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Narrative Inquiry: Exploring Black Female Professional Counselors' Storied Experiences of Supervision

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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Abstract

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by

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MA, Marshall University Graduate College, 2004

BA, Davis and Elkins College, 2000

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Black women supervisees are underrepresented in research. Given the importance of relational connections in women's lives and how the supervision process occurs in relational interactions of intersecting contextual variables, an investigation into the supervision experiences of Black female professional counselor supervisees was warranted. This narrative inquiry aimed to explore and understand how Black female professional counselor supervisees narrate their supervision experience. The research question focused on how Black female professional counselor supervisees narrated their supervision experience. Eight participants were recruited from social media. They self-identified as Black and female, lived in the United States, and were licensed professional counselors. Narrative thematic analysis revealed themes and codes from the participants' storied supervision experiences. The data was analyzed using critical race theory and relational cultural theory. The results of the audio-recorded Zoom interviews uncovered four themes: (a) navigating gender and racial stereotypes, (b) relying on perseverance strategies, (c) wanting support of self-concept and mentoring, and (d) taking ownership of personal and professional growth. Their stories indicated a need for mentors and allies who are culturally competent and culturally humble and prioritize establishing reciprocal relationships as social action to help them "show up" fully and authentically. The social change implication of the results of this study includes offering a greater understanding of how to provide effective supervision and support cultural responsiveness and alliance with Black female professional counselor supervisees.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to those who embrace a worldview of success and optimism while enduring experiences shaped by inequity in sociopolitical power, social isolation, and exposure to oppressive forces. I see your strivings and your strength.

Acknowledgments

This dissertation project was animated through the effort and support of many people. To begin with, I would like to thank the participants who courageously shared their stories to give knowledge back to the counseling profession by contributing to the release of culturally inclusive research. I sincerely appreciate the support of my dissertation committee. To my wife, Saira Cooper, thank you for your love and for celebrating each step of life's journey with me. To my two daughters (Sophia and Aleena), thank you for grounding and inspiring me. Also, to my mother, Venus Washington, your strength is the foundation of my resiliency and professional success. Lastly, I thank my father (Daniel Cooper) and mentors for their encouragement, prayers, and faith in me.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Developing cultural competency is one of the most critical issues facing the counseling profession in the 21st century. Human perception, bias, prejudice, and worldview can limit counselors' and supervisors' abilities to understand clients and supervisees from different cultures. Clinical supervision is the foundational training process for increasing counselors' effectiveness, involving multiple roles and responsibilities (Hutman & Ellis, 2020; Tohidian & Mui-Teng Quek, 2017). The clinical supervision process occurs in the relational interactions of different cultural and other contextual variables (Phillips et al., 2017; Thacker et al., 2020; Tohidian & Mui-Teng Quek, 2017). Professional development involves sponsoring and cultivating the integration of the unique cultural identities, personal attributes, and clinical skills of all counseling professionals (Flacking et al., 2019; Thacker et al., 2020). Professional counselors who identify with marginalized identities face barriers to supervisory alliance and professional identity development because of adverse experiences (Branco & Jones, 2021; Thacker et al., 2020). Hence, addressing multicultural issues and diverse identities in the supervisory relationship is required of professional counselor supervisors (ACA, 2014; Branco & Jones, 2021; Flacking et al., 2019; Tohidian & Mui-Teng Quek, 2017).

Literature in multicultural supervision reveals that Black women supervisees are underrepresented in research and experience harmful and unresponsive supervision practices disproportionately more than White supervisees (Callahan & Love, 2020; Davis et al., 2020; Upshaw et al., 2019). The disproportionately low representation of counselor

educators and supervisors who are Black has led to painful racism, microinvalidation, and marginalization experiences for Black females in the counseling profession (Callahan & Love, 2020; Holden et al., 2013; Sue et al., 2007). This qualitative study employed a narrative inquiry to address this gap in the literature, provide rich and descriptive data, and give primacy to the lived experiences of Black female professional counselors who have received professional supervision. Because people exposed to continual experiences with racial, ethnic, and sexual invalidations and microaggressions develop feelings of inadequacy and subjugating cultural narratives (Davis et al., 2020), this research is a storytelling inquiry intersecting around the themes of race, gender, and Eurocentrism as experienced and interpreted through the descriptions of those who have the most access to this specialized knowledge. Although this project was focused on the experiences of Black women, a narrative inquiry provided the space through listening, questioning, and storytelling to identify the events, strategies, skills, and cultural, environmental, and contextual factors supportive or non-supportive for teaching and the practice of multicultural supervision with Black female professional counselors.

In addressing this research problem, Chapter 1 begins with a brief overview of the research investigating the perspectives of supervisees identifying as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) before presenting the problem statement, the purpose of the study, and the research question. I will describe the theoretical frameworks and nature of the study and define key terminology. I will also discuss this qualitative inquiry's scope, assumptions, and limitations. Lastly, this chapter will conclude with a discussion of the

study's significance and its potential to promote positive social change.

Background

The United States and global community are pluralistic. The American Psychological Association (APA, 2017a) indicated that students who identified as BIPOC increased from 26.3 to 30% between 2005 and 2015. The ever-changing demographic trends in the United States, immigration, international migration, and the diversification of graduate counseling programs suggest a need for counselor educators and supervisors to provide training programs and supervision that is multiculturally responsive and effective (Jain & Aggarwal, 2020; Jendrusina & Martinez, 2019). Ethical practice in a pluralistic society requires mental health care professionals to be prepared to work effectively with people who are culturally different and from diverse social backgrounds (American Counseling Association (ACA, 2014; APA, 2017b; Jain & Aggarwal, 2020; Jendrusina & Martinez, 2019). Nonetheless, roughly 88% of graduate counseling and psychology training program faculty and supervisors self-identify as White (Baggerly et al., 2017). White clinicians account for approximately 83% of the counseling and psychology workforce (APA, 2022). The likelihood of cross-racial supervision experiences is high for BIPOC supervisees. Although research has demonstrated that BIPOC supervisees report experiencing empathic support from White supervisors and mentors (Brown & Grothaus, 2019), BIPOC supervisees also experience racial stress and other adverse experiences related to racial, social, and cultural differences when paired with White supervisors (Branco & Jones, 2021; Sue et al., 2022; Wilcox et al., 2023).

Consequently, there is a need for additional research on the impact of supervision within the context of the supervisory relationship and cultural competency to enhance the practice of supervision.

Promoting cultural competence, diversifying the counseling profession, and promoting inclusion and social justice among its professionals are core values and goals of the counseling profession (ACA, 2014; Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs [CACREP], 2018). Despite the increased diversification of graduate counseling programs and efforts to improve the multicultural competence of students and professionals, many counseling professionals and students with marginalized identities experience a White-centric culture that is oppressive, isolating, and lacking in support and mentorship (Brown & Grothaus, 2019; Jendrusina & Martinez, 2019; Thacker & Milton, 2020). Many supervisees who identify with marginalized identities report adverse experiences of microaggression, stereotyping, tokenism, and invalidation related to their gendered, racial, ethnic, and sexual orientation (Jendrusina & Martinez, 2019; Thacker & Milton, 2020; Thacker et al., 2021). Marginalization, microaggression, and microinvalidation can demoralize and harm an individual's sense of worth and belonging (Sue et al., 2022; Thacker & Milton, 2020; Thacker et al., 2021). Although these reported adverse experiences seem to undermine the counseling profession's values of promoting inclusion and social justice, research that incorporates the perspectives of supervisees who identify with marginalized identities can inform the practice of clinical supervision, encourage supervisors to create a safe spaces

for supervisees, and enhance the practice of culturally responsive supervision (Bowie et al., 2019; Brown & Grothaus, 2019; Jendrusina & Martinez, 2019; Sue et al., 2022; Thacker & Milton, 2020; Thacker et al., 2021).

The history of Black Americans is with adversity and experiences of racism and prejudice (Du Bois, 1903; Takaki, 1993). Black women are marginalized not only by race but also by gender and class (Bowie et al., 2019; Hall, 2018). In addition to the historical, environmental, and systemic factors that often contribute to adverse experiences, Black female professional counselor supervisees are vulnerable to experiencing racism or sexism in clinical supervision (Bowie et al., 2019; Hall, 2018; Sue et al., 2022). These experiences can harm the supervisory relationship and adversely impact the supervision process and outcome for BIPOC supervisees (Wilcox et al., 2023). Although research related to BIPOC supervisees' experiences in supervision has informed the practice of clinical supervision and enhanced the practice of culturally inclusive and responsive supervision (Bowie et al., 2019; Sue et al., 2022; Wilcox et al., 2023), capturing supervisees' views that identify as Black females is lacking. Therefore, this research will help address the lack of culturally inclusive studies and the gap in the literature by documenting Black female professional counselor supervisees' perceptions of their clinical supervision experiences as told through their storied lives.

Problem Statement

The need to address multicultural issues and diverse identities in the supervisory relationship is required of professional counselor supervisors (Tohidian & Mui-Teng

Quek, 2017). However, it is difficult for counselor educators and professional counselor supervisors to attend to and develop a comprehensive approach that accounts for the complexity of human behavior and diversity (APA, 2017; Benuto et al., 2019; Upshaw et al., 2019). The counseling profession is mainly made up of White women who account for about 70% of counselors, and only 11% of counselors identify as Black (Michel et al., 2013). Black women have a positioning that is marginalized by race, gender, and class (Bowie et al., 2019; Hall, 2018; Williams & Lewis, 2021). Black women's experiences are multilayered and are historically shaped by inequity in sociopolitical power, social isolation, and exposure to oppressive forces (Bayne & Branco, 2018; Sue et al., 2007; Upshaw et al., 2019). The well-being, psychological adjustment, racial identity development, and perception of control that Black women experience is shaped by the dominant social group in the United States (Abrams et al., 2019). Black women must subjugate their sense of self to gain social acceptance into the dominant culture (i.e., White, middle class, Protestant people of northern European descent) and for the Black race (Abrams et al., 2019; Green & Burton, 2021; Temple, 2012). But the pressures to be strong, resilient, and independent can have an adverse impact on the mental health of Black women (Abrams et al., 2019). The stress of living with exclusion and discrimination can push many Black women beyond their ability to cope (Callahan & Love, 2020; Holden et al., 2013; Sue et al., 2007; Sue et al., 2022).

Further, Black female supervisees are vulnerable to depression and unintentional harm in the supervisory relationship (Upshaw et al., 2019). Although research related to

the experiences of Black supervises in counseling doctoral programs is growing (Bayne & Branco, 2018; Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Callahan & Love, 2020; Constantine & Sue, 2007; Henfield et al., 2011; Sue et al., 2022), little attention is often given to capturing supervisees' views who identify as Black female professional counselors. Due to this lack of information, counselor educators and supervisors may be ill-equipped to provide culturally responsive supervision and build effective supervisory alliances with Black female counselors. The narratives of counselors who identify as Black females need to be highlighted in research (Davis et al., 2020).

Purpose

This qualitative narrative study was conducted to understand and capture the lived experiences of Black female professional counselors' storied experiences of supervision. Ethnic minorities are often underrepresented in clinical research (Castillo et al., 2012; Davis et al., 2020; Henfield et al., 2011; Sue et al., 2022) and report a cultural climate within the counseling profession that reflects adverse societal experiences that can be isolating and suppressive of expression and their marginalized identities (CACREP, 2018; Thacker & Milton, 2022). The narrative approach allowed participants to tell their storied experiences of supervision without externally imposed constraints to explore the essential elements of the meanings that Black female professional counselors derive from their supervision experiences. The contextualized stories of Black female professional counselors can help to improve the understanding of what is supportive or non-supportive for teaching and practicing multicultural supervision with Black female professional

counselor supervisees.

Research Questions

The research question for this narrative inquiry qualitative study was "How do Black female professional counselor supervisees narrate their supervision experience?"

Theoretical Framework

For this study, critical race theory (CRT) and relational cultural theory (RCT) guided the research and informed data collection and data analysis. The phenomenon under study describes lived experience through the storied lives of Black female professional counselor supervisees. Race is a psychic and socially constructed construct that intersects with other identity constructs and helps people make sense of their experiences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; George, 2016; Rodriguez et al., 2023). Although intragroup variation exists, Black women in the United States share unique positioning and perspectives of being marginalized by race, gender, and class (Bowie et al., 2019; Hall, 2018; Hooks, 1994; Hooks, 2017; Williams & Lewis, 2021). This research is culturally centered because it investigates the views of a marginalized population.

CRT is an appropriate theory to have as a base for conducting this study because CRT advances "that race, and races are products of social thought and relations" (Delgado & Stefanic, 2012, p. 8). CRT was developed in response to the suppression of Black American voices marginalized by race and promoted the use of social science research and knowledge to counter the harmful impact of racial oppression (Delgado &

Stefancic, 2012; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). CRT also promotes adopting a social and culturally conscious perspective to understand the strengths and limitations of research methods applied to marginalized populations (Davis et al., 2020; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Additionally, CRT theorists recommend that research generation and design involve inclusive methods and collaborative strategies beneficial to participants from marginalized populations (Davis et al., 2020; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

RCT is a critical post-modern psychological theory applied to trauma therapy, clinical supervision, cultural competency, and research (Duffey et al., 2015; Gomez, 2020). RCT is a paradigm developed alongside the U.S. feminist movement in the 1970s and centralizes naming oppressive systems and giving voice to marginalized populations to make social change (Jordan, 2017). RCT emphasizes valuing women's experiences, and that relationships and identity are integral and inseparable from the larger social and cultural context (Jordan, 2017). RCT maintains that Western society has a dominant patriarchal culture and that systemic power differentials can contribute to adverse experiences that can be disempowering and isolating (Jordan, 2017). Nonetheless, RCT advances that mutual empathy, growth-fostering, and authentic relationships empower people (Duffey et al., 2015; Duffey & Trepal, 2016; Gomez, 2020). Also, RCT is empirically established as foundational to the professional supervisory relationship. RCT is central to adequate supervision, increasing relational and multicultural competencies (Duffey et al., 2015; Gomez, 2020). Accordingly, subsequent research and application of

RCT offer guidance on communicating and understanding the lived relational complexities of the storied lives of Black professional counselor supervisees' supervision experiences (Bradley et al., 2019; Hammonds et al., 2023).

Nature of Study

Due to the need to understand and capture the lived experiences of Black female professional counselors' storied supervision experiences, the nature of this study was qualitative and used narrative inquiry, a qualitative approach to understanding lived experiences within specific contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). Even though other qualitative methods such as phenomenology and case study were considered, the research question, which sought to understand better how Black female professional counselor supervisees narrate their supervision experience, required a methodology to describe individuals' storied lives as expressed in their stories. People from marginalized groups are often underrepresented in clinical research (Gomez, 2020; Thomas et al., 2019), and many report that their marginalized identities, culture, and voices are "invalidated and made invisible throughout a context" (Thacker et al., 2020, p. 39). The narrative approach allows for a rich, descriptive, more nuanced, and in-depth understanding of the meanings that participants glean from their experiences within their context (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Hussain & Ali, 2019). Participants' lived experiences have priority in narrative inquiry, and reality or subjective truth is understood as constructed through storytelling (Blustein et al., 2013; Hussain & Ali, 2019; Patton, 2015). People make narratives to make sense of interpersonal experiences and structure

their life experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moen, 2006; Zellermayer, 1997). Consistent with a constructivist epistemology, meaning and understanding are created and transferred interpersonally through dialogue in narrative research, and narratives are where reality is produced and transferred (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Denzin, 2017; Moen, 2006).

Similarly, marginalized identities and stories are dynamic and understood interpersonally within context and time (Thacker et al., 2020). Narrative analysis allows the researcher to attempt to highlight the meanings of participants' personal stories and events through the telling of stories and counter stories as the primary means of understanding lived experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Hussain & Ali, 2019; Patton, 2015). Narrative inquiry is a complex and dynamic methodology that relies on active collaboration with participants using interviews, observation, field notes, journals, and other artifacts to understand the intricacy of the culturally bound phenomena of lived experience through the collaborative narrative of the researcher and storyteller (Clandinin, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Keeping the focus on understanding the lived relational complexities of the storied lives of Black female professional counselor supervisees' supervision experiences should be consistent with RCT, CRT, and qualitative inquiry. Therefore, narrative inquiry was suited for capturing the dynamic and complex experiences of people who identify as Black female professional counselor supervisees, as further explored in Chapters 2 and 3.

Participants who identify as Black female professional counselor supervisees

credentialed as licensed professional counselors (LPC) from across the United States was recruited for this study. Consistent with narrative inquiry (Creswell & Poth, 2018), semistructured interviews were conducted via Zoom, a collaborative, end-to-end encrypted, cloud-based video and audio-conferencing service. The interview guide consisted of open-ended narrative questions to evoke stories that capture both the personal and social aspects of the participants' experiences. Follow-up questions were used to glean a more approximate understanding of various realms of the participants' experiences and the construction of reality through their stories' narration. The design included debriefing with qualified peer researchers and faculty mentors as possible sources for triangulation. A combination of Microsoft Word and hand coding was utilized to maintain fidelity to the participants' experiences. To ensure the accuracy and credibility of the initial coding, the researcher debriefed and cross-checked initial themes with members.

Definitions

The following definitions are terms associated with the top of the lived experiences of Black female professional counselors' storied supervision experiences.

Black female or Black woman: A multidimensional person, a woman of color, or an African American woman self-identifying with any of the various social identities with origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa, and Afro-diasporic descent, including women from the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe, Asia, Australian Aboriginal and Melanesian descent (Clayton, 2020; Devost, 2023; Kissi & Ewan, 2023).

Marginalized populations: Refers to the socially influenced process in which individual worldviews and systems of power historically disempower, oppress, and exclude groups that include women, people with disabilities, BIPOC, lesbian, gay, bisexual transgender, queer, or questioning (LGBTQ+) individuals, and people of lower socio-economic status (Choen & Kassan, 2018; Tacker e al., 2021).

Gendered racism: A term used to describe the unique and inseparable experiences of racism and sexism that Black women experience because of their intersectional gendered racial identity that can be harmful to mental health (Essed, 1991; Lewis et al., 2017).

Narrative inquiry: A method of conveying an understanding of the lived experiences of individuals as expressed in their stories (Clandinin, 2013; Patton 2015).

Licensed professional counselor (LPC): A credentialed mental health provider with at least a master's degree in counseling, knowledgeable in assessment and diagnosis, "trained to work with individuals, families and groups in treating mental, behavioral, and emotional problems and disorders" (ACA, 2020, para. 1).

Assumptions

Assumptions for this study align with a constructivist stance that asserts that the most approximate way that the researcher can understand individuals, groups, and phenomena is through their interpretation of their contextualized experience as experienced and interpreted by the researcher (Balkin & Kleist, 2017: Denzin, 2017; Patton 2015). In qualitative research, knowledge is transactional, dynamic, and "uniquely

tied to context and time" (Balkin & Kleist, 2017, p. 197). For this reason, my assumptions for this study were the following:

1. By employing narrative methodology, it was assumed that despite the persistent adverse experiences and marginalization, the study would be an appropriate platform to highlight Black women's voices about their storied supervision experiences.
2. I assumed that the participants would be candid in telling me about their experiences they will disclose during the interview.
3. I assumed that deep and nuanced accounts of participants' storied experiences will be obtained, thus answering the study's research question.

The focus of the research question for this narrative inquiry qualitative study was on understanding how Black female professional counselor supervisees narrate their supervision experience. Because the study focused on a population that is culturally diverse and may identify with marginalized identities, it required a culturally sensitive and appropriate approach. In culturally sensitive and responsive research, culture must be central throughout the "research design, data collection, and data interpretation" to achieve cultural integrity and credibility (Bloomberg, 2023, p. 260). The complex interrelationships and intersections of the researcher's and participants' social identities and positionalities "in relationship to the context and setting of the research" impact the credibility of the findings in qualitative research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 11). Consequently, examining and discussing the researcher's assumptions was necessary to

ensure the rigor and credibility of the research findings (Bloomberg, 2023; Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Scope and Delimitations

This study focused on understanding and capturing the lived experiences of Black female professional counselors' storied experiences of supervision. For this reason, the study's scope only included participants who identify as women of Black or African descent, had or was receiving supervision, and were LPCs in good standing from across the United States. The geographic scope of the study was confined to counselor supervisees living in the United States. Following the guidelines of IRB, I did not collect any specific participant demographic data for this study. All eight participants in the study self-identified as Black and female. I conducted the study via Zoom in Texas, and participants from various states across the United States were self-selected by responding to the social media post (via LinkedIn and Facebook), self-identifying as meeting eligibility requirements, and expressing willingness to participate in the study. All participants confirmed that they lived in the United States, were licensed or provisionally licensed as a professional counselor, and lived in the state where they were licensed. Although the study's delimitation is of participants who identified as women and of Black or African descent living in the United States, transferability, or the extent to which a study can expand understanding from one individual, group, or context to another, is the focus of qualitative research (Balkin & Kleist, 2017; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015). Therefore, I detailed the steps taken throughout the study's data collection and

analysis and provide in-depth and rich descriptions of participants' responses to offer future researchers a means to compare the study's findings to other individuals, groups, or settings.

Limitations

Narrative inquiry is collaborative, dynamic, and informant centered (Clandinin, 2013; Patton, 2015). The approach suggests that the interpretation of the participants' storied lives involves the interaction and collaborative narrative of the personal, cultural, and social aspects of the researcher and participants' experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study's constructivist epistemology, which centered on subjectivity and interpretation and focuses on participants who identify as women of Black or African descent, may limit the transferability of the findings. Likewise, limitations related to restricted inclusion criteria may have limited the diversification of the sample to a broader audience. Nonetheless, there is yet to be a consensus on the suitable range of sampling size or a single actual reality in qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Guest et al., 2006; Mason, 2010; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). As a methodological principle in qualitative research, saturation or adequate and quality data should emerge from the data themselves (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Another limitation is interviewer bias, which can influence face-to-face interviews (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). To minimize personal biases as a researcher and ensure credibility, I used triangulation, random purposive sampling to select participants, and

inductive thematic analysis to assess and report saturation. Purposeful sampling techniques are optimal for identifying and selecting information-rich cases (Patton, 2015). Online self-selection sampling helps investigate marginalized and subpopulations effectively (McInroy, 2016). In self-selection sampling, participants can volunteer to become a part of a study when asked or respond to an advertisement by the researchers (Catania et al., 2015). Using self-selection sampling methods, I secured a representative sample to participate in the study to strengthen credibility and trustworthiness.

Additionally, involving participants, other researchers, and committee members as informants can strengthen research credibility and dependability (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To strengthen the study's credibility and dependability, I used two different data sources and address my subjectivity used reflective memos for all participants and throughout the interview process. I confirmed the data's internal coherence by detailing the data analysis process and taking detailed methodological process notes throughout the study. I also utilized the weekly course discussion boards as a strategy to acknowledge and reduce my bias while verifying my interpretations against the perspectives of other researchers and the dissertation committee (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I further confirmed the data by having the participants review the transcription to collaborate on the integrity of the represented understanding of their storied experiences (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Significance

This study helped fill the gap in the literature in understanding what is supportive

or non-supportive for teaching and practicing multicultural supervision with Black female professional counselor supervisees. Knowledge gained in research can empower marginalized people (Brown & Grothaus, 2019; Thacker et al., 2020; Williams & Raney, 2020). Knowledge has been linked to increased positivity, competency, and behaviors resulting from minorities participating in research (Thacker et al., 2020; Williams & Raney, 2020). Also, ethnic minorities are often underrepresented in clinical research (Gomez, 2020; Thomas et al., 2019). As a result, a study focusing on an ethnic minority subpopulation perspective could lead to a sense of inclusion, empowerment, and increased knowledge as a benefit of the study's results. Social change implications from the results of this study may help scholars address the gap in the literature relating to understanding how to train counselors and counselor educators to support cultural responsiveness and alliance with Black female professional counselor supervisees.

Summary

Despite decades of research and the counseling profession's initiatives to promote cultural competence, diversify the counseling profession, and promote inclusion and social justice among its professionals, individuals who identify with marginalized identities continue to experience exclusion, adversity, and lack of support (Bowie et al., 2019; Hall, 2018; Sue et al., 2022; Thacker & Milton, 2020; Thacker et al., 2021). This issue is particularly pronounced for individuals who identify as Black female professional counselor supervisees (Callahan & Love, 2020; Holden et al., 2013; Sue et al., 2007), because of their unique positioning of being marginalized by race, gender, and class.

Although growing research highlights that incorporating the perspectives of professionals who identify as BIPOC in research can inform the practice of clinical supervision, create a safe space, and enhance the practice of culturally responsive supervision (Thacker & Milton, 2020; Thacker et al., 2021; Thomas et al., 2019), the perspectives of Black female professional counselor supervisees are currently missing from the existent literature. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to employ narrative inquiry to help understand and illuminate the intricacy of individuals who identify as Black female professional counselor supervisees' experiences of supervision in the form of their own stories.

Chapter 1 provided a general overview and the background that sets the stage for supporting research aimed at understanding and capturing the lived experiences of Black female professional counselors' storied experiences of supervision. This chapter also identified the problem statement and described the purpose of the study. Moreover, I presented the theoretical framework, research question, and the nature of the study. Additionally, definitions of key terms were provided, and assumptions, scope, delimitations, and the study's limitations were outlined. Chapter 1 concluded with an overview of the study's significance. Chapter 2 includes a comprehensive literature review.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The experience of Black people in the United States is historically and culturally situated and subjected to marginalization and systemic oppression (Du Bois, 1903; Quaye et al., 2023; Thacker et al., 2021). The counseling profession is no exception and has historically paralleled a White, male-oriented hegemonic culture that can perpetuate racial and gender microaggression (Branco & Jones, 2021; Quaye et al., 2023; Thacker et al., 2021). Counseling students, supervisees, and professionals who identify as Black can endure significant experiences of microaggression and racism in all facets of their clinical training and professional development (Branco & Jones, 2021; Sue et al., 2022; Thacker & Milton, 2020; Thacker et al., 2021). Supervisees who identify as Black women can experience racial and gender microaggressions that can impede learning and cause emotional and psychological harm (Quaye et al., 2023; Thacker et al., 2021). Despite the changing demographics and increasing diversification in the United States and counseling programs (CACREP, 2016; Thacker & Milton, 2020), this systemic issue contradicts the counseling profession's values of inclusion, diversity, and social justice underscored in professional standards (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2016; CACREP, 2018). Although there is an ongoing effort to address microaggressions (Branco & Jones, 2021; Sue et al., 2019; Sue et al., 2022) and integrate the perspectives of supervisees to develop culturally effective approaches to supervision, descriptive data are lacking that includes the perspectives of supervisees who identify as Black female professional counselor supervisees. Therefore, this qualitative narrative study was conducted to understand how

Black female professional counselors assign meaning to their supervision experiences through the stories they tell.

In Chapter 2, I provide a comprehensive review of the empirical literature that situates the study in the context of previous research that supports the study's importance, addresses the gap in previous research, and provides a rationale for the study's theoretical framework. I begin the chapter by discussing all the strategies used in the literature search. I also review the databases and search engines, including a list of key terms employed to identify scholarly material germane to the topic. Additionally, I explain the theoretical frameworks that supported the study's design and analysis of findings. The chapter ends with a comprehensive literature review synthesis, highlighting gaps, strengths, and limitations, integrating key themes and issues, and providing a rationale for the study.

Literature Search Strategy

In conducting the literature review, I ran a systemic and extensive search of the existing relevant peer-reviewed literature from the past 5 years, dissertations, and scholarly books specific to the topic. I used the Walden Library Catalog, EBSCO Host, ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis, Open Access Theses and Dissertations, and Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA) as databases to find relevant literature for this study. The primary search keywords included the following: *supervision, supervisee, African American, professional counselors, counselor education, supervisees' perspectives and supervision, multicultural supervision, storied experiences and*

supervision, narrative inquiry or Black women, Black female, psychology trainees, Black supervisees, minoritized professionals, cross-racial supervision, marginalization, women of color, counselors of color, people of color, and *BIPOC*. Once I found articles using these primary keywords, I ran additional searches using keywords suggested by previous authors. I also pulled articles referenced across those found that were not initially popping up.

Searching relevant scholarship related to Black female storied supervision experiences evidenced a lack of research on this topic. As a result, I expanded the topic's potentiality by searching for literature that was supervision adjacent, such as Black women's or minoritized professionals' experiences in counselor education and other institutional spaces. Once I could locate literature representing the sum of current knowledge on my topic, I integrated and synthesized the review to contextualize an argument for the rationale and significance of the study.

Theoretical Framework

CRT and RCT formed the theoretical framework that guided the research process, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Black women can experience oppression in the form of classism, racism, and sexism (Bowie et al., 2019; Hall, 2018). CRT and RCT offer a way for understanding Black women's experiences and intersecting identities while seeking to empower and include all marginalized identities (Bell, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Jordan, 2017; Singh et al., 2020). CRT is an interdisciplinary and intersectional approach that creates conceptual space for

understanding how race and power systems reinforce the social inequalities and isolation that people with marginalized identities endure (Bell, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Singh et al., 2020). The goal of CRT is understanding and addressing racial inequality so that people with marginalized identities can be empowered to liberate themselves from the various forms of oppression that they face (Kassi & Ewan, 2023; Singh et al., 2020; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). RCT is a counseling and clinical supervision theory that centralizes the interplay of contextual, relational, and sociopolitical forces in helping understand and remedy the disconnection and isolation that may result from marginalization (Jordan, 2017; Singh, 2020). Therefore, combining CRT and RCT provided coherence for the research and informed the understanding of Black female professional counselors' storied supervision experiences.

Critical Race Theory

CRT has its roots in critical theory, which addresses unequal power relations between different groups, classes, and cultures to help address individually and socially created inequities (Ellsworth, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 2006). CRT emerged in the late 1980s and was developed within the legal profession in response to the limitations of theoretical frameworks at the time to give voice to the role of racism and sexism in American law with a focus on the elimination of racism, inequality, and injustice (Crenshaw, 1989; Ellsworth, 1989). Bell (1995) expanded CRT to offer a counter-narrative to predominant theories that did not center the inequities that the power and privilege of a White, male-oriented hegemonic culture in social and legal structures

would have on perpetuating oppression.

CRT provides an intersectional framework built on feminist principles that consider how existing power dynamics and privilege may influence all relationships (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). CRT as a framework offers centrality to the "interlocking components" of race, gender, and class that contribute to the various forms of oppression that people with marginalized identities may experience (Howard-Hamilton, 2003, p. 22). CRT recognizes that students and counseling professionals with marginalized identities, regardless of socioeconomic status, can experience the adverse effects of systemic racism that is embedded into the United States culture, behavior, and institutional structures (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Therefore, CRT strengthened the study's framework because it contributed to the idea that people with marginalized identities are likely to experience various forms of oppression in U.S. society and legitimatize these adverse experiences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

CRT is guided by five tenets (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). The five tenets that CRT theorists' postulate can be used in research in counselor education to address racism and promote social justice include (a) the permanence and intersectionality of race and racism, (b) the critique of liberalism and color blindness, (c) counter-storytelling, (d) interest convergence, and (e) Whiteness as property (Haskins & Singh, 2015). CRT offers researchers and counselor educators a critical framework for validating and understanding the lived experiences of people with marginalized identities by promoting

a conscious consideration of the processes, behaviors, and systems that perpetuate racism and other forms of oppression in the United States (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Haskins & Singh, 2015). Theorists applying CRT recognize the continuity of their personal histories, social context, and lived experiences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). The CRT tenet of counter-storytelling acknowledges that people with marginalized identities have a unique perspective that can inform the dominant White-centric culture because their histories and experiences are different and run counter to the dominant culture (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Using the CRT framework, counter-storytelling is utilized to give storytellers from marginalized communities the power to construct their own stories while giving primacy to their stories, experiences, and interpersonal truths (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

By empowering the voices of individuals and groups that experience marginalization and promoting reflection and the opportunity to create their narratives, CRT recognizes all levels of experience, even beyond adversity (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). For example, Davis et al. (2020) applied the CRT to further understand the complexity of the African American experience with identity, research, and doctoral education experiences. They found that incorporating African American individuals' narratives provides a counter-narrative to that of the dominant cultural ideology that can be empowering and essential to understanding the complex racial identity of African Americans. The four essential themes related to the participants' complex contextualized

identity and professional experiences in the program were (a) making an impact, (b) cohort diversity, (c) racialized experiences and microaggressions, and (d) “my narrative is not what you think it is” (Davis et al., 2020, p. 207).

Branco and Jones (2021) also used qualitative case study methodology and CRT to help increase the multicultural and social justice competence of counselor educators and supervisors to support supervisees with marginalized identities more. Despite research substantiating the adverse impact of the experience of systemic oppression and microaggression on supervisees with marginalized identities (Sue et al., 2019; Thacker et al., 2020) and the adverse impact on the counseling relationship and outcomes (Hook et al., 2016), there remained a gap in strategies to optimize levels of supervisor offered support (Branco & Bayne, 2020). To address this gap, the researchers selected CRT as a framework because of the centrality of the intersectionality of race and racism and focus on the empowerment and inclusion of voices isolated by the systemic effects of racism and oppression to promote social justice (Bell, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). As a result of using a CRT lens, the researchers were able to help move the counseling profession forward by providing supportive interventions for counselor educators and supervisors to offer culturally “responsive strategies” to manage client microaggression and racism in counseling (Branco & Jones, 2021, p. 292). The study also supported CRT as a lens for understanding, acknowledging, and validating the storied experiences of Black female professional counselor supervisees.

Additionally, Jones (2021) applied qualitative methodology and the tenets of CRT

to center the unique experiences and inform the understanding of how Black women at a historically White institution respond to racial microaggression. Despite the growth of the number of Black women attending historically White colleges (Green et al., 2018), Black women report being isolated by experiences of marginalization and "gendered racial battle fatigue" at high levels (Quaye et al., 2023, p. 1). The researcher used CRT to center the participant's "intersectional identities as Black women" and utilized the tenet of counter-storying to amplify their narratives and experiences that run counter to dominant culture narratives (Jones, 2021, p. 1827). The researcher found how Black women's experiences of racial microaggression can exhaust coping skills, erode self-esteem, and result in serious health consequences (Jones, 2021). The Black women in the study described their experiences of marginalization as reinforcing feelings of isolation, threats of being stereotyped as the "angry Black woman," and fears of not being understood (Jones, 2021, p. 1834). Despite navigating their experience of racial microaggression in various ways, Black women generally responded with quiet endurance (Jones, 2021). Given the disproportionately low representation of counselor educators and supervisors of color, the research noted the importance and benefits of increased faculty diversity in the classroom and equipping counselors and educators with a multicultural framework and competency to promote inclusive, safe places that counter the systemic effects of racism that can impact the learning and well-being of Black women (Jones, 2021).

Together, these findings suggest that research incorporating the perspectives of Black supervisees is essential for building a culturally responsive learning and

professional community that responds to the diverse range of cultures and intersecting identities that supervisees of color hold. Black female professional counselors need safe spaces to connect and can benefit from support in overcoming the barriers of racism, sexism, and other social barriers. This research supported the use of CRT in my study because it underscores the importance of establishing a counternarrative to the dominant culture's understanding of supervision through the complexity of the Black female professional counselors' storied supervision experiences from their perspectives.

Relational Cultural Theory

RCT is a paradigm developed in response to the limitations of traditional theories in psychology during the feminist movement in the late 1970s (Jordan, 2010; Jordan, 2017). Contrary to traditional models of human nature in the United States at the time that were "built to support the story of a dog-eat-dog, competitive, individualistic, independent way of being," RCT centralizes culture, connection, and women's experiences living in oppressive patriarchal systems (Jordan, 2017, p. 230). RCT is a feminist framework that focuses on the influence of relational, contextual, sociopolitical, and systemic power differentials on men's and women's experiences (Gomez, 2020; Jordan, 2017). Jordan (2017) postulated that the "power-over relationships" and systemic power differentials that historically characterize the dominant culture in the United States can be isolating, discouraging, and oppressive to people with marginalized identities (Jordan, 2017, p. 231). In RCT, connection and relationships are integral to human experience, and the disconnection and isolation that can result from marinization can lead

to psychological suffering and distress (Gomez, 2020; Jordan, 2017). RCT is a framework that emphasizes understanding the complexity of relationships and giving a voice to individuals and groups that have been marginalized (Jordan, 2017). Promoting growth-fostering relationships characterized by relational authenticity, mutual empowerment, and mutual empathy are core principles of RCT that can foster growth, connection, mutual learning, safety, creativity, and increased self-worth with people with marginalized identities (Jordan, 2017; Williams & Raney, 2020). Using RCT as a framework allows for a better understanding of the ability of Black women and other groups with marginalized identities to power through the effects of oppression that impact wellness, learning, and connectedness, which are not pathologized but seen and heard through the telling of their stories as strengths (Jordan, 2017).

Jordan (2017) advanced that RCT can be used in counseling, education, and research to dismantle oppressive power systems and promote social justice. Practicing cultural humility and maintaining a commitment to understanding the relational, cultural, and sociopolitical contexts of participants who identify with marginalized identities and the researcher's positionality is essential to dismantling barriers to connection and establishing growth-fostering relationships (Gomez, 2020; Jordan, 2017; Williams & Raney, 2020). Gomez (2020) applied RCT as a framework to shape their understanding of the supervision and therapeutic processes because it advances that mutual empathy, growth-fostering, and authentic relationships empower people. The study established that collaborative relationships that incorporate the complexities of racial, ethnic, and cultural

identities of supervisees strengthened alliances and supported professional growth (Gomez, 2020). Although a qualitative case study methodology was used to explore their experience and perspective as a Black woman working with low-income women with histories of trauma and abuse, the researcher uncovered that feminist multicultural approaches such as RCT are appropriate for understanding the lived relational complexity of people's lives while promoting growth and cultural competence (Gomez, 2020).

Williams and Raney (2020) also used qualitative research and RCT to establish that counselor educators and supervisors can use the approach in research to enhance the clinical supervision of supervisees who identify with marginalized identities. Like many supervisees of color, the supervisees in the study reported that their experience of having previous supervisors reject or not acknowledge their marginalized identities made them initially reluctant to trust their supervisor or disclose critical incidents. Nonetheless, the supervisor's disclosure and discussion of their culture, intersecting identities, and experiences with injustice strengthened the supervisory alliance and was growth-promoting (Williams & Raney, 2020). Even though the supervisee and the supervisor identified with marginalized identities and experienced oppression, the supervisor's use of the core principles of relational cultural supervision, such as modeling vulnerability, mutual empathy, authenticity, and mutual empowerment, engendered mutual personal and professional growth (Williams & Raney, 2020).

Supervision is an essential relationship and process for developing counseling supervisees' personal and professional identity development (Bernard & Goodyear,

2013). Anxiety and the feelings of isolation that accompany marginalization can affect supervisees' learning, performance, and engagement in supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013; Thacker et al., 2021). Nonetheless, using the supervisory relationship and process to broach and support anxiety and vulnerability can help strengthen the supervisory relationship while promoting learning and development (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013; Gomez, 2020; Thacker et al., 2021). Bradley et al. (2019) further established that the supervision process and relationship reduced anxiety and created a space for supervisees to be vulnerable when a RCT framework is applied. The researchers also advanced that experientially integrating an RCT lens can facilitate an increase in awareness, promote shared vulnerability, and enhance the learning and professional development of supervisees with marginalized identities despite the feelings of isolation and fear that can result from experiences of societal oppression (Bradley et al., 2019). The studies mentioned above justify my research because it supports the use of RCT in supervision and research with supervisees identifying with marginalized identities. Due to the limited research on the effectiveness of RCT in supervision, the researchers recommended that future research is needed to find out the benefits of using RCT for clinical training with supervisees identifying with marginalized identities. Therefore, subsequent research and application of RCT offer guidance on communicating and understanding the lived relational complexities of the storied lives of Black professional counselor supervisees' experiences of supervision.

Accordingly, RCT was the bridge with CRT and provided the theoretical

frameworks that guided this study to inform data collection and data analysis. RCT and CRT as frameworks were well suited to answer the study's research question about how Black female professional counselor supervisees narrate their supervision experience. Based on the ongoing research conversations in education and the behavioral sciences, RCT and CRT have helped researchers understand and address racial inequality and the complexity of the unique experiences and relationships of Black women while seeking to empower, validate, and affirm the experiences of all people who identify with marginalized identities (Bell, 1995; Bradley et al., 2019; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Jordan, 2017; Singh et al., 2020). Theorists have also used RCT and CRT to justify the critical roles theory and research can have in illuminating the impact of systemic racism and microaggressive behaviors on the experiences of Black women (Gomez, 2020; Jones, 2021; Williams & Raney, 2020). As such, it translates research into social action to promote positive social change and social justice by centering the experiences of people who identify with marginalized identities (Jordan, 2017).

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts

To understand the experiences of Black women as a group in American society, an understanding of the dominant value structure and beliefs and how race, racism, power, and positionality shape the experiences of people with marginalized identities is imperative (Bell, 1995; DuBois, 1903; George, 2016; Jordan, 2017; Singh et al., 2019; Thomas et al., 2021). Historically, Black women in American society have endured adverse and traumatic experiences from a dominant value structure in the United States

that emphasized the subornation and exclusion of their subjective and constructed knowledge and experiences (DuBois, 1903; George, 2016; Spates et al., 2020; Thomas et al., 2021). Research suggests that having to navigate systemic oppression and marginalization can be isolating and detrimental to learning, identity development, and Black women's health (Jones, 2021; Quaye et al., 2023; Spates et al., 2020; Thacker et al., 2021). Perceived threats of racial stereotypes, experiences of racial bias, and lack of professional representation and mentoring relationships in counselor education contribute to feelings of exclusion, isolation, and devaluation of Black women and other groups that identify with marginalized identities (Quaye et al., 2023; Spates et al., 2020; Thacker et al., 2021). Despite having to navigate the isolating and often harmful effects of societal stratification, marginalization, and microaggressions in higher education and professional settings (Branco & Jones, 2021; Jones, 2021; Thacker et al., 2021), many Black women overcome these challenges and remain resilient, rely on perseverance strategies, and demonstrate strength in the face of these adverse experiences (Branch, 2023; Nelson et al., 2022; Spates et al., 2019; Thomas et al., 2022).

Intersectional Gendered Racial Identity Experience

Researchers have long substantiated that adverse experiences of racism and sexism can shape an individual's racial and gender identity development (Bell, 1995; Crenshaw, 1989; Cross, 1991; Cross & Vandiver, 2001; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). People who identify as BIPOC experience various forms of oppression (Crenshaw, 1989; Williams & Lewis, 2021; Thacker & Minton, 2020). Being Black and female, Black

women experience their race and gender simultaneously (Crenshaw, 1989; Devost, 2022; Spates et al., 2020) and "occupy a simultaneously racially subordinate position" (Spates et al., 2020, p. 513). Even though differences exist within groups and between groups, and one's experience is unique to the individual, a Black woman's identity is marginalized "at the intersection of race and gender" (Williams & Lewis, 2021, p. 212). The experience of having simultaneous racial and gendered positionality in the United States has contributed to Black women reporting more racial-based hostility in academic and professional settings than other groups with marginalized identities (Devost, 2022; Hammons et al., 2023; Jones, 2021; Leath & Chavous, 2018). Racial identity development is essential to self-esteem, wellness, adjustment, and learning (Devost, 2022; Clayton, 2020). Although racial identity development for Black women is multidimensional and complex (Devost, 2022; Williams & Lewis, 2021), understanding the intersectional gendered racial identity experiences of Black women is critical for supporting wellness, academic success, and professional identity development (Devost, 2022; Hammons et al., 2023; Williams & Lewis, 2021).

Research support that understanding Black women's intersectional gendered racial identity experiences is also essential for promoting inclusion, diversifying the counseling profession, and supporting the professional identity development of students and professionals who identify with marginalized identities (Hammons et al., 2023; Thacker & Minton, 2020). To account for the dominant value structure in the United States that has historically marginalized Black women's voices and experiences, the

tenets of Black feminism, intersectionality theory, CRT, and RCT have been used in research to examine, understand, and center Black women's complex intersectional identity and relational experiences (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989; Johnson & Scott, 2020; Williams & Raney, 2020; Williams & Lewis, 2021). Williams and Lewis (2021) used a qualitative research paradigm to incorporate the voices of Black women to help understand how the interrelationship between sociocultural context, oppression, and their unique marginalized identities shaped their gendered racial identity development and experience. The researcher established that Black women make meaning of their intersectional gendered racial identity experiences through a "dynamic and fluid process" socially constructed through relational gendered racial interactions (Williams & Lewis, 2021, p. 218). The researchers established that the quality and nature of relational gendered racial interactions in an interplay with the context of oppressive sociocultural systems shaped Black women's thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of "their gendered racial identity throughout their development" (Williams & Lewis, 2021, p. 217). Despite having to navigate racist and sexist interactions and living in oppressive, White-centric, patriarchal systems, Black women's "gendered racial identity serves a protective function throughout the developmental process" as well as a diadem of pride (Williams & Lewis, 2021, p. 224). Although the qualitative study design limited the study's transferability, the researchers' use of an intersectionality framework, which is a tenet of CRT, allowed Black women to construct their stories "amidst a history of oppression, marginalization, and disempowerment" (Williams & Lewis, 2021, p. 224). Consequently, the research was

"an act of empowerment" that included the subjective truths of Black women participants in understanding the influence of the relationship of identity and power on their intersectional gendered racial identity experience (Williams & Lewis, 2021, p. 224).

Devost (2023) also used a qualitative research paradigm to understand the intersectional gendered racial identity development of Black women college students with experiences in the foster care system. Although the intersectional gendered racial identity of Black women is dynamic, multidimensional, and complex (Crenshaw, 1989; Williams & Lewis, 2021) and can impact learning, wellness, and the socialization experiences of Black women in colleges and professional environments (Clayton, 2020; Johnson & Scott, 2020), there is limited research that reflects the diversity and perspectives of people from different social contexts that identify as a Black woman (Devost, 2023). The researcher wanted to expand existing literature on racial identical research by including the unique voices and positionality of Black women college students with experiences in foster care (Devost, 2023). The researcher employed several social justice theoretical frameworks "that center Black women" by recognizing how the complexity of power, privilege, and positionality shape their lived experiences (Devost, 2023, p. 241). Despite having a shared ancestral history and similarities in their intersectional gendered racial identity experiences, the researcher found that "through dialogical engagement," Black women shape the meaning of their own experiences as protective shields in the face of adverse experiences while also being shaped by their experiences (Devost, 2023, p. 252). Although the small sample size limited the study's

transferability, this research supported employing CRT and RCT as a collective conceptual framework for centering and understanding the complexities of Black female professional counselor supervisees' storied supervision experiences.

Gendered Racism

Black women in the United States have historically experienced racism and discrimination just because of their intersectional identities of being Black and female (Crenshaw, 1989; Essed, 1991; Spates et al., 2020). Previous research affirms that Black women occupy a positionality of intersecting marginalized identities (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989; Cross, 1991; Devost, 2022; Williams & Lewis, 2021). Essed (1991) conceptualized the term gendered racism to describe the unique and inseparable experiences of racism and sexism that Black women experience because of their intersectional gendered racial identity. Essed (1991) also postulated that negative imagery and stereotypes about Black womanhood in the United States perpetuate the gendered racism that Black women experience. All forms of discrimination (i.e., racism, sexism, classism) can be harmful to mental health (Lewis et al., 2017; Nelson et al., 2023). Gendered racism can adversely impact Black women's mental, physical, and emotional health (Lewis et al., 2017; Rosenthal & Lobel, 2020) as well as create barriers to socialization, learning, and professional identity development (Hammons et al., 2023; Quaye et al., 2023; Thacker et al., 2020). Through a CRT lens, specifically the tenet of the permanence and intersectionality of race and racism, the socially constructed categories of race, gender, and class are intersecting systems of oppression that exist

interdependently and cannot be viewed separately in research when exploring a Black woman's experience (Collins, 1989; Crenshaw, 1991; Essed, 1991). For this reason, Nelson and colleagues (2023) applied a social justice lens, a quantitative design, and path analysis to examine the effects of gendered racism on the health of (n= 263) Black women. Although the researchers disproved a significant causal relationship between gendered racism and depression and anxiety, they found that the oppressive stress that Black women experience from gendered racism significantly correlated ($b = 0.242$, $p = < 0.001$) with loneliness and social isolation, "which can negatively impact Black women's health" (Nelson et al., 2023, p.12). Therefore, Nelson and colleagues (2023) further established that the pervasive and potentially harmful gendered racialized stress that Black women experience is because of their intersecting marginalized identities of being Black and female.

Even though the use of self-reported data allowed the researchers to explore a range of discrete emotions related to gendered racism, it may have resulted in validity problems such as participants' biases (Nelson et al., 2023). Using a cross-sectional design also limited the researchers' ability to establish a cause-and-effect relationship or study the long-term effects of gendered racism (Nelson et al., 2023). Despite having a larger sample size (n = 263) than a qualitative sample, the convenience sample of Black women limited the generalization of the study's findings (Nelson et al., 2023). Nelson and colleagues (2023) research further established that utilizing a social-justice framework "provides both a tool and a lens to understanding" how race and gender influence Black

women's social location in United States society (p. 22). RCT theorists emphasize that human beings, especially women, are "wired to connect" and that experiences of disconnection and marginalization lead to isolation and psychological distress (Jordan, 2017, p. 231). Although the societal disconnection, gendered racialized stress, and isolation caused by gendered racism can be harmful to the physical and mental health of Black women as well as create barriers to help-seeking (Nelson et al., 2022), understanding how power, privilege, and positionality can impact wellness and impact relationships can help counselor educators create safe spaces to support supervisees who identify with marginalized identities (Hammonds et al., 2023; Spates et al., 2020; Thacker et al., 2020). Therefore, employing CRT and RCT as a collective conceptual framework in this study would have highlighted both the complexity of Black women's intersectional gendered racial identity (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Quaye et al., 2023) and affirmed the complexity and importance of supportive relational connections (Jordan, 2017; Singh et al., 2020).

Spates and colleagues (2020) also applied a social justice framework. Still, they utilized qualitative methodology to address the gap in the literature that "gives little attention to" how Black women manage the gendered racism associated with their intersectional gendered racial identity experience (p. 513). The racialized stress, stigmatization, and discrimination that Black women disproportionately endure (Green et al., 2018; Jones, 2021) are unique to their intersecting marginalized identities of being Black and female (Quaye et al., 2023; Williams & Lewis, 2021). Given Black women's

complex intersectional gendered racial identity experience, navigating the various forms of discrimination can be challenging, unrelenting, and taxing (Green et al., 2018; Quaye et al., 2023; Williams & Lewis, 2021). Despite the barriers associated with racism, sexism, and cultural underrepresentation, many Black women display resilience and take pride in taking ownership of their professional development (Branch, 2023; Horak et al., 2020). Although previous research has established that Black women in the United States use their social support networks, spirituality, and religion, and even modify the way they behave to cope with social inequities and other forms of injustice (Danielle & Chavez, 2018; Lewis et al., 2013; Thomas et al., 2008), gendered racism is not centralized as the primary issue (Spates et al., 2020). Therefore, by highlighting Black women's voices in the study, researchers demonstrated that Black women cope with gendered racism thematically in the following four ways: "(a) by redefining Black womanhood; (b) by empowering overt and covert forms of resistance; (c) by relying on faith prayer, and the pursuit of balance; and (d) by expressing their thoughts and feelings in safe spaces" (Spates et al., 2020, p. 517).

Although Spates and colleagues (2020) use of snowball sampling limited the representativeness of the sample to all Black women in the United States, the results further demonstrated the importance of utilizing a social-justice lens to explore the ways that race and gender influence the socialization experiences of Black women to "shape culturally specific ways to develop rapport, build trust, and increase cultural knowledge of groups that occupy multiple subordinate categories" (p. 522). Black women and other

groups that identify with marginalized identities report adverse experiences related to prejudice and discrimination that can hinder professional development, learning, and wellness (Hammons et al., 2023; Johnson & Scott, 2020; Thacker et al., 2020). Black women, supervisees, and professionals who identify with marginalized identities may suppress aspects of their identities, turn to their faith, isolate, and become overwhelmed with societal expectations because of a lack of representation, supportive mentorship, and safe spaces (Hammons et al., 2023; Thacker et al., 2020). Understanding how experiences of gendered racism influence Black women can inform the scholarship of teaching and equip counselor educators and supervisors with cultural awareness, cultural humility, cultural comfort, and multicultural and social justice competencies to further support Black women, supervisees, and professionals who identify with marginalized identities (Branco & Jones, 2021; Hammons et al., 2023; Johnson & Scott, 2020; Thacker et al., 2020; Wilcox et al., 2023).

Racial Microaggression

Racism is a significant part of America's history and origins and has lived in the storied experiences of Black Americans since "Africans were taken from their land centuries ago and brought to the Americas" (Robinson & Howard-Hamilton, 2000, p. 59). Over the centuries, racism has mutated from naked aggression and racial discrimination into covert racial and gendered microaggressions (Lewis et al., 2013; Pierce, 1970; Sue et al., 2007). As a result, many White Americans overlook the ongoing adverse social impact of racism in the lives of people with marginalized identities (Pierce, 1970; Sue et

al., 2007; Thacker & Minton, 2021). Pierce (1970) initially conceptualized the manifestation of White supremacy that Black Americans experience in the form of covert racial discrimination and oppression as "offensive mechanisms" to centralize the adverse impact of racism in the lives of people of color in the United States society (p. 303). Pierce and colleagues (1978) later conceptualized the term racial microaggressions as the subtle race-related discriminatory, unsettling, and invalidating assaults on individuals from racial and ethnic minority groups. Sue et al. (2007) expanded the construct of racial microaggressions within the framework of counseling and supervision to include "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environment indignities, whether intentional or unintentional" (p. 72) that are harmful and expressed in the form of "microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations" (p.72). Sue et al. (2008) used a qualitative approach to explore how Black Americans experience and make meaning of microaggressions in microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations. The findings established that the narratives of Black Americans who experienced the various forms of racial microaggressions detailed traumatic experiences that "have a harmful and lasting psychological impact" on the mental health of Black Americans (Sue et al., 2008, p. 336).

The six essential themes related to the meaning participants made of their experiences of racial microaggressions were: "(1) assumption of intellectual inferiority; (2) second-class citizenship; (3) assumption of criminality; (4) assumption of inferior status; (5) assumed universality of the Black American experience and (6) assumed superiority of White cultural values/communication styles" (Sue et al., 2008, pp. 333-

334). Although covert and at times unintentional, the results of the study demonstrated that the lingering adverse impact of experiences of racial microaggressions could perpetuate feelings of anxiety and mistrust that can affect the therapeutic and supervisory alliance, learning, performance, and Black Americans' quality engagement with counseling and supervision (Sue et al., 2008). Consequently, the researchers advanced that counselor educators and supervisors develop personal humility, awareness of racial biases and stereotypes, and a social-justice framework to defuse and disrupt oppressive power dynamics and structures that maintain inequities in the United States and the counseling profession (Sue et al., 2008).

Constantine and Sue (2007) used a qualitative phenomenological framework to explore Black American supervisees' perceptions of their experience of microaggressions by White supervisors to understand how they appear and their effects. The researchers interviewed ten self-identified Black doctoral supervisees in counseling and clinical psychology programs in the northeastern United States. The researchers use Smith's (1999) interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to interpret the participants' lived experiences and to understand their accounts of the processes in which they make sense of their experiences in specific circumstances. The essential themes that emerged from the Black supervisees' accounts of racial microaggressions were:

1. Invalidating racial-cultural issues.
2. Making stereotypic assumptions about Black clients.
3. Making stereotypic assumptions about Black supervisees.

4. Reluctance to give performance feedback for fear of being viewed as racist.
5. Focusing primarily on clinical weaknesses.
6. Blaming clients of color for problems stemming from oppression.
7. Offering culturally insensitive treatment recommendations.

The researchers concluded that racial microaggression appears in the supervisory relationship and can cause psychological injury to Black supervisees. The researchers suggested that racial bias is mainly unconscious, and White supervisors need to develop cultural awareness to prevent harm to supervisees and impair the supervisory alliance (Constantine & Sue, 2007). Similarly, Sue et al. (2019) recommended that counselor educators utilize micro-interventions as an act of social justice to help the counseling profession "to begin the process of disrupting, dismantling, and disarming the constant onslaught of micro and macroaggression" that supervisees who identify with marginalized identities endure (p. 128). Micro-interventions involve social action through allyship that communicates to those impacted by microaggressions the following messages: "(a) validation of their experiential reality, (b) value as a person, (c) affirmation of their racial group identity, (d) support and encouragement, and (e) reassurance that they are not alone" (Sue et al., 2019, p. 134).

In their review of the peer-reviewed literature published in the last two decades related to the experiences of students and professionals in counselor education who identify with marginalized identities, Thacker and Minton (2020) found that racial microaggressions were one of the eight common types of adverse experiences related to

historical racial discrimination and oppression that Black women experience. The researchers highlighted the permanence of racism and its harmful impact on the experiences of Black women and other minoritized professionals in counselor education (Thacker & Minton, 2020). Consistent throughout the literature in the past two decades, Black women and other individuals who identify with marginalized identities report that "they feel invalidated, isolated, invisible, tokenized, pressured, disconnected, and underrepresented across professional environments" (Thacker & Minton, 2020, p. 45). The researchers argued for education and training that increases counselor educators and supervisors' awareness of their cultural values and stereotypes and understanding of historical oppression and microaggression on Black women's worldview and experiences (Thacker & Minton, 2020). The researchers also concluded that future studies utilize frameworks that consider the intersectionality of marginalized identity and "environmental factors in various contexts" (Thacker & Minton, 2020, p. 47), such as this research on Black female professional counselors' storied supervision experiences.

Vaishnav's (2021) research study utilized the Photovoice methodology to further address how doctoral students who identified as BIPOC in CACREP-accredited Counselor Education programs experience racism in the form of racial microaggressions. Based on the narratives described through participatory photography, the following themes were identified: "Struggle, Racism, Sacrifice Ourselves, and Self-Advocacy" (Vaishnav, 2021, p. 10). Consistent with previous research, the author's findings highlighted that Counselor Education programs reflect the racist history, attitudes, and

discriminatory practices in American society (Cohen & Kassan, 2018; Henfield et al., 2013; Interiano & Lim, 2018). Although participants reported harmful experiences that inhibited an authentic expression of their marginalized identities, the participants remained resilient in the face of adverse experiences (Vaishnav, 2021). Given the negative impact of racial microaggression on students who identify as people of color, Vaishnav recommended that counselor educators actively engage students and validate their experiences of racial microaggressions (2021). The researcher also recommended "relational mentoring," training in multiculturalism, and diversification of the curriculum in Counselor Education programs to be more inclusive (Vaishnav, 2021, p. 24). The focus on race excluded a consideration of the intersectionality of identities in the participants' experiences of microaggressions (Vaishnav, 2021). Therefore, the researcher recommended that future studies include frameworks that consider how Black women negotiate the intersectionality of identities in more depth (Vaishnav, 2021), such as this research focusing on the unique experiences of Black female professional counselor supervisees storied supervision experiences.

Gendered-Racial Microaggressions

Race and the female sex are unchosen characteristics of Black women's intersectional gendered racial identity marginalized in the United States (Collins, 1989; Crenshaw, 1991; Devost, 2023; Essed, 1991; Williams & Lewis, 2021). Although being Black and female are unchosen characteristics, Black women living in the United States can experience unique racialized stressors related to their intersectional marginalized

gender racial identity that can have harmful emotional and psychological consequences (Devost, 2023; Dorsey, 2023). Gendered racism is rooted in the racist and sexist sociopolitical attitudes and stereotypes of gender roles in the United States that devalue Black women and reinforce the superiority of White Americans (Essed, 1991). Because of their intersectional marginalized gender racial identity, gender racism is the concurrent racism and sexism that Black women experience (Essed, 1991). While Sue (2010) expanded their conceptualization of microaggressions to include race, gender, and sexual orientation, Lewis and colleagues (2013) further defined gendered racial microaggressions "as subtle and everyday verbal, behavioral, and environmental expressions of oppression based on the intersection of one's race and gender" (p. 53).

To address the gap in the literature on people who identify as BIPOC experiences that rarely focus on the intersection of covert racism and sexism (Capodilupo et al., 2010; Porter & Dean, 2015; Sue et al., 2007, 2008; Thomas et al., 2011, 2013), researchers used an intersectional framework and a constructivist qualitative approach to explore Black women's simultaneous experiences of gendered racial microaggressions (Lewis et al., 2016). Three core themes that also contained two subthemes each related to the participants' experiences with gendered racial microaggressions were: (1) projected stereotypes (expectation of the Jezebel and expectation of the angry Black woman); (2) silenced and marginalized (struggle for respect and invisibility); and (3) assumptions about style and beauty (assumptions about communication styles and assumptions about aesthetics).

The findings highlighted that Black women continue to experience the impact of systemic and structural racism in the covert forms of racism and sexism that are rooted in poisonous sociopolitical attitudes and stereotypes that objectify, devalue, and "reduce them to their race and gender" (Lewis et al., 2016, p. 773). Given the isolating and shaming experiences detailed across participants' stories, the researchers also advocated for counselor educators and supervisors to develop their understanding of sociopolitical attitudes and stereotypes to reduce harm and develop safe spaces to address the adverse impact of gendered racial microaggressions (Lewis et al., 2016). The small sample size (n=17) consisting of only college students who identified as Black women limited the transferability among Black women in different contexts. Therefore, the researchers recommended that future research include Black women's experiences in different contexts with an individual interview method instead of the focus group method used in the study to gain a deeper understanding of experiences (Lewis et al., 2016). Similarly, Jones and colleagues (2019) recommended that counselor educators' model and train students in broaching as a strategy to strengthen the supervisory alliance and create a safe space for students and supervisees with marginalized identities to explore the adverse impact of prejudice and discrimination on their sense of self and professional development. Also, Bronco and Bayne (2020) further established that through broaching and modeling cultural humility, counselor educators can use clinical supervision intentionally for processing supervisees who identify as BIPOC and experience the impact of systemic and structural racism in the covert forms of racism and sexism.

Johnson and Scott (2020) applied a phenomenological, qualitative research design and narrative inquiry to explore "the ways race and gender intersect to shape" storied experiences of Black female doctoral students who had completed their graduate coursework and comprehensive examinations but had not completed their dissertations (p. 613). The researchers applied CRT as the framework to complement the limitations of socialization theory, which researchers have used to understand the experiences of graduate students in academia (Johnson & Scott, 2020). Unlike CRT, socialization theory does not consider the intersectionality and permanence of race and racism and different systems of privilege on Black women's socialization and sense of self. The findings suggest that the narratives of the Black women doctoral students "reveal that the intersecting identities held by Black women are largely ignored during interactions with graduate faculty and peers, complicating the graduate school socialization process" (Johnson & Scott, 2020, p. 612). The lack of awareness of multicultural and social justice inequities of Black women and the pedagogical culture and practice in predominately White institutional spaces broadly did not validate the gendered racial experiences of Black women (Johnson & Scott, 2020). It also contributed to feelings of isolation and the devaluation of their scholarly contributions (Johnson & Scott, 2016). The findings suggested that Black female students and supervisees can benefit from the support of culturally competent educators, supervisors and mentors, the creation of safe spaces enriched with cultural humility and responsiveness and having access to school sponsored mentoring support (Johnson & Scott, 2020). Although the small sample size (n

= 7) and differences in the doctoral programs of the participants limited the transferability of the study results, “the commonality of experiences across these diverse settings” highlighted that the gendered-racial microaggressions that Black women experience is ubiquitous across institutional context (Johnson & Scott, 2020, p. 617).

In another study, Branco and Jones (2021) recommended that CACREP-accredited counselor education programs adopt a CRT lens to help deconstruct and disarm the oppressive power dynamics that bound race and racism in institutional spaces by providing micro-interventions (Sue et al., 2019) and training to “benefit students and counselors of all identities to identify, respond to, and act as an ally when encountering client microaggressions” (p. 282). Nonetheless, Black women still navigate racism and sexism in society and professional environments that can be harmful to their sense of self and professional progress (Williams & Lewis, 2021). For this reason, Hammonds et al. (2023) advocated through empirical research that clinical and professional settings adopt an RCT framework to “ensure that Black women are valued and affirmed, and their voices are amplified through their therapeutic process” further supporting Black women’s professional identity development experiences (p. 254). Accordingly, combining CRT and RCT as frameworks will help better understand and challenge the ways that racism and sexism implicitly and explicitly influence the complexity of the unique experiences and relationships of Black women while seeking to promote growth, validate, and affirm their experiences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Jordan, 2017).

Stereotypes

Oppressive racist and sexist stereotypes about Black women and women of color are pervasive throughout American society and institutional spaces (Hall, 2018; Nelson et al., 2022; Thacker & Minton, 2020). Collins (2000) conceptualized stereotypes as oppressive tools in American society that control the image of Black women and help maintain White supremacy and the exclusion of all other groups. Oppressive racist and sexist stereotypes originate from the enslavement of Black women in America and continue to shape the ways that Black women report that they are portrayed and socialized (Collins, 2000; Hall, 2018; Johnson & Scott, 2020; Thomas, 2021). The historical racist and sexist stereotypes attributed to Black women because of their intersectional gendered racial identity in the United States can adversely influence supervisors' and supervisees' perceptions and the supervisory relationship (Hall, 2018; Sato, 2014; Sue et al., 2019), professional identity development and learning (Johnson & Scott, 2020; Thacker et al., 2020) and their sense of self and professional development (Williams & Lewis, 2021). Copious research findings have confirmed that the identities and experiences of Black women supervisees and supervisees who identified as women of color are devalued, invalidated, or not acknowledged in supervision and professional spaces (Hall, 2018; Johnson & Scott, 2020; Williams & Lewis, 2021; Williams & Raney, 2020). Research has established that even White supervisees devalue and direct racist and sexist behaviors towards Black female supervisors (Hall, 2018). Hall (2018) found that in cross-cultural supervision, the therapeutic space between Black female supervisors who

provide clinical supervision to supervisees who identify as White is often cluttered with "racist and sexist negative stereotypes which portray Black women as immoral, aggressive, loud, angry, and promiscuous" that may adversely affect the quality of supervision alliance (p. 1022).

Despite their higher social status as clinicians and social power as supervisors, the narratives of the Black women supervisors communicated that they experienced feeling reduced to "the working-class stereotypes of the Mammy, Jezebel, and the Sapphire" (Hall, 2018, p. 1028). Although the qualitative nature of the study and small sample size (N=57) limited the transferability of the study's results to all Black female supervisors, the findings further advanced the need for culturally inclusive research and for the counseling programs to adopt training strategies that promote respect and acceptance of cultural differences and multicultural competency (Hall, 2018).

In contrast, Jendrusina and Martinez (2019) used vignettes and qualitative research to study the impact of race on supervision from their lived experience as supervisees from underrepresented racial backgrounds working with White supervisors to improve the supervision process from a multicultural perspective. The researchers found that supervisors with limited knowledge about culturally different supervisees can provide multiculturally responsive and sensitive supervision to culturally diverse supervisees by utilizing multicultural and social justice frameworks (Jendrusina & Martinez, 2019). The researchers also found that supervisees with marginalized identities appreciate supervisors initiating conversations about race, privilege, and intrapersonal

identities such as gender, ethnicity, and gender identity (Jendrusina & Martinez, 2019). Additionally, supervisors who adopt a multiculturally responsive and sensitive supervision style that utilizes their multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills can help mediate the racialized stress and social isolation that some Black women experience (Branco & Jones, 2021; Jendrusina & Martinez, 2019; Johnson & Scott, 2020; Sue et al., 2019). However, some Black women adopt racist and sexist stereotypes as a crown of pride, strength, and resilience despite adversity (Nelson et al., 2022; Thomas et al., 2022).

For some Black women, integrating the Superwoman/Strong Black woman (SW/SBW) stereotype can help act as a buffer against the harmful and shameful gendered racial microaggressions associated with other stereotypes such as the Mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire (Corbin et al., 2018; Nelson et al., 2022; Thomas et al., 2022). While the Mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire stereotypes have "reduced African American women to their sexuality and body parts by virtue of their race, gender, and class" (Hall, 2018, p. 1028), the SBW is a "cultural gender role expectation specific to Black to women" (Thomas et al., 2022, p. 3). It represents self-sacrifice, self-reliance, and strength despite adversity (Thomas et al., 2022). The SW stereotype provides a positive ideal in contrast to the negative images of Black women and represents invulnerability, sacrifice, drive, and emotional suppression to survive (Thomas et al., 2022; Woods-Giscombe et al., 2019). Thomas and colleagues (2022) conducted a comprehensive review of peer-reviewed qualitative and quantitative literature on the SW/SBW stereotype in social science research in the past 25 years. The researchers found that the SW/SBW stereotype

can be a complex and contradictory stereotype initially imposed by the dominant White-centric, heteronormative, patriarchal culture in the United States based on negative assumptions about Black women's intersecting gender-racial identity (Thomas et al., 2022). Although many Black women have gradually assimilated the SW/SBW across generations (Oshin et al., 2019) to project strengths and mediate experiences of oppression at the intersections of racism and sexism (Nelson et al., 2022; Thomas et al., 2022), some Black women resist taking on the SW/SBW stereotype (Davis & Jones, 2021; Thomas et al., 2022).

Thomas and colleagues (2022) also found in their comprehensive literature review that the SW/SBW stereotype can create an unrealistic idea about the role of Black womanhood for some Black women that can create barriers to seeking support and worsen the social isolation of oppression, which can negatively affect their physical and emotional health. In contrast, Nelson et al. (2022) applied a quantitative design, Bivariate Person's correlation, to examine the relationship between SW/SBW, depression, and resilience and established that "an obligation to display an image of strength and an intense motivation to succeed was positively associated with resilience" (p. 95). Because the SW/SBW stereotype "is functional and adaptive" for some Black women, the researchers recommended that future researchers should investigate unique contexts and individual-level contextual factors that may support some Black women's assimilation of the SW/SBW (Nelson et al., 2022, p. 104). Similarly, Thomas and colleagues (2022) found that contextual factors such as environment, employment status, and cultural

acceptability “might moderate how useful, realistic, or acceptable” a Black woman finds the SW/SBW stereotype (p. 16). As a result, the researchers recommended that future research include more diverse samples of Black women in different contexts and consider exploring Black women’s experiences through a social justice framework to understand better “intersecting oppressions and identities” (Thomas et al., 2022, p. 18).

Supervision and Mentoring Relationships

Clinical supervision essential to clinical training, ethical practice, and promoting counselor development and growth (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013; Bradley et al., 2019; Thacker & Minton, 2021; Wilcox et al., 2023) and mentorship is an indispensable component of the supervisory relationship that promotes counselor safety, trust, and the likelihood of professional success (Allen & Joseph, 2018; Thacker & Minton, 2021; Tibbetts & Smith, 2023). Nonetheless, the underrepresentation of diverse individuals in counselor education and the often White-centric, hegemonic culture within the counseling profession (APA, 2022; CACREP, 2018) can be harmful, isolating, and can “create fewer opportunities and increased challenges associated with mentorship” and success (Thacker & Minton, 2021, p. 43). Many counselors and supervisees who identify as BIPOC report experiencing racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression that adversely affect their overall well-being, professional identity development, and success (Branco & Jones, 2022; Thacker & Minton, 2021; Tibbetts & Smith, 2023). For many Black women, their intersecting gendered racial identity impacts their experiences (Hammonds et al., 2023; Williams & Lewis, 2021), and the historical lack of

multicultural awareness and competency in counselor education have increased their risk for gendered racial microaggressions and other harmful experiences (Hammonds et al., 2023; Thacker et al., 2021; Wilcox et al., 2023). Although racist and sexist experiences harm supervisory alliance and mentoring relationships (Branco & Jones, 2022; Jang et al., 2019; O'Hara, 2014; Thacker & Minton, 2021; Tibbetts & Smith, 2023) and supervision and mentorship provide contexts and relationships to promote counselor development and growth (Thacker & Minton, 2021; Tibbetts & Smith, 2023; Wilcox et al., 2023) the research on supervision and mentoring is still lacking in counseling and psychology (Tibbetts & Smith, 2023; Wilcox et al., 2023).

Although researchers have found that supervisees who identify as BIPOC report experiencing adverse experiences and harmful supervision experiences related to their marginalized identities (Thacker & Minton, 2021; Sue et al., 2022), Tohidian and Mui-Teng Quek (2017) studied the processes involved in multicultural supervision and the findings supported the efficacy of clinical supervision for increasing multicultural competence and knowledge and understanding that helps counselors promote competency and effectiveness (Tohidian & Mui-Teng Quek, 2017). Also, Tibbetts and Smith (2023) found that when mentors use a social justice lens such as CRT, mentorship can "foster well-being and retention for BIPOC professionals" in a behavioral health profession that is predominantly White (p. 46). Wilcox and colleagues (2023) studied cross-racial supervisory relationships utilizing quantitative research and a social justice framework to examine the relationships between "cultural humility, cultural comfort, and

supervisees' satisfaction with supervision, disclosure in supervision, and the supervisory working alliance" (p. 1038). The survey results demonstrated that BIPOC supervisees (N=116) "who rated their supervisors high in cultural humility and cultural comfort also reported higher supervision satisfaction and a stronger supervisory working alliance" (Wilcox et al., 2023, p. 1038). Even though the study's sample was adequate and diverse enough to support the generalizability of the findings to BIPOP supervisees, not accounting for intersectionality, such as with Black women's gendered-racial identity experience, was a limitation of the study (Wilcox et al., 2023).

Of course, researchers have established that when supervisors and mentors integrate a CRT or RCT framework, supervision and mentorship can be indispensable practices and relational contexts that can help dismantle systems of marginalization and privilege while creating safe spaces for supporting Black female professional counselors' supervisees development and success (Bradley et al., 2019; Thacker & Minton, 2020; Tibbetts & Smith, 2023; Wilcox et al., 2023). Supervisors and mentors can use CRT to acknowledge and affirm the enduring and harmful effects of systemic racism that Black women may experience in the form of gendered and racial microaggressions (Branco & Jones, 2021; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Leon & Thomas, 2016; Tibbetts & Smith, 2023). CRT can be used to elevate Black women stories and experiences that run counter to the dominant culture's narratives that have the most influence in society and institutional spaces while promoting safety, inclusion, and empowerment (Branco & Jones, 2021; Leon & Thomas, 2016; Tibbetts & Smith, 2023). RCT has an emphasis on

relationships, vulnerability, mutual empathy, and mutual empowerment (Jordan, 2017) and can help mentors and supervisors understand the complexity of Black women's complex intersecting gendered racial identity experience (Bradley et al., 2019; Hammonds et al., 2023) which can promote Black women supervisees' sense of safety, trust, professional identity development and success (Bradley et al., 2019; Hammonds et al., 2023). Integrating CRT and RCT frameworks can help supervisors, mentors, and researchers uphold the ethical principle of justice, minimize harm, promote growth and success, and connect with supervisees who identify with marginalized identities in culturally responsive ways (Bradley et al., 2019; Branco & Jones, 2021; Hammonds et al., 2023; Leon & Thomas, 2016; Tibbetts & Smith, 2023).

Summary and Conclusions

In summary**,** Chapter 2 provided a substantive and thorough literature review on the experiences of Black women in supervision, counselor education, and other institutional and professional spaces to acquire a complete understanding of what is known and yet to learn about how Black female professional counselors assign meaning to their supervision experiences through the stories they tell. I described how I conducted the study's literature review process and detailed the search strategy that involved a systemic and extensive search of the existing relevant peer-reviewed literature from the past five years, dissertations, and scholarly books specific to the topic. The theoretical frameworks for this study involved bridging CRT, which acknowledges systemic and institutional racism in the United States with a focus on "transforming the relationship

among race, racism, and power" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p.2) and RCT. Theorists using RCT focus on exploring the complexity of relationships and centralize naming oppressive systems and empowering the voices of people who identify with marginalized identities (Jordan, 2017). The literature review highlighted the following six critical topics related to Black women's experiences in supervision, counselor education, and other institutional and professional spaces: (a) intersectional gendered racial experience; (b) gendered racism; (c) racial microaggressions; (d) gendered-racial microaggressions; (e) stereotypes; and (f) supervision and mentoring relationships. According to this literature review, to understand Black female professional counselors' storied supervision experiences in the United States, one must consider Black women's unique intersecting gendered racial experience and how intersectional oppression may shape their socialization, sense of connection, and relationships. The literature review also indicated a gap in the research scholarship that explored Black women's experiences, which often does not account for multiple intersecting marginalized identities across various contexts, such as Black female professional counselor supervisees' storied supervision experiences. Chapter 3 includes the study's research design, methodology, participant selection procedure, data collection, and analysis methods.

Chapter 3: Research Method

This qualitative narrative study was conducted to understand and capture the lived experiences of Black female professional counselors' storied experiences of supervision. Ethnic minorities are often underrepresented in clinical research (Castillo et al., 2012; Davis et al., 2020; Henfield et al., 2011; Sue et al., 2022) and report a cultural climate within the counseling profession that reflects adverse societal experiences that can be isolating and suppressive of expression and their marginalized identities (CACREP, 2018; Thacker & Milton, 2022). The narrative approach allowed participants to tell their storied experiences of supervision without externally imposed constraints to explore the essential elements of the meanings that Black female professional counselors derive from their supervision experiences. The contextualized stories of Black female professional counselors can help to improve the understanding of what is supportive for teaching and practicing multicultural supervision with Black female professional counselor supervisees.

This chapter overviews the research study's purpose and research question. Chapter 3 details and justifies the study's research design, methodology, participant selection procedure, data collection, and analysis methods. I will also discuss the criteria for evaluating the study's trustworthiness and the ethical procedures to address potential ethical issues. Chapter 3 concludes with a summary integrating all the abovementioned elements and a transition to Chapter 4.

Research Design and Rationale

This qualitative narrative study aimed to answer the following research question: How do Black female professional counselor supervisees narrate their supervision experience? Qualitative research is appropriate when the researcher aims to understand the complexity and subjectivity of how human beings make meaning of lived experience (Denzin, 2017; Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2015). The qualitative method was relevant because it involves a narrative to report and describe people's everyday experiences and interactions within the contexts in which their actions and experiences occur (Erickson, 2011). Qualitative researchers focus on the approximate representation of contextualized subjectivity constructed through collaborative human interaction (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Specifically, the narrative approach prioritizes establishing relationships that allow for deep and rich descriptions of participants' stories as retold in narrative format by the researcher (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Relationships, lived experiences, and the stories that the participants share have priority in narrative research (Clandinin, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Black women in the United States can experience isolation and oppression because of their intersecting gendered racial identity (Williams & Lewis, 2021; Thacker & Minton, 2020). Also, culturally inclusive and appropriate research capturing supervisees' views identifying as Black females are lacking (Thacker et al., 2021; Sue et al., 2022; Wilcox et al., 2023). Using a narrative approach can help facilitate and promote social change by empowering people with marginalized identities to tell their contextualized stories in an unimputed way that magnifies their voices and

experiences (Chase, 2018). Although other qualitative methods such as phenomenology and case study allow for in-depth exploration and a description of experience (Balkin & Kleist, 2017; Denzin, 2017; Patton, 2015), the research question, which sought to understand better how Black female professional counselor supervisees narrate their supervision experience, required a methodology to describe the contextualized meaning of individuals' storied lives as expressed in their stories (Loseke, 2022).

Role of the Researcher

As the sole researcher for this qualitative narrative study, I collaboratively constructed contextualized meaning from the storied supervision experiences described by participants as an active participant (Chase, 2018; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Loseke, 2022). Although the role of the researcher is central as the instrument in qualitative research (Balkin & Kleist, 2017; Denzin, 2017; Patton, 2015), narrative researchers "work within the space not only with our participants but also with ourselves" resulting in a collaborative narrative of both the participants and researchers storied lives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 61). Awareness of the researcher's positionality is paramount throughout the narrative inquiry process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Loseke, 2022). Therefore, I actively examined my assumptions, values, and beliefs to identify potential biases that could influence data collection and analysis.

As an African-born, Black, cisgender, able-bodied, heterosexual man, I hold different roles and social identities that can influence the relationship with the participant collaborators and how I interpret the data. At the time of the study, I was a licensed

professional counselor supervisor and a nationally certified counselor. I received a Master's in Community Counseling from Marshall University Graduate College in 2004. I was also a doctoral student pursuing a doctorate in counselor education and supervision with over 20 years of clinical and administrative supervision experience. I held social roles and identities of both privilege and marginalization. While I did not have direct lived experience as a Black woman, I had commonalities with their racialized experiences. Nonetheless, my positionality and subjectivities as an African-born, Black, cisgender, able-bodied, heterosexual man may have centralized the power, privilege, and dominance I have when interacting with Black women participants. Because power dynamics and power relationships shape storytelling (Loseke, 2022), to minimize personal biases as a researcher and ensure rigor and trustworthiness, I reflected on distinct experiences negotiating identity and collaboratively engaged with participants by sharing transcription data to verify accuracy.

Methodology

In this study, I used a qualitative research design and narrative inquiry to explore and capture the lived experiences of Black female professional counselors' storied experiences of supervision. Once I obtained the institutional review board (IRB) approval, the study required the involvement of Black women to be interviewed through semistructured interviews using the secure Zoom audioconferencing platform for data collection. Consenting participants responded to a prescreen research flyer as the screening tool. I recorded, transcribed, and entered the interview data in Microsoft Word

(2016) to help quickly manage, categorize, and store data while using hand coding to maintain fidelity to the participants' experience. The participants were assigned a pseudonym to represent them in the study, and the transcribed documents served as the primary data source.

Participant Selection Logic

I began data collection after I acquired permission from Walden University's IRB (IRB# 09-27-24-0980434). The data for this study was limited to eight participants who identified as Black women, were currently under supervision, and were licensed professional counselors (LPC) from across the United States. The research questions, goals of the study, and methodology should guide the researcher when considering sample size (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; van Rijnsoever, 2017). There is no consensus on the suitable range of sampling size or a single actual reality in qualitative research (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; van Rijnsoever, 2017). Nonetheless, studies adopting a narrative research approach with a homogeneous group have used limited participants (Baker, 2015; Hussain & Ali, 2019; Johnson & Scott, 2020; Thacker et al., 2021). Although up to seven participants participated in the narrative research studies mentioned above, Blustein and colleagues (2018) used only 11 participants to understand the storied experiences of a diverse group of individuals. Based on the literature review, I recruited 8 participants to participate in the study. I used self-selection sampling methods to secure a representative sample to participate in this study. According to Patton (2015), purposeful sampling techniques are optimal for identifying and selecting information-rich cases. Online self-

selection sampling helps investigate marginalized subpopulations effectively (McInroy, 2016). In self-selection sampling, participants can volunteer to participate in a study when asked or respond to an advertisement by the researchers (Catania et al., 2015). To be eligible for participation in the study, participants met the following criteria:

1. Be 18 years of age or older.
2. Identify as African American or Black women.
3. Live in the United States of America.
4. Have completed a master's degree in counseling or a related degree, e.g., Addictions Counseling, Clinical Mental Health, Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Psychology, Rehabilitation Counseling, School Counseling.
5. Be licensed in good standing in the United States and hold one of, both or a variation of the following licenses:
    - Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) (including Associate Status), e.g., Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor (LCMHC), Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC), Licensed Independent Mental Health Practitioner (LIMP), Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC), Licensed Mental Health Practitioner (LMPH), Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor (LPCMHC)

To recruit participants for the study, the researcher sent out a call via social media (LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook). Participant procedures included completing an electronic prescreen research flyer to establish eligibility.

Instrumentation

I was the main instrument for data collection. In qualitative inquiry, the researcher's interactive competence and written descriptions of the participants' behaviors and experiences are the heart of data collection (Balkin & Kleist, 2017; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In narrative inquiry research, the researcher actively listens in collaborative and relational ways to help glean a more approximate representation of the participants' storied experiences (Chase, 2018; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Loseke, 2022). Narrative inquiry requires the researcher to listen actively to understand how participants assign meaning to their experiences about a specific issue through the stories they tell of their lived experiences and collaboratively describe the themes or essence of the participants' storied experiences in a chronological sequence (Loseke, 2022; O'Toole, 2018). Consistent with CRT and RCT, the frameworks for this study, narrative inquiry can empower marginalized people to tell their stories to reveal the meaning of their experiences without the external constraints of dominant groups (Chace, 2018; O'Toole, 2018). Therefore, I observed, listened actively, engaged in dialogue, took detailed field notes, engaged in reflective memo writing, and collected data through web-based audio-recorded semi-structured interviews.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I conducted the research study after receiving approval from the IRB. I, the primary researcher, collected the data. The researcher also shared a flyer via social media (LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook). Participant procedures included responding to a

prescreen research flyer to establish eligibility. I obtained consent from participants using an electronic consent template and emailed it to them once they contacted the researcher and confirmed their eligibility. To avoid coercion or undue influence, I avoided in-person recruitment, and the consent template emphasized the voluntary nature of the study. The consent template also provided background information on the researcher and the study, procedures for participation, benefits, risks, and the IRB approval.

Data Analysis Plan

Researchers use narrative text analysis in narrative inquiry to interpret and develop emergent themes from the interview data within context (Loseke, 2022; O'Toole, 2018; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Narrative thematic analysis is a structured, step-by-step process that allows for an in-depth engagement with the interview data to glean thick descriptions of experience that describe the essence of the participants' stories in a meaningful way that can support the study's research question (Loseke, 2022; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Saldana, 2016). Also, researchers have employed a combination of narrative thematic analysis, inductive thematic analysis, and other coding methods to construct meaning from participants' stories in narrative inquiry (Hussain & Ali, 2019; Thacker et al., 2021). I plan to employ narrative thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Leavy, 2015; Riessman, 2008) and open coding (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Saldana, 2016) to initially capture the multi-dimensional components of the participants' contextualized retelling of their storied experiences. According to Saldana (2016), In-Vivo Coding is appropriate for the coding of narratives of marginalized participants

because the participants' actual words are coded verbatim by the researcher to understand "their culture and worldviews" (p. 106). Based on the methodological needs of the study, I am also considering applying in-vivo coding to capture the phenomenon's essence while keeping part of the data in the participants words as codes to assess and report saturation.

I facilitated semi-structured interviews using the Zoom audioconferencing platform for secure recording and to gain access to the participants' experiences. Zoom allowed the researcher to obtain audio recordings. Establishing rapport and explaining the process of semi-structured and narrative interviews can encourage storytelling (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I maintained a professional mindset, utilized my extensive experience facilitating interviews, and established initial trust by creating credibility as a counselor-educator-in-training with a particular interest in what the participants had to say about the topic of interest. I adopted a relational approach through mutual engagement where the researcher and the participants could ask questions initially to establish trust. I also oriented participants to the rules and process of narrative interviews and adopted a responsive interviewing style, blending a mix of prepared questions, spontaneity, and follow-up questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I modeled honesty, cultural humility, and transparency in communications because our genuine presence promotes relational depth (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019).

To maintain confidentiality and anonymity, I assigned the participants a pseudonym to represent them in the study, and no personal identifiers will be collected. I

stored coding and interview data on my computer, which will be password-protected and encrypted for five years. Only the researcher will have access to the data stored on the computer, and I will wipe or erase all data from the computer's hard drive at the end of five years.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is a crucial component of qualitative research to establish rigor and quality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Cark, 2016). Transparency with the research design, methods, and conditions is essential to establishing rigor and quality in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Cark, 2016). Although there are many methodological strategies that researchers can use to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study integrated Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four general criteria for establishing trustworthiness: (a) credibility; (b) transferability; (c) dependability; and (d) confirmability. I will discuss the operationalization of each criterion mentioned above in detail.

Credibility

In qualitative research, credibility refers to how closely the researcher can represent or interpret participants' perspectives of the meaning of their experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Cark, 2016). Triangulation or using multiple data sources or procedures can help promote credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015). I reviewed the transcripts and coding of the interview data thoroughly. I also used two different data sources and address my biases using reflective memos for all

participants throughout data collection to help establish the credibility of the findings. I confirmed the data's internal coherence by detailing the data analysis process and taking detailed methodological process notes. I further confirmed the accuracy of the transcription data by having the participants review them to collaborate on the integrity of the represented understanding of their storied experiences. I utilized consultation with the Dissertation Committee Chair to review the data and codes to acknowledge and reduce bias while verifying interpretations against the perspectives of another researcher.

Transferability

Transferability is the second criterion for establishing trustworthiness. Transferability represents how the researcher's descriptive findings can be applied to broader contexts and similar settings or individuals by people reading the study (Carminati, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015). The researcher can establish transferability by providing enough data and details regarding the context and sample to help answer the research questions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015). Consequently, I detailed the sampling strategy, data collection, and analysis process and provide detailed descriptions and notes of reflexivity of salient experiences negotiating identity and potential biases.

Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research assures that the findings are consistent over time and between and across researchers despite events that unfold during data collection (Carminati, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015). Dependability is established by

the researcher detailing an audit trail using peer review and triangulation strategies (Carminati, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015). Therefore, I included a detailed and thorough explanation of the data collection and analysis process, provided a record of transcripts, and had the Dissertation Committee review the data and codes to acknowledge and reduce bias.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to strategies the researcher uses to demonstrate that the findings and interpretations are supported by the design and data, not the result of the researcher's biases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015). Like dependability, confirmability is established by the researcher detailing an audit trail using peer review and triangulation strategies (Carminati, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Patton, 2015). I engaged in reflective journal writing and triangulation by having other professionals review transcript data and codes to acknowledge and reduce bias. I used my reflectivity and subjectivity as an experienced LPC to maintain objectivity and be bias-free throughout the data collection and analysis.

Ethical Procedures

The intersection of culture, race, and ethnicity and how they influence respondents' perspectives is complex. People are influenced by cultural and contextual factors such as race, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class (Green et al., 2018; Quaye et al., 2023; Williams & Lewis, 2021). Cultural and contextual factors influence is also fundamental in qualitative research (Patton, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Ethical

research in the 21st century requires multicultural awareness and cultural competence (ACA, 2014; Flickling et al., 2019). Nonetheless, inequality, underrepresentation, racial discrimination, and social injustices in the history of research in the United States have made ethical practice a professional obligation and a federal mandate (Groves et al., 2009). To protect human subjects, a researcher must obtain an IRB for research involving human subjects. Therefore, I acquired IRB approval before beginning this research study and used an ethical issues checklist (Patton, 2015) as a guide throughout the stages of design, data collection, analysis, and reporting the findings.

Research in counseling must align with ethical standards, state and federal laws, and institutional and organizational regulations governing research practice (ACA, 2014). I treated all research participants with respect and equality, and the research process aligned with the ethical and legal standards of the Walden IRB (Walden University, 2020). I also adhered to the federal regulations from the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and the *ACA Code of Ethics* (ACA, 2014; OHRP, 2009). I completed the human subjects research training. I observed the ethical guidelines outlined by the Clinical Research Training and the United States Department of Health and Human Services National Institutes of Health (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2020). I recruited potential participants through an online flier advertisement using a self-selected sampling of professional counselor supervisees across the United States. I obtained consent from participants using an electronic consent template and emailed it to them. To avoid coercion or undue influence, I avoided in-person

recruitment, and the informed consent template emphasized the voluntary nature of the study. The consent template also provided background information on the researcher and the study, procedures for participation, benefits, risks, and, when obtained, the IRB of Walden University approval number for the study.

To maintain confidentiality and anonymity, I assigned the participants a pseudonym or unique identifying numbers to represent them in the study, and no personal identifiers will be collected. I did not collect any internet addresses or names from participants who responded to the online flyers. All participants were informed about maintaining data security and told that the information would be anonymous. I collected data via the Zoom audio conferencing platform, which meets the privacy, security, and breach notification rules of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) (Archibald et al., 2019). I also stored coding and interview data on the computer, which is password-protected and encrypted for five years. Adhering to Walden University's policy, data pulled from the Zoom platform will only be used by the researcher for data analysis and permanently deleted from the desktop computer within five years after the study's conclusion.

Summary

In summary**,** Chapter 3 provided details of the methods used to conduct this study, outlining the research design and rationale. The study aims to use a qualitative research design and narrative inquiry to explore and capture the lived experiences of Black female professional counselors' storied experiences of supervision. I will use the semi-structured

interviews to collect data. I addressed my positionality as the researcher and detailed the steps to minimize bias. I also explained how the participant selection logic was based on purposive sampling and that participants were recruited through online self-selection sampling. I sent electronic flyers to recruit participants via social media (LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook). Additionally, I discussed the criteria for evaluating the study's trustworthiness and the ethical procedures to address potential ethical issues. In Chapter 4, I will discuss the study's findings and provide detailed and in-depth descriptions related to Black female professional counselors' storied experiences of supervision.

Chapter 4: Results

This qualitative, narrative study was conducted to understand and capture the lived experiences of Black female professional counselors' storied experiences of supervision. The research question was "How do Black female professional counselor supervisees narrate their supervision experience?" The following chapter discusses the research setting, participant demographics, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness evidence, and the study results.

Setting

There were no known personal or organizational conditions that influenced participants or their experience at the time of the study that may affect the interpretations of the study results. I conducted the interviews via Zoom audio conferencing from my home office. All the participants confirmed they were in a mutually convenient location ranging from their homes and parked cars to office settings that afforded as much privacy as possible. Although Participant B and Participant F met via Zoom from their parked cars, they confirmed that the location was mutually convenient and private.

Demographics

Following the guidelines of IRB, I did not collect any specific participant demographic data for this study. All eight participants in the study self-identified as Black and female. I conducted the study via Zoom audio-conference in the state of Texas, and participants were in various states across the United States. They were self-selected by responding to a social media post (via LinkedIn and Facebook), self-identifying as

meeting eligibility requirements, and expressing willingness to participate in the study. All participants confirmed that they lived in the United States, were licensed or provisionally licensed as a professional counselor, and lived in the state where they were licensed.

Data Collection

Once I obtained IRB approval, the data collection process began. I conducted semistructured interviews with eight participants via the Zoom audioconferencing platform for secure recording and data collection. I interviewed each participant once. The interviews took place from November 4 to November 30, 2024. Although I planned for up to 60 minutes interviews, the duration of the interviews varied. Some participants talked more about their experiences in supervision, and others were straightforward in telling their storied supervision experiences, which caused a variation in the time of the interviews. Participant A's interview was 58 minutes, Participant B's interview was 50 minutes, Participant C's interview was 47 minutes, Participant D's interview was 49 minutes, Participant E's interview was 54 minutes, Participant F's interview was 53 minutes, Participant G's interview was 43 minutes, and Participant H's interview was 33 minutes. I maintained fidelity to the narrative interview style by allowing participants to tell their stories on their terms and at their own pace with minimal interruptions. I refrained from prompting for more information and used active listening and open-ended questions.

Data Analysis

As discussed in Chapter 3, I used narrative thematic analysis to understand the participants' storied supervision experiences. Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach to narrative thematic analysis, which involves using a six-phase process, was selected because it ensured that I would capture the nuances and complexities of the participants' storied accounts of their supervision experiences in a detailed and nuanced way that align with the underlying constructionist theoretical assumptions of the study. Story and meaning are contextualized in narrative thematic analysis, and the researcher's reflective representations and interpretations of the participants' subjectivity are an integral collaborative process (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Loseke, 2022). I used an inductive approach where in vivo descriptors emerged from the data to highlight the participants' voices (Saldana, 2016). I also employed deductive analysis using process coding to help produce themes that were meaningful to the research question. The six-phase process used to code the data and generate themes included: familiarizing myself with the data, generating initial codes, developing themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing the data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013, 2020).

Familiarization with the Data

The first phase in narrative thematic analysis is for the researcher to immerse themselves in the data by reading and rereading to become familiar with its nuances (Braun & Clarke, 2013). I listened to the audio recordings three times to familiarize

myself with the interviews. While listening to audio files, I actively took notes to help me reflect on my thoughts, experiences, and interpretations throughout the data analysis. After actively listening to them, I manually transcribed each interview to further immerse myself in the data. I also shared the data with the participants to verify the accuracy and completeness of the transcriptions.

Generating Initial Codes

Generating initial codes is the second phase in narrative thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013). To initially analyze or code the data, I highlighted interesting sections in the transcripts and used the "comments" function of Microsoft Word. Each initial code represented words or short phrases from the participants' transcripts to highlight their voices. I reviewed each transcript two times to reflect on the underlying meaning and to identify relevant codes. I transferred the initial codes to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to keep track of the codes and to help with reanalyzing the codes. I labeled the codes with the respective participant pseudonyms. I recorded the initial codes using process coding to better capture the process of human action and experience and to help produce themes that were meaningful to the research question. After recoding and reviewing the codes, I collated the codes to develop a sense of thematic and theoretical organization of the data. I regularly reviewed the transcripts for further familiarity while generating new codes and engaging in writing reflective memos.

Developing Themes

Generating themes is the third phase in narrative thematic analysis (Braun &

Clarke, 2013). Generating themes involves collapsing multiple codes with similar underlying concepts to form themes that help answer the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Byrne, 2021). I utilized this process by combining clusters of coded data with similar underlying concepts into a single theme. I moved the clusters of coded data that fit under the appropriate themes and eliminated some that did not fit within the overall analysis or among other perspective themes.

Reviewing Themes

The researcher must examine the identified themes in the fourth phase to ensure they are congruent with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). During this phase, I reviewed the themes to ensure coherence with the research question and that the relationship among the codes accurately supported the themes. I evaluated the themes, combined themes, and refined the themes as appropriate to the research question.

Defining and Naming Themes

In the fifth phase, the researcher assigns descriptive names to the themes and provides a concise definition that informs the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2013). When defining and naming the themes, I provided names congruent with the data, allowing me to communicate the contextualized complexities of the data. I also submitted the themes to the research committee chair for additional review to acknowledge and reduce bias while verifying interpretations and analysis against the perspectives of another researcher.

Writing the Data Analysis

The final phase of narrative thematic analysis is to produce a written report of the findings and interpretations in a coherent narrative manner (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The following sections of this chapter include the narrative write-up and data analysis report. The data analysis write-up includes detailed descriptions of the codes and themes that emerged from the data, extensive data excerpts from participants, and a summary of interpretations of the results.

Specific Themes and Supporting Codes Emerging from Thematic Analysis of Data

An overview description of each emergent theme from the thematic analysis of the data is listed here, with the codes supporting the most meaningful interpretation of the data:

1. Navigating gender and racial stereotypes (codes were persevering adversity, experiencing racialized stress, experiencing gender-racialized stress, navigating stereotypes, experiencing invalidation, and feeling invisible).
2. Relying on perseverance strategies (codes were raising with coping skills, pursuing learning, relying on faith, bouncing back from adversity, learning from adversity, avoiding vulnerability, having vigilance, persevering adversity, and suppressing voice).
3. Wanting support of self-concept and mentoring (codes were affirming adversity, having competency, helping navigate adversity, providing mentoring, supporting learning, providing safe spaces, feeling isolated,

experiencing financial stress, and mentoring from Black women).

4. Taking ownership of personal growth (codes were learning coping skills, pursuing growth, embracing vulnerability, paying it forward, seeking community, making appropriate changes, and seeking safe spaces).

Evidence of Trustworthiness

I followed the strategic procedures outlined in Chapter 3 to enhance the rigor and trustworthiness of the study. In the following section, I discuss in detail how I have accounted for and addressed all four criteria of trustworthiness. The sections discuss how credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were confirmed.

Credibility

I established credibility by recording, transcribing, reviewing the transcripts, and coding the interview data thoroughly. I confirmed the accuracy of the transcription data by having the participants review them to collaborate on the integrity of the represented understanding of their storied experiences. There were no modifications to credibility strategies, and member checks helped develop a comprehensive understanding of the data and helped promote credibility. Triangulation or using multiple data sources or procedures can help promote credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015). I reviewed the transcripts and coding of the interview data thoroughly. I also used two different data sources and address my biases using reflective memos for all participants throughout data collection to help establish the credibility of the findings. I confirmed the data's internal coherence by detailing the data analysis process and taking detailed

methodological process notes. I further confirmed the accuracy of the transcription data by having the participants review them to collaborate on the integrity of the represented understanding of their storied experiences. I consulted with my dissertation committee chair to review the data and codes to acknowledge and reduce bias while verifying interpretations against the perspectives of another researcher.

Transferability

Transferability represents how the researcher's descriptive findings can be applied to broader contexts and similar settings or individuals by people reading the study (Carminati, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015). The researcher can establish transferability by providing enough data and details regarding the context and sample to help answer the research questions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015). I made no adjustments to transferability strategies. I included sufficient and detailed information when reporting the results to establish transferability. For example, I detailed the sampling strategy, data collection, and analysis process and provide detailed descriptions and notes of reflexivity of salient experiences negotiating identity and potential biases. As a result, the reader can determine the applicability of the study's results and conclusions to other contexts and settings.

Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research assures that the findings are consistent over time and between and across researchers despite events that unfold during data collection (Carminati, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015). Dependability is established by

the researcher detailing an audit trail using peer review and triangulation strategies (Carminati, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015). I did not adjust dependability strategies. I provided a detailed and thorough explanation of the data collection and analysis process. I sent the transcripts to participants to ensure an accurate representation of their perspectives and to allow them to review and provide feedback on the data analysis. I also had my dissertation committee chair review the data and codes to reduce bias further and increase validity and dependability.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to strategies the researcher uses to demonstrate that the findings and interpretations are supported by the design and data, not the result of the researcher's biases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015). Like dependability, confirmability is established by the researcher detailing an audit trail using peer review and triangulation strategies (Carminati, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Patton, 2015). I made no adjustments to confirmability strategies. The findings are derived from the data. I used my reflectivity and subjectivity as an experienced LPC to maintain objectivity and be bias-free throughout the data collection and analysis. I engaged in a reflective process in discussing the study's conclusion. I also had another researcher conduct an internal audit of data and results to confirm the study results.

Results

This study addressed a gap in the literature by identifying themes related to the events, strategies, skills, and cultural, environmental, and contextual factors supportive or

non-supportive for teaching and the practice of multicultural supervision with Black female professional counselors. This qualitative narrative study was conducted to understand and capture the lived experiences of Black female professional counselors' storied experiences of supervision. The research question was "How do Black female professional counselor supervisees narrate their supervision experience?" Following a thorough, thoughtful, and reflective analysis of the interviews for eight Black female professional counselors, four themes emerged that support the research question and shed light on the participants' storied supervision experiences: (a) navigating gender and racial stereotypes, (b) relying on perseverance strategies, (c) wanting support of self-concept and mentoring, and (d) taking ownership of personal and professional growth. The following sections offer quotes from the participants' interviews that refer to and support the themes and codes representative of the participants' experiences.

Theme 1: Navigating Gender and Racial Stereotypes

Navigating gender and racial stereotypes was the first emerging theme identified during the data analysis. Navigating gender and racial stereotypes represents the negative attitudes, racialized stress, and invalidation that impacted the participants' storied supervision experiences at the intersection of either their race or gender. Participants' narratives contained several accounts explaining how racist and sexist stereotypes and cultural underrepresentation impacted their experiences in supervision and their professional development. When interpreting the participants' perceptions or experiences of navigating discrimination through the lens of their intersecting gender-racial identities,

the overarching sentiment from the participants is that they felt underrepresented, invalidated, invisible, and under significant stress to have to prove their competency. For example, Participant A shared the following experience where they felt significant pressure to prove their competency in a professional environment while eight months pregnant:

> They have to believe that you're competent to do your job, or they will be horrible. So, if they don't believe that you're competent to do your job, they will treat you adversely. So, there's that, and if they treat you adversely. Whether it be unintentional or intentional. Then you won't, as a supervisee or the subordinate in the situation, you won't feel like you can communicate with them and so, then you will not communicate with them which just fuels, their mistrust of you. So, from a gender point of view, I, I was pregnant, I was, 8 months, 8 months pregnant and my supervisor wanted me to, it was time for my like yearly review, but I was like literally like 8 months, like 4 weeks in like 4 weeks away from what actually became my due date. (talking faster) And so, he and his boss, which is also my supervisor. We all had a meeting because he gave me very low were marks on my yearly Eval and he and she. We had a meeting, and he was expressing that I wasn't, I needed to like complete a certain task. And in order to like uplift, like my average, or my numbers, or whatever. And I was asking him, I was like, Okay, well, what? What would you have me to do? You know? And he was like, oh, well, I think you should take on more clients, and I'm like, well, I'm

not gonna do that. And then he like looks at my boss. Like to try to like, to confirm like, see, this is what I mean when she doesn't listen. And he was like, Well, why not? And I was like, because I'm 8 months pregnant and I'm going to go on maternity leave in 4 weeks. Why would I take on new clients when I know for a fact? I won't be here in 4 weeks. That's, that's unethical in my point of view that you would even suggest that as my boss for me to take on new clients when I'm going to be leaving in 4 weeks, so they would have to be transferred to someone else, all because you want me to get my numbers up. You're willing to risk me breaking a bond with these people starting and breaking all because you want my numbers to go up?

So, he didn't like that answer, obviously. So, then his boss was like, "well, we don't feel like you know enough to support your team". And I'm like, okay, well, what about my team is failing? They didn't have an answer, because my team all was meeting their numbers, meeting their averages. They were superstars at that point, and they were like, well, so they couldn't have answers. So, they're like, "well, we want you to go and shadow one of your team members", and I'm like, so you want the people that I train to go in home to do therapy? You want me to shadow one of them to prove that I'm competent at 8 months pregnant? (sounding frustrated) This is what you want me to do? And they were like, "well, if you can't do it, you know. Just say that." Of course, I'm not going to do that because I'm 8 months pregnant. I don't know if you have kids or not, but at the

> 36, or 40, you know, like, when you're any day person, you're any day person like that can happen from 36 to 40, you know, like, that's just how it goes. So that's how people treat you. But that's how you should be treated?...So, from a gender standpoint, you know. It, it was just kind of like. Oh, y'all really don't want me to come back because you're putting me in situations where you know I'm due any day or getting to that point where I'm going to be due any day, and you're asking me to complete tasks that are literally impossible. Oh, and I'm not, and I'm not, at a at a, I'm not one of those people who was financially strapped to where I felt backed in a corner like I had to do this in order to keep my job so. But they didn't know that they thought, because, you know, I don't know what planet they were living on. But it was like, hey, what are you really asking me to do? Because no one in our right mind would have an 8-month, pregnant woman go into the home with the style of people we were working with at the time to put myself my baby, possibly the family, in some level of harm. If, if someone were to have an incident, if that makes sense.

Participant A shared another experience of racial discrimination in a professional environment where a supervisor used the participant's personal lunch bowl to feed a dog:

> So, another incident where I was working, and I had a supervisor, I would be the first one to get in every morning. And, and, so, I would just eat like breakfast at work just like oatmeal. So, I bought like some like food or whatever, and it had a particular bowl that I would eat out of and I'll wash it. Put it back, you know.

Blah blah. So, I've been doing this throughout the winter months, so that would be, was it October, November, December, January, you know, depending on where, where the state I was in at the time, February as well and one day. So, when we have our morning staff meetings. I would just eat breakfast because I got there before everyone else, so, like everyone else, was kind of getting settled. I was kind of already settled in my day. So, one day I come into work, and my supervisor is there before me. And I'm like, Okay, cool. So, I walk into her office, and the bowl that I eat out of every morning is on the floor with her dog's food in it. And so, I say to her, where did you get that bowl? Because I'm trying to give her an out, like maybe this, maybe we just so happen to have the same bowl. You know what I'm saying. And she was like, "oh, it's the bowl that was in the rack in the kitchen." And I was like…Oh, okay. And so, to me, you knew that that was the bowl that I eat out of every day like I'm wearing the staff meeting where and that's it. We, you know, when you go to work sometimes you just have, like, you know, unofficial assigned seats or whatever. So, it's like we all sit in the same spot. We all do the same thing. People have their coffee. People have their Starbucks like, I don't drink coffee. I don't drink Starbucks, so you know everyone has their like morning routine. So, to sit over and say you didn't know that wasn't my bowl or the bowl that I chose would just be a lie because I was the only one that ate oatmeal every morning for breakfast. Everyone else ate a bagel or ate, you know, had their Starbucks, or you know, whatever. I was, the only one

> that was physically eating like oatmeal with a banana, or whatever, because they used to make fun of me and be like, oh, (Participant A's name), you're so healthy, so you can't make fun of me and be like, Oh, (Participant A's name), you're so healthy, and then turn around and be like. Oh, I didn't know this was your bowl. That's a lie. So, situations like that will be the racial aspect of your question.

Participant A also described their experience of cultural underrepresentation and invalidation and how their positionality in societal contexts impacts their experiences. Participant A shared,

> So, like I, I'm a stay at home, mom, and so like, I'll go to like the Y.M.C.A. You know. I'll take like 8 o'clock class in the Y.M.C.A. And I'm like, probably like I'm definitely the only Black person like in my class, in like the little workout classes that I take. So, people will be like, "what do you do for a living?", or like just trying to figure out like, how am I managing to be here at 8 o'clock in the morning on a Tuesday, when all of them from a, they all either are retired, or they just have, you know, flexibility in their schedules. In the same way that I have flexibility in my schedule. But they were just trying to figure out like, how like, how, how are you made like? How are you here? You know. Style of questions…I don't know what they were assuming, but I'm assuming they were probably like cause I, I do get told that I look relatively young for my age. So, as most black people do, you know what I'm saying? (laughs) But, but so at the same time they were probably like, how like, how is she here on a Tuesday at 8

o'clock in the morning? You know. Like, how? How was she navigating that? And then, when I was pregnant, and I was still going to the workout class. They were like, how what do you do for a living, you know. So, it's just like, stuff like that which some of them were very genuine, just older people, because I was the new person in class, or just in that particular community. I understood that they were probably some of them, anyway, were probably just trying to extend of Olive Branch, because I was the only person who looked like me in the class. So, there were several people who just wouldn't even talk to me or wouldn't even look in my direction. But there were a nice amount who were like, let's get to know her. And, and I could, some of them, I could tell they were probably like, how does this work? And then others were just like, oh, no, like, just, we just want to get to know cause we're, you know, older, nosy people. And I'm like, okay, I'll indulge…Oh, yeah, living in Tucson, yeah, there's been times that, not only, but I was the only Black person in the room. I was probably the only Black person in the building. And then, if there was another Black person there, they were probably like a janitor or something crazy.

Participant B described specific gender barriers that adversely impacted their professional growth in supervision. Participant B shared,

So, my, my supervisor was Black, and so I was hoping that that would help with any type of racial biases and helping me to be able to connect with client who are the same cultural background. (long pause) But I was now not able to connect

> with him. And I do think that that may be because of the gender. (long pause) So, I wasn't able to utilize my strengths, to really understand how to encounter clients who are men. If I had that, those opportunities, if that environment was inviting, I would definitely have felt more equipped, going into private practice on my own. Or just entering into a private practice, you know private practice…So, I did not feel like I could be authentic, be myself in supervision. Um, I wanted to, (pause) yeah, just go through it just to get through it, get it done. And I think that, that stunted (long pause) um, my process and learning and becoming a, a good clinician, or learning all that I could, or gain all the information that I could gain from supervision…Well, I think that it, it opened my eyes that everyone does not have the same values, and even though they are becoming a counselor, or even though they are a counselor, and they're supposed to provide, unconditional positive regard, and that's not always going to be the case. I think it changed me because or impacted, because I think I held supervisors in such a high regard, when they're just as human as everyone else.

Participant D described specific gender-racial and class discrimination that adversely impacted their mental health and professional identity development in supervision. This participant reflected on encountering barriers to success, including cultural underrepresentation, economic disparities, and lack of mentoring. These systemic barriers may have led to Participant D describing experiencing and observing "withholding" and competitiveness" with other Black women in professional spaces.

Participant D shared,

> Ah, so, I would say biases are when it comes to race, I have encountered and or observed an extreme withholding. Ah, a competitiveness that I don't understand, which I kind of also think bleeds into a gender thing as well is very competitive, very. I know what I know, and I need to keep what I know, and you're only going to get this information if you're under me, or my tutelage, or, or um, if you pay me, that kind of energy and mentality. Um, I've I've, yeah, I've heard of that, and I've witnessed that on a couple of occasions which was intriguing to me…in supervision, um, I have experienced the fact that I come from low, low, socioeconomic status. I come from the working poor. Um, and with that that comes with its own culture, its own dialect, its own presentation, its own inflection in our voices and our language, and I know in supervision, and in school I was cautioned against being too, homey, no homely, I think that's what he said… At the time I was like, well, what does that mean? And a little a, a little, um, discombobulated. Um, kind of am I doing something wrong is, is me? Is that not, okay? Me being me? Is that not, okay? Is that, is this not the proper space to be me. I know, in supervision, like I said she was a very much a stickler on writing and verbiage, and communicating and articulating in a certain way, and so it was just kind of like, so, what is wrong with what I'm saying? Or is it I'm just not seeing it the way you think I should say it? So, we would kinda go back and forth about that until I just gave up was like, I'll just write these notes the way you

want me to articulate this. Um, but thankfully, as, as I evolved and kind of went on my journey in counseling. I'm fully okay with being me, and whatever that means.

Participant D also discussed the impact of cultural underrepresentation on their options for professional development:

I think, I think overall, it impacted my accessibility. Again, um, there weren't too many, um, Black therapists that was supervisors. Um, so, that kind of hindered, who, my options. You know it, that opportunity, maybe glean from somebody else, or even to encounter someone who's a little more like me, on more of the spectrums, more of those you know, the social, ah, the socioeconomic spectrum. Um, the gender spectrum, um, ah, and the race spectrum, right? Ah, so, there weren't a lot of Black supervisors to begin with, and then you narrow that number down to females and that slices another pick. So, I think the biggest part was just, um, the options I had. I took what I could get. Um, and again did not really know anything different… very, very, very limited options. And then, when you factor, now that I'm thinking about, if you factor, factor classism into it, that would have narrowed my options even more, because for me, I do not understand how we fully expect these associates who have limited work experience, most of us know that if they want jobs to get their first job it is going to be something, you know, minimally pay. And yet I have heard about supervisors charging $250, $175, and I'm just like, how do you reasonably expect them to pay that, on a weekly basis?

Participant E described their experience of having to navigate gender and racial stereotypes, invalidation, and racialized stress in having to prove their competence in an educational environment. Participant E shared,

> Um, let' see, so within, I would say in my master's program. I would say that that was my very first time that I felt like I was being judge by my race. Um, I noticed that in the classroom, um, when we would get our papers handed back to us that my papers would always come back with red, with red writing on them. And then I, when I would ask my classmates who were Caucasian, and I'd be like, hey, let me see your paper. They wouldn't have those things on their papers. And so, in the class it was, I felt like I was always being challenged like I was always the one that was on that radar where it was like. Hey, here goes the Black girl. Let's see if she knows xyz. So, I felt like I was always being challenged while I was in class by not all of my professors, but by this one particular professor. If it was like it didn't matter what was going on. It felt like he was labeling me as if I was not supposed to be there, like I didn't belong there, and who let me, who let me in, and he was going to prove to them that I did not belong. And so, that's what I felt every time I went in that classroom. Every time I had to stand up in front of the classroom and present or turned in any writing assignments or anything like that, or if we did any kind of group activity, it was always him always on me, and he did not do that same thing to my White classmates. And when they started noticing it, that's when I knew that, hey? It's not just me. I'm not the only, I'm

not going crazy. This is real, this is happening… and then one day we had our comprehensive examination, and I passed. It was all written and I was wondering why he wanted to have me in his office. And so, I'm like, he said he only want people in his office that failed. So, why am I being put here. So, I will go into his office. And he's like, oh, I wanted to talk to you because I wanted to let you know that I researched you. And I was like, hmm, you research me like, that's why like, why, what is going on, what is happening and what I've? And from that conversation it laid into, I've seen that you were highly recommended for this counseling program by one of the top researchers and Deans. And I would have never knew that, that person would have even looked at you in that capacity. And so, that day, right there, that was like, wow! So, everything that I thought about you was true on how you feel about Black people in general. Like we, we don't, we're not supposed to be in the same rooms that you all are in. We're not, we're not supposed to have an extensive vocabulary, because we're all supposed to just be poor, or you know, or we need, we need support or help and things of that nature. So, that was my first experience, ever experiencing something like that in my master's program… gender was also another factor for him as well, because I was a female, and then I was Black. And for him it was, you know, women are supposed to be at home. And Black women are supposed to be working. They don't have time for school. They shouldn't be in arenas, where school is because they have broken families already. So, the woman has to work. So, how are you

here? Why are you here?

Participant F described their experience of sexism during site supervision with an employer that stayed in their mind and influenced their professional comportment moving forward. They also described experiencing invalidation because of their gender-racial identity. Participant F shared,

> As an employee being supervised, I have had unfortunate experiences with supervisors who did not demonstrate cultural competence or ethical practices which made it difficult to come to work some days and perform. I can even recall a time when a highly sexist remark was made by a male supervisor who was also a professional counselor. He made a statement about women in a room filled with women that was misogynistic and disrespectful. His gender biases were very evident in that moment and it changed how I saw him from that moment on. It also challenged me to remember this moment and be mindful of how I communicate to supervisees in the future to ensure that microaggressions and biases are not clouding the necessary work that we as clinicians do daily… In my career post licensure, I have experienced not feel heard or seen by supervisors when communicating the need for more ethical practices, improved operating procedures, etc. I can recall times when I made recommendations and they were overlooked because I did not fit the part of an individual who would have a valid opinion or idea. In certain instances, the only gratification came from learning about or seeing the changes I recommended being implemented - even if someone

> else took the credit. I'm reminded of a time when I worked for a specific employer where biases were openly used more than once and I was reminded of a speech my father gave me before starting college at Baylor University. He told me to imagine standing in a line of ten students - male a female of 5 different races. He let me know that if we all made an A in a class, my A would have to be the highest A to be looked at and even then, because I am a black woman, even that may not be enough.

Similarly, Participant G described their experiences navigating gender and racial stereotypes while working towards professional licensure. Participant G shared,

> So, I will say, like becoming a professional early, you know, when you're young and naive, you just you don't realize how wrong something is at that time right, but I can look back and just cringe at the things that I've lived through where I'm like, oh, my God! That was inappropriate, right. So, I'll say gender bias would be, um, I remember getting into the workforce, and I was always expected to be the person, and I don't even know if this is gender or age. So let me just kind of tell you, and you can fit, fit it in. But I feel like I have, you know, as a young professional, I didn't realize the inappropriate of certain, the inappropriateness of certain actions, and I remember starting in the workplace, and you know you get overtime, and of course, when you broke like you, you jump on it right. But I think I came to a point where I noticed it was expected of me because I didn't have children. Does that make sense? Like other like, the other, like we work in

the counseling field, I think there's an agreement that women outweigh men in the counseling field… But there was like when, when something was needed, somebody needs to stay late, come early, do extra, I think I was expected to be the person to do it because I didn't have a family. Like everybody else has got kids everybody else has got, and I'm like that doesn't mean I don't have free time. And that doesn't mean I don't have a family, right… So, in terms of racial, I, I can't say, I can't say I've had an experience that's like shaped my, um, oh, you know what, I, you know, I, yeah, I, okay. So once again, young, naive don't know what's going on in the world. But I remember having a job. And they were hiring for a lead, and it was recommended that I apply. Um, and I, I think I was pretty indifferent about the job. Like I wasn't going out of my way to look for it right. So, um, whether they gave it to me or not was not a huge thing. So, um, but I remember having a job applying for this role, and then the interview, the male, I had a male supervisor at the time, and he mentioned me being aggressive. And he also questioned, it, it was strange. So, you mentioned me being aggressive. number one, which I think as a Black woman is, you know, can very much become a stereotype, and when I gave that, when I shared that feedback with an old, you know, with a colleague at the time like she was mortified right because she was like, oh, no, you can't let them do that to you, and I was like, do what to me? And she was like, they're doing that thing. And I was like, what's the thing? But once again I was so new that I didn't even understand these dynamics, right.

> How like Black women can be seen as aggressive rather than assertive, right. Like it's a, it's a very thin line. It's, it's a word play. But I think I would say in terms of, of race, then that would be like the one experience. And once again, once it goes brought to my attention. Of course I didn't run off with it, but, but I live in the world. So, I definitely see how people choose their language when they describe different people. And, and I'll say that was probably the one thing. But I didn't, that's not something I really hold held on to, and I don't know how much I would have noticed that if somebody didn't pinpoint it at that time, like maybe in hindsight, I would have eventually figured it out like, wait a minute. He did that thing to me right, but I think at the time it wasn't on my radar.

Although their experience in supervision was described as generally positive, Participant H described their experience of racial bias and discrimination in the form of microaggressions. Participant H shared,

> For the most part, I'm going to say I've had a great experience with supervision. Um, there was only, um, when I worked for, I was working at an agency, not an agency private practice for someone before I started my own. Um, I did not, and I was working for a Caucasian lady. She had just started her practice about a year and a half prior. So newly supervised, just got her supervisor license last year. And she made me feel stupid. She made me feel that I did not know anything as far as anything in reference to counseling. She made me feel less than, um, when I tried to start my own practice. She, um, discouraged me a lot from that. Um, she

> wanted me to work for her practice and bring all the clients to her. She did not, she just discouraged me from starting my own practice, um, which really left a bad taste in my mouth with her. Um, just was not a friendly person. It's, it's like, um, I felt very used, and I felt like I said, I felt dumb. I felt like I didn't know anything. And this is coming from a person that works at an agency that trains other counselors that is not fully licensed. I train other counselors how to do their job. So, I know how to do notes. I know how to write notes. I know how to run group. I know how to train others. I know how to do all of these things, but when it came to her, I felt that she, I don't know if she was, she was too, she micromanaged her practice too much or she was a little prejudiced either one, either that, either one. The other experiences that I've had with supervision have been all great, um, and I've learned tremendously from my supervisors. I mean, yeah, very much so…

Theme 2: Relying on Perseverance Strategies

All the participants in this study described themselves as resilient because of their ability to adapt and feel motivated to overcome adversity. The participants described perseverance strategies used to help them overcome adverse experiences associated with racial and gender discrimination. For many participants, relying on perseverance strategies helped affirm their experiences navigating oppressive societal stereotypes and systemic barriers while providing a sense of hope, meaning, and resilience during transition and adversity. In this context, relying on their upbringing and community, their

faith, and learning from adverse experiences helped cultivate the strength and hope to cope with the challenges of oppressive forces and systemic barriers.

Participant A reflected on their qualities and described the factors that impact personal resilience,

> I always kind of go back and forth between like perseverance and resilience, like, cause I've had to persevere. But I mean I guess that would mean I'm resilient, but I don't know. I have to like. They're not synonyms, but they're like kissing cousins, but I haven't like fully landed on one yet. Um, I mean, when you've gone, not really gone through what I've gone through. It's not like I was out here just traumatized, but just living in 2024 as a minority and a woman, you know, you just have to have patience because you have to wait for other people to catch up to stuff that you feel like you've already experienced, or you've already traversed through… Well, it's just more like they raised me to be a confident person. But how they raised me to be a confident person was instilling competence in me that I had the ability to find the answer for myself. But also understand when to ask for help if I got in over my head. So, what I wasn't raised like I had to do it all. No one else could do it only me. But I definitely wasn't raised with learned helplessness where I'm a victim. So, they, they raised me with a like come on, (name), we're just gonna give you a bunch of knowledge. We're gonna encourage you. You know, to do these things, to make these mistakes. But instead of having mistakes as being failures, you just look at what lesson did you

> learn out of that. So, it's kind of like if you see a baby kind of like learning how to walk, they fall down, but we still encourage them to get back up, get back, up, get back up. So, it's like that same principle, because you have to be competent in your ability to walk. And then, once you get, understand the mechanics, you're confident in your ability to act it out. So, it's like that same principle with pretty much every topic, because it's applicable.

Participant A described how relying on their faith allows them to recover from adverse experiences related to racism and sexism by allowing them to "see purpose in everything, you know. That's probably why I'm so patient because I'm like the purpose will reveal itself. It's gotta hold tight. It's gonna come. And then when it comes, you're like, here we go." Participant B reflected that they are resilient "at times' and "when I'm faced with adversity, I try to pick myself back up and, and keep going". Participant B also described that early in their life, "I was influenced to go to college and to pledge a sorority and (pause), to have a family, to have a relationship with God." Participant C described themselves as "extremely resilient" and that "my spiritual life is a part of me in every aspect, although I don't claim to be a Christian counselor. But it comes out naturally." Participant C also attributed their resilience to their upbringing and spiritual beliefs. Participant C shared,

> My mother. Um, she is a formidable woman. Um, she is feisty, direct, godly, um, determined, resilient and pushes me still, today. She's been living with me for the last 6 years after major illnesses, and you would never know it. Um, that

> resiliency is evident. She's a prayer warrior, and I attribute my faith in prayer life to her in the way that she brought me up…Um, I think my upbringing, as I said, I'm an only child. My parents were divorced when I was 5, so my mom raised me by herself. She would tell you with the Lord's help, of course, but it was just the 2 of us. And I spent a lot of time around, um like I said much older people. I'm the only girl in my 1st cousin circle. The other 7 are boys, and so I was around a lot of men. And I am the youngest of all of them. The next one closest to me is 10 years older. And so, imagine being 5 being around 15-year-olds, and um, so, of course back in my day children were seen and not heard, so I was around them listening to them, and how they collaborated together and again shared words of wisdom talking with one another. My aunt is 16 years older than my mother and so, I was around her and her friends a lot, just listening to their conversations, and how they helped each other. I think that is one of the most beautiful things about women in general, but especially Black women. We are willing to help each other stand."

Participant D described themselves as "absolutely" resilient and attributed their resiliency to their upbringing, facing poverty, and adapting and thriving in the face of adversity. Participant D shared,

> But that's more of my childhood history than anything. I was probably born to be a little more resilient than the rest. Um, family history just says that, ah, change is inevitable. And that though there are individuals who could be positioned to help

> you along the way, does not mean that they will take those opportunities and or honor those opportunities. And all of that still does not absolve you from needing to get what it is that's for you. So, with that being said, there were tons of changes, tons of tons of interesting things that happened to me as a kiddo, that you just keep moving forward. You take the lessons you learn, and you use that information to kind of propel you to the next step. So as far as being resilient, I think I'm pretty alright…. Um, I have always marched to the beat of my own drum. I have always been fully okay with everything I am and everything I'm not, and everything I would never be. And so, I think I just trusted myself and my abilities to pivot. That if it, if it came to a point or a place where it's like you know what I don't think this jells with who I am, I just find something else to do.

Participant E described resilience as essential to their well-being as a Black woman because they can experience many stressors, which helps them feel motivated and keep going. Participant E shared,

> Um, resiliency for me, it, it can be a lot. So, that's where that self-care has to come in. Because I do give so much of myself out to people, and sometimes I don't give that back to me. And I really work hard to make sure that I'm there for other people. And so, with that, I can overcome a lot of stuff. So, even with that loyalty that I have for people, even if sometimes it, it is not coming back to me. I can recover quickly from things, but I have to, that's where I was talking about, where I kind of like shut down and, and close myself off because I, I have to

> withdraw from things because my outer is very tough. But I'm such a loving and caring person that sometimes I give so much of myself to where I can bring myself to getting close to that burnout. But due to the fact that I know what burnout looks like I can catch that, so I can recover quickly. And so sometimes I can push myself so much due to the fact that I am so resilient, (laughs softly to self) I can sustain a lot, and I can take on a lot. So, it's almost like that rubber band that can continue to expand. (pause) And so that's where I would say, like, my resiliency comes in because I'm, I can recover quickly from things that that's very difficult or can be difficult on to me. So, I don't let that get to a point to where it brings me to a point to where I move into like a stage of like anxiety or anything like that. So, I can go through the emotion, and I can move through my emotions rather quickly, and bounce back and overcome those difficulties or those hurdles that I may be going through at that time. So, I kind of look at it like a rubber band that's always expanding. But then it can come back into its shape.

Participant E also described their upbringing and their parents' parenting as focused on "a lot of self-love," identity development, and pursuing learning as being essential in preparing them to cope with adverse experiences and stressors linked to racism and sexism. Participant E shared,

> And so, in the class it was, I felt like I was always being challenged like I was always the one that was on that radar where it was like. Hey, here goes the Black girl. Let's see if she knows xyz. So, I felt like I was always being challenged

while I was in class by not all of my professors, but by this one particular professor. If it was like it didn't matter what was going on. It felt like he was labeling me as if I was not supposed to be there, like I didn't belong there, and who let me, who let me in, and he was going to prove to them that I did not belong. And so, that's what I felt every time I went in that classroom. Every time I had to stand up in front of the classroom and present or turned in any writing assignments or anything like that, or if we did any kind of group activity, it was always him always on me, and he did not do that same thing to my White classmates. And when they started noticing it, that's when I knew that, hey? It's not just me. I'm not the only, I'm not going crazy. This is real, this is happening. And so, for me, that put me in a situation to where if I didn't have the upbringing that I would have had that could have really put me in a position to where I could have gave up. But due to my how I grew up in my background with my family dynamic, all that did for me was make me go even harder. Make me stand out, and put me in the positions to where now in any room that I walk in, it don't matter what color of skin that's there, I can stand in that room, and I can stand there alone, and there's nothing that's gonna put me in a situation to where I'm, I'm gonna ever feel inadequate or like, I don't belong because I am in the room, and when I'm in the room I'm in there because I belong there. No one put me in here... Yeah, I mean with, with him making, with him with that, it didn't like, I said, because of my upbringing, it didn't bring me to a place to where I would

have became defeated, that I would have left. What that did for me was solidify, that you're intimidated by me. That. you know, you know my worth, because you see my work. And you're afraid of that because I'm the one that can challenge you. Because based off, of how you're treating me, I'm the only one in this room, in this classroom that can challenge you. And go level to level with you, whereas my classmates can't do that. So, that was how I looked at it. I didn't look at it as a defeat, or something to, or something that will put me down or bring me to, you know, giving up because I knew, I know what my worth is, and I know who I am. And it didn't break me. All it did was make me stronger and solidify what I already knew to be true about myself. I hate that it happened because it was like, wow! So, this is what y'all think of us. And here it is. I'm about to be your colleague because I'm no longer considered a student. Because I've passed my comprehensive examination. I'm about to get this master's degree. So, who once was a student is now your colleague. So, now we on the equal level playing field. So, that's what I took from that. That's what I use to continue to move me through my process. And anytime that I feel like I am back around a person that is almost similar or kind of mimics that man, I just sit back, and I laugh at it because I'm like, wow! They still exist. They're still here. So, I find humor in it… So, it was a lot of self-love within my family. It was a lot of teaching in my family, meaning that, hey, we're going to teach you. You know how things about, about the real world and how it works. But if you don't have a strong foundation, this is what

can happen to you. So, it was a lot of those things. So, hearing and listening to my, my, you know parents and my grandparents, and what they endured, you know, when they were coming up, you know, from the 1930s all the way up until the 1950s and sixties, and them going through those, those times that they went through, as well as you know, we were that upper class family. So, we had, you know, we were afforded, you know, nice things, and so that's the arena that I grew up in. But it was always, you know, we had those lessons of being taught, hey, you know, when you work hard, you know these are the things that you get from here, you know. And it was always, you know, if you were sad, you know we were as a family to where we allowed each other to express emotions, but at the same time, you know, work through those things, motivated each other, supported each other. Um, you know, spoke highly of each other, even if there was like something that you may have said that you felt that was negative, you know, just making sure that, hey, I'm going to reassure you that this is not true. So, instilling those, those qualities that those leadership abilities being able to communicate, and those things that's what's stem from my upbringing was, hey, you know you're Black, and you know, life is life is gonna come at you differently because of the color of your skin. And if you're not comfortable in your own skin, then you will be easily able to be influenced by other people when you don't know yourself your true identity. So, it was always instilled upon us that we can do anything that we put our minds to, and I come from a well-

educated family. So, education was something that my family thrived off, of and supported. Um, and there was a lot of teachings, you know, within the home. So, it wasn't just put on, oh, you're going to learn these things at school. No, we learned these things while we were at home, and then, when we got into the classrooms, these were things that we already knew. It was just that, now we are being more advanced, and things of that nature we was taught, you know, not to have like hard skin. But hey, you don't, when people say things about you that's a reflection of them. That is what they're seeing for themselves, and they're putting it on you and for you not to take ownership of those things. So, let them call you names. Let them say whatever they want to say about you, and that is, that's how they feel. That's that projection, there, that's not really, that's not who you are. That's not your identity. How do you see yourself is how you should lead yourself, and not how other people perceive you are what people say about you. So, that was instilled in me early on of, who is (Participant E's name)? How does (Participant E's name) see herself? How does she define herself? Her own image, through her own eyes, through her own lens, is the only one that she needs to walk through, not other people, because if she lead by letting other people dictate that, then they're going to be able to control and maneuver her life. Even if things don't go your way, and you may fall short sometimes, don't look at it as a negative aspect. Try to come from it of seeing, what is this trying to teach you? So, what can you learn from this? Not how, oh, this defeated me! So now I'm

> going to give up? No! How can you turn that into motivation and drive? So, that's my upbringing.

Participant F also described themselves as "very" resilient and described their experiences related to racial and gender discrimination. Participant F shared,

> Unfortunately, because of my gender and color of my skin, and that takes a lot to come back from when you know automatically going in, ah, that may be one of the biggest knocks against you. Um, so, I definitely see myself as resilient. I feel that I have to be resilient because I am not always seen as equal due to my gender and race. Even in times when my credentials speak for me, I still have so much to prove to certain individuals. Choosing to get up and do this challenging work daily and receiving the client feedback I get often are testaments to my resilience.

Participant F described how their upbringing and faith were essential to cultivating resilience and coping with experiences related to racial and gender discrimination. Participant F shared,

> In my career post licensure, I have experienced not feel heard or seen by supervisors when communicating the need for more ethical practices, improved operating procedures, etc. I can recall times when I made recommendations and they were overlooked because I did not fit the part of an individual who would have a valid opinion or idea. In certain instances, the only gratification came from learning about or seeing the changes I recommended being implemented - eben if someone else took the credit. I'm reminded of a time when I worked for a specific

employer where biases were openly used more than once and I was reminded of a speech my father gave me before starting college at Baylor University. He told me to imagine standing in a line of ten students - male a female of 5 different races. He let me know that if we all made an A in a class, my A would have to be the highest A to be looked at and even then, because I am a Black woman, even that may not be enough. My father encouraged me to not allow the ignorance of others to deter me and to remember my value and my worth. Always remember that knowledge would be my power and that I needed to gain as much of it as I could while embarking on that journey of higher education. That lesson was likely the blueprint to how I handled myself in challenging situations going forward and motivated me to persevere in the midst of adversity, bias, and inequality…Um, something I talked about with before recently with my husband, I had a lot more male figures in my life growing up, and, by God's grace, ah, they were positive male figures. I always had someone tell me how beautiful I was, how smart I was, how amazing I was, so that definitely helped to shape and mold, how I saw myself. Um, and even how I dealt with other young ladies. It gave me a passionate heart to pour into young ladies. When I went to undergrad, I went to, attended, graduated from, let me say that correctly, I graduated from Baylor University, in Waco. I think at the time was one of the like nineteenth poorest cities in the United States, and just the amount - the need that was there for the young ladies, teen and tween age girls. Um, the need for positivity was vast. One

> mission during that time was to give to other young girls what I received and pray that they pay it forward to someone else. I lived by the "each one teach one" motto. I took what I got from my village, all of the positivity I got from my village, um, and did my best to impart that toward and pay it forward. I can't go back and thank my parents, um, for every little thing. I can't go back and thank my grandfathers for everything, my uncles, my aunts, for all that they did to support me growing up, but I could pay it forward to somebody else. So, I guess I can't necessarily attribute it to one person, specifically. But I would definitely say, as a whole, my village.

Participant G also described how their upbringing and faith were essential to cultivating resilience. Participant G shared,

> Um, I think from an early age I'm just, you know, which I think everybody has a story right? So, I just feel like I have a story where I've had some difficult times in life, but I've been able to overcome them and succeed. Whether it's education wise, whether it's family, um, you know, family illnesses, deaths, etc. Um, yeah, I, I just have a story like I think many people do. And I feel like I've been able to overcome them and learn from them and just develop from them. (pause)… I grew up in a household where trying to use my words like, you know, children didn't really have a voice. Right? So, I think it's just, you know, observation. And one of the things that I feel like I'm good at is like recognizing patterns. Like seeing a pattern and then recognizing it, and then going in the way that I think

> makes sense compared to the pattern. And so, in terms of being resilient, I think my family was always supportive, always prayerful, um, in that sense, but never really like process your feelings with you. So that was just something I had to like learn to do on my own. So, in terms of cultivating just, you know, I think, observing my mom observing my, you know my family in terms of how they handle things and then continue to persevere.

Participant H described their resiliency developing from their upbringing and ability to overcome stressors, including structural and historical oppression based on class. Participant H shared,

> Well, I would say that, um, I grew up in a low socioeconomic background. Um, and I've been able to cope with those things. I've been able to come back from a lot of those things. I am a first-generation graduate. Um, a lot of things I've seen growing up, um, didn't lead to a career, didn't lead to, to college. High school was like, um, the, the ultimate goal if you finish high school, you, you had it made. But, um, seen a lot of those different type of things, struggle, I feel that I have been able to have, you know, a lot of social support. Um, and actually recover from some of those things that were meant to bring me down… My mother definitely taught me how to be strong. She taught me how to be independent and, and taught me how to hold my head up, no matter where I come from or what I've encountered, to keep pushing.

Participant H also described an experience of how their upbringing helped them

recover quickly from their experience of discrimination in which their overall competence, intellect, and capabilities were challenged and undermined in the supervisory relationship. Participant H explained learning from adversity and using it as motivation:

> Um, it was annoying. It was very frustrating. Um, I, I mean, my feelings were hurt honestly, my feelings were very hurt. I was, um, annoyed, and I felt, um, like I said I felt dumb. That was, that was one of the, the pushes that I need. I'm a person again with resilience. So that's to me, it's like a push, like a push for me to no matter what's going on, or no matter what somebody is attempting to make you feel like, or try to put you in, a label you in a box, you still get out of that box, and you come up rising. So, to me it was like motivation for me, because, um, even though she made me feel like that, or it just made me see things in in a different way. So, that was actually just motivation for me to just continue pushing to do what I've always done… I could have easily been offended, as far as like made it known to her that I was but instead, I feel that you, um, you kill a person with kindness, and it's not like I'm trying to show her anything or make her feel a certain type of way. It was more personal for me because it just let me see how people really are. And in this field, you just really have to stay on your P's and Q's and stay on your, um, do what you need to do ethically, so that you can become a better version of yourself. So, I definitely don't, it may have been the worst experience, as far as now that I've had, and very bothered by that. But

actually, it was a learning experience, too. It was very, it was a learning experience.

Theme 3: Wanting Support of Self-Concept and Mentoring

Given the oppression and marginalization that many Black women face, many participants shared valuing or wanting to experience connection with a supervisor who possessed competency in understanding the nuances of a Black woman's unique gender-racial identity and provided a safe space for Black women professional counselors to show up fully and authentically. Some participants reflected that finance or socioeconomic class barriers were a source of stress that limited their choices in supervision. A supervisor who is aware of the familiar sources of stress among Black female professional counselors can help Black female professional counselors navigate some of these barriers and show up as themselves. The participants shared that they valued or wanted a growth-fostering relationship with their supervisor that supported learning, mutuality, vulnerability, and professional identity development. Many participants shared their appreciation of or desire for culturally responsive supervision. Several participants also reported wanting or valuing mentoring from a Black woman supervisor because they could relate more closely to a Black woman's lived experiences. However, one participant described the importance of mentoring or supervision from a Black male supervisor.

Participant A described how the mentoring and supervision relationship is essential for helping professional development and navigating barriers to professional

goals. They also explained the importance of the supervisor cultivating growth-fostering spaces that can translate to expanding safety in the community spaces. Participant A shared,

> A mentor is kind of like someone who is maybe in your area of study. Well, for me, my mentor was, or she is, someone who was able to help me get through the process of being a therapist and help me navigate through, or maybe not make some of the same mistakes she did when she was like navigating it. So, like a mentor is like someone who ostensibly has something that you want. But they can help you walk through that, and maybe not make some of the same mistakes they did, but also recognizing you're still gonna make mistakes. But they can just kind of help you guide, guide you through that… I feel like a mentor can be a chosen parent whereas your parents who birth, you are like your biological parents because they, they can offer different things, you know, if I'm, if I'm a, like for me, my mentor is a therapist, and she helped me get through, you know. I met her doing one of my internships and she helped me, you know. Get me licensed through supervision, you know, like. She helped me with all of that which my parents could have. I guess. Technically my mom could have done because she's a therapist as well. But her job was to be my mom, and you know, and my mentor's job was to help navigate me through that space. At that time…supervision means growth. If, I had to pick like a word. Because I mean the whole, the point of the supervision is to help you grow in whatever it is that

> you're doing. So, both parties grow as either the supervisor which I've been, or the supervise which I've also been. It, you should grow regardless of what position you're in. So, I would think supervision for me is a level of growth… My expectation is that we both grow, and the expectation is to build a networking system, and that's my hope is to build like a village. Yeah. But to build a village of therapists who are comfortable, you know, with each other to a degree, because I mean, that's how you get clients. That's how you, you know network, I mean, that's you know, people won't send you people depending on your style of therapy, or what you do, or practice, or whatever they won't send people your way if they don't trust you. So, supervision is a part of that.

Given their adverse experience of racism and sexism in supervision, Participant A also shared the importance of a supervisor having cultural awareness,

> You know everybody, now, when you renew your license, you have to take a multicultural CEU. You know that wasn't always the case. So, you know, just being aware that there's a multicultural aspect to every person and try to do your best. If you, I'll say, if you know that you cannot, if you know that you're not able to not inflict harm, then don't work with people of color, which is a possibility. You can, you can just work with your, your culture and make a lot of money and be okay with that.

Similarly, Participant B described how the mentoring and supervision relationship is essential for helping professional development and navigating barriers to professional

goals. Participant B also described the importance of the supervisor cultivating growth-fostering spaces by providing accountability, being straightforward in communication, and helping cultivate emotional awareness and clinical skills. Participant B described a mentor as "someone that provides guidance" and shared,

> Someone who holds you accountable and helps you reach whichever goals that you have set. (pause) Someone that is reliable… So, I would say finding a supervisor who has the same, who is in a role that I desire to be in, meaning if I wanted to be in private practice, finding a super, supervisor who was in private practice and could actually like provide guidance on how to run a private practice. Um, the ins and outs. Someone, a supervisor who is competent in writing progress notes, and what they should look like. (long pause) A supervisor who, who does point out when they notice that maybe I didn't handle that situation. And this is, this probably would have been a better way. (long pause) …Um, the willingness to correct when I, or when a person is heading in the wrong direction. Provides the knowledge needed to be competent in the whatever role that they are in. Providing constructive feedback (pause) and affirming when things are going well… I expect, I expect supervisors to, to practice creating or teaching clinicians how to be in tune with their own emotions while being in sessions with other clients, and how that affects the rapport. How it affects the clients feeling of safety. How it affects the, um, the whole therapeutic experience. I expect (pause) to learn competencies to be an effective clinician, ethical and um, (pause)

> clinically. I expect open, clear communication…I remember in supervision, not being able to tell my supervisor that he was wrong about what he had told me some information about with regards to having two supervisors. He said it wasn't possible that you couldn't do that, so I needed to, um, remove my first supervisor. (pause) He was so adamant about it, but I knew that you can have more than one. And I didn't argue. I just said, okay, and I removed my other supervisor. So, there was no, it wasn't a safe environment where I felt like I could share or challenge. (pause) Supervising became dreadful.

Given Participant B's "dreadful" supervision experience where their supervisor did not establish mutuality and support of vulnerability, they also reflected that "um, I would change my counsel or my supervisor, I would, would have found someone who was in trauma, and I probably would have looked for a Black woman." Participant B also reflected on the impact of limited finances on their supervision experience. Participant B shared,

> Well, I think, not that you should have asked, but I think I want to share that one of the reasons why I went with him was because of his fees were lower than anyone else. And I'm wondering if that was because if that was a reason coming out of grad school, not really having, like this full time, full pay, fully licensed., receiving cash pay clients or full insurance reimbursements, leaves a recent grad pretty, a little struggling. And so having that supervision is an added cost to already getting pay low wages as an intern, probably influenced my decision to go

with him as opposed to other supervisors.

Participant C also shared valuing mentors or supervisors who supported learning, provided safe spaces free from judgment, were culturally responsive, were authentically available, and willing to "pay it forward". Participant C described a mentor as "someone who listens, doesn't judge, and objectively responds when requested." Participant C shared,

> I had a great supervisor. My supervisory experience was the best. She's the reason I kind of decided I wanted to go on with being a supervisor, and she made herself available for me. It wasn't about making money, it wasn't any of that. It was about a profession that she loved, and she wanted people to be involved in it that loved it, too. And she made herself available to me. Um, we had certain hours, of course, that we did supervision. But if I emailed her and called her and told her I had a client with a particular situation, even after I was out of supervision, she still made herself available to me. She still makes herself available (laughs) to me now. Um, and I do run things past her, ah, from time to time. And so, having relationship, being available when people need you is highly important in this line of work… It means giving back, paying it forward in such a way that we are building, ah, individuals who are passionate about helping others. And, um, I like it so much, I want to make sure that people that are involved in it aren't in it for the money, um, but more than that like, I said that helping relationship… And so counseling, coaching, supervising, mentoring whatever you want to call it, are all

> my ways of paying it for it. I've been very, very blessed to have some great women, men in my life to guide me, lead me, direct me. And so, I hope I have been that for others.

Participant C describe their experience of helping a Black woman professional counselor supervisee navigate financial barriers that impacted their supervision experience as "difficult" and a challenging supervision experience. Participant C shared,

> Um, yeah, I mean it wasn't, it was difficult, because my heart was going one way and, um, one of my supervisees went through a situation where they were not able to pay for supervision. And I had to decide, do I continue to supervise them without pay? Do I suspend them? Which meant they would have lost their job, which also meant they would have lost access to their livelihood. And I really had to seek out a few other counselors, um, cause that had never happened before. Um, and what I did was suspend them for the 60 days that they had asked. Um, they paid a minimal amount to hold their spot because they knew 3 of their friends, um, were trying to get me to supervise them. Um, and I checked in with them weekly, um, for about 10,15 min, just to see how things were going. Um, and when, the 60 days, right before the 60 days were up, they got another position that was paying them, and so forth, and they want it to resume. And so, we, um, went through, you know, resuming them, getting them back in supervision. But it was hard for me on the flip side of that, because I'm not in supervision necessarily for the money but I also didn't want to set a precedent out there that I was going

> to be that supervisor, that if you don't pay, or what have you? Because that's not how I work, and that's not how I rule my life. And so, it really challenged my spiritual side versus my business side, if you will. Um, and it was difficult for she and I think she had some embarrassment, um, or what have you? But we've gotten past it. She's still one of my supervisees, and, um, doing really well, and so, but it was, it was hard for me on a personal note, because I just did not want to suspend her. So, for those 60 days, even though she was working none of her hours counted. We notified the TBHEC, the whole 9, I mean, I went through all the proper channels, but it was very difficult for me, personally. She may not have known that, but it really was.

Although Participant C reported that they had not experienced racism or sexism in supervision, they reported valuing mentoring from a Black woman supervisor because they could relate more closely to a Black woman's lived experiences. Participant C reflected on Black women,

> I think we just have a different perspective on life. We had to fight, work harder, do more than our counterparts, and we understand that, and I don't think our counterparts understand it, not because they're not empathetic, but because they haven't had to live it. Um, and I think Black women instinctively, just know, um, for us to get here, LPCS, 2 master's degrees. You know they know that it came with working hard, student loan debts, I'm still trying to pay, etc. it's an understanding. And again, I have great non-Black LPC friends. I'm the head of

> the Houston Area Independent School Counselors group. Um, and so within that group, I am one of the few Black females. And yet I'm the head of that group. I'm around LPCs all the time. It's not that they're not empathetic because they wouldn't be in the counseling business if they weren't. But they don't understand the struggle because they don't have the same struggle. It's a very different struggle. Um, many of them, you know, I was working full time going to grad school, taking care of twins, etc. Many of them, they don't have to work. They didn't, it came very easy to them. This was like their little, you know, I'll give this a try if it doesn't work, they're not the sole provider. It had to work for me. For many Black women it has to work because we are responsible for so much more. And so, it's just a different perspective, a life that is understood, a journey that is understood. Um, and it may be different, but it's still understood.

In contrast, Participant D reflected on their "awful" supervision experience and described how that experience made them want to become a supervisor. Like the other participants, Participant D explained how their supervision experience engendered a wanting or valuing supervisors or mentors who supported learning, provided safe spaces free from judgment, were culturally responsive, were authentically available, and were able to demonstrate "competency, understanding, and integrity." Participant D shared,

> My supervision experience was awful. (laughs) Um, there was limited guidance, limited feedback. It was truly a situation in which it was like, hey, if you're just here to get your hours and have someone sign off, I am your individual. At the

time that I came out of school there really weren't too many options that I knew about. There were no resources. My school did not do a very good job, or really anything to kind of guide and, and, lend, or be a bridge between, hey, this is school, this is real life. These are the things that you're going to need in between, and these are some resources, these are some places you can go. So, my supervisor was actually a, a psychologist who was an LPC supervisor. And, um, though she was cool though, um, when it comes to note taking and note writing she was, she was very strong in that area. As far as application, guidance, ethical concerns, do's and don'ts, yeah, that was extremely limited to non-existent. And I did not want, um, any clinician to have that experience and wanted to provide them more of a, enriched and fulfilling guidance… My general experiences have been interesting, I would say interesting, kind of disappointing, interesting on the disappointing side. Um, I run into a lot of people who have not had quality supervision. So, there's an assumption there when they go places or when they work certain jobs that they know certain laws or, or know certain skills that they don't know. And it's not that it makes them a bad therapist or an awful therapist as much as there's just a deficit there, there's a lack there. Um, in addition to supervision, I also provide NCE study group training, kind of prepping those who are who are graduating on what comes next. And just the feedback and response is, is that there is a huge lack between school and application. And even though they've well-meaning great intentions, they don't know, they, they don't know

> how to build rapport. They don't know the, the art of therapy that it's actually a dance. It's not very directive, unless you take that approach. They don't fully understand, well, how do I make CBT work for this person? etc. And so, yeah, right now, supervision just needs, ah, needs some help.

As a result of their "awful" supervision experience, Participant D described a mentor as "a person and/or people who not only provide that safe space to learn and to evolve, but they also demonstrate the things that they are lending and teaching." Participant D also described the importance of supervisors providing culturally responsive mentoring where Black women professional counselor supervisees feel respected, safe enough to be vulnerable, and empowered. Participant D shared their expectations when receiving supervision,

> Receiving, however, is more vulnerable because there's a trust factor there. I am trusting that you know information that I don't know, and that you're willingly going to give it to me. Receiving there's a vulnerability there, because it takes me to acknowledge that I don't know what I don't know. Whether I'm embarrassed about it, ashamed about it, maybe it's something I should, quote unquote should have known. There is that vulnerability there that I have to be willing to be open enough to just admit I don't know what I don't know.

Participant D described their experience of cultural underrepresentation and the importance of also receiving supervision or mentoring from a Black man in supporting self-concept, developing professional identity development and opportunities for Black

female professional counselors. Participant D shared,

> I think, I think overall, it impacted my accessibility. Again, um, there weren't too many, um, Black therapists that was supervisors. Um, so, that kind of hindered, who, my options. You know it, that opportunity, maybe glean from somebody else, or even to encounter someone who's a little more like me, on more of the spectrums, more of those you know, the social, ah, the socioeconomic spectrum. Um, the gender spectrum, um, ah, and the race spectrum, right? Ah, so, there weren't a lot of Black supervisors to begin with, and then you narrow that number down to females and that slices another pick. So, I think the biggest part was just, um, the options I had. I took what I could get. Um, and again did not really know anything different… Um, we are, um, Black people in general, we come from a Collectivist, um, people. And that is where we learn best. That is where we shine best is when we are in community, when we learn from one another. Um, instead of the competitiveness, but truly, being a support system can just help anybody period. Um, but it's especially with Black women. And, um, I think having the support of Black men will further that because the honest to God truth is, is that a woman is a woman, and a man is a man. And a man's voice is heard, ah, in all, in all different realms. And so, I feel like having the support of Black men, I would love to see more Black men in the counseling space, period. Lord bless it! I think, with that support, some of our needs, some of our wants, some of the things that we're seeing would be taken a lot more seriously, then kind of minimized and

> dumb down to oh, you're just complaining. You're being bitchy… So, I would say it's the Black male voice in particular, because, socially and culturally speaking, um, there's just a power there, there's a strength there that is authority there, that believe it or not is recognized by all races and all genders. When you go to safety meetings, if you ever go to a safety meeting and they're teaching stranger danger. They will tell you, if you are in danger, as a child or as a woman, you are more likely to get help, if you go to a Black man. That's just bottom line, hands down. They got social, they got psychological studies, no, sociological studies about that. And so, for me, that just speaks volume again to the power and the strength that comes with being a Black man. Um, that we could benefit from quite a bit.

Participant E described how the mentoring and supervision relationship is essential for providing guidance, supporting learning, and opportunities for professional growth. They also explained the importance of the supervisor establishing authentic connections and a relationship that fosters trust, empathy, and straightforward communication. Given their adverse experience of having to navigate sexism and racial stereotypes, Participant D also described wanting a "reciprocal relationship" with a supervisor because it would support a connection that mitigates being misunderstood by the supervisor. Participant E shared,

> A mentor, a mentor to me is basically someone who is like a trusted advisor. A person that I can go to that only that does not only advise or train, but someone

that I can call a colleague or a friend. Someone that I can go to for guidance or direction. So, that's what I would say a mentor would be for me… In the supervisor, three most important things in a supervisor for me would be is going back to that guidance. Um, is going back to someone who can teach, because not everyone can teach. But they are good at what they're, what they do. And someone who is, someone that you can trust. So, I'm big on big on trust. That's, that's very big for me. So, person that provides guidance, person that can teach, and a person that you can trust. Those were, would be those things for me that I would look into for a supervisor. Someone that I can trust. Because I mean, if I, if I can't trust you, how can I? How can I let you lead me? How can I let you advise me or guide me? So, (pause) supervision, supervision. So, I was saying this is where I can go, and I can have this person to where I can talk to about the things that I'm learning, or I can go to, to get that critical feedback from. Someone who is not going to put me in a situation or direct me into doing something that isn't, that isn't the correct the correct way. So, being able to support me in that relationship that we have being able to address, you know, to talk to them, to address any, you know, issues or, or collaborations, or just opportunities, to be able to learn and develop and grow. So, my hopes for supervision is that when someone is looking for a supervisor within supervision is that they are making sure that they are communicating their needs. Um, my hopes for supervision is that the relationship is reciprocal. So, meaning that just because that person is

being supervised from that person that we both can learn and grow from each other and support each other. So, that would be my hopes. My fears and super, for supervision is that the Supervisor isn't able to communicate whatever those organization needs are. Or instead of being able to support and provide guidance when they critique is not, welcoming feedback. My fear is that within supervision, that the individual is put in a position to where they're they feel inadequate, due to the fact of the role of the supervisor…so my expectations would be for supervision, is that that person is knowledgeable. Um, and I know that they won't know every single thing, but being able to communicate and say, well, hey, you know I'm not, I'm not well versed in that area. But how about we both go ahead, and we do some research on it, and then we come back together and share those things and move accordingly to what we have learned. Um, also being able to, I'm going back to that reciprocal relationship, making sure that that reciprocal relationship is there between the supervisor and that supervise throughout the supervision process.

Given their experience of sexism, racism, and cultural underrepresentation, Participant E also described the importance of receiving supervision or mentoring from a Black woman in supporting self-concept, mutuality or an understanding of shared experience, and professional development for Black female professional counselors. Participant E shared,

For Black women receiving supervision, for me, I would say, receiving that

> supervision from another Black woman. To be able to see someone in a position that you may be trying to go into can always help with motivating you. Because now you're like, wow, we are here. We can do these things. Being a Black woman and being a supervisor to other Black women, is taking their hand and walking with them versus letting them figure it out on their own… You know learning documentation from a Black person's perspective, because we know that a lot of the books and a lot of those things have has been written, not by us, and you know, providing those resources for the, the material that has been written by us and for us. And utilizing that material to be able to help you build and grow in your profession as that counselor.

Participant F described how the mentoring and supervision relationship is effective when the supervisor is competent in cultivating growth-fostering relationships, promoting professional development, supporting learning, and validating and affirming the experiences of Black women professional counselors. They also described the importance of the supervisor engaging in mutually empathetic and empowering relationships supporting Black women professional counselors' spiritual beliefs and intersecting identities. Participant F shared,

> In my own supervision, I think I had a very culturally competent supervisor. Um, while she was not Black, ah, she, she, did a great job, in fact, I did a triadic and group supervision with the same supervisor. Our group was multicultural, and she did, I think, a great job of, um, welcoming the cultural differences, not glossing

over them with, the “I don’t see color” position. I always say please see my color. It is very evident, it’s there, please see it. She didn’t look over it and say, okay, well, I don’t see color, or I don’t see your differences from my position in a seat of privilege. It was very much so her asking and inquiring, “hey, how do you see this issue?”, ah, “culturally, how do you see it?…Um, so, having people support me spiritually, was one aspect of mentoring for me, and then, um, kind of pushing me to get out of my shell. Um, and kind of encouraging my gifts, if you will. I define a mentor as an individual or individuals who support, teach, encourage, and motivate toward growth, positivity, and change in the lives of their mentee. This can be in the area of one’s career, faith/religion, personal growth, etc. I was fortunate to have faith-based mentors in high school and college, academic mentors in teachers and administrative staff in high school, and career mentors in professors and individuals whom I had the privilege of shadowing throughout my undergraduate and graduate careers… The 3 most important things I feel are needed in a supervisor are understanding how the supervisee learns, being willing to challenge thinking/actions/technique, being honest about what really happens in the work that therapists do daily whether in an agency or private practice setting. I’d add a 4th in that it is important for the supervisor to be patient and trust the counseling process. Supervision means being held accountable, being taught, being challenged, and encouraged by one’s supervisor. In the supervision process, the supervisee is able to present cases, reflect on what is going well,

> reflect on areas of clinical improvement, be challenged to think outside of the box with effective interventions, etc.… My hopes for supervision are for the supervisor to continue learning alongside the supervisee. I can't begin to tell you how much I learn from clients daily and as the supervisor, it is beneficial to learn from and teach supervisees in the moment to help mold them into the best clinical version of themselves. My fear in supervision is for ethical practices/ of some supervisees and supervisors throughout the supervision process due to the, the potential for corners to be cut and critical information to be imported to the supervisee when needed. My expectations are for supervisors to be diligent with continuing education, diligent with board rules, and diligent with their ability to be patient and adjust as needed when the supervisee needs additional help, hand holding, etc. In my own supervision experience, I feel that I worked with a culturally competent supervisor who was respectful and aware of cultural differences among the individuals in my supervision group. I also feel that she was receptive to learning about my culture through my lens.

Although Participant F described the value of having a Black woman supervisor in supporting the self-concept and mentoring Black women professional counselor supervisors, they emphasized the diversity of Black women's experiences and the importance of the supervisor demonstrating cultural humility and creating an affirming and welcoming space despite the supervisor's race. Participant F shared,

> I don't think they have to be Black. That sounds weird to say that as a Black

woman. I don't feel like (inaudible) you need to be Black be to be able to relate to or empathize with or understand. Um, it's a plus, if they are but it's it's, it's almost weird to say not all Black is the same (chuckles). Um, because I can't quite say it is. It's helpful, but it's not a must, if you ask me. Yeah, it's just not a must… The cultures of the households that we grew up in share a lot of similarities but a lot of huge differences. I remember when we, um, 1st moved back to the city we're living in now, where we're from. and we got engaged shortly thereafter. I remember the first weekend home, we went to his aunt's house after church on Sunday. And I was like, "okay, we're going to go visit your aunt, okay, great". Well, the next Sunday after service again. we go back to this same aunt's house. I was like, oh, we're going again. Oh, okay, cool. No, no problem." The 3rd Sunday I was like "Bro again? We are seeing them every weekend?" Well, culturally, that's what his family did. Everyone met at this, this great aunt's house, and everyone had dinner together every week. Whereas I grew up in a family where we mostly saw one another for holidays and maybe a couple of times throughout the year. This even applied to a relative who lived 4 to 5 houses down the street. My mom always says, "seldom visits make longtime friends." Some of her closest friends (inaudible) whom she [my mom] doesn't see often, are visited once a year or once every 2 years, And so, I use that example to say, the culture of what happens or what it means to be a Black woman in one house may be different, for what it means to be a Black woman in someone else's

home. In some homes/families/groups, Black women are seen as the ones who have the babies…They stay home with their kids; they raise their kids. Education may or may not be important. Whereas in another households, Black women are supposed to go to school, they're supposed to be educated. They may get married, and they may have kids. The family, the environment, the culture, and social and familial expectations may be different from one family to the next. I actually learned today about a woman in her 80s voted for the 1st time because she was no longer told by her late husband that she did not need to vote as a woman. She lived her entire life and never voted because she was told she couldn't by her husband, and it took him passing away since the last election for her to be able to cast her first ballot. What it means to be a woman, how a woman's role is defined, and how she is perceived is diverse - especially for a Black woman. I was raised as a Black woman to be independent to make my own decisions, and if I have a partner - great… phenomenal. I can collaborate with my partner to make decisions. But I also need to be capable of making my own decisions and being self-sufficient. That was something that was taught to me by both parents. However, some people didn't grow up in a household where, you know, they were taught as Black women to be self-sufficient, to go get their education, etc. Some Black women don't grow up with the expectation of a father being around. Mine has always been around. But that's not the story for some, and it's not the story for all. So, I would definitely say that experience and lessons

observed and taught can dictate how a Black woman carries herself, how she lives her life, and what she expects for herself.

Participant G described the importance of a supervisor or mentor's role in providing guidance, gatekeeping, and supporting both professional and personal development. Participant G shared,

> Um, to me, a mentor looks or means someone who's able to provide guidance, knowledge, um, yeah, guidance and knowledge. Helping you know more than what I would know a mentor would, ah, maybe add some perspective to life. Or you know whether, whether it's work or personal life. Yeah… So, um, I think for me, um, I'll kind of, you know, mash the two up, I guess. Um, I think leadership skills, which is not just somebody in a leadership role, right. So, someone who has vision, um, somebody who can be of influence, someone who is knowledgeable also. Yeah, so, I think leadership skills. I think, that's, that's, that's gonna be a site supervisor, right. So, I think in terms of clinical supervisor, I think someone with a well-rounded, um, experience, is helpful, not just someone who has a like a narrow experience, um, professional experience. That would be for clinical supervisor. And then, I think, um, for super for clinical supervisor, something that's important is that, that they've done their work, right. Like they're not imposing on, or and I think actually, that that's, that's for both. So, I think, for both the ability to allow autonomy… Um, supervision to me just means a watchful eye. (laughs) Not, I mean, honestly, yeah, just, just a watchful eye. Um,

> supervision, I do understand there's, there's a liability to it, you know, on the part of the Supervisor. But I think you know the over like a general way to describe it is just being a watchful eye…I mean, you know, good, bad, indifferent, like just, um, just being able to notice right, and then be able to, to interject, if necessary, whatever it looks like. That might be a compliment, because you did something good, or a watchful eye might be maybe there's a concern for safety or liability, and something like they need to interject right. So, it doesn't have to be good or bad, you know, or, or one, one versus the other versus just both, like they're not looking for anything in particular. They're just noticing, what's occurring.

Like the other participants, Participant G highlighted that the supervisor needs to be competent in cultivating growth-fostering relationships, supporting autonomy, supporting learning, and validating and affirming the experiences of Black women professional counselors to "allow a person to develop into who they are, not necessarily who you want them to be." Participant G shared,

> Yeah. I will say that my fears is being grossly misunderstood. Right so, and, and I'll, I'll use another word which is like inclusivity, like I think the fear is not being able to show up is who I am. And then people not mistaking that right. I think as a woman, as a Black woman, you can, you know there's a lot of assumptions and boxes you could be placed in. So, I think that's the fear is, is really just being misunderstood. Um, let me distinguish between hope and expectation. Um, my expectation is that a supervisor has, like exhibits, positive regard for me, right.

Just have no other, um, intentions or motives other than to do what their job is to do. I'll say that's my expectation. It's just have positive regard. My hope for supervision is to be able to grow, to develop like that's, that's the idea, right. You can have supervision and not do either one… Okay. I've had positive ones, and I've had not, you know, um, and I'll kind of distinguish the two. Early in my career, when I was working at the nonprofit, I had a supervisor who absolutely knew what she was doing but expected me to be her. Yeah, just expected me to be her, and I wasn't her by personality, or anything, or experience, or anything else. So, um, there's that. I've had a wonderful supervisor before, Site Supervisor, who was, who, I felt was, probably, ah, has made one of the biggest impacts on me, which was just someone who was trusting, right. Um, I used to work at a place where you used to have to staff everything like it was a managed care company, and you used to have the staff literally every single call. There was no decision that you could make without touching bases with somebody. And I transitioned to this other role, and this person was like I would call to quote unquote staff, and they'd be like anything you choose, I'll support, right. And I'm like, what who says that? Like, you don't even know me. But, but I think overall that helped me develop like not allowing me to rely on them, as I had relied previously, allowed me to develop. And at the time, I mean, I wasn't upset at the time. I just was like, oh, my God! How do I? I just didn't have the confidence I needed right, to just rely on my own clinical judgment. But that definitely pushed me into that space

> like absolutely pushed me into that space like someone just saying, I trust you. But if you know, but if you're concerned, something's gonna go wrong. Give me a heads up like that was like what like that was psychological safety at its finest… um, I've had another workplace supervisor who it, it wasn't as positive. Um, I don't think (sighs) the, you know, I don't think he had bad intentions, but I, I do feel like he was incompetent. Like grossly incompetent. And, um, yeah, I just feel like he was grossly incompetent. Um, so, there wasn't much support that I felt like I needed or wanted from that particular person.

Like Participant F, Participant G described the value of having a Black woman supervisor in supporting the self-concept and mentoring Black women professional counselor supervisors but also emphasized the diversity of Black women's experiences and that Black women also have their biases. Participant G shared,

> Other professionals. I mean, it's, it's great if they're Black women. But Black women still have their own like, they only see through, I'm not saying that they only, but us as humans, we, we see through a certain lens, right. And so, everybody's gonna have blind spots. So, when I say other professionals, it could be other Black women, but it could just be professionals in general. Like really pay attention to more of the trends and the patterns than just one person telling you a set of information.

Participant G also reflected on the impact of limited finances on the supervision experience of many Black women. Participant G shared,

So, I guess I'll answer this from the perspective of like clinical supervision, cause supervision is supervision in the workplace. But considering supervision, um, you know, that's interesting because I don't even know honestly, when I got super like clinical supervision, I was just trying to find somebody who I can afford like it wasn't even it wasn't even been anything difficult. Now, granted, I got what I paid for. (laughs). But I mean, you know, you're in survival mode at a certain time, you know, like I just didn't have a hundred dollars per session to pay people in 2005, 2006, right. So, I don't even know what feedback I would give them in terms of supervision, cause I realize clinically that isn't just the, that isn't just based on desire. It's based on ability, financially. Or and, and or time wise, like depending on how, you know, what your schedule looks like. And once again, you know, once you graduate with your master's degree, you're not making money like you're still, you just got a master's degree, you know. So, you know, I think we all recognize that like you don't make the money until you get the license, but until then you still got bills. You're still paying rent, gas, ah, food, all of the requirements. So, um, you do what you can do to get by, right. Um, I remember at the time someone was like, who are you being supervised by? And I told her, and she was like, well, how much is she? And I she was like, oh, is that a good supervisor? I remember the person asking me like, well, that's really cheap, because the person I go to is a hundred dollars a, a session, or, you know, a supervisor, and I'm like who got $400 extra to give the supervisor? But like I'm

barely living at the moment. So, that's definitely not, not an option… But considering supervision, um, you know, that's interesting because I don't even know honestly, when I got super like clinical supervision, I was just trying to find somebody who I can afford like it wasn't even it wasn't even been anything difficult. Now, granted, I got what I paid for. (laughs). But I mean, you know, you're in survival mode at a certain time, you know, like I just didn't have a hundred dollars per session to pay people in 2005, 2006, right. So, I don't even know what feedback I would give them in terms of supervision, cause I realize clinically that isn't just the, that isn't just based on desire. It's based on ability, financially. Or and, and or time wise, like depending on how, you know, what your schedule looks like…And once again, you know, once you graduate with your master's degree, you're not making money like you're still, you just got a master's degree, you know. So, you know, I think we all recognize that like you don't make the money until you get the license, but until then you still got bills. You're still paying rent, gas, ah, food, all of the requirements. So, um, you do what you can do to get by, right. Um, I remember at the time someone was like, who are you being supervised by? And I told her, and she was like, well, how much is she? And I she was like, oh, is that a good supervisor? I remember the person asking me like, well, that's really cheap, because the person I go to is a hundred dollars a, a session, or, you know, a supervisor, and I'm like who got $400 extra to give the supervisor

Participant H described themselves as mentors and the importance of mentoring relationships in helping Black female professional counselors become competent professionals. Participant H explained that supervisors can support Black female professional counselors' professional development by understanding the challenges faced by professionals with marginalized identities and providing a sense of safety by fostering empowerment, developing trust, having cultural humility, and being accessible and available. Participant H also voiced that receiving mentoring and supervision from a Black woman is "beneficial" to the self-concept and professional development of Black women professional counselor supervisors. Participant H shared,

> I am actually a mentor. A mentor is somebody that you can actually go to, to give you professional, um, guidance. Um, that's what a mentor means. To be somebody that I look up to. Somebody who is credible. Somebody who, um, is trustworthy. A person who actually, that I can really confide in when it comes to certain things. Um, as, as far as professional growth, yeah… Um, um, what, I would say, availability for one. I know that a lot of supervisors, they'll probably have other jobs, other supervisees that they have. But availability is something that I think is needed more, um, in the LPC field for sure. Just time. Understanding, um, and they're willing to help. A lot of I don't have that much experience with a lot of supervisors, but I do have a good experience and a bad experience with, um, with supervisors. So, basically, time, knowledge, um, understanding, and, um, being humble, yeah… supervision to me means,

> correction, um, guidance, um, understanding, um, and leadership, too. Um, because, um, I want to be able to say that I learned a lot from my supervisor. Everything that I, I've learned, and any questions that I've had, I want, I want to say that I had a great supervisor. A great supervisor, somebody that goes above and beyond to, to assist with, with you and make you understand to your level of understanding. Hum, well, being an African American in this field, there's for one, there's not many, many African Americans, um, in this field for one. Um, for two, I think that the future, I think the future needs more people like us that are willing to just like help cause I keep veering towards the bad experience I had with a supervisor. I just want supervisors to, um, to be humble and to help. And I think that's what super, that's what I really, I just want to be helped… I feel that, um, supervisors, they should go through some, some type of training or something, because everybody cannot be a good supervisor. My fear is that, um, a supervisor may, um, hinder another person from reaching their goals if they're not knowledgeable of what's going on. Yeah, that's it.

Theme 4: Taking Ownership of Personal and Professional Growth

Taking ownership of personal and professional growth is the data analysis's final theme and reflects the over-arching narrative within the data. Despite the many stressors and challenges that the participants described experiencing when navigating systemic discrimination and marginalization because of their gender-racial identity, the participants' storied supervision experiences expressed a need for self-advocacy and

taking ownership of promoting personal and professional growth. Participants in this study shared their perspectives on owning their personal and professional development and resources that would support Black women in becoming competent and successful professional counselors. Participant A described feeling empowered by their experience overcoming adversity, commitment to lifelong learning, positive supervision and mentoring experiences, and matriculation. Participant A described wanting to leverage their experiences and success to empower others. Participant A shared,

> I was just gonna say, like, you know, because of this, the way I present to people when I tell them these stories, they're shocked because they're like that's wild, and I'm, like, and because I, I come across, you know as chill, or, you know, well spoken, or because, you know, I have all these 7,000 letters behind my name. It puts more validity. You know people respect what I'm saying or believe the story that I'm telling them. So, it's like, I need not say I needed to experience these things, but because of who I am in these stories that I can tell people that I've witnessed firsthand. It'll help someone who's less educated than I am, or who can't speak as well as I can to. Maybe someone will give them just an ounce of belief that they probably wouldn't have had I not interacted with them.

Because they successfully navigated racism and sexism, Participant A also recommended that Black women professional counselors become their advocates and seek out supportive communities to sponsor their self-concept and professional growth. Participant A shared,

> I would say, try your best to work, that whatever company you work for, that they have a diverse population of employees. If that's possible. Sometimes it's not because what I found in both of those situations that I expressed to you; I was in upper management, but I was the only, I was mid to upper management, but I was the only Black person, at least in that department of that could, that would, that was in that position. And I was the most educated, the most credentialed out of all of those people. So, my suggestion would be try to find a place that has levels of multiculturalism in it. Kind of built into the fabric of the company, because when, when you are in a situation like that, you're less likely to experience some of the stuff that you can just tell that these people want you around versus, they're tolerating you… Yeah. And if you have to go, if you have to go through it and not because the resources aren't there, then you have to work to build a community outside of that which is where, like some of these Facebook groups come into play, where you can have dialogue with people and, and talk about things or explain situations so that people can validate like, no, you're not crazy. They are wild.

Participant B described regretting not using their voice and staying in a "dreadful" supervisory relationship where they experienced disconnection and the relationship did not foster personal and professional growth. Although the supervisor was of the same race, Participant B described being adversely impacted by sexism. Nonetheless, Participant B wanted to use their experience of navigating discrimination to help

empower other Black women. Participant B shared,

> So, my, my supervisor was Black, and so I was hoping that that would help with any type of racial biases and helping me to be able to connect with client who are the same cultural background. (long pause) But I was now not able to connect with him. And I do think that that may be because of the gender. (long pause) So, I wasn't able to utilize my strengths, to really understand how to encounter clients who are men… If I had that, those opportunities, if that environment was inviting, I would definitely have felt more equipped, going into private practice on my own. Or just entering into a private practice, you know private practice… Well, I'm a little a little anxious (long pause) but also, also kind of curious cause, I, I never really kind of talked about it. And now, I'm just like wondering like, what would have been, if I, (long pause) how many lives or how many more clients could I have reached and, and helped on their journeys.

Participant B recommended that Black female professional counselors take ownership of seeking "that safe space" and take responsibility for their personal and professional growth. Participant B stated,

> That if you don't have that connection, if you don't have that safe space, that it's okay to look for a supervisor, where you can have that, where there is, the opportunity to, in which the, the supervisor can foster growth… I think that, making sure, well, I honestly feel that, having the ability or having access, or, it's going through counseling yourself to talk about these experiences and get

feedback from clinicians and working through what's been experienced and how to navigate and advocate.

Participant C reflected on the impact of barriers to Black female professional counselors achieving successful professional development, such as cultural underrepresentation, systemic racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression. Participant C described the impact of oppression and stereotypes on Black women professional counselors' mental health, emotional expression, and interpersonal relationships. Participant C recommended that Black female professional counselors take ownership of their healing and professional growth by seeking counseling, community, and mentorship from other professionals who can understand and provide caring and collaborative mentorship to Black women professional counselors. Participant C shared,

> I was one of the only Black women in my counselor education classes when I was at Sam Houston, and so, um, and I'm still friends with the two women that I was with from various parts of the program. Um, but I think doing that, um, and I think finding some counselor, um, for oneself because as a culture don't really do much counseling. And yet that has not been beneficial for us as a people. Um, we hide things, we keep secrets forever. We go to our grave with crap. And so, those 16 weeks I mentioned that I did, counseling for myself was eye-opening and it was with a Black female, and so very good for me. So, I think one of the things that supervisors should do, especially Black women, is seek another Black woman to counsel with. Um, maybe not in your immediate circle, but definitely, someone

who understands life as a Black woman…We were raised to, you know what happens in the house stays in the house, mentality. Um, that is a generational, thing amongst Black people in general and so, we, we go to work, we go to school, we go to church, whatever. And we have our best foot forward, and no one knows, based on the way we look, the way we dress, that we are struggling inside. That is how we were raised, and we unfortunately still do that to an extent that has not been beneficial, in my opinion, for Black people. And that is one of the strengths and weaknesses of Black women. When Black women in general, that we can hide how we're feeling when we're hurt, when we're sad, when we're lonely, when we're, you know, whatever it is, we've been taught to not show it. Not just us, Black men don't show it either, but, um, at some point that weighs on you and the way to get that weight off is to have us somebody, somebody, something that can help you release some of that. And you know many of our culture goes to drug and alcohol, um, promiscuity, all sorts of stuff. Um, Black women, although they're in all of that, too. Um, we can hide it for longer, and that makes it more dangerous for us. Um, you know the numbers of women, Black women, still dying from heart disease and strokes, and so forth, is still higher than our counterparts. And I think it's because we've not yet learned to give some of those old ways up and be honest with somebody. U, and like, I said, those 16 weeks of counseling was the hardest thing ever. But on this side, I can say I needed it. And I think any person in counseling that has never gone through

> counseling should be ashamed of themselves. Um, because it's truly different sitting on the other side of the sofa. Um, and something worth experiencing and for Black women, probably even more vital. Um, to help them be better. Yeah, that's just my opinion… Um, there are a couple of Facebook groups that are just for Black women. Um, I think it would be great to join those groups. I'm a member of one of them. I can't even think of the name of it right this minute. But collaborating with women who most of the time grew up like I did, obviously educated, etc. Um, is always helpful because you do get a different perspective. Um, and I know Black women get a bad rap from time to time, but we are loving, kind individuals, but we're also women who because of just life, um, our patience goes so far. Our tolerance goes so far, and so we have limits, boundaries. Um, and I just think it's good to, to find one of those groups connect oneself with other Black supervisors, other Black counselors that are able to be there for you. I am blessed at my church. There is probably ten other Black women who are LPCs or LMFTSs, um, and so we are often in Sunday school together, or different women's groups together, and it is nice to be able to collaborate and chat about the profession with them. So, I think, being in some type of group where you are around other people like yourself is important, and that you don't see that a lot.

Similarly, given the many systemic barriers to success that Black female professional counselors face, Participant D recommended they take ownership of their personal and professional growth by advocating for themselves and seeking counseling,

supportive mentorship, and community. Participant D shared,

> Um, I think supervises should know to push for what works for you and push for what you want. Um, unfortunately, until we figure this thing out. It's you're really going to have to be a self-starter. So, interview these supervisors. Are, you guys have the same values? Are you guys on the same page? Quality versus quantity. Yes, anybody could sign a piece of paper, I mean, you know. Pay me enough, I'll sign a piece of paper. But this is your career. This is your journey. You are going to be impacting and imparting information on to others. Therefore, if, if it doesn't work for whatever reason do not be afraid to pivot. Do not be afraid to find that other person… I would say, a community of other Black people. But we can start with just a community. Um, growing up in a space, um, in high school and in college, where I was one of few. You can, you can still glean from that community. Um, having that support is better than being in it by yourself. Um, even if that support is still limited, right? So, first, just focusing on allow allowing yourself to have a community, having allowing yourself to receive help, to give help, allowing yourself just to kind of fall apart and the rest, and be around people you can trust for, for that. That's important. But if we're talking about, you know, high in the sky hopes upon our hopes, then eventually yes, moving to a space of people who know who you are, know what certain things mean without having to explain or educate.

Participant E recommended that Black women professional counselors refrain

from subjecting their authentic identity to navigate environments where White perspectives hold privilege and instead transform the pain from adverse experiences to motivation for promoting personal and professional success. They also recommended seeking support in culturally inclusive communities and mentorship. Participant E shared,

> Oh, for me, I would say, you know, get in tune with who you are. And always be yourself. Um, because when you know yourself, it's easy for you to walk in arenas. But when you, and I'm going to use this for lack of a better word. When you try to mimic another person, or it's almost like a chameleon, or are trying to become a chameleon, you have a tendency to hurt yourself more than anything. But when you lead by your own example, and can present with yourself, you will never fall short. And whatever life journey that you have, that, or that you have been going through, don't look at it from a negative connotation. Ask yourself, what can you do to, lead a better, lead from a better position to than where you are now. How can you? What was those things that you can see that, that's good from what another person would consider a failure. Cause life isn't about failures. Life is about opportunities, but there's sometimes where that opportunity that you might have wanted, may have not came through, and it might not be because you were inadequate of receiving it. Now is, hey! Be truthful and honest with yourself. Were you in a position to where you could have sustained in it, if you would have moved into it at that moment at that time. And if you're truthful and honest with yourself, the answer might be no. And if the answer is no, then what are those

> things that you could do to be able to bring yourself to being able to be in that arena, or to be in that room. How to take something that you look at and perceive as pain, and use it to be able to thrive from, motivate… Um, resources and support, I would say, you know, there's getting into like different groups. Ah, or if there isn't a group, you know, getting in a group where you are with other, um, like-minded, meaning in the same profession or arena. So, that way you can learn. Um, so that will be like networking. Um, also being able to look at like the different platforms that they have out there. Um, listening to, you know different podcasts, you know that support, you know Black women, Black women in the working arena or in the counseling field. And even when it comes to, um, like resources for like documentation and things of that nature. You know learning documentation from a Black person's perspective, because we know that a lot of the books and a lot of those things have has been written, not by us, and you know, providing those resources for the, the material that has been written by us and for us. And utilizing that material to be able to help you build and grow in your profession as that counselor.

Due to their impactful experience of supportive, critical, and collaborative mentorship relationships in offsetting the oppression and marginalization they experienced in supervision, Participant F recommended that Black female professional counselors take ownership of their personal and professional growth by making the appropriate changes, investing in themselves, and by joining "professional organizations

that offer specific subsects for women of color." Participant F shared,

> I feel they should know that just like a provider/ a medical provider - if you need to change, change. Whether it's a supervisor or a job - if you need to change, do that, and don't feel obligated to stay stuck in one position. There are supervisors who are respectful. There are institutions you can work for, where, as the employee, as the clinician, as the supervisee, you can be valued, you will be valued, and everybody won't treat you the same as maybe that, um, negative one did. And so just knowing, while one person can kind of shape how maybe they see supervision. And if it's a negative person, um, that's unfortunate. But even if that person shapes how they see supervision in a negative way, ah, there is hope, knowing there are more positive supervisors out there. There are more positive supervisory experiences out there, and it just takes them, being courageous enough and bold enough to seek out the change that they need. Be diligent and, um, take them, take their time when it comes to interviewing supervisors. You got to pay this person. So, if I'm going to pay you my hard-earned money, and we know that associates don't get, get paid a lot. So, I'm going to pay you the little money that I do have. (chuckles) I want this to be a worthwhile experience. I want to get the value of what I am paying for. So, just being willing to change if they need to. Speak up if they need to. Don't be afraid to communicate, "hey, this isn't working for me, or I need help in this area". I can recall being in triadic supervision with another young lady who was on track to finish her hours around

> the same time as me. One of the things we both asked our supervisor about was how do to segue into private practice. We wanted to know what that looked like. We questioned if we should take that path? You know, what can we expect? And the supervisor was very honest. Down to going into paperwork, like this is what your paperwork needs to look like. This is what your notes need to look like. This is what, the like very specific, if you're going to take insurance, if you're going to do self-pay. She walked us through step by step, which I can't say I got that in school, and I don't really know that they would have done that in school anyway. Um, but you know just having that willingness, um, to teach in whatever form, ah, we needed teaching to be done. That was, was awesome. And then, if you don't feel like you're getting that, seek it somewhere else. Ah, and be willing to seek it somewhere else.

Participant G encouraged Black women professional counselors to connect with other professionals who can provide supportive, critical, and collaborative mentorship to Black women. Participant G also encouraged Black women professional counselors to invest in "soft skills trainings" and "leadership trainings" to overcome oppression and marginalization, develop trust, and become successful professionals. Participant G shared,

> Oh, um, again, I would, I would encourage Black women to just really connect with others around them, right. Like, um, I've had some very supportive Black women around me that have taught me some things where I'm like, oh, okay, this

> is how this goes, right. So, I think, and, and that doesn't like, I said, that doesn't just have to be friends and family that could just be colleagues, right. Like being willing to open up and say, hey, if I have any blind spots, do you mind pointing them out to me? I think the best resource is, is, is connecting with others around you, and, and being able to identify patterns, and problem solving… Other professionals. I mean, it's, it's great if they're Black women. But Black women still have their own like, they only see through, I'm not saying that they only, but us as humans, we, we see through a certain lens, right. And so, everybody's gonna have blind spots. So, when I say other professionals, it could be other Black women, but it could just be professionals in general. Like really pay attention to more of the trends and the patterns than just one person telling you a set of information.

Lastly, Participant H recommended that Black female professional counselors take ownership of their personal and professional growth experiences by treating supervision and their wellness as an "investment." Participant H also reflected on the importance of Black women professional counselors "having a support system" and caring and collaborative mentorship to thrive in the profession. Participant H advised,

> You're gonna meet a lot of people in your life, in your path that may not agree with where you are or where you, who you are, where you come from, or what you know. It doesn't matter what you know, and I would just encourage them, um, that what's inside of you, what you know and what you value and what you

> care about is always going to be what you value. And don't let anybody take that from you. And sometimes, you know people, you just have to be the bigger person regardless of it supervisor, manager, because some people are just not professionally mature… you have to have a call, you have to have a group of peers that you can talk to, that you can relate to. I think definitely join in some type of podcast. Um, just having colleagues that are that are in the same mindset with you, just having that peer support is very, um, promising and positive. I think just having that that support system is, is very positive. Hmm, no, just having a support system and building your support system, even if you have to do it yourself. Um, I started a support group on social media with peers throughout Texas. I'm in Texas, but I know people in New York and Georgia and North Carolina that we've been, we have monthly meetings where we talk about different modalities and supervision. We talk about how, um, our clients, not necessarily, we just talk about, you know, the different types of clients and different ways to help and assist. We, we do that, um, every month. But just having a support group just building that support group is most, is, is most important.

Summary

In summary, Chapter 4 provided the data analysis for this qualitative, narrative inquiry. I discussed the research setting, participant demographics, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness evidence, and the study results. Although I used a semi-

structured interview to allow the participants to elaborate on their storied supervision experiences, I used an interview protocol to ensure that participants responded to the same questions. The research question is: how do Black female professional counselor supervisees narrate their supervision experience? The stories of the Black female professional counselors shared commonalities and themes representative of an over-arching narrative within the data. The results of the audio-recorded Zoom interviews with 8 participants uncovered four themes. The four themes that emerged from the study were (1) Navigating gender and racial stereotypes, (2) Relying on perseverance strategies, (3) Wanting support of self-concept and mentoring, and (4) Taking ownership of personal and professional growth.

The theme of navigating gender and racial stereotypes represents the negative attitudes, racialized stress, and invalidation that impacted the participants' storied supervision experiences based on both their race and gender. The theme of relying on perseverance strategies emerged as participants described perseverance strategies used to help them overcome adverse experiences associated with racial and gender discrimination. Given the oppression and marginalization that many of the participants reported experiencing in supervision, the theme of wanting support of self-concept and mentoring emerged from many participants sharing valuing or desiring to experience connection with a supervisor who possessed competency in understanding the nuances of a Black woman's unique gender-racial identity and provided a safe space for Black women professional counselors to show up fully and authentically. Lastly, the theme of

taking ownership of personal and professional growth emerged from the participants' experiences as they navigated a predominately White counseling profession, highlighting the importance of Black female professional counselors taking an active role in improving their supervisory experiences and opportunities for personal and professional success. Participants' responses aligned with four themes that emerged from the study, and there were no significant contradictions or inconsistencies within the data set. In Chapter 5, I will concisely interpret the study's findings, study limitations, social change implications, and recommendations and discuss the implications for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This qualitative narrative study was conducted to understand and capture the lived experiences of Black female professional counselors' storied experiences of supervision. I conducted this study because despite decades of research and the counseling profession's initiatives to promote cultural competence, diversify the counseling profession, and promote inclusion and social justice among its professionals, individuals who identify with marginalized identities continue to experience exclusion, adversity, and lack of support (Bowie et al., 2019; Hall, 2018; Sue et al., 2022; Thacker & Milton, 2020; Thacker et al., 2021). This issue is particularly pronounced for individuals who identify as Black female professional counselor supervisees (Callahan & Love, 2020; Holden et al., 2013; Sue et al., 2007) because of their unique positioning of being marginalized by race, gender, and class. Although growing research highlights that incorporating the perspectives of professionals who identify as BIPOC in research can inform the practice of clinical supervision, create a safe space, and enhance the practice of culturally responsive supervision (Thacker & Milton, 2020; Thacker et al., 2021; Thomas et al., 2019), the perspectives of Black female professional counselor supervisees are currently missing from the existent literature. For this reason, the purpose of this study was to employ narrative inquiry to help understand and illuminate the intricacy of individuals who identify as Black female professional counselor supervisees' experiences of supervision in the form of their own stories help to improve the understanding of what is supportive for teaching and practicing multicultural supervision with Black female

professional counselor supervisees.

The key findings in this study contained four themes that highlight and describe the participants' storied supervision experiences and answer the study's research question: How do Black female professional counselor supervisees narrate their supervision experience? The four themes that emerged from the study were (a) navigating gender and racial stereotypes, (b) relying on perseverance strategies, (c) wanting support of self-concept and mentoring, and (d) taking ownership of personal and professional growth. Although my findings confirmed what already exists in the literature, some slight differences were specific to Black female professional counselors' supervisees. In this chapter, I present an interpretation of these findings within the context of the existing literature, explore the limitations of the study, describe recommendations for future research, and discuss the implications for positive social change.

Interpretation of the Findings

I used narrative inquiry to explore and capture the lived experiences of Black female professional counselors' storied experiences of supervision. The narrative approach allows participants to tell stories of their lived experiences in relational ways that will enable for participants stories to be applied to their own social and cultural context to describe the meaning of the experience of a phenomenon with nuance (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Loseke, 2022; O'Toole, 2018). The narrative approach allows people with marginalized identities to tell their contextualized stories in an unimputed way that magnifies their voices and experiences (Chase, 2018). Black women

continue to experience systemic oppression, discrimination, and unequal power dynamics within society because they identify with marginalized identities at the intersection of race and gender (Bowie et al., 2019; Hall, 2018; Sue et al., 2022; Thacker & Milton, 2020; Thacker et al., 2021). As an African-born, Black, cisgender, able-bodied, heterosexual man, I hold different roles and social identities that could have influenced the relationship with the participant collaborators and my interpretation of the data. I was cognizant of my positionality and how this could shape the representations and interpretations of the participants' storied experiences throughout the narrative inquiry and data analysis process. In this spirit, the participants' narratives revealed the meanings of their storied supervision experiences without containing interpretations of their experiences.

Navigating Gender and Racial Stereotypes

Overall, the study's results aligned with the findings of many researchers on the unique form of discrimination that Black women face in academic and professional settings in the United States because of their gender-racial identity experience (Devost, 2022; Essed, 1991; Hammons et al., 2023; Jones, 2021; Leath & Chavous, 2018; Nelson et al., 2023). As discussed in Chapter 2, Black women report more racial-based hostility in academic and professional settings than other groups with marginalized identities (Devost, 2022; Hammons et al., 2023; Jones, 2021; Leath & Chavous, 2018). Negative imagery and stereotypes about Black womanhood in the United States perpetuate the gendered racism that Black women experience (Essed, 1991; Lewis et al., 2017; Nelson,

2023). All forms of discrimination (i.e., racism, sexism, classism) can be harmful to mental health (Lewis et al., 2017; Nelson et al., 2023). Gendered racism can adversely impact Black women's mental, physical, and emotional health (Lewis et al., 2017; Rosenthal & Lobel, 2020) and create barriers to socialization, learning, and professional identity development (Hammons et al., 2023; Quaye et al., 2023; Thacker et al., 2020). In this study, participants' narratives contained numerous accounts explaining how encountering racist and sexist stereotypes and cultural underrepresentation in academic and professional settings impacted their experiences in supervision and their professional development.

When interpreting the participants' perceptions or experiences of navigating discrimination because of the unique aspect of their intersectional gender-racial identity, the overarching sentiment from the participants was that they felt underrepresented, invalidated, invisible, and under significant stress to have to prove their competency. This study also supported Nelson et al.'s (2022) conclusions that the societal disconnection, gendered racialized stress, and isolation caused by gendered racism can be harmful to the physical and mental health of Black women and create barriers to help-seeking. Participants in this study described experiencing stress from gendered racism which resulted in feelings of isolation and disconnection that negatively impacted their sense of safety and negatively influenced the supervisory alliance. Participants in this study noted that their education, qualifications, and experience did not always level the playing field or mitigate the adverse gender-racial experiences they had to navigate. Despite the

adversities experienced because of their intersecting marginalized identities of being Black and female, participants used their social support networks, spirituality, and religion and even modified the way they behaved to cope with social inequities and other forms of injustice (Danielle & Chavez, 2018; Lewis et al., 2013; Thomas et al., 2008).

Relying on Perseverance Strategies

In Chapter 2, I discussed how oppressive racist and sexist stereotypes about Black women and women of color are pervasive throughout American society and institutional spaces (Hall, 2018; Nelson et al., 2022; Thacker & Minton, 2020). I also discussed how the existing research highlighted how Black women and people who identified as BIPOC remained resilient despite adverse experiences in professional settings and CACREP-accredited Counselor Education programs (Hammonds et al., 2023; Lewis et al., 2016; Vaishnav, 2021). For many Black women, overcoming adversity and persevering against the odds by relying on strengths and resources can help mediate experiences of oppression at the intersections of racism and sexism (Branch, 2023; Nelson et al., 2022; Thomas et al., 2022). In this study, all the participants described themselves as resilient because they could adapt and feel motivated to overcome adversity related to oppressive racist and sexist stereotypes. Consistent with previous research, the findings from the participants' storied supervision experiences highlighted that professional spaces, supervisory relationships, and Counselor Education programs continue to reflect the racist history, attitudes, and discriminatory practices in American society (Cohen & Kassan, 2018; Henfield et al., 2013; Interiano & Lim, 2018). The participants in this

study described perseverance strategies used to help them overcome adverse experiences associated with racial and gender discrimination. In this study, relying on perseverance strategies helped affirm the participants' experiences navigating oppressive societal stereotypes and systemic barriers while providing a sense of hope, meaning, and resilience during transition and adversity. For Black female professional counselors in this study, relying on their upbringing and community, their faith, and learning from adverse experiences helped cultivate the strength and hope to cope with the challenges of oppressive forces and systemic barriers.

Wanting Support of Self-Concept and Mentoring

In Chapter, I described how existing research established clinical supervision as essential to clinical training, ethical practice, and promoting counselor development and growth (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013; Bradley et al., 2019; Thacker & Minton, 2021; Wilcox et al., 2023) and mentorship is an indispensable component of the supervisory relationship that promotes counselor safety, trust, and the likelihood of professional success (Allen & Joseph, 2018; Thacker & Minton, 2021; Tibbetts & Smith, 2023). I also discussed in Chapter 2 how the underrepresentation of diverse individuals in counselor education and the often White-centric, hegemonic culture within the counseling profession (APA, 2022; CACREP, 2018) can be harmful, isolating and can limit the opportunities for Black women to receive effective mentorship and be successful (Thacker & Minton, 2021; Tibbetts & Smith, 2023). Given the oppression and marginalization that many Black women face, the participants in this study shared

valuing or wanting to experience connection with a supervisor who possessed competency in understanding the nuances of a Black woman's unique gender-racial identity and provided a safe space for Black women professional counselors to show up fully and authentically. Specific to the Black female professional counselors in this study, financial or socioeconomic class barriers were also a source of stress that limited their choices in supervision and influenced the supervisory relationship. Black women experience being marginalized not only by their race but also by gender and class (Bowie et al., 2019; Hall, 2018). Consistent with existing research, the participants in this study reported higher satisfaction and connections with supervisors who demonstrated multicultural competency and cultural humility (Tohidian & Mui-Teng Quek, 2017; Wilcox et al., 2023). Although participants described valuing a mentor or supervisor who demonstrated multicultural competency and cultural humility, participants reported wanting or valuing mentoring from a Black woman supervisor because they could relate more closely to a Black woman's lived experiences. Therefore, this study supported existing research findings that supervisors who adopt a multiculturally responsive and sensitive supervision style that utilizes their multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills can help mediate the racialized stress and social isolation that some Black women experience (Branco & Jones, 2021; Jendrusina & Martinez, 2019; Johnson & Scott, 2020; Sue et al., 2019).

Taking Ownership of Personal and Professional Growth

In Chapter 2, I discussed how, for some Black women, integrating the

Superwoman/Strong Black woman (SW/SBW) stereotype can help act as a buffer against the harmful and shameful gendered racial microaggressions associated with other stereotypes such as the Mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire (Corbin et al., 2018; Nelson et al., 2022; Thomas et al., 2022). For Black women, it represents self-sacrifice, self-reliance, and strength despite adversity (Thomas et al., 2022). Consistent with existing research, the participants in this study described having a sense of pride in displaying resilience as Black women, presenting an image of strength, being driven to succeed despite adverse experiences, supporting others, and protecting vulnerability (Allen et al., 2019; Hammonds et al., 2023).

A comprehensive literature review of existing research established that the SW/SBW stereotype can create an unrealistic idea about the role of Black womanhood for some Black women that can create barriers to seeking support and worsen the social isolation of oppression, which can negatively affect their physical and emotional health (Thomas et al., 2022). Nonetheless, many Black women report taking pride in owning their professional growth (Branch, 2023; Horak et al., 2020). Likewise, the participants in this study describe how being adversely impacted by sexism, racism, and classism limited their access to supportive mentorship and supervision, resulted in feelings of isolation and disconnection, and affected their well-being. For this reason, the participants' storied supervision experiences expressed a need for Black female professional counselors to engage in self-advocacy and take ownership of promoting personal and professional growth. The participants recommended that Black female professional counselors seek

safe spaces, participate in counseling, invest in effective mentorship and culturally responsive supervision, and seek supportive communities to sponsor their self-concept and professional growth.

Narratives as Related to Theoretical Frameworks

This study's theoretical frameworks were critical race theory (CRT) and relational cultural theory (RCT). Existing research has substantiated that Black women can experience oppression in the form of classism, racism, and sexism **(**Bowie et al., 2019; Hall, 2018). Unequal power dynamics and systemic power differentials that historically characterize the dominant culture in the United States can be isolating, discouraging, and oppressive to people with marginalized identities (Jordan, 2017). CRT is an interdisciplinary and intersectional approach that creates conceptual space for understanding how race and power systems reinforce the social inequalities and isolation that people with marginalized identities endure (Bell, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Singh et al., 2020). RCT is a counseling and clinical supervision theory that offers a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay of contextual, relational, and sociopolitical forces on Black women's experiences in the United States (Jordan, 2017; Williams & Raney, 2020). The combination of CRT and RCT in this study provided coherence for the research and informed the understanding of Black female professional counselors' storied supervision experiences. The application of CRT and RCT offered a way to contribute to the existing knowledge base by providing a lens for understanding Black women's experiences and intersecting identities while seeking to empower and

include all marginalized identities (Bell, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Jordan, 2017; Singh et al., 2020).

The participants described navigating sexism and racism in professional spaces, supervisory relationships, and counselor education programs. The participants' narratives highlighted how navigating racist and sexist stereotypes and experiencing financial stressors affected their experiences and created challenges to personal and professional growth and limited access to effective mentorship and culturally responsive supervision. The participants linked the impact of having to navigate the power dynamics related to sexism, racism, and classism in supervisory relationships and professional settings to experiencing disconnection, isolation, cultural underrepresentation, pressure to prove competence, and feeling invalidated. For these reasons, the participants valued a mentor or supervisor who demonstrated multicultural competency and cultural humility. The participants also reported wanting or valuing mentoring from a Black woman supervisor because they could relate more closely to a Black woman's lived experiences. Lastly, the participants recommended that Black female professional counselors seek safe spaces, participate in counseling, invest in effective mentorship and culturally responsive supervision, and seek supportive communities to sponsor their self-concept and professional growth. Therefore, employing CRT and RCT as a collective conceptual framework in this study highlighted both the complexity of Black women's intersecting gendered racial identity (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Quaye et al., 2023) and affirmed the complexity and importance of supportive relational connections (Jordan, 2017; Singh et

al., 2020).

Limitations to the Study

As discussed in Chapter 1, qualitative studies have smaller sample sizes (Patton, 2015). Studies adopting a narrative research approach with a homogeneous group have used limited participants (Baker, 2015; Hussain & Ali, 2019; Johnson & Scott, 2020; Thacker et al., 2021) with often two to four participants due to the rich information emerging from the data (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2020). The small number of participants in the study limited the transferability of the findings. Also, limitations related to restricted inclusion criteria limited the sample's diversification to a broader audience. I used triangulation and random purposive sampling as a researcher to minimize personal biases and ensure credibility. Therefore, no additional limitations to trustworthiness occurred during the execution of the study.

Recommendations

This research was a culmination of calls by existing researchers for research to include more diverse samples of Black women in different contexts and consider exploring Black women's experiences through a social justice framework to understand better their intersecting gender-racial identity (Avent Harris et al., 2021; Hammonds et al., 2023; Thomas et al., 2022). The current study included the stories and supervision experiences of Black female professional counselors' supervisees. Although some participants also identified as counseling supervisors, including those who identify as counselor educators, counseling mentors, or counseling supervisors would likely provide

different stories and experiences. Future researchers can consider interviewing other minorities with intersecting identities to learn more about their unique experiences. Moreover, researchers can consider using future qualitative studies to examine this unique population of Black women as an extension of the research. This study's goals align with the counseling profession's initiatives to promote cultural competence, diversify the counseling profession, and promote inclusion and social justice among its professionals and for individuals who identify with marginalized identities because they continue to experience exclusion, adversity, and lack of support (Bowie et al., 2019; Hall, 2018; Sue et al., 2022; Thacker & Milton, 2020; Thacker et al., 2021).

Implications for Positive Social Change

Black women often experience a unique form of discrimination in academic and professional settings in the United States because of their gender-racial identity experience (Devost, 2022; Essed, 1991; Hammons et al., 2023; Nelson et al., 2023; Jones, 2021; Leath & Chavous, 2018). Despite the oppression, cultural underrepresentation, and marginalization that many Black women face, the participants in this study described themselves as resilient. They reported relying on various perseverance strategies to "bounce back" from adverse experiences and systemic barriers to professional development and success. The participants shared that they valued or wanted to experience a connection with a supervisor who possessed competency in understanding the nuances of a Black woman's unique gender-racial identity and provided a safe space for Black female professional counselors to show up fully and authentically. The

participants also recommended that Black female professional counselors seek safe spaces, participate in counseling, invest in effective mentorship and culturally responsive supervision, and seek supportive communities to sponsor their self-concept and professional growth. Because ethnic minorities are often underrepresented in clinical research (Gomez, 2020; Thomas et al., 2019), at the individual level, a social change implication of a study focusing on an ethnic minority subpopulation perspective could lead to a sense of inclusion, empowerment, and increased knowledge as a benefit of the study's results. By recognizing the themes in this study, I highlighted Black women's voices and experiences in providing insight and guidance into what is supportive or non-supportive for teaching and practicing multicultural supervision with Black female professional counselor supervisees.

The study's findings can inform counselor educators and supervisors to consider utilizing CRT and RCT frameworks to engage and empower Black female professional counselors in incorporating their resiliency and perseverance strategies in navigating gender and racial stereotypes, cultural underrepresentation, and financial and racialized stress inflicted by systemic barriers. This study can also inform the development of policies and practices that address systemic barriers to access to affordable clinical supervision, culturally competent and collaborative mentorship opportunities, and the importance of adopting a more comprehensive approach to supporting Black female professional counselors' professional identity development and success. Lastly, this study's findings can inform the development of legislation that promotes consideration of

diversity, equity, and inclusion policies that support increased representation of diverse mentors and professionals in leadership in counselor education and supervision. By including the subjective experiences of Black female professional counselors' storied supervision experiences to understand what is supportive or non-supportive for teaching and practicing multicultural supervision with Black female professional counselor supervisees, this study was social justice advocacy and empowerment in action.

Conclusions

In the current study, I sought to understand and capture the lived experiences of Black female professional counselors' storied experiences of supervision so that perspectives that are often missing from the research conversation could provide insight to help improve the understanding of what is supportive or non-supportive for teaching and practicing multicultural supervision with Black female professional counselor supervisees. Based on the participants' storied supervision experiences, Black female professional counselors' supervisees need mentors and allies who are culturally competent and culturally humble and prioritize establishing reciprocal relationships as social action to help them "show up" fully and authentically. The existing research provides compelling evidence that Black women face oppression and marginalization in academic and professional settings in the United States because of their gender-racial identity experience, which can be detrimental to their professional identity development and success (Devost, 2022; Essed, 1991; Hammons et al., 2023; Nelson et al., 2023; Jones, 2021; Leath & Chavous, 2018). Nonetheless, this study provided insight using the

words of Black women to understand how counselor educators and supervisors in professional settings and educational spaces can shift the narrative to attending to the intersectionality of identity, providing a sense of safety and belonging, and using their positions of privilege to provide collaborative mentorship opportunities. Given the lack of collaborative mentorship relationships that the participants described, counselor educators must promote social justice advocacy and incorporate resources based on the experiences of Black women professional counselors to adequately address the impact of systemic oppression while establishing authentic connections that promote wellness, self-advocacy, and opportunities for professional growth and success.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

Research Questions and Interview Questions

Date: _____

Name of Interviewer: _____

Assigned participant pseudonym: _____

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview today. As discussed in the consent, I will be recording the interview. I will take notes throughout the interview to help me reflect on my experience facilitating the interview and keep track of crucial moments in your responses. I will keep these notes confidential. Before we get started, do you have any questions? I will now ask you some questions to get to know you, and I would like you to answer them to the best of your ability and with as much detail as possible.

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself. How would you describe yourself?
    a. Do you consider yourself to be resilient?
2. Tell me about your strengths. What are your areas for growth?
3. How would you think a colleague would describe your strengths or say are your areas for growth?
4. Who was the person that had the most positive influence on your life?
    a. What did they do?
5. What does a mentor mean to you?

6. How did your experiences growing up influence you to choose counseling as a career choice?
7. What are the three most important things for you in a supervisor?
8. What does supervision mean to you?
    a. Tell me more about your hopes, fears, and expectations about supervision?
    b. Tell me about your experiences in supervision.
9. What specific systemic gender and racial biases, if any, have you experienced in supervision?
10. What specific class biases, if any, have your experienced in supervision?
11. Explain how gender, class, and racial biases, if any, might have impacted your experience in supervision?
12. Can you describe any particularly difficult or challenging experiences in your life related to supervision?
    a. Can you tell me about a particular day that this happened to you?
13. What do you think other supervisees should know about this experience?
14. How did these supervision experiences affect your career and life?
15. Please describe resources and support that are important for Black women receiving supervision.
16. What would you say to someone considering supervision?
17. What, if anything, would you change about your experience in supervision if

you could?

a. How has this changed you?

18. Is there anything else I should have asked you but did not?

a. Can you say a little more about that?

Closing Statement

Thank you for your participation and for sharing your experiences with me. I appreciate your taking the time to do so. I may contact you afterward to obtain additional information as needed. I will also send you the transcription of this interview and verify the accuracy of the information.