

6-7-2022

"I'm Very Enlightened:" Assisting Black Males Involved in the Criminal Justice System to Deal With and Heal From Racism

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<https://doi.org/10.15760/etd.7858>

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“I’m Very Enlightened:”

Assisting Black Males Involved in the Criminal Justice System
to Deal With and Heal From Racism

by

Darnell Jackie Strong

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Social Work and Social Research

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Portland State University
2022

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Abstract

Black Males who have offended face major challenges stemming from their involvement in the Criminal Justice System. Once involved it is hard to get out, as exhibited by high recidivism rates and mass incarceration, issues that have plagued Black Males since slavery. There is little research on interventions to ameliorate the effects of racism on this population.

The aim of this research was to: a) create a training to help Black Males who have been involved in the Criminal Justice System deal with racism and b) evaluate the intervention. This mixed methods research utilized Constructivist Grounded Theory and Afrocentric theory lenses to explore the data. Twenty-two Black Males each participated in one of five different three-hour groups, teaching them to deal with and heal from racism.

Findings, primarily qualitative, demonstrated that intervention content on slavery, implicit bias, internalized racism, labeling, and individual and generational trauma were all highly valued by participants. Learning about racism in their lives is important to Black Males who have offended. Participants learned that starting in slavery they were characterized as criminals to justify their enslavement and the criminal labeling still happens today resulting in generational trauma that can cause them to have self-hatred, or to reject white spaces they need to embrace to have success with re-entry efforts, to reduce recidivism and collectively impact mass incarceration. Participants were anxious to learn strategies to counteract the negative consequences of racism, accordingly they embraced the presented plan to use when having a racial encounter. Participants were

able to safely practice using the plan by participating in role plays, and many of the participants felt this was the most valuable part of the second half of the training.

Participants learned new skills, felt the training was empowering, and wanted more.

Quantitative results showed significant changes from before to after the intervention, and from before to two weeks following the intervention. Finally, research findings indicate that the intervention part of this study evolved over time and currently is the best it can be.

Dedication

First, I want to dedicate this effort to my parents: Luther Strong who showed me how to be a responsible, courageous Black Male, and Opal Strong who taught me the fundamentals of activism and community organizing. Their combined love and emphasis on education is what propelled me to complete this research.

I also want to show appreciation to my siblings Luther, Gail, and Boots who all attended college successfully and set learning standards that challenged me to match their achievements. Continuing with family, I want to dedicate this effort to my daughter Rekah who joined me on this academic journey and taught me how to become a better parent. I also want to dedicate this work to my grandchildren Makayla, Braydon, Cameron, Spencer, and Austin, in hopes that this work will motivate you to go out and make a difference in the world like Grandma and I taught you.

Finally, I want to dedicate this research to my wife Eileen Gilchrist Strong who was equally important to the completion of this research journey by offering support at all hours of the day and night, in all areas of our lives, allowing me the time to complete this important work. I know she is looking down and smiling like the other family members who have passed.

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to acknowledge the participants who collaborated with me to create this important research by sharing their experiences with racism in and out of the Criminal Justice System, providing a template that others may use when confronted with racism. Next, I want to acknowledge all the Black Males who helped me get through this arduous journey: David J. who encouraged me and provided regular pep talks, Ronald W., Eoj, and Charles H., community advocates committed to this research who recruited most of the participants. I also want to acknowledge my sixty-nine classmates Terry, Ronnie H., and Ronnie M., my ride or die friends. I also want to acknowledge Chuck and Julie M., my chosen family members, who got me through the death of my wife and assisted me in business matters so I could focus on this research.

I also want to thank the academic community at PSU who supported me throughout this process. First, my dissertation committee is chaired by Maria Talbott, a white woman, who helped me craft and develop this research when I had no idea of what

I wanted to study or what social problem I wanted address. Yet in spite of our cultural and gender differences she guided me to the answers that were hidden within me. I also want to thank the rest of my committee team. Thank you, Dr. Ethan Johnson. Your positive and supportive Black Maleness gave me confidence my work is important to our community. Thank you, Dr. Carmen Thompson, your cultural knowledge and expertise about the African American experience were invaluable, in addition to the pep talks to keep going. Finally, thanks to Dr. Lakindra Mitchell, who as a previous classmate provided me the impetus to complete this dissertation and follow in her footsteps. Finally, I want to thank the School of Social Work PhD Program team especially Director Junghee Lee, who supported me by working overtime to find me a committee chair when no other PSU staff wanted to take me on (angry Black Male student). I want to thank Dr. Katharine Cahn, my classmate and practicum advisor, and thanks to Thet Mar Win who shepherded me from day one by keeping me abreast of class schedules, requirements, and deadlines. I also appreciate the support from the Longres Dissertation Award.

Finally, to complete this journey it truly took a village and I thank Ron Noble, my go to guy, Katie, Ernestine, Cathy and Demetrius Rhodes, my ACH team and all those I failed to mention.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Table 1

List of Abbreviations

Full Phrase	Acronym
Aggression Replacement Training	ART
Alcoholics Anonymous	AA
Appropriated Racial Oppression Scale	AROS
Constructivist Grounded Theory	CGT
Criminal Justice System	CJS
Cross Racial Identity Scale	CRIS
Depression Anxiety Stress Scale	DASS
Driving While Black	DWB
Driving While Black Trauma Test	DWBTT
Implicit Associations Test	IAT
Implicit Bias	IB
Institutional Review Board	IRB
Internalized Racism	IR
Internalized Racism Oppression Scale	IROS
Licensed Clinical Social Worker	LCSW
Mental Health Inventory	MHI
National Association of Social Workers	NASW
Race Based Trauma Stress Symptom Scale	RBTS

Table 1 (continued)List of Acronyms

Restorative Justice	RJ
Schedule of Racist Events	SRE
Standard Deviation	SD

Since the historic election of Barack Obama, a Black Male, it might appear that social justice for all Black Males has finally arrived in America. One can see prominent Black Males in roles as politicians, entertainers, celebrities and sports figures with wealth and status. The notoriety and inclusion of such individuals suggest that many Black Males have achieved equality. I beg to differ with this assumption: I contend that Black Males are still challenged daily and have to deal with a host of problems that greatly hinder their ability to experience social justice. The recent rash of Black Males being shot, captured on video and in full public view, is a testament to the ongoing racism that Black Males experience.

There is a group of Black Males that has even greater barriers to overcome which are accentuated by their actual involvement in the criminal justice system (CJS), whether they are actually confined or supervised in the communities where they live. This

research presents an intervention designed to assist Black Males who are or have been in the CJS and who are living in the community, to overcome the many challenges and barriers they face.

In this chapter, to demonstrate the significance of this study, I first present information about mass incarceration and racial discrepancies in incarceration and recidivism, with particular attention to discrepancies in judging, prosecuting, and defending. Then I provide an introduction to racism and oppression as explanations for these imbalances. While there has been attention to racial injustice in the CJS in the media and in academia, there have been almost no interventions attention directed toward Black Males who are in the CJS that address how to deal with racism and its effects. This dissertation proposes a new intervention for that purpose, which is briefly described in this chapter. This intervention provides an up-to-date understanding of racism, including Implicit bias (IB) and Internalized racism (IR), and it teaches skills for combating racism and its ill effects in everyday situations. This dissertation will obtain evidence about the effectiveness of this intervention as well as guidance toward improving it. The dissertation provides valuable information that can be built on in future interventions. I conclude this chapter with an overview of the rest of the dissertation.

Mass Incarceration and Black Males

The sociologist Dave Garland (2001) first defined “mass imprisonment” as a condition in a CJS that occurs when the focus of incarceration is not on a single offending

individual, but on the systemic imprisonment of whole targeted groups, similar to what has happened to Black Males.

This is an historical occurrence echoed by Michelle Alexander, who reflects that under the Reagan administration (1981-1989) this policy approach became the lay of the land. During Reagan's regime, he implemented a media campaign to generate legislative support to combat an emerging crack cocaine problem that had festered in Black communities across the US. During this time media images and stereotypes of black prostitutes, crack dealers and crack babies living in impoverished inner cities saturated the air waves and fueled the federal policy of the "War on Drugs" (Alexander, 2010). What is amazing about this assault on the black community is that in approximately 30 years since the War on Drugs started, the US penal population increased from roughly 300,000 to 2 million, and drug convictions accounted for the majority of the increase (Mauer, 2006). As a result, Alexander notes that US incarceration rates are the highest in the world, towering over countries that are seemingly more repressive, e.g., Russia, Iran and China. Summarized, there is not another country that locks up its minority and racial communities so frequently.

Oregon is no exception to this phenomenon., A study completed by the Sentencing Project (2016) examined census and Bureau of Justice data which revealed the following: a) African Americans comprise 1.8% of the state population and 9% of the prison population, b) Oregon is seventh in the nation locking up Black persons with a rate of 2,061 out of 100,000 Black residents who are incarcerated. This rate is almost

twice the rate of its neighbor Washington with a rate of 1,272 incarcerated per 100,000 people, d) one out of 21 Black men in Oregon is in prison, and e) the incarceration rates for Black Oregonians is nearly 5.6 times greater than for whites. The report also revealed that Oregon has higher incarceration rates in several categories than several states in the deep south with a long history of racism, like Mississippi, Georgia, Louisiana, and Alabama as examples.

Sadly the system of mass incarceration has been justified by many as an effective way to teach offenders that crime doesn't pay and to address crime and public safety. These assumptions are based on the premise that being locked up is painful and more productive than noncustodial consequences, yet the high numbers of persons incarcerated speaks differently (Cullen et al., 2011).

Mass incarceration causes peripheral damage to Black Males that extends beyond their involvement in the CJS. When one becomes a felon, their rights are substantially reduced and the traditions of discrimination (e.g., in housing, employment, education, and healthcare) as well as the inability to vote come into play in their lives. The impact is analogous to what Black Males experienced living in the south during the Jim Crow era (Alexander, 2010). Black Males ages 20 to 34 in prisons or jails have the lowest high school graduation rate of all ethnic and gender groups: Approximately 30 percent of them have a GED (General Educational Diploma) or high school diploma. And 60 percent of Black Males who drop out of high school are jailed at some point in their lives.

Unfortunately, one in three Black Males who are dropouts is in prison or jail on any given day (Ewert et al., 2014).

This research is grounded in the belief echoed by several researchers who proclaim and present evidence that instead suggests that Mass incarceration has more of a criminogenic impact on offenders who are locked up (Cullen et al., 2011).

Recidivism and Black Males

Cullen et al. (2011) declare one of the important causes of mass incarceration is the notion that locking up individuals reduces recidivism by teaching them that “crime does not pay.” The rationale behind this premise is rooted in a deterrence philosophy, which espouses that custodial sanctions are more painful than noncustodial sanctions and therefore have a higher cost to the offender, decreasing his willingness to re-offend. However many criminologists have voiced an opposing position proclaiming that incarceration also exposes prisoners to a social experience that entrenches them deeper into a world of crime, and that prisons increase the tendency to reoffend and recidivate back into the system they are trying to escape. Smith and Hattery (2010) suggest that prison has little effect on rehabilitation or deterrence of offenders and focuses more on detainment and removing the individual from society while exploiting them for labor,

with around 2.4 million persons under some form of incarceration on any given day (Sabol, et al., 2009).

Recidivism rates among Black Male offenders are high and Black Male recidivism rates are consistently much higher than those for other races, even when adjusted for factors such as age at the time of release, prior recidivism, type of crime committed, the type of custody employed (if any) at the time of release such as parole or supervised release, and time served in prison before release. Nellis (2016) reports the overall recidivism rates for African Americans released from state prisons is 510% the rate for whites. In some states with large white populations such as Iowa, Minnesota, New Jersey, Vermont, and Wisconsin, the disparity between black and white offenders' recidivism rates is more than 10-to-1. Seacat (2018) examined recidivism rates by race and noted many factors related to the higher statistical average hampering black ex-convicts over white and Hispanic ones. The factors included drug use after leaving prison, the lack of family support, and the inability to find legal employment after release. Seacat postulates that it is four times more difficult for a black ex-offender to find a legal job than a white ex-convict.

Recidivism rates are heavily dependent on the type of crime, but in each and every case, black offenders had higher failure rates for societal reentry, and returned to prison more frequently. For example, Rowland (2016) examined recidivism rates for federal drug offenders, including those released early from prison due to good behavior. One would assume that an early release for good behavior would equate to a smoother

and more successful transition after being incarcerated. However, such is not the case and Rowland unearthed data revealing that Black Males had a 235% higher rate of recidivism than their white counterparts, even when correcting for the same types of offenses and time in prison. Spohn and Holleran (2002) found that the recidivism rate for black offenders convicted of drug crimes was twice the overall adjusted rate of white ex-convicts convicted of the same offense. This was true even when adjusting for numerous factors including length of time in prison, prior felony convictions, whether a person was held in state or federal prison, level of education, length of time of drug use, or type of supervision after release. In each case and for every individual condition or metric, Black Males had a higher rate of recidivism and reentry failure ranging from 60% to an alarming 785% more. Cullen et al. (2011) support these facts and reflect that the prison institution has failed to turn around those who are placed in custody, in fact does the opposite. Those incarcerated often leave prison with a degree in gangsterism, disrupted social connections and bonds to their families, and increased stigmatization from being labeled a criminal. They also often leave with a strong sense of anger and defiance against a system that has offered little rehabilitation, hope or skills to assist them to avoid the revolving door of recidivating.

Rehabilitation has been the stated purpose of the CJS for at least a century. Kratcoski (2017) notes the “sole purpose” of incarceration is to evaluate each convict and prisoner for the best and most efficacious rehabilitative treatment, as a means of both allowing for the successful re-entry of the offender into society after release and of reducing their propensity to reoffend. Others disagree that this is the sole aim of modern

incarceration. For example, Benson (2003) argues that prison itself operates simultaneously both to rehabilitate and deter. “Incarceration is not meant to be fun,” so most attempts at rehabilitation are stymied within this context. Benson also posits that “Today's prisons are less likely to rehabilitate their inhabitants.” According to Benson the pendulum towards more punitive attitudes in the penal system has been on the upswing since the 1970s, which is regarded by Benson as “the golden age of rehabilitation.”

Recidivism rates confirm this standpoint and reflect the golden age of rehabilitation has passed and the altruistic goal of rehabilitation for today’s offenders is merely a pipe dream. The reality is that prison has not done an adequate job preparing prisoners for their release after serving their terms and reentering our society. One must remember the overwhelming majority of inmates will be released from prison after serving their sentences, and the nation has struggled with how to help them reenter society, especially Black Males.

In addition to these overall statistics, research at different levels of the criminal justice hierarchy has shown that judges and lawyers have shown bias against Black Males.

Judges

You often hear the cliché “justice is blind.” Unfortunately, it appears it is not. Judges who regularly make decisions about court matters influencing the lives of Black

Males are the eyes of our communities and have the power to dictate outcomes over the lives they preside. Research has produced evidence that supports the notion black defendants experience worse outcomes in court than their white counterparts. A study conducted by Ayres and Waldfogel (1994) looked at bail setting and found that judges set bail amounts for black offenders twenty five percent higher than white defendants. An analysis of judicial decision-making related to the Reform Act of 1984 revealed federal judges handed out sentences that were twelve percent longer for black offenders than whites (Mustard, 2001). Capital punishment research has also revealed that killers of white victims are more likely to be sentenced to death than are killers of black persons, and black offenders are more likely to get the death penalty (Banks et al., 2006). Research has found even persons who embrace nondiscrimination values (as judges are supposed to) hold IB that might negatively influence their nondiscriminative stance (Kang & Banaji, 2006). (IB will be discussed in more detail in Ch. 2.) It is a scary thought that judges are prone to IB like the rest of the public, and a scary thought that Black Males are vulnerable in their courtrooms. A study conducted by Rachlinski, Johnson, Wistrich, and Guthrie (2009) explored IB among judges to see if they hold biases in the same ways as the general population and if those biases influenced their decision-making. Results revealed judges do hold IB and their biases can influence their judgement.

Bennett (2017) unveiled clear statistical evidence of longer imposed sentences by judges due to their IB, resulting in Black Males being incarcerated for approximately thirty months longer than white defendants convicted for the same crimes on nearly the

identical facts. Clair and Winter (2016) conducted research on racial disparities and situational decision-making in the CJS and found that bias permeates throughout jury trials, plea bargain agreements, and sentencing. Additionally, judges seemed unaware their actions were distinct and harsher than those imposed against white defendants, in fact, these same jurists when confronted with their pattern of disparities were shocked at what they saw.

Prosecutors

Prosecutors have the power to decide (a) should a person be charged with a crime; (b) how much bail should be recommended; (c) what crime should be charged or dropped; (d) should a plea bargain be offered and; (e) what sentence should be recommended (Smith & Levinson, 2012). So their decisions may also contribute to the racial disparities in the CJS.

Morrison and DeVaul-Fetters (2016) concluded prosecutors have a bias toward stacking juries against Black Males during trial and also a tendency to overcharge Black defendants, either forcing unfair plea agreements or requiring them to go to trial for crimes they actually did not commit. The authors concluded that this strategy violated constitutional guarantees such as the presumption of innocence and also their oath as prosecutors not to abuse their discretion. Levinson et al. (2014) examined death penalty cases involving Black Males and found “massive disparities” between the sentences of white defendants and their black counterparts for the same criminal act. Unbelievably

some of these white defendants were actually acquitted of their crimes by white and even black majority juries while none of the Black Males examined by the study across six states actually escaped death sentences. Clemons (2014) found the same bias against Black Males at the legal appellate level, including before the U.S. Supreme Court in cases involving Black men appealing their convictions for serious felonies involving prison sentences of more than ten years. The study found “implicit racial bias” by the Supreme Court in a review of more than sixty cases, including some where factual analysis and the histories of the prosecutors showed clear racial animus towards the defendants. The author described the result as “blind injustice” since the Court seemed bound by precedent which it knew or should have known would result in racial disparities, but did not care to lecture lower courts on this result.

Public Defenders

Surprisingly, research has also revealed that public defenders are guilty of bias. Richardson and Goff (2013) proclaim public defenders face overwhelming challenges of providing services to clients in environments which are often hectic, underfunded with few resources, and large caseloads. In light of their circumstances they are forced to make decisions quickly about which cases will warrant their attention. In order to make these decisions the public defenders participate in triage to make that determination. Richardson and Goff contend that during triage, the history of racial stereotypes specific to stigmatizing groups about crime triggers an unconscious bias that impacts their triage and interactions with offenders they defend. Cues in the environment (Correll et al.,

2002) inclusive of color, age, and gender (Levinson & Young, 2010) are related to black Americans and can activate IB.

Most public defenders are truly advocates for the less fortunate and do good work, yet they are Americans and have been exposed to the same racism as other Americans. These historical forces can shape their decision-making, greatly impacting persons of color (Richardson & Goff, 2013). Remarkably, some studies have concluded that public defenders who often point out IB by prosecutors and judges, often engage in the same behaviors themselves. Girvan (2015) called this phenomenon the “psychological science of IB” which suggests some people can see bias in others, or at least the appearance or possible presence of bias, but not observe the same psychological conditions in themselves. Even when confronted with actual court statistics suggesting their treatment of African American defendants was inconsistent with their practice towards white defendants, these same public defenders could not admit their obvious bias. The study’s author called this occurrence “frightening” because Black Males who are often poor with prior felony convictions are literally surrounded by bias in all aspects of the CJS.

The evidence shows disproportionate Black Male incarceration, from the police which arrest them, to the prosecutors and judges which try cases against them and sadly in the public defenders which are appointed to represent them against the state and its biases. The data show that Black Males are disproportionately incarcerated and disproportionately at risk for recidivism. Racism in society at large and in the CJS

in particular must be a large part of the explanation for these discrepancies. I will now provide a basic understanding of racism and oppression.

Racism

Racism in this research is defined by Wilson, (1999, p. 14) as “an ideology of racial domination” where it is presumed one group is both biologically and culturally superior to other racial groups, and those in power use their status to justify and promote the mistreatment of others, based on their social status and racial group.

Speight (2007) proclaims that racism in America is alive and well, that it causes psychological damage, that it spans generations at both personal and institutional levels, and that it is not perpetrated by one individual at one time, or in one place. Mauer and Chesney-Lind (2002), Painter (2007), and Parham et al. (1999), all state that for decades and centuries the dominant culture in America has ostracized various ethnic and racial communities, similarly to what has happened to Black Males involved in the CJS.

Numerous authors have noted that racism is present at multiple levels in our society. Speight (2007) proclaims that racism is a form of oppression and a part of our American daily cultural reality, furthermore she states racism is a form of oppression in our daily lives, and that it is manifested at the interpersonal, cultural and structural levels, and is not easy to identify. Speight says it is not limited to type-casting, labeling or racial profiling. Bulhan (1985) supports this position, stipulating that racism is not one specific

event but is a process that can violate the victim a variety of ways (i.e., psychologically, spiritually, physically, materially, or socially). Young (1990) mentions that oppression is “systematically reproduced in major economic, political, and cultural institutions,” and it operates through “the normal processes of everyday life” (p. 41).

Racism, which is rooted in our country’s history, has focused on Black Americans and Black Males in particular by labeling them as criminals, and its occurrence is at the core of the current turmoil we all are experiencing. There are new terms of *Anti-Blackness* or *Anti-Black Racism* that are used to specify the particular kind of racism that is directed against Black and African American people (Wun, 2016). In this dissertation, I am focusing on this kind of racism, but I will employ the more widely used general term of “racism.”

The following discourse about oppression offers knowledge to understand how racism and oppression have joined to manifest themselves as described by Labelling Theory, IB and IR.

Oppression

Young (1990) calls oppression the sibling of racism and states that it is related to heterosexism, classism, and sexism. All of these restrict one’s interpersonal development and ability to self-determine the course of one’s life. Young has identified five distinct conditions as criteria illustrating how individuals and groups are oppressed.

Exploitation is the first condition Young (1990) details; he relates that exploitation is a social process that uses the energies (labor) of a subordinated group to build wealth for the dominant group, resulting in the unequal distribution of wealth. This process of exploitation benefits those in charge.

Young (1990) presents marginalization as the second condition and possibly the most harmful condition of his taxonomy of oppression. According to Young, when people or groups experience marginalization they are “expelled from useful participation in the society and are potentially subjected to material deprivation and extermination” (p. 53). He further states that the populations that are marginalized (e.g., Black and Latino males), then become relegated to the margins of society where “the opportunity to exercise capacities in socially defined and recognized ways” is handicapped (p. 54).

The third condition Young (1990) presents is powerlessness, a dilemma for “those over whom power is exercised, without their exercising it; the powerless are situated so that they must take orders and rarely have the right to give them” (Young, 1990, p. 56). Speight (2007) aids this position proclaiming that people of color regularly have to prove they are worthy of respectability and their powerlessness can cause a diminished chance of achieving positive personal growth and respectability. The opposite occurs for those in power, who are fortunate to receive many privileges and respectability.

Systemic violence focused on members of a particular group is the fourth condition presented by Young (1990). Young says the painful experience of being on the

receiving end of violence “consists of not only direct victimization but in daily knowledge shared by all members of oppressed groups that they are liable to violation solely on account of their group identity” (p. 62). Young continues his discourse stating that the mere threat of potential violence can cause a reaction in Black Males and their families who are taught techniques (e.g., keep hands visible, do not make sudden movements, and do not raise your voice to police officers) at an early age to be safe. They are taught to be keenly aware of the many possible encounters and places in our country and neighborhoods where their safety is at stake.

Young (1990) also relates that the threat of living in a social system (USA) that allows violence directed at a particular group to be “possible and even acceptable” is taxing on that group, requiring an inordinate amount of energy to identify and deal appropriately with the many overt and subtle ways racism and oppression happens today.

The fifth condition Young (1990) discusses is cultural imperialism, a path that marginalized persons often take as they internalize the oppression they experience. Young’s description of cultural imperialism reflects that it “involves the universalization of a dominant group’s experience and culture, and its establishment as the norm” (p. 59). This norming process by the dominant group allows them to dictate what is “representative of humanity,” in turn stereotyping and diminishing the worth of the targeted group rendering them as invisible and outcast.

Jones (2007) summarizes the connection between racism and oppression as applied to Black Male offenders: Racism combined with varied forms of oppression has caused differential access to the products, services and chances to succeed in our society for persons of color. He further states that harmful “labels” and negative stereotypes of those marginalized has justified the unfair treatment of people of color, such as that which is experienced by Black Males in America.

The Intervention: Assisting Black Males Involved in the Criminal Justice System to Deal With and Heal From Racism

The aforementioned discussion underscores that Black Males are disproportionately represented in the CJS and, even though there are a variety of existing programs to improve outcomes for Black Males who are in the CJS, to a great extent they are failing by not recognizing and addressing the cultural needs of this population as they attempt to rid the label of criminal.

This study is designed specifically for Black Males who have offended and researches a brief intervention to help them better deal with the racism that can influence the shaping of their views of self, others and the world. Despite all the evidence of racial bias in the CJS and in recidivism issues in particular, I have not found any programs aimed at reducing recidivism that are targeted to Black Males helping them deal with racism and its effects. Understanding how racism affects Black Males being criminalized, as well as a cornucopia of collateral consequences, could be very important to Black

Males. This understanding along with strategies to deal with racism will be taught to Black Males to reduce recidivism and increase reentry success.

The aim of this intervention is mostly congruent with an abolitionist stance as proclaimed by Angela Davis (2003) who states that a new approach to imprisonment is in order to curtail the Mass Incarceration complex. She postulates that there needs to be a psychological reframe of our American ideology, that prisons alone are the best way to deal with crime, and a shift to envision an array of radical and transformative alternatives to prison that can address racism, white male dominance, class bias, and other structures of domination. This study is designed to aid Black Males and other Americans in this quest. At the same time, the intervention proposed here attempts to work within the structures that exist now to improve the situations of Black Males who are currently involved in the system.

The intervention encompasses a historical review of slavery and its relationship to criminalizing Black Males under a racist veil. The training then connects the past history to current times detailing how overt racist acts became cloaked in IB of dominant culture members and IR among Black People, causing the oppressive conditions of slavery to resurface, disguised as mass incarceration. Participants will also learn a communication/conflict resolution model to utilize, along with mindfulness strategies to relieve anxiety and stress from encounters with Racism, IB, and IR.

The goals of the intervention are:

Goal 1: To empower Black Males who have offended by providing an opportunity to talk about and understand their life events with Racism, IB, and IR related to their involvement in the CJS and criminalized behaviors.

Goal 2: To help Black Male offenders understand and ameliorate the traumatic consequences they experience stemming from being labeled criminals, from IB and IR, and from their involvement in the CJS, which can impact their psyche and stymie their attempts to stay out of the system

Goal 3: To present communication/conflict resolution tools to utilize when confronted by individuals displaying aggressive and microaggressive attacks of Racism, IB, and IR towards participants.

Aims of Dissertation Research

This dissertation will evaluate the intervention in its evolving form, and will provide guidance toward improving and finalizing an effective intervention. The proposed study has the following aims:

Aim 1: To evaluate the intervention, especially its content; and

Aim 2: To obtain information to strengthen the quality of this training by assisting in developing a final model for the intervention.

Importance to the Field of Social Work

The importance of this study to the field of social work is immense because social work has failed to provide adequate services to this marginalized community, according to our standards as outlined in the preamble to the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). The 2018 version states:

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty (NASW 2018).

As outlined in this study, research supports the notion that Black Males have suffered from their status in America. As an LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social Worker) who has provided services to this population, I can attest to the fact that academics, service providers and systems have been lacking in involving Black Males in social work efforts. Watkins et al. (2015) describe this occurrence as an invisible presence of Black Males in social work research, policy and practice. Thompson et al. (2002) fuel this discourse proclaiming that the underutilization of services by Black males who seek social work type of aid is partly due to stigma related to mental illness, lack of trust

(confidentiality), and lack of cultural understanding and sensitivity to their unique situation. Braxton-Newby and Jones (2014) concur and comment that it is highly likely that Black Males have an overall distrust of service providers out of fear they will be disrespected and viewed as “objects, stereotypes, suspects, deviants” (p. 261)

Realizing that the core element of the NASW mission statement, as stated above, is to empower those who are oppressed, we believe this study is well suited to aid in filling the void in the area of research conducted with Black Males. We believe that this study can aid participants by helping them learn to think critically and unlearn the brainwashing and conditioning from decades of macro and micro assaults, and learn to redefine themselves. As part of their transformation we anticipate they will experience a new self-confidence and balance their relationships to IR and IB, resulting in improvement in their individual lives and the greater communities of which they belong (Chamberlin & Schene, 1997, p.2).

In conclusion I again return to the NASW code (2018) which states, “Social workers practice within their areas of competence” and “Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession” (NASW 2018).

This research is conducted and designed by a Black Male social worker who has offended, and has provided social work services to this population for over 30 years. This positionality provides a connection to the research, enhancing the opportunity for the participants to trust the process and benefit. Finally this

dissertation study will contribute to the field of social work by testing a new intervention to serve this population, possibly influencing the dismal rates of recidivism related to re-entry.

Contributions to Research

This dissertation will contribute to the field of research work by increasing knowledge regarding the trauma from racism suffered in particular by Black Males who have offended.

There is little research on any similar interventions for this population that address the issues from racism that Black Males who have offended have experienced. In fact, many Black Males have reservations about participating in research projects stemming from the infamous syphilis study, where Black Males were denied treatment for syphilis.

The attention to racism in the CJS has largely occurred in the media and in academia. This knowledge and understanding have not yet been applied to Black Males who are or have been in the CJS. This study will test a groundbreaking intervention that could provide important knowledge that assists Black Males overcome challenges stemming from racial injustice.

This research also has the potential to contribute, through dissemination of the results, to inform multiple disciplines (Education, Criminology, Psychology, Sociology,

Social Work, Medicine etc.) about work with Black Males who have offended. It may do this by exposing their daily battles with racism, IB, and IR, their sentiments about feelings they don't normally talk about, and solutions they have unearthed and use that work.

This study's value to research is amplified when one considers that Black Males face racism in a variety of contexts. This intervention offers knowledge and skills that are generalizable and can be applied to other program models they may participate in, and can be used in interpersonal interactions with co-workers, CJS workers, and family and friends.

As a practicing clinician and researcher, I have come to the realization that racism, IB and IR are parts of the legacy of who we are as a nation, and there is a pressing need for researchers to learn more about how those constructs intersect in the lives of Black Males who have offended. This study has the potential to provide a pathway to greater understanding for researchers, service providers and educators who work with this population.

Importance to Criminal Justice Field and Policy

Considering the disparities and challenges Black Males who have offended face, the value of this study to the criminal justice field is immense, because of mass incarceration and dismal racially disproportionate recidivism rates. This research has the potential to

inform all players in the CJS of new approaches to better support Black Males who offend. Policy makers have recently focused on reducing racial discrimination, which is essential. But racism is persistent, and continues to impact how Black Males in the CJS fare. This research is intended to address the Black Males who are exposed to this system, thereby filling an important gap in policy and practice.

Overview of the Dissertation

In Chapter 2, the rationale for the intervention is provided, both for what is taught and discussed, and for how it is conducted. The intervention is described at the end of Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, the methodology of the dissertation is provided and explained. In Chapter 4 we will present the results of the study and in Chapter 5 we will discuss the findings related to the research questions and their implications. We conclude with suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature and Theory Related to the Intervention

The foundation of this dissertation research is formulated in the recognition and understanding of the role historical racism has played in the negative experiences of Black Males who have offended. This chapter presents the theoretical and empirical bases for the intervention. The chapter begins with a review of the reentry and decarceration movements, noting that surprisingly, there are few reentry programs that have been found effective, and no re-entry programs have been found that focus on Black Males who are or have been in the CJS and how they can best deal with the racism they encounter. A brief review of the decarceration movement follows the Reentry information. Then the rationale for the content and the process of the proposed intervention are presented. For the content of the intervention, theories and findings about several theories are reviewed. First, Labeling Theory is discussed, detailing the history of Black Males being labeled criminals and providing a segue to “Theory of African American Offending,” a theory depicting what Labeling Theory looks like today. The chapter then shifts to a brief explanation about explicit bias to show how old -fashioned racism has transformed itself to IB, a newer version of racism. IB is then discussed in detail revealing how it impacts Black Males in the CJS. Following our discussion of IB we present information about IR and the trauma it causes to Black Males who offend. IB and IR are briefly taught in the intervention. Then I turn to the process of the intervention, to provide a foundation for how the intervention takes place. I present research about how Black Males learn best and theories related to andragogy and effective adult learning principles. These theories and findings provide the basis for how

the intervention is conducted. The chapter concludes with a description of the intervention.

Reentry and Decarceration

The discovery of the importance of reentry, the transition from life in jail or prison to life in the community, is a phenomenon occurring in the last few decades that has gained support and momentum from a variety of advocates. The attention to this concept has been in part based on the fact there are more than 600,000 inmates released each year.

Johnson and Cullen (2015) say in response to this epic occurrence that a plethora of programs have been developed both in prison and various communities in an attempt to quell the cycle of recidivism and assist in reentry. A main element of the reentry bandwagon is the intention to hone in on programs that are conducive to a successful integration by connecting reentry to rehabilitation. The problem is that these programs face major challenges regarding their effectiveness, and are sometimes even criminogenic. Although a wide range of programs fall into this category, only a few rigorous evaluations have been undertaken, even though research suggests that if done properly, reentry programs actually do reduce recidivism. Johnson and Cullen state that in order to impact this condition a new, rigorously designed model, which they termed “criminology of reentry” may be needed.

Two examples of programs that facilitate reentry by offenders into society but may be hampered by IB are the “restorative justice” (RJ) approach to crime and Aggression Replacement Training (ART).

Restorative Justice

Van Ness and Strong (2015) believe the foundations of RJ involve forgoing punishment as a goal against criminal offenders with a strong focus on the psychological issues which gave rise to their criminal activity in the first place. The first and most common factor (but not always a mandatory one) in RJ paradigms is the personalization of the criminal act by the offender and involving the victim into the rehabilitative process, often by mediating a “restitution agreement” between the offender and the community which was harmed by their actions.

Umbriet and Coates (2000) describe RJ “as both a process and outcome,” and programs can ascribe to the principles according to how they deem appropriate, in fact it has been modified and used in many institutional places like prisons, community reparation boards, family group conferences, circle sentencing, victim-offender mediation, and public school systems. There is evidence that RJ can be effective and many tout the effectiveness of RJ programs. Crocker (2015) observed RJ systems when implemented in prison allow wide community involvement both inside and outside the prison walls, allowing for an offender to begin reintegration into society while still serving their sentence. Part of the value of these programs was regular contact with non-

prison persons and communities, in other words, prisoners spent time with other people rather than merely other offenders and their assigned guards.

Bohmert et al. (2016) reported community involvement in RJ programs so effective that in some places where they have been attempted, local support actually overcomes “structural and legal barriers” such as limits or prohibitions on contact of any kind between offenders and victims, particularly in the area of sex crimes. Offenders also report high approval towards RJ programs, and Smith (2015) observed incarcerated youthful offenders describe RJ efforts involving dialogue between them and their victims as “anti-bullying rehabilitation” and a welcome alternative to isolation, solitary confinement, or complete distance from the outside world.

As a final example, Payne et al. (2018) conducted a study and examined data from a nationally representative sample of schools, to see what the characteristics of schools were that were likely to implement RJ practices and to examine school conditions that influence the use of restorative responses to violence and misbehavior. They reported that RJ programs produced positive effects regardless of the school’s characteristics. They also concluded that if RJ were implemented in more schools it could equate to a safer schools, better learning environment, and possibly aid in reducing the impact of the school to prison pipeline.

In spite of these promising reports, when it comes to RJ programs, they have not been demonstrated to be universally efficacious. One of the most common objections is

that many victims of crime do not want to participate in these programs and wish to have no contact with their abuser or attacker. The small numbers of victims who do participate find satisfaction and are happy they do, but Wood (2015) points out that focusing only on those who choose to participate gives a skewed picture of overall effectiveness.

Sherman et al. (2015) state that RJ programs can work to facilitate reentry into society but only when also combined with strong psychological treatment as well as victim contact, creating the question of whether it was the counseling which led to the reported efficacy rather than victim contact.

These findings are amplified in relevance to this research, when determining the effectiveness of RJ programs against patterns of racism and IB, especially related to Black Males. Thompson (2017) argued that RJ programs work better for white offenders than minority offenders and especially Black Males, since the bias towards punishment over rehabilitative efforts was subconsciously taught through IB by teachers to African American offenders starting during early school years. Black students were more harshly punished than white ones for the same offense, conditioning Black offenders in later years to believe punishment was the norm for offending rather than kind words, counseling, or rehabilitation. Thompson referred to this continuum of IB as part of the “school-to-prison pipeline.”

Nance (2015) echoed the very same “pipeline” language while describing the identical phenomenon with respect to the failure of RJ programs due to IB during early

school age programs. Over-disciplining of black students for the same offense in school settings due to teacher IB conditions black offenders in prison to expect such conduct, leaving their minds on a subconscious level (IR) unprepared for the psychological benefits and approaches of RJ methods. Nance concludes RJ programs can help reentry of some offenders, unfortunately not black or minority offenders due to IB conditioning years before prison.

Langberg and Ciolfi (2017) argue white privilege and IB combined with the lack of culturally responsible approaches within the prison setting leave RJ programs a solution for only white convicts convicted of minor crimes such as those directed against property.

Summarized, it seems there is no clear consensus on the effectiveness of RJ programs especially regarding the possible cultural barriers that could hinder implementing the model. There is no direct attention to racism in the RJ model. Therefore it is unlikely that Black Males who have offended will be successful if they encounter racism or IB in RJ process.

ART Program

Another program that has grown in popularity is the Anger Replacement Training (ART) program. The ART program was developed by Goldstein et al. (1998), as a program constructed to lessen aggressive behaviors by addressing three areas of

personal influences, i.e., skill acquisition, anger control and moral reasoning. The sections are designed to teach participants social skills, and to help them identify new skills they may need, with plenty of chances to practice via role plays. The training also offers anger management strategies, so that when triggered, participants are able to avoid reacting in ways that can cause problems for them or others. The final component of the model is moral reasoning, which is structured in a format that uses story problems to challenge the moral position of the participants and enlightens them as to new perspectives while confronting old beliefs that may be skewed.

ART was initially designed for youths but has been reformatted for adult offenders and is used across North America and Europe, and administered in a variety of settings ranging from educational to correctional institutions. In fact it has an international organization, the International Center for Aggression Replacement Training (ICART: Goldstein et al., 2004).

ART has been shown, to an extent, to be effective in several studies. Goldstein et al. (1987), (the developers of ART) found that ART produced statistically significant reductions in the number of intense acting out behaviors within the facility where it was first used. An additional study reported an increase in interpersonal skills accrued to those who participated in the program (Goldstein et al., 1989). Other positive outcomes were reported with male delinquents who were confined in maximum security settings, were involved in gangs (Goldstein, et al., 1994), were offenders with behavior issues in a residential treatment center (Coleman et al., 1991), and were psychiatric patients

(Hornsfield et al., 2004). Closer to home an evaluation conducted for the State of Washington, by the creators of ART, illuminates that when completely delivered ART had positive outcomes: it produced approximately a 24% reduction in recidivism rate for those who received the training compared to the control group (Goldstein et al 1987; Goldstein et al 1994). Another program worked with the developers of ART and created an altered version, for adults involved in English and Welsh probation services. Sugg (2000) reported that persons who completed the program had a 20.4 % reconviction rate compared to 34.5 percent rate for the control group.

This summary of ART reflects that it is a program that has merit, but as a trained person who has conducted ART for more than 5 years I can attest that it is lacking for several reasons. First the length of the program, requiring participants meet three times per week for one hour over a 10 to 12 week period leads to high noncompletion rates. I personally experienced low completion rates resulting from Black Male participants being challenged with daily life issues which superseded ART attendance. Sugg (2000) reflects the same sentiment and proclaimed that offenders who had their enrollment in ART revoked had a reconviction rate of 65% compared to the 20.4 % rate of completers. Secondly ART is designed in a dominant culture framework meaning that it required me to provide a cultural context to frame the role plays for the participants. I was forced to modify the moral reasoning scenarios in the manual so that the stories were Afrocentric and more in line with Black Males' real life experiences. Had I not been comfortable with, or knowledgeable enough, about the dominant culture, the

redesign may not have happened. Finally, while ART appears promising in some ways, it, too, does not address racism in the CJS.

The understanding of the fact that current reentry programs have at best mixed results, makes it clear that a reliable prisoner reentry model or intervention has not yet been developed, and more attention needs to be paid to the “quality” of reentry program design or implementation. Improving each of these areas will allow for better analysis of the true impact of services (Pettus-Davis & Epperson 2015). Lipsey and Cullen (2007) illuminate this notion and report that cognitive behavioral programs proclaim an 8% to 32% reduction in recidivism, drug programs report less than a 30% reduction, education and employment programs hover around 20%, and other therapy and behavior programs proclaim numbers ranging from a 14% to 20% reduction between program participants and non-participants.

Decarceration

Sadly these low success rates are the current bar, but on the bright side incarceration rates of all groups showed a downward trajectory during the period of 2009-2012. In fact by 2011, this period had yielded the lowest incarceration rates since 1997 (Carson & Golinelli, 2012). According to a Marshall Project analysis of yearly reports by the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics, and the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting system, the data showed that between 2000 and 2015, the imprisonment rates of Black Men dropped by more than 24 percent (Hager, 2017). There are multiple

suggestions from scholars as to why this decline is happening. Gottschalk (2009), and Kyckelhahn (2014) say the cause is state budget crises that have forced states to reduce levels of spending related to corrections programs. Others (e.g. Bosworth, 2011) say the decline is happening due to prison reform and a building skepticism about whether the use of incarceration is really effective at reducing crime or improving reentry, as illustrated by the fact that almost 77% of prisoners who are released are arrested again for a new crime within five years (Durose et al., 2014). Adding to this discussion as an example, The War on Drugs and other extreme sentencing efforts are now being questioned on both the societal and policy levels by politicians on both sides. In fact, the “tough on crime” approach, which accelerated mass incarceration, has now slowed (Petersilia & Cullen, 2014). As troubling is the fact that a current analysis revealed that if one uses the rate of change between 2009 to 2016 it will take 75 years to decrease the prison population by half (Schrantz et al., 2018) .

One thing is clear: A movement is needed aimed to reduce incarceration and improve reentry outcomes, because if this trend does not continue the USA could slip back to the practices and policies that caused Mass incarceration (Pettus-Davis & Epperson, 2015).

The decarceration movement can assist in the trend to reduce recidivism and incarceration numbers. Decarceration was first introduced by Scull (1977) when he coined the term as a response to the shuttering of asylums, prisons and reformatories. An updated version is presented by Garland et al. (2014) who defines decarceration as an

effort to decrease the numbers of offenders in prisons or jails and the rates of offender entry into them, as well as a push towards less secure ways of correctional control such as probation and parole.

There is mounting evidence that a combination of both structural and behavioral interventions is necessary to aid in the reduction of incarcerated persons. The evidence indicates there are three broad categories where change is necessary. The decarceration movement focuses on these: a) in diverting offenders from prison by finding alternatives, b) by reducing recidivism and improving reentry outcomes, and c) by investing resources available in the CJS on prevention and treatment services (Pettus-Davis & Epperson, 2015). Pettus-Davis and Epperson also posit that there is a need to fill the void of transformative interventions, which have not been yet created but are needed, for the decarceration movement to be successful. This is a space this research intends to address.

This study is relevant to the decarceration movement because this intervention has the potential to be a transformative intervention, and because the social work profession, ethically, has an obligation to counteract the ill effects Mass Incarceration has had on the vulnerable group of Black Males who have offended (Pettus-Davis & Epperson, 2015).

I have found no research on interventions for Black Males living in the community who have been involved in the CJS to better equip them to deal with racism. Having established the need for such an intervention, now I turn to the design of the intervention

studied here. First, the theories and findings that provide the foundation of the content of the intervention are reviewed.

Theoretical and Historical Framework of the Intervention

Labeling Theory

Labeling theory originated with Tannenbaum (1938), who posited that the way to make a criminal is to tag, identify and segregate him, via conscious and unconscious acts, causing the person to manifest the very traits complained about. Midcentury, Lemert (1951) promoted and introduced the concept of Secondary Deviance. Whereas Primary Deviance is what happens when a person commits a deviant act, Secondary Deviance relates to the impact of, and problems created for, the labeled person by society's response of labeling the person as deviant. Becker (1963) expanded the base of Labeling Theory with the idea that no act in and of itself is deviant. He argued that "moral entrepreneurs" are persons who make the rules that define deviance and apply them to certain persons, who then suffer the consequences of being so labeled.

Labeling theory has developed in multiple directions. Paternoster and Iovanni (1989) postulated that its description and application are rooted in two hypotheses. The first is the status characteristics hypothesis and the second is the deviance hypothesis. Status characteristics postulates that labels are placed on persons because of the status of one group over another, usually the one being labeled. The deviance

hypothesis argues that deviant labels can cause those being labeled to have more problems and lead to a greater involvement in deviant behavior and crime. More recently, Plummer (2011) believes that social control leads to deviance. He offers multiple examples that can be related to Black Males' experiences of being labeled criminals. He mentions Cultural Criminology, which looks at the media's coverage of crime, studies about stereotypes, and the moral panic theory of public attitudes toward crime. Rohloff and Wright (2010) explain moral panic as the concept that concern about a social problem can cause an overreaction to that problem. They state that moral panics are usually temporary and don't take into account the historical processes that contribute to the discourse. This premise offers reasons why Black Males are labeled criminals today.

Using Labeling theory and moral panic theory, Black Males have been vilified and criminalized dating back to slavery. DeGruy (2005) notes that immediately after the Civil War, White fear of the newly emancipated slave and the need for workers to keep their plantations going led to the Black Code laws, sharecropping, and indentured servitude for many Black people, who were thereby criminalized for any acts of freedom. The Convict Lease system was created as an option for states with little money to support prisons: criminals were leased, often for life, to plantation owners and other businesses. Alexander (2010) shows how using Black criminals in a business model to support industries and create wealth continues. She describes how the current justice system, rooted in slavery and the Jim Crow era, is skewed to target Black Males and criminalize

them while industries, professions, and institutions, both private and public, achieve wealth at their expense.

The demonization of Black Males during the early periods after the ending of slavery was supported by propagandists who supported the Ku Klux Klan and accused Black Males of being oversexed and violent. *Harper's*, a prominent publication at the time, labeled as the "New Negro Crime" sexual assaults against White women by Black Males, while asserting that such crimes were unheard of during slavery (Leiter, 2008). It was reasoned that the sexual assaults were the result of African American Males' inability to control themselves in their new social status as free men, and that therefore Black Males needed to be separated from the White community.

Throughout the South, the Klan whipped and killed Black men for criminal offenses ranging from arson, theft, rape, murder, voting, organizing, to union sympathizing as well as for any number of other reasons, and sometimes none at all. What is amazing about this propaganda is that, in spite of the harsh evidence of white male sexual violence against Black women, there was more emphasis on and increase in the fear of the Black Male rapist.

When motion pictures came into being, they offered a form of entertainment that was scripted according to trends stirring in American society. After the abolition of slavery, the country shifted from characterization of Black Males as happy slaves to Black brutes (Smiley & Fakunle, 2016).

More recently, the “War on Drugs” created a proliferation of the prison industry. This new shift created exponential growth in the prison system by 700% (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2007). Welch (2007) asserts that the War on Drugs launched in the 1980’s by Reagan funneled a large portion of Black Males into the CJS. In particular the passage of strict cocaine laws that impacted Black Males differently compared to the dominant culture were responsible. Kunjufu (2001) points out that in 1986 The Anti-Crime Act and the Violent Crime Act were passed and the measures created a 100:1 ratio for crack versus cocaine sentencing. Dominant culture persons usually are charged with cocaine offenses while Black Males are accused of crack offenses and sentenced more harshly. Welch proclaims that crack cocaine and the “criminal black man” label is supported by the disproportionate representation of Black Males in the CJS related to drug convictions. He proposes that the results of this framing contribute to a knee-jerk response by law enforcement to control these persons.

Moving into the 21st century, Smiley and Fakunle (2016) note a shift from calling Black Male criminals “brutes” to calling them “thugs.” Racial profiling, an instrument of White power, is often used to target minorities during crime investigations in an effort to increase the likelihood of discovering illegal activity. It is heavily influenced by labels about Black Males as gang members and drug dealers (Welch, 2007).

Collectively, looking back to the time of slavery and up through the present, we see Blackness and Male gender associated with criminalization (Alexander, 2010; Davis, 1998; Muhammad, 2010). Gao (2014) argues that mass incarceration where Black men

are six times more likely to be jailed or imprisoned than white Males, is rooted in a social construction of race by framing and labeling Black Males as criminals, as Unnever and Gabbidon's (2011) seminal work, *A Theory of African American Offending*, illustrates.

Theory of African American Offending

In 1898 W.E.B. Du Bois, the famous social scientist, asserted that a true understanding of African American offending must be grounded in the "real conditions" of what it means to be Black living in a racial hierarchal society. Forty years later, Tannenbaum (1938) posited that the way to make a criminal is to tag, identify and segregate him, via conscious and unconscious acts, causing the person to manifest the very traits complained about. Fast forward, decades later, Unnever and Gabbidon (2011) presented an updated version of both scholars' position, reflecting the harmful power of being labeled.

Unnever and Gabbidon's (2011) research exposed the importance of understanding the connection between racial injustices and African Americans who offend. They advance the notion that African Americans in America have a unique view of the world that is ingrained by centuries of racial oppression, racial subordination, and confirmed by their personal experiences of dealing with racial struggles. The authors declare that the negative impact of racism and bias culminate in the criminal Black man label, a dominant cultural portrayal, that supposes the worst behavior and attitude from African American men.

Unnever and Gabbidon (2011) furthermore emphasize that these lived experiences lead to an increased probability of offending by wearing down the strength of ties between African Americans and White-dominated institutions (i.e. Schools, employment programs, treatment groups). These are the same institutions Black Males who have offended need to engage with if they are to stay out of a life of crime.

Unnever (2014) decided to test his theory and conducted a large study of data collected by the National Survey of American Life on a subset of 3,570 African Americans. The study, conducted between 2001 and 2003, used in-home face-to-face interviews. Unnever used the data to test the hypothesis that Blacks who experience racial discrimination and buy into the stereotype that Blacks are violent are more likely to be arrested, as well as to suffer from anger, depression, and lack of self-control. Unnever theorized that Blacks believing in the violence stereotype take it on as part of their self-identity, that confrontation with this stereotype depletes self-regulatory resources, and that this stereotype also weakens bonds with conventional institutions such as schools and employers.

Unnever (2014) conducted three sets of analyses. The first set looked at whether the belief that Blacks are violent, as well as having experienced racial discrimination, predicted having been arrested, substance abuse, low self-control, anger, and depression, above and beyond demographic characteristics. They found that experience with racial discrimination predicted all five dependent variables. In addition, beliefs that Blacks are violent significantly predicted all but depression.

Next, Unnever (2014) addressed the question of whether anger, depression, and low self-control themselves predicted arrests and substance abuse, above and beyond demographic variables as well as beliefs about Blacks being violent, and discrimination experience. Anger, depression, and low self-control all significantly predicted both arrests and substance abuse. Further, racial discrimination continued to predict both arrests and substance abuse. However, when including these new independent variables, beliefs that blacks are violent no longer significantly predicted either arrests or substance abuse.

Thus, Unnever (2014) concluded, both racial discrimination and internalization of the violence stereotype may lead to the psychological symptoms of low self-control, anger, and depression. The evidence from the data analyses were consistent with the idea that buying into the stereotype of blacks being violent has its major impact through depleting self-control and causing depression and anger. However, the data were also consistent with the idea that living in a racialized society continued to have a separate effect on Blacks being arrested and developing substance abuse issues, beyond just its possible impact on psychological symptoms.

At its core the construct of *A Theory of African American Offending* (Unnever & Gabbidon, 2011) illustrates the more African Americans encounter real or imagined forms of racial unfairness, the greater the likelihood they will offend, or have difficulties getting out of the CJS.

Labeling theory and the theory of African American offending are foundational for understanding IB, and for this intervention, which seeks to increase the participants' understanding of racism.

Implicit Bias: The Subtle Form of Racism

For more than a century sociologists and psychologists have been studying bias. They have discovered two types: Explicit bias and IB. Each type is connected to its own type of cognitive processing. Explicit bias is hallmarked by ethnocentrism, racism, and prejudice toward marginalized groups (e.g., Black Males who offend), and supported by attitudes of superiority using stereotypes to frame outgroups in a negative fashion. Explicit bias is a system 2 cognitive process; system 2 processes are those processes which individuals experience as conscious attention (Girvan, 2015).

Explicit bias has changed since the 1900's when overt and directly harmful acts of racial bias were commonplace and accepted as a way of life. In fact, by the mid-1900's America had enacted measures to rid itself of the ugly legacy of slavery and the Jim Crow era. During this time (1960-1980) social scientists investigating bias discovered that there was a transition that happened in America. This transition was caused by a shift in the morality of American culture, that, at least on the surface, no longer tolerated such a stance, making it taboo for individuals to outwardly display racist behavior. This shift in America's moral stance is the pathway that connects old fashioned explicit bias to system 1 cognitive processing, which is involved in IB.

System 1 cognitive processing is quick, automatic, and occurs mostly outside of conscious awareness. IB exists in a person's unconscious regions and usually is triggered as an automatic response that is often primed and triggered unbeknownst to the person. Therefore one may think they are not committing an explicit act but for those who regularly experience the effects of IB, the act can feel as devastating and harmful as an explicitly racist act (Girvan, 2015), as the following discourse informs us. Both types of bias still exist, but there is less understanding of IB and fewer known strategies for dealing with it.

The relationship between Blacks and crime is so pervasive, thoughts of crime unconsciously conjure up visions of black Americans and reciprocally thoughts of Black Males conjure thoughts of crime (Eberhardt et al., 2004). Research tells us in moments of stress and fast decision-making, a person is more likely revert to instinctual responses.

Implicit biases are more subtle forms of racial bias, which may or may not be consciously recognized (Cameron et al., 2010), and are associated with discriminatory behavior (Glaser & Knowles, 2008). Amodio and Mendoza (2010) describe IB as "associations stored in memory." Implicit biases of Whites against Blacks have been said to include the stereotypes of Black men as "criminals" and "thugs" (Quillian & Pager, 2001; Sidanius et al., 2000).

By far the most widely used measure of implicit attitudes, including implicit race bias, is the Implicit Associations Test (IAT). In the "race IAT," for half of the trials a

respondent presses one key if a picture of a White person's face or a positive word is shown on the computer screen, and another key if a Black person's face *or* a negative word is shown (the "compatible task"). In the other trials, the respondent must press one key if a White face or a negative word is shown, and another if a Black face *or* a positive word is shown (the "incompatible task"). Response times are measured, and it is assumed that if a respondent has longer response times for the incompatible task, this is due to negative associations with Black persons (Blanton et al., 2015). Nosek et al. (2007) reviewed the findings from the IAT, which had been completed by 2.5 million people as of 2006. Overall, 68% of respondents have been faster at pairing photos of black persons with "bad" words and photos of white persons with "good" words than the reverse. White respondents have shown a strong pro-white bias, with American Indians, Asians, and Hispanics also showing a pro-white bias. Black respondents are the only group not to show this bias.

Correll et al. (2002) reviewed research and found the same behavior is perceived as more aggressive when committed by an African American than by a white person (such as when what is seen as a "light push" by a white person is seen as a "violent shove" by a black person). Further suggesting an unconscious influence, persons primed with words related to stereotypes of African Americans (but excluding violence) were thereafter more likely to rate ambiguous behavior as hostile. Corell et al. also conducted their own research where the effect of ethnicity on "shoot or don't shoot" decisions in a video game was examined. In this research, participants decided more quickly to correctly shoot (if a hand-held object were actually a gun) if the "target" was an African

American but more quickly made the correct decision to not shoot if the target was a white person. Other data from various surveys revealed respondents associated African Americans with derogatory labels as “dangerous,” “violent,” and “criminal” (Eberhardt et al., 2004).

A brief understanding of IB will be provided in the intervention, and the skills part of the intervention will address how to deal with IB.

Internalized Racism

IR has been known by different names such as “internalized racialism” (Taylor & Jackson, 1991), and “internalized racial oppression” (Bailey, 2008). These terms have not been without controversy. Tappan (2006) argues that the term “internalized oppression” suggests the phenomenon of IR is purely psychological, whereas he believes it is better understood as a combination of psychological and social elements. One social force producing IR or oppression is the existence of oppressive ideologies. Tappan advocates instead for the term “appropriated oppression.” Researchers over time have offered many definitions of IR. Williams and Williams-Morris (2000) referred to IR as a process where marginalized racial groups accept the negative biases and stereotypes about themselves placed on them by the dominant culture. Jones (2000) and Pheterson (1986) proclaimed that in addition to the acceptance of biases and stereotypes constructed by members of the dominant group, IR causes the oppressed group (Black Males in this case), to incorporate the toxic messages about their abilities and worth. This phenomenon is likely to result in

self-alienation, self-hatred, and feelings of inferiority and powerlessness (Jones, 2000; Pheterson, 1986; Watts-Jones, 2002).

Emphasizing the social aspects of IR, Speight (2007) states that IR is about cultural imperialism, domination, and the normalization of the ‘way things are’ in our racialized society. Bryant (2011) states that “IR for African Americans involves the acceptance of the hegemonic hierarchal stratification of race that places them at the bottom of the order. It is also the acceptance of negative stereotypes about African Americans concerning their abilities and intrinsic worth.” Finally Graham et al. (2016) offer a straight to-the-point definition stating that IR is racist attitudes held by members of ethnic groups towards their own group.

An example which helps understand these definitions in context was illustrated by two early African American IR researchers. Clark and Clark (1939; 1952), conducted doll studies with Black children and attempted to determine which dolls the children preferred, Black or White. Their results uncovered a preference by the children for White dolls over the Black ones. Even though some have challenged the credibility of the test on the basis of using measurements that were not suitable for measuring racial self-esteem or identity and preference (Baldwin 1979; Banks 1976), others proclaim (Comer 1970; Kardiner & Ovesey 1965) that the studies found that Blacks were self-hating. Fast forward to current times, and Kohli (2014) supports this previous work and states that IR can be found in the classroom when young children play with dolls. She posits that African American children prefer to play with white dolls with yellow hair over brown

dolls with black hair. When the black children are asked why they pick the white dolls, they say because they are “good” or “pretty” and say the black dolls are “bad” and “ugly.”

Other researchers have operationalized IR via the creation of scales to measure it. Bailey et al. (2011) created the Internalized Racial Oppression Scale (IROS), with five dimensions of internalized racial oppression: (1) internalization of negative stereotypes, (2) self-destructive behaviors, (3) devaluation of the African world view, (4) belief in the biased representation of history, and (5) alteration of physical appearance. Campón and Carter (2015) developed the Appropriated Racial Oppression Scale (AROS), designed to measure IR in all peoples of color. Factor analysis identified four components of IR: (1) emotional responses, (feelings about belonging to one’s racial group), (2) American standard of beauty, capturing preferences for appearing more white, (e.g., straight hair), (3) devaluation of own group, which included both feelings and attitudes devaluing one’s own racial group, and (4) patterns of thinking, which consisted of dismissive attitudes toward the seriousness of racism. The dimensions captured in these scales provide information about the concept of IR itself.

Researchers have also documented harms related to IR. Campón and Carter (2015) found that IR correlated with anxiety and depression in their sample (which included other people of color in addition to African Americans). Participants in their study, in addition to being given the AROS, were administered the 18-item Mental

Health Inventory (MHI), which has both an anxiety and a depression subscale. The authors found IR was correlated with poor mental health.

Graham et al. (2016) studied whether IR mediated the reaction of Black Americans to recent racist encounters. Participants were given the Schedule of Racist Events (SRE; Landrine & Klonoff, 1996), and the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale, (DASS-21; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). The DASS-21 has three subscales, respectively measuring depression, anxious arousal, and stress. The self-hatred subscale of the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS; Worrell et al., 2004) was also administered. The CRIS was created specifically for black individuals. The self-hatred subscale was used as a measure of IR (Graham et al., 2016). The researchers concluded that IR did mediate the relationship between experiences of racism in the last year, and the level of anxiety and stress experienced by participants currently. Those with higher levels of IR experienced more anxiety/stress given the same exposure to racism than those with lower levels. The authors suggested that clinicians might focus on reducing IR to treat anxiety symptoms and stress (Graham et al., 2016).

IR is an outgrowth of oppression and must be viewed in relation to its creator Racism. All of these internalized thoughts and behaviors caused by IR share common root causes and employ methods that inevitably lead to a self-fulfilling effect, and a scheme to oppress one group usually at the expense of another. The outcome leads to trauma reflected as self-hatred of one's own group, and can act as an actual barrier to

assimilation and inclusion. The intervention will include a component teaching participants about IR.

Racial Trauma

Racial trauma comes in various forms. One extreme form of trauma is being a direct victim of, or being exposed to, physical violence. Homicide rates for Black Males are 27 per 100,000 a year as opposed to white peers who reflect rates of 3 per 100,000 annually (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016). And although tragically Black Male homicide victims are no longer part of the population, Black Males are also approximately three times more likely to be a victim of a non-fatal gun injury according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. One study found that 64% of low-income, urban, African American men had been attacked with weapons (Davis et al., 2008). According to Motley and Banks (2018), trauma exposure to Black Males over 18 is an unaddressed major medical and public health issue. These authors cite multiple studies as showing that roughly 62% of Black Males have been directly involved in a traumatic event during their lives, 72% have viewed a traumatic event first hand, and 59% have had a close friend or family member experience a traumatic event.

Racial trauma can also occur as a result of direct confrontations with law enforcement. Watson and Thompson (2015) define racial trauma as the mental health symptoms of individuals who have had these experiences, and are negatively impacted as a result of these encounters. Examples of law enforcement interactions which can give

rise to racial trauma are racial harassment by police officers, witnessing racial violence committed by any one across racial boundaries, or experiencing institutional racism. Direct mental health symptoms which can be observed and medically documented as a result of racial trauma include anxiety, including panic attacks, low self-esteem, feelings of humiliation, general irritability and difficulty in getting along with other people, and poor concentration when attempting to do abstract skills such as mathematical problems. López et al. (2017) have noted racial trauma can cause mood disorders, anxiety issues leading to dependency on drugs such as Xanax, and increased incidence of interpersonal violence across racial lines, for example, between Hispanics and non-Hispanic blacks.

More generally, racial discrimination of many types may be experienced as traumatic, and the effects appear to begin early. In a sample of minority emerging adults (among whom African Americans were the largest sub-group) Polanco-Roman et al. (2016) found that those who had experienced the most racial discrimination were the most likely to exhibit dissociative symptoms. Anglin et al. (2014) also found that racial discrimination experienced by ethnic minorities was associated with “attenuated positive psychotic symptoms,” which included the symptoms of suspiciousness and altered perceptions, as well as increased psychological distress. These behaviors are likely to continue into adulthood and have an influence on their ability to engage in opportunities that can improve their chances to not recidivate.

The early effects of experiencing racial discrimination include overt behavior such as delinquency, as well as the psychological symptoms noted above. Kang and

Burton (2014) have linked childhood racial traumas to subsequent juvenile delinquency in African-American incarcerated youth. The value of this research was the direct links between two definitive contributors to juvenile delinquency: The “ (a) effects of manifestation of a structural factor (racism) on the lives of these young men, and (b) the effects of the personal, emotional, and psychological consequences of those manifestations (i.e., trauma symptoms) on juvenile delinquency” (p.1119). The authors concluded “childhood trauma, trauma symptoms, and racial discrimination experiences all significantly contributed to juvenile delinquency and participants who experienced greater racial discrimination had higher post-traumatic stress symptoms and elevated delinquency rates” (p. 1121). This suggests a strong relationship between racial discrimination and eventual contact with the CJS.

Numerous studies have concluded the effects of racial trauma from discrimination and institutional racism are cumulative and grow in intensity and severity over time as more psychological damage is done to the individual. Carter and Sant-Barket (2015) added refinements to the established method in measuring the effects of racial trauma caused by institutional racism and discrimination with the Race-Based Traumatic Stress Symptom Scale (RBTSSS) which has been used for years to evaluate the emotional impact of race-based encounters. Their conclusions show RBTSSS can measure actual emotional harms or racial traumas caused by negative encounters with others centered around race, and these events are so severe the memories are permanently debilitating. RBTSSS can also measure the cumulative effects of racial trauma through objective variables such as the lack of hours of sleep, use of illegal drugs or alcohol, use of

prescribed anti-anxiety drugs, irritability, and loss of temper episodes. Their analysis underscored the fact each new encounter with institutional racism or a microaggression would create a cascading or compounding effect, opening up a new wound rather than merely recycling an old memory. A later study by Carter et al. (2018) found that higher scores on the RBTSSS were significantly associated with negative psychological outcomes such as depression, anxiety, and loss of emotional and behavioral control. Cook et al. (2005) show effects of racial trauma such as stress symptoms, alcohol use, and certain psychological disorders can be traced directly from childhood experiences with racial discrimination all the way through adolescent and adult incarceration. The authors called the effects of racial trauma “complex” because a single incident of racism done against a child can literally cascade into a lifetime of racial trauma, psychological dysfunction, juvenile delinquency and the inevitable contacts with the CJS.

Of great importance when considering paths to societal re-entry for the offender is the fact that victims of racial trauma often live in a “chronic state of danger” and “do not develop a sense of future” which means they have great difficulty setting long-term goals. Many offenders coping with racial trauma believe their own death is a likely outcome; this expectation precludes any attempt at long-term behavioral planning. Bowleg et al. (2014) have linked the fatalistic emotional symptoms of experienced racial traumas in urban black heterosexual men to ultra-high risk behaviors such as having unprotected sex with known HIV (Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus) infected women as an example.

The research on racial trauma has been extended not just to include psychological damage to individuals but also impairment of entire communities which share the emotional shocks of racism. Clark et al. (2016) have defined the mental health symptoms of a community experiencing racial trauma as “lateral violence” or psychological trauma directed against members of a racial group by its own members out of feelings of shared humiliation and hopelessness. The irony of such hatred and contempt against one's own race underscores the psychological damage caused by racial trauma.

The synergistic impact of experiencing the deleterious effects of Racism, IB, being labeled a criminal and experiencing IR has psychological implications. It causes Black Male offenders to see themselves through two lenses, one framed by the dominant culture (Racism, IB, and Labeling) and one framed by their acceptance of the dominant culture's standpoint of who they are. hooks (2003) mirrors this statement and refers to this process as “indoctrination” and “mental colonization.” Fanon (1963), Freire (1970) and Memmi (1965), concerned about the psychological effects of oppression in North Africa and South America, detail a desire to be like the colonizers as a result of a colonized mentality. hooks (2004) posits that Black Male identity is defined in relation to these characterizations as Black Males try to become them or try to be different from them. hooks (2001), as well as Watts-Jones (2002) support the notion Black Males experience psychological damage from internalizing racism as reflected by self-hatred, which promotes a low perception and valuation of self, as well as self-alienation and self-degradation.

This intervention included a component where participants share their experiences of racial trauma so that it can be understood as a shared experience caused by racism. The intervention included attention to the emotional and psychological components of dealing with racism, and hopes to help ameliorate some of those negative effects. Importantly this study emphasizes to participants that even though the system is flawed, the purpose of this intervention is to not make them hateful of dominant culture persons or institutions, but to assist them to work more effectively with dominant culture persons and to function better in dominant cultural settings.

The preceding sections of this chapter have provided the foundation for the content of the intervention. The final component of the content is a section on strategies to deal with racism. I now turn to the process of how the intervention will be provided.

Black Males and Learning

Edward Bell (2010) posits that Black Males have internalized the labels and negative narratives of who they are and what their capabilities are, and the end result is that Black Males have been sabotaged by a dominant culture attitude that has stymied their academic potential (Bell, 2009; Douglas, 2007). Black Males have experienced the harmful effects of school in the past, and their reluctance to engage and perform in an academic setting may be connected to teacher biases they previously encountered (Douglas, 2007). It is important that this intervention and this research take these realities into account.

Bell (2010; 2009) postulates that in order to combat these internalized labels and narratives, Black Males must be socialized to embrace the notion of academic success. Bell postulates this will often be the cornerstone of them being successful in a trade program or being able to advance on a job, in turn increasing their chances of successful re-entry back into their communities. Unfortunately, even though many Black Males may want to learn to be successful, (for example, by reentering society), they often have little clue as to how to go about this.

It is therefore of paramount importance that this intervention teach and prepare Black Males (offenders) to embrace the notion of participating in a learning environment. It needs be noted that I have been traumatized by the academic experience and therefore have gone to great lengths to guard the participants from the same. Things we have done are: a) we have evaluated the materials to make sure they can be understood regardless of participants' grade levels, b) we will have two facilitators available before, during and after the study to aid participants, in case someone doesn't understand something or needs to debrief, c) we will gather feedback from participants to inform us about the how to improve the intervention and d) we will remind participants that if things become too uncomfortable they have the option to withdraw from the study.

Andragogy/Adult Learning

It is important to have a vehicle that will motivate workshop members to want to participate, take charge of their learning and utilize me as a gateway and co-creator of

knowledge, as opposed to this researcher being the main conduit of knowledge. I now shift to a discussion about Andragogy and Adult Learning, two concepts that are woven into this study, in order to facilitate the learning experience of participants.

Andragogy

Andragogy, a theory brought to America in the 70's by Malcom Knowles, highlights the notion that adults learn differently than children. Since its introduction andragogy has been evaluated and critiqued thoroughly (Knowles et al., 2015). Multiple scholars have attempted to describe andragogy. Brookfield (1986) defined it as a set of assumptions, Merriam (1993) saw it as a set of guidelines, while Pratt (1993) visualized it as a philosophy. In spite of the ways in which scholars and researchers have chosen to describe and define andragogy, one thing remains true: That its core elements continue to live on (Davenport & Davenport, 1985; Hartree, 1984; Pratt, 1988). What is the Andragogical Model? According to Knowles et al. the Andragogical Model is based on 6 assumptions.

1. *The need to know.* Adults need to know why they need to learn something before becoming involved in the process. The group facilitator must create an environment that stimulates the learner's desire to acquire a deeper level of knowledge about the topic. The facilitator must help them realize where they are now in relation to the topic, and determine where they may want to be in the future related to the topic.

2. *The learner's self-concept.* Adults have a self-concept of being self-directed and can become resistant to receiving knowledge if they feel a facilitator is pushing an agenda on them. This can happen whenever a participant is told they are participating in a training in some type of educational setting. The unconscious psychological mechanisms triggered from their early childhood school and learning experiences can play a role in the receptiveness of the participant to accept new knowledge, because the participant is now an adult and doesn't have to pay attention unless there is a benefit.
3. *The role of the learner's experience.* Adult learners come to an educational activity with a vast array of lived experiences that are valuable to the group setting. This wide array of personal experiences is valuable to participants and can be incorporated into a training by using group discussions, peer to peer exercises, activities and case studies. All of these methods facilitate a dynamic learning environment that allows the facilitator to join with the participants in creating knowledge.
4. *Readiness to learn.* As an adult, one becomes more ready to learn things they need to know if it will help them cope with a real-life situation. As a person matures, his/her readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his/her social roles.
5. *Orientation to learning.* Adults are task-centered or problem-centered regarding their learning styles. In other words, adults are motivated to learn when learned information helps them perform tasks or deal with problems they deem worthy of their attention. Finally, adults are more likely to learn and value new knowledge

and skills when information is presented and applied to real-life situations they can relate to.

6. *Motivation*. The final assumption is that adults usually respond to outside motivations, but the strongest motivator is the internal drive one possesses when focused on something one desires, e.g., new job, self-esteem or quality of life.

These principles are critical to this intervention, and in order to be sure the participants obtain value from their experience, we will create a learning environment meant to empower them as they talk about their past and current encounters with racism, IB, and IR. The material will also be presented in a way that takes into consideration their past school experiences, so as to not traumatize them, if they have had early bad experiences in school. Finally we will discuss real life issues as presented by the participants in hopes that the stories and examples discussed will be motivating and will have greater meaning and value. It needs to be mentioned that many professionals have proclaimed that instructors should all facilitate according to the same recipe (Brookfield, 1986; Feuer & Gerber, 1988; Pratt, 1993). However contrary to this position Knowles (1984) offers a less rigid approach and offers two diversions from the “follow the format” approach. He states first that the andragogical model is a combination of elements that can be shaped or designed according to need, and secondly that the Andragogical model has no starting point and the ways it can be applied may vary according to the situation (Knowles et al., p. 418). In regards to this study, Knowles’ words regarding flexibility ring loudly and resonate with this research project.

The Process of Adult Learning

The andragogical model, or process model, is heavily focused on process as opposed to a pedagogical model, or content model, a more traditional approach that most educators, teachers or instructors employ.

In the content model, the instructor plans ahead of time what knowledge will be transmitted and what skills participants will learn. The information is then formatted in the chosen mode of delivery (lecture, lab exercises, readings, etc.) and presented in a traditional sequential orderly style by the instructor. Summarized, the content model is heavily dependent on the educator transmitting knowledge and skills they deem as important, versus the participant's co-creating knowledge with the educator (Knowles et al., (2015).

The process model takes a different approach to the instruction design and delivery by promoting a model (procedures, resources) that helps participants acquire information and skills they choose as important, which is different from a pedagogical and traditional approach where learning goals are directed by the teacher.

Knowles et al. (2015) detail that the process model has eight elements that are addressed ahead of time by the instructor in an effort to increase involvement of participants:

“(1) Preparing the learner; (2) establishing a climate conducive to learning; (3) creating a mechanism for mutual planning; (4) diagnosing the need for learning; (5) formulating program objectives (which is content) that will satisfy these needs; (6) designing a pattern of learning experiences; (7) conducting these learning experiences with suitable techniques and materials; and (8) evaluating the learning outcomes and diagnosing learning needs.” The first seven elements are reviewed in this chapter in relation to the intervention. The eighth element, evaluation, relates to the dissertation and is reviewed in Ch. 3.

Preparing the Learner.

Knowles et al. (2015) posit that preparing the learner is a critical part of the process and addresses the issue that most adult learners are not prepared to be self-directed and responsible for their own learning, as most of us are conditioned to have an instructor directing our learning. Preparing the learner is simply teaching the participant/s how to learn. In order to do so the change agent must (a) explain the difference between reactive and proactive learning (b) identify what resources, experiences and knowledge are possessed by group members and (c) provide opportunities for participants to use skills in a proactive way (acting prior to a conflict), versus a reactive way (reacting based on past issues, without thinking about the future).

Establishing a Climate Conducive to Learning.

This element includes the need to have suitable physical accommodations such as comfortable chairs, lighting and climate, with easily accessible and properly positioned technology aids. Also relevant to the proper environment for discourse is the need for group rooms to be appropriate in size, and the seating of participants be arranged in a configuration that facilitates and encourages face to face exchanges of knowledge (Alford, 1968; Knowles 1980, pp163-165).

Creating a Mechanism for Mutual Planning.

The importance of this element lies in the fact people tend to feel a level of commitment commensurate to their involvement in the planning of what they will learn. Without that participation they are likely to feel that an activity is being imposed on them minus their input.

Diagnosing the Need for Learning.

According to Knowles et al. (2015), designing a pattern of learning experiences is important because it taps into an individual adult learner's desire to learn what they wish to learn, to achieve what they want to achieve, and to perform at the level at which they wish to perform. These core components form a foundation and starting point for constructing a model of competence for the learner.

Assessing Discrepancies.

This element addresses the gap between where a participant is now and where they want or need to be and is a necessary assessment that must happen. The participants' perception and self-assessment of the gap is critical to them acquiring knowledge and skills, equipping them with the tools to capably apply the model competencies.

Formatting Program Objectives.

Creating objectives that will meet participants' needs is important for participant growth. Taba (1962, pp.200-205) provides a model of cognitive orientation and approach to creating course objectives. The model stipulates that: First, objective statements should detail the behavior expected and the context of its application. Second, objectives should be clear and it should be easy to identify what the expected behavior looks like. Third, learning goals should be designed in a way to illustrate that there are distinct differences between learning exercises, which aids participants learning new behaviors, and information they need to learn. The fourth premise is that objectives can be evolutionary (a road to travel instead of fixed points). The fifth and final principle states that an objective should be realistic and capable of being infused into the learning materials and activities.

Designing a Pattern of Learning Experiences.

Ingalls and Arceri (1972), and Knowles (1980) say that designing a pattern of learning experiences involves choosing areas or problems selected by participants, by engaging in group activities or through their self-assessment. The data resulting from these exercises provides direction that informs the units of experiential learning, which are delivered via the chosen methods and materials and arranged sequentially according to the participants' readiness.

Conducting These Learning Experiences.

Conducting these learning experiences with suitable techniques and materials simply means that the content of the training, workshop, or educational setting needs to utilize creative, innovative, and experiential techniques. Activities of inquiry need to unveil and co-create knowledge that is individually valued by participants according to their needs, preferences and learning styles.

In order to incorporate the previously discussed elements into the intervention this research will prepare the participants by providing a PowerPoint presentation that is easy to understand and follow, this guide will serve as a template to aid in discussions and inform participants about what they can expect to learn. The learning environment will be accommodating and comfortable enough to allow participants plenty of space and privacy to talk about materials covered. The intervention material will be delivered in a

group format and designed so that participants can choose what information is most valuable to them, which should help them self assess, enabling them to identify which skills they need, and to help them develop objectives and goals to improve their lives. Finally we will use creative exercises and activities, identified in the previous pilot study and in each of the future trainings conducted, to build an intervention that is most beneficial to those who participate. The following information describes a summarized version of the intervention.

Social Work with Groups

Ethnic sensitivity in the delivery of the material is an important part of this intervention, because we want the groups to be effective, and to allow the participants to gain value from participating. My experience as a seasoned LCSW informs me that utilizing a Social Work foundation is the best approach. Zastrow and Hessenauer (2018) reflect that groups, in a traditional sense, have operated based on the medical model, which they say is a deficit- themed model that emphasizes the worst of a person and “ignores environmental factors that affect the ‘person-in-situation.’” The authors also posit that in order to conduct culturally sensitive group research, one must conceptualize in an ethnically sensitive way a full picture of the total needs of the participants and make sure to address the following, (as we did in this training):

- The group material should be delivered in a way that resonates with the participants and has values and dispositions similar to the participants.

- Inform and incorporate strategies to assist participants understand the duality of their existence, stemming from their involvement in two systems. One is the dominant culture system that we all live in and the second is the nurturing system that is part of the person's family and community where they can be supported. This can offset the negatives one might encounter in the dominant culture. The participants need to become empowered to counter oppression by their participation. Empowerment has the ability to help a group overcome the stereotypes that have been established from the history of racism, like what has happened to Black Males who offend. Use a strengths perspective which builds on participants' strengths, rather than their inadequacies.

Along with the culturally sensitive approach we also incorporated certain elements that derive from three types of treatment group models. The "Social Skills Group" model elements include helping participants, by use of role plays and discussions to, for example, be more assertive, learn conflict resolution skills, and increase problem solving skills. This model also allows for positive feedback to happen from other participants. The "Stress Management Groups" model was another guide to this research. We exposed participants to options to use before they are stressed and strategies combat the harm caused by stress, when it occurs. Some of the activities, both mental and physical, we used to help participants reduce stress were discussions to get suggestions from others, and relaxation tips, e.g. deep breathing, yoga, aroma therapy, and positive imagery.

In conclusion, Group Social Work has the power to assist individuals in becoming helpers as they aid other members solve their problems. This often leads to the helper developing new perspectives about their own problems, that may be similar (Zastrow & Hessenauer, 2018). It is also generally easier to change a person's attitude in a group than one on one (Lewin, 1952).

The Intervention

This intervention is designed with the understanding that there are multiple factors related to racial inequities and challenges Black Males who offend face. Therefore this intervention offered skills that can be used in conjunction with other programs they may be participating in. The hoped-for end result will be that Black Males who have offended are able to avoid recidivating.

The goals of the intervention are:

Goal 1: To empower Black Males who have offended by providing them an opportunity to talk about and understand their life experiences with Racism, IB, and IR related to their involvement in the CJS and criminalized behaviors.

Goal 2: To help Black Male offenders understand and ameliorate the traumatic impacts to their psyches that have resulted from being labeled criminals, from IB and IR, and from their involvement in the CJS, which can stymie their attempts to stay out of the system.

Goal 3: To present communication/conflict resolution and stress reduction tools to utilize by the participants when confronted by individuals displaying aggressive and microaggressive attacks of Racism, IB, and IR towards participants.

Overview

This intervention was designed to accommodate 3 to 7 participants each time and was scheduled to last approximately 3 hours, because this amount of time allowed for roughly two 1 hour sessions with one 7-8 minute break each half, and a 20-30 minute mid intervention break to eat their lunch, before the last session. The modules are titled, *Trauma*, and *How to heal*. All of the groups were able to adhere to this schedule except for one of the groups.

Training Hourly Schedule

Before the start of the training, participants filled out the informed consent and signed the forms, and filled out the pretest questionnaire with demographic questions.

Time	Activity
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0:00	Training Begins. This Trauma module includes Slavery, Implicit Bias, and Internalized Racism.
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1:00 Mini-focus Group to evaluate first half of the training

1:10 Lunch break

1:30 Second half of training begins. Healing module includes the plan for responding to racism, role plays, and ways to heal

2:40: Second focus group to evaluate second half of training

2:50 Final questionnaires (first post-test)

3:00 Training ends

Trauma

The trauma module presented information beginning in Africa when Black Males were first criminalized as part of the slave trade, The training then provided a connection to how the colonizers used a criminal label and narrative to frame and justify enslaving Black Males for cheap labor, for financial gain, and to keep them subservient. The intervention then described how even after the abolishment of slavery, the criminal label continued as an instrument to keep Black Males who had offended marginalized and in harm's way.

We taught participants about how racism fashioned in older times has morphed into IB which is also a form of racism. We also helped them become aware of the notion that being on the receiving end of racist and biased acts can lead to them being traumatized, and internalize the attacks (IR), leading to self harm. For example, we discussed the all-too-common experiences of being followed by security guards in stores. We pointed out to participants that the self harm they experience can be unconsciously manifested in self-sabotaging actions, in turn causing behaviors that can lead to incarceration.

How to Heal

The second half of the training consisted of information that provided multiple options for participants to counter the adverse effects that can happen as a result of a racist act, an IB microaggression, or an incident stemming from IR.

The second half provided an easy to learn interaction plan that can be used in a variety of scenarios. Different versions or components of this interaction plan have been used in my counseling private practice, to teach cultural competence, and anger management. It has been used to teach Black Males how to deal with racism, IB and IR. The plan has four dimensions the participant needs to go through when involved in a racial situation. We taught them to: a) First use your anger management skills to calm your self down, so you don't let your anger over rule your executive functioning; b) Secondly we taught participants to use the interaction communication model about how

to communicate with someone who may act rudely towards them. The model is a three compartment design that taught participants to “Explore” a racialized situation by first asking the racist person a probing question about the racialized act, then listening to the response to see if they can move to the next section, which is to make sure you “Understand” what the person is saying so you can shape your thoughts and responses, in preparation to move to the “Action” phase when you tell the other person what you want to them to know regarding how to resolve the issue. This model was created as a collaboration between Ramsey and colleagues, and the Canadian Mental Health Association (McAuliffe & Perry, 2007). Participants were able to practice using this communication model during the role plays.

The final two parts of the plan c) Encouraged the participants to “Debrief” with a support person who can give them support and truthful feedback about how they handled the racialized situation, and finally to make sure they d) “Destressed” by doing something that helps them move on from the incident in a positive way (e.g., exercise, meditate, listen to music).

Additionally during the healing section participants were taught some easy to do skills focused on mindfulness components, to help them learn ways to reduce anger if in a tense exchange or distress after an event to let go. Mindfulness evolved from Buddhist meditation practices and was reconceptualized for secular delivery. Mindfulness endeavors to educate persons to achieve attentional awareness by focusing on the core practices of using breathing, body awareness, and mindful movements to aid in stress

reduction (Simpson et al., 2018). These practices can help improve the ability of participants to self-regulate, leading to a shift in their views of themselves (Hölzel et al., 2011). Research findings reflect that mindfulness strategies have been useful in multiple ways, such as improving the psychological function and general well-being of people with health problems (Fjorback et al, 2011; Goyal et al., 2014). Other studies have reported the efficacy of mindfulness-based interventions as well. One alternative to incarceration study for adults ages 18 to 24 found that mindfulness techniques helped participants to better control their anger and generally self-regulate (Barrett, 2017).

The components we taught were a) a breathing exercise that was easy to learn and practice, by simply inhaling deeply, holding the breath for a few seconds then then exhaling. We also let them try their choice of: b) smelling fragrances like lavender, spice and other calming scents to possibly purchase at a later date and use to help them relax when stressed. Finally, c) we wanted to address the physical part of mindfulness and provided easy to use hand held massage equipment for them to operate and use on targeted body areas where they retain stress. They were also told that many of the items came from second hand stores, or could be purchased online for a few dollars.

In Chapter 2 we reviewed literature that informs the research and theory about the intervention. Covered in this chapter was a review of the reentry and decarceration movements and the history of how racism manifests itself and impacts Black Males . The chapter includes detailing steps to aid Black Males, to have success in learning. The

chapter concluded with a description of the intervention. I now turn to Chapter 3 and discuss details about how the study was conducted.

Chapter 3: Methods

The process model of adult education presented in Chapter 2 (Knowles et al., 2015) includes an eighth component, evaluating the learning outcomes and diagnosing learning needs. They note that this component is important, but also that evaluation of learning is a weak link. Hilgard and Bower (1966) support this notion and stipulate that it is difficult to apply strict research techniques to be efficient when one uses simple, instead of complex objectives. Knowles et al. add fodder and proclaim that the purpose of evaluation should be to improve instruction and learning, not to justify a presupposed research question. This study is a formative evaluation, evaluating the program as it develops.

This chapter describes the methods that were used to guide the study. This chapter begins stating the Aims and Research Questions of the research and then provides an overview of the Afrocentric approach to research used in this study, and a discussion of my positionality. then moves to a description of how research participants for this study were sampled and recruited. The facilitators and settings are described. The section on Consent and Confidentiality, explains how participants were informed about privacy issue issues. Following these sections, the potential risks the participants could experience from their participation, and the measures put in place as protection against risk, so they would not be harmed from participating, are discussed. Sections describing data collection and analysis follow, including an overview of Constructivist Grounded Theory that was used in the qualitative data analysis. This is followed by a section on

quantitative data analysis. Finally, a pilot test that was conducted to determine the worthiness of this research is described.

Aims of Dissertation Research

This dissertation evaluated the intervention in its evolving form, to provide guidance toward improving and finalizing an effective intervention. The study had the following aims:

Aim 1: To evaluate the intervention, especially its content; and

Aim 2: To obtain information to strengthen the quality of this training by assisting in developing a final model.

Research Questions

This study was designed with the understanding that there are multiple factors and challenges Black Males who offend face. Therefore, this exploratory research is seeking knowledge from the participants that might help them and others. The following research questions are framed with this notion in mind:

1. To what extent do participants gain awareness about the historical connection between *slavery* and *racism*, *IB*, and *IR* and their life experiences as Black men

involved with the criminal justice system? To what extent can participants connect these phenomena (IB and IR and trauma) with their own life experiences and experiences with the CJS? Does this understanding help in dealing with the traumatic aspects of experiencing racism?

2. To what extent is the intervention helping participants respond, both internally and interpersonally, to explicit and implicit racism, IB, and IR in ways that they consider successful?
3. How can the intervention be improved to better achieve its goals?

Afrocentric Approach

The Afrocentric Paradigm was an additional lens that guided this research study. A summation of the Afrocentric Paradigm is social work research which is predicated on traditional African philosophical assumptions, and which emphasizes a holistic, interdependent and spiritual conception of people and their environments (Schiele, 2000). In support of the holistic notion, Livingston and Nahimana (2006) posit that “Black male development evolves in a context of people, places and institutions that impact and form their ecological context” (p.209).

The methodology of this study was guided by and informed by my experience as a Black Male who has offended, as an LCSW practicing clinician with extensive group facilitation experience, and as a researcher in search of knowledge to aid the participants in being successful. During my experiences of over 40 years providing services to Black

Males, I have found that using an Afrocentric approach rooted in “Social Work with Groups” principles (Zastrow & Hessenauer, 2018) increases the value of the group experience for participants as it did in this research. This intervention and this study are both by and for Black Males. Therefore, this methods section was constructed as informed by the Afrocentric paradigm.

The Afrocentric worldview emphasizes “interdependency, collectivity, spirituality, and affect” (Schiele, 2000, p.25.) The Afrocentric approach to social research includes a focus on the oral traditions in African diaspora, consciousness of the oppression that people of African descent experience, and qualitative research. Qualitative methods center personal narratives and collective cultural meanings.

From a standpoint position the Afrocentric model allowed this researcher to secure information from Black Males by asking questions and seeking new knowledge in a manner that honored and respected their unique position in our hierarchically arranged social world (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

Furthermore, the Afrocentric approach brought to attention the fact that African Americans have been oppressed by Eurocentric paradigms in social science, extending back to the times when ideas, which rose during the European Enlightenment period, were used to justify enslaving people of African descent and claimed them to be racially inferior (Ani, 1994). This research tradition continued. An example of Black males being harmed by research is the U.S. Public Health Service syphilis study. DeGruy (2005, p.

98) summarizes the impact of that research: “The majority of the men who participated were illiterate sharecroppers complaining of fatigue. After tests were run, they were told they had a blood disorder when they really had syphilis. They received no treatment for their condition.”

Finally, this paradigm was valuable to this study because it presented information in a way of thinking that meshed with Black Males’ cultural psyche and is rooted in a strengths-based anti- oppressive format.

The importance of delivery of the intervention information stemmed from the fact that a large majority of Black Male offenders have had minimal success in the classroom. Ewert (2014) fuels this discourse by informing us that Black Males ages 20-34 have the lowest high school graduation rate of all ethnic and gender groups and that only 30 percent of Black males in this age group have a GED or high school diploma. Specifically, about Black males who have offended, he contends that 60 percent of Black males who drop out are jailed at some point in their lives, and one in three black males who are dropouts are in prison or jail on any given day. These statistics indicate that Black Males have struggled in academic settings, and these struggles are connected to mass incarceration.

Great lengths were gone to in order to address the cultural concerns mentioned. First, to circumvent the realization that Black Males have been traumatized from school experiences, we utilized culturally sensitive techniques and strategies to rebuff those

experiences in a positive manner. Secondly, I used my experiences, as a Black Male social worker, community-based administrator, and private practitioner who has worked with this disenfranchised community, as an asset that aided in engaging and joining with the participants to co create knowledge. Finally, my status and experiences as a Black Male who has offended, who has overcome his academic trauma and criminalized characterization, greatly assisted me in understanding the culturally flavored fears and success stories shared in the groups, in turn creating a healing and learning environment.

Researcher Positioning

Research positioning was an important part of this research and was crucial to my designing and conducting the intervention and the study. I am an African American, a successful businessman, and a social worker (LCSW). I have been a probation officer and an administrator of programs specifically geared toward African Americans. I was also an offender. I am an activist for the Black community. This study was informed by my personal stories and experiences of encountering racism, which resonated with participants who have offended and have experienced many of the same challenges.

Related to my positioning, I wanted to prevent coming across as a know-it-all or misinterpreting what participants said, if I viewed them through a skewed lens. Initially I thought the generation gap between me and the participants might be a possible hindrance, fearing the participants might have thought the material presented didn't apply in today's world; I was also concerned that this gap may have influenced my

understanding. However, my current stories and information helped to dismantle the generational issue and my combination of business experiences resulted in the participants being more attentive to my advice especially when they learned I own multiple houses, I am my own boss and have accomplished many of the same things they want to achieve in their lifetimes. As importantly, the participants also taught me, I am a role model and have a responsibility to realize the power of my status in the community.

Finally, my positioning as a Bi-cultural Black Male insider/researcher, and as a member of the target group, was a concern initially because participants might have seen me through two different lenses: One that portrayed me as a privileged representative of dominant culture ideology, and another vision based on our Black Male cultural connection. This potentially precarious position could have caused inner turmoil for me by triggering my own IR, if either scenario happened. In order to prevent my researcher status to not alienate the participants, I used Afrocentric approaches to connect with Group members, and CGT elements to make sure I heard their messages, and utilized social work with groups strategies assuring that I connected with them in a positive empowering way. In order to assess if I was being viewed as a privileged researcher, I: a) listened to the immediate feedback from the focus groups, b) debriefed with the co-facilitator after each group, and c) did regular journaling about my thoughts regarding how I was viewed by participants. All of these efforts helped me stay grounded and connected to the participants.

Pilot Test

This Dissertation was aided by a Pilot study, conducted for the purpose of providing information to determine if Black Male offenders have an interest in participating. Research questions were: a) Are Black Males offenders interested in a one-day training to learn about how they are criminalized from Racism? b) Would participants be willing to learn skills to help them better deal with Racism, IB and IR? and c) Do participants believe there is a need for this type of training?

Participants for the pilot study matched the proposed population detailed in this research study: Black males who have offended, and live in the greater Portland metropolitan area. The age of participants was 18 years of age as a lower limit and there was no upper age limit. This pilot study utilized one-on-one interviews to collect data. Institutional Review Board (IRB approval for this pilot study was obtained January 14, 2019. There were a total number of ten participants that participated in this study.

Results were fruitful in providing answers to proposed questions, and provided valuable information that was incorporated into the intervention. Study questions were designed to determine participants' willingness to participate, how concepts would be taught and participants' level of understanding of the intervention material.

Research questions for pilot test

R1 Are Black Males offenders interested in a one-day training to learn about how they are Criminalized by Racism?

R2 Would participants be willing to learn skills to help them better deal with Racism?

R3 Do participants believe there is a need for this type of training?

R4 Do you know what Implicit Bias is?

R5 Do you know what Internalized Racism is?

R6 Have you experienced Trauma?

R7 Have you been Traumatized as a Black Male Offender?

R8 Do you know what microaggressions are?

The responses to the research questions for the pilot test indicated universal interest in, willingness to participate in, and perceived need for a training of the type piloted in the pilot study. The responses also indicated participants had little knowledge of the key concepts to be covered in the training. Finally, the responses revealed that a majority of participants have experienced trauma on two levels as a Black Male and a Black Male who has offended. A breakdown of the responses can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Participants' Responses to Research Questions for Pilot Test

Question	Yes	No	Percent Yes
Interest in one-day training	10	0	100%
Willing to learn skills	10	0	100%
See need for training	10	0	100%
Know what implicit bias is	1	9	10%
Know what internalized racism is	3	7	30%
Experienced trauma	9	1	90%
Experienced trauma as offender	10	0	100%
Know what microaggressions are	2	8	20%
Concepts hard to understand	9	1	90%

This study also allowed for qualitative responses to happen and the results were equally informative in providing additional information of how participants feel related to the open-ended questions asked.

The analysis of data revealed important themes that were generated from the open-ended questions asked the participants. Examples of the valuable data yielded in comments were: “I would like you to talk about relationships with police,” and “How to deal with racism and police profiling is important to be included.” Others commented, “My biggest challenge was that I had a distorted view about life and I had problems staying away from all that’s negative.” “My challenge was now that I was back out how was I going to join the system and stay out?” “Make money, because I have a 4th grade education I need to hustle.”

What I learned from this pilot study is that Black Males are interested in learning ways to deal with racism, and I learned that input from the participants sheds light on the need to offer the curriculum in a way that they understand, and most importantly I learned that a training like what we are proposing is one they would be willing to participate in if given a chance, and would highly recommend to others. The final learning experience was that the information derived from the pilot was the foundation to this research study and intervention design.

Recruitment and the Sample

Purposive sampling was used to select participants for this research intervention because it allowed for homogeneity in the groups. Snowball sampling was also employed, as an organic form of sampling that happened as program advocates (co-facilitators) and participants spread the word about the intervention to others in their community. The results of this strategy proved fruitful resulting in the recruitment of enough participants to complete the study.

The target sample for this research included Black Males who had ever been charged with a crime, found guilty, sentenced, and currently live in the greater Portland metropolitan area. The age of participants started at age 18 as a lower limit and there was no upper age limit. All who were selected needed to have basic reading and writing skills, and the targeted number of participants for this study was 20-30. Exclusion criteria included Black Males who are under 18 years of age, or who had no involvement in the CJS.

Recruitment efforts focused on community agencies that have frequent contact with Black Males. In this study we focused on Black Men's groups, community advocacy programs working with Black Males who have offended, and African American specific recovery programs. It needs to be mentioned that during the recruitment of participants, numerous programs and participants wanted to join this dissertation study and asked to be added to a waiting list if there was one.

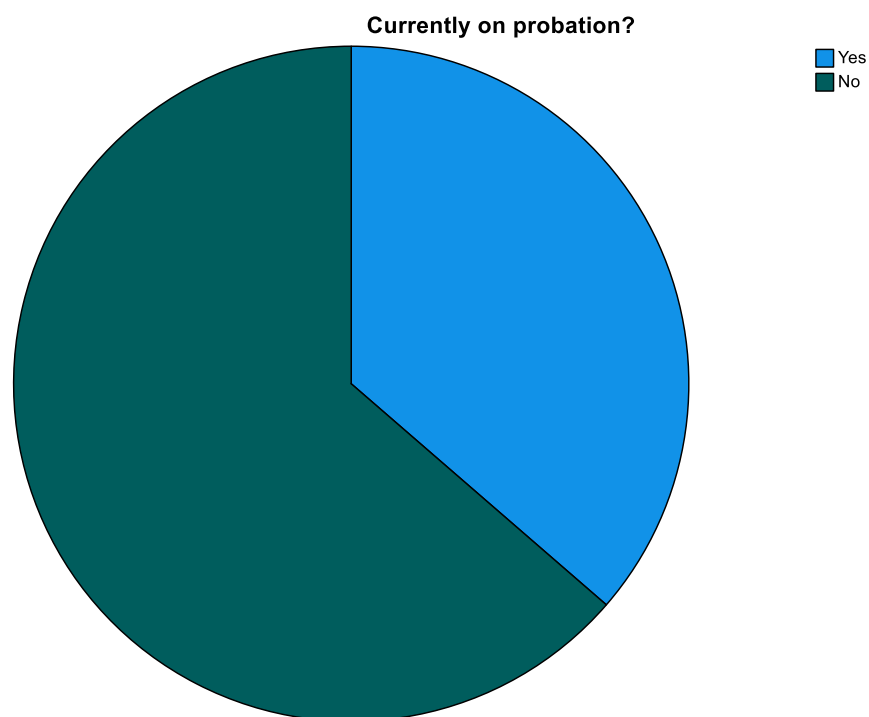
In order to recruit participants and to compensate them for their valuable time, this study gave \$100 to each participant for their transportation to and from the trainings and for their participation in the intervention. The dollar amount was also an attempt to aid members who really needed the money as they were still challenged financially from the Covid pandemic which caused a financial strain on our community. The money was distributed in two installments, \$60 at the end of the training and \$40 after the two-week interview with me in person.

Covid spread after the proposal was approved in August of 2020 but before data was collected the Portland State University IRB halted research activities. IRB approval was obtained to start conducting groups again in the fall of 2021. All participants had to be vaccinated, and this requirement was made part of recruitment materials. One potential participant was excluded because he was not vaccinated. All five groups were conducted in October and November 2021.

Recruitment efforts produced a total of 22 participants, each of whom participated in one of 5 different groups. The actual number of groups conducted was determined based on the level and quality of data collected after the third group, as informed by after group discussions with the co-facilitator, dissertation committee chair, and myself. It was determined after three groups that: a) saturation would be reached with 5 groups and b) there would be enough information collected to answer all of the research questions.

The 22 participants were all Black Males, ranging in age from 32 to 74. Thirty six percent ($n = 8$) were on probation at the time of their participation. See Figure 1.

Figure 1: Participants' Probation Status



The Facilitators

The training was conducted by the lead researcher/facilitator who brought group teaching skills and a wealth of history serving this population, and supported by one co-facilitator each group. There was a total of two different co facilitators, who are Black Males who have offended. Each had 12-15 years of experience working with the research population as their advocate and support person and importantly provided the snowball sample link that was valuable to recruitment of participants and them feeling comfortable and trusting enough to participate.

It was important to present the research curriculum according to the outline, and facilitate the group learning process in a culturally sensitive climate that was empowering and transformative. The co-facilitators aided in this quest by keeping the discussions moving when they noticed the participants getting off track and they also offered translations for some members when they needed extra help completing the questionnaires, doing the role plays and using the relaxation tools. The co-facilitators also assisted in distribution of materials, and were available after the intervention to debrief with the lead researcher about how the group went.

The Settings

The settings where the workshops happened were in the community. Four of the sessions happened at churches and one happened at a community- based alcohol and drug program. All of the locations were easily accessible by bus routes that had frequent scheduled times, close to the workshop site. All of the settings had clean restrooms, comfortable chairs and tables with enough room to distance from each other (Covid Precautions), and to allow participants room to write down important information. The rooms had enough space allowing for both small group (role plays) and large group interactions to happen without disturbing each other. The settings had ample electric outlets, tech connections, and large televisions so participants could easily see the PowerPoint presentation slides. To make the setting even more comfortable, light refreshments (bottled water) and sandwiches and chips were provided for mid workshop break.

Consent

Informed consent can be a lightning rod when working on research projects with Black Males who have offended, due to their marginalization and distrust of research projects. This research met criteria for the requirement of needing informed consent because the study (a) involved interactions with research participants, (b) taught an intervention with research participants and (c) involved collection of private information.

Therefore, in this study permission was first secured to conduct this intervention through Portland State University's Institutional Review Board; who provided a template to be used describing how to do this research project.

After getting the IRB approved consent form, we issued it to the participants before the training and reviewed it with them. Participants reviewed the potential benefits and risks of their participation, as well as privacy issues. Participants were asked for permission to record the intervention for my later review. Finally, participants were informed that they would receive \$100 for participating. It was made clear to participants that they had the option to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions. All participants in this study agreed to what was outlined above, they were to be asked to sign the consent form to participate, and all signed it (see Appendix).

Confidentiality

I was well aware that participants might be concerned about trustworthiness of this research and might not trust me regarding what happened to the information unearthed in the intervention. Therefore, participants were informed about confidentiality matters while completing consent forms. Privacy issues related to confidentiality were also detailed in the consent form as well. Regarding privacy issues, participants were informed that their information would be protected, and that as findings were studied and reported, their identifying information would be changed so their identities would not be detectable.

Participants were also informed that all hard copies of questionnaires would be secured by keeping data in a locked file cabinet in a secured office. In order to manage the sensitive data maintained on computers, the following was done: a) Access to the data was managed, and limited to only those with permission to have access and those who have the access codes, b) Data was stored on a personal computer which was kept in a locked office, c) Data in the devices was secured by using anti-virus software and special passcodes, ending inactive sessions, and using firewalls, and d) Data was managed responsibly by not gathering unnecessary information and by only gathering information as approved by the IRB process. Data will be stored for a period of time according to principles for publication.

Finally, participants were informed that in the dissertation and any related presentations and publications, their individual identities would not be exposed and they would hence remain anonymous.

Potential Risks and Protections Against Risk

Participants were exposed to minimal risk being involved in this workshop. One risk was a psychological reaction triggered by discussions reflecting on past negative events experienced by the participants. In order to prevent participants from having a negative psychological reaction: a) We had a facilitator and co-facilitator available during the training, and immediately after the training, so participants could process and debrief if necessary; b) Participants were also given my phone number to call in case a psychological event happened; and c) We made sure participants could understand the consent form enough to feel comfortable signing, while knowing even if they did sign they had the option to withdraw at any time without consequences. No participants expressed any discomfort or misgivings, and there were no apparent harmful effects of the intervention or the study.

Another risk needing attention was in regards to Black Males' level of mistrust related to being subjects of research. My insider status, as a Black Male who has offended and a as a community advocate, aided in reducing this potential risk and reduced the participants' apprehensions about risk they be exposed to. Additionally, my connection to the population, in conjunction with the relationships I established during

recruitment for the pilot interviews, served as a vital link to participants, and acted as prescreening tool vetted by the community activist who made the referrals. Finally, to mitigate risk, this dissertation study informed participants about possible risk, by way of the IRB approved consent form which detailed possible risks for their involvement. No participant expressed any mistrust regarding the study.

Data Collection

This mixed methods study incorporated two types of data collection, qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative research was emphasized in this research study, because it is designated as a design that is favorable for communities of color that have been marginalized (like Black Males who have offended). The qualitative design allowed me to tap into peoples' personal narratives, allowed for interactions between the researcher and the subjects to happen, and was a key to this study's success.

Quantitative methods added value to this research because they allowed the collection of general demographic information. Demographic information collected included: participants' age, and if they were currently on probation. Additionally, we also collected data by asking a few questions related to the research questions via pre and post questionnaires, distributed at the start of the training, at the end of training, and again approximately two weeks later in a follow up interview. The strength of the quantitative data, related to significance, adds value showing that this intervention is scientifically tested to be effective.

Data collection efforts for this mixed methods design are now discussed. Five methods were used to collect data: a. group transcripts, b. mini focus groups, c. two questionnaires: before and after the intervention, d. observations of the group, e. follow-up in community interviews, all of which yielded valuable information.

a. Group Transcripts

Group discussions were used as the main conduit to knowledge. Participants were involved in the general workshop and activities for a period of approximately 3 hours, the scheduled length of the intervention. The full training was tape recorded, yielding data that was later transcribed.

The training was divided into two knowledge modules. The first half presented information that is trauma informed, related to slavery history, racism, mass incarceration, and the accumulated impact on Black Males who have offended. The second half of the training taught participants how handle racial situations and how to heal from those experiences. A key element is that the intervention fosters a lot of input from participants sharing their stories, questions and solutions about how they handle racism the transcripts capture these knowledge modules for my review.

b. Mini focus groups

We collected specific data at the end of each half of the intervention, using a short focus group (15 minutes) with two questions (see Appendix), targeted to acquire specific information, related to the research questions. These groups were taped and transcribed along with the intervention.

c. Questionnaires

The questionnaires were designed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative, brief open and closed ended questions. There was a total of two questionnaires administered, the first at the start of the intervention and the second at the end of the intervention. The first questionnaire contained some basic demographic questions. Both included several qualitative questions in order to gather data about their personal experiences, backgrounds, and opinions related to participating in this study. It should be noted that if the participant had questions about items on the questionnaires, I and the co-facilitator made a concerted effort to make sure they understood.

d. Observations of the Group

Immediately after the conclusion of each group, the facilitator and co-facilitator had a general discussion (approximately 15 minutes). The discussions were about how the group went, what went well and why, what did not work, and what could be improved about the training. Particular attention was paid to the research questions. The facilitator

and co-facilitator also made notes during the debriefing to make sure needed changes happened as talked about.

e. Follow-up Interviews

Originally the plan was to do the follow up interviews by phone, but after the first two phone interviews it felt so impersonal, I (consulting with the dissertation chair) decided to do the interviews in person, in order to check back to make sure the participant was all right. This change was embraced by participants as they seemed to enjoy the opportunity to show me what they remembered, get refreshed on what they learned and to reconnect. They also seemed happy that I would take the time to come and see them in their community space, where ever it was. One of those places was a housing unit for offenders situated in a drug infested area of the city, and the participant made an all out effort to make sure I was safe by escorting me from and to my car at dark, while proudly introducing me to others, some of who were just out of prison and living on the streets. The follow up interviews included the same quantitative evaluative questions that were asked in the pretest and posttest.

Qualitative Data Analysis using Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT)

Constructivist grounded theory (CGT) is the methodological approach that informed and guided this study. CGT is an outgrowth of Grounded Theory a concept developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The basics tenets of Grounded theory focus on

theoretical sensitivity, theoretical sampling, ongoing comparative analysis, how data is coded and categorized, theoretical memos, and integration of the theory (McCann & Clark, 2003; Wadsworth, 2015). Grounded theorists use these elements to guide and develop social constructs by combining their thoughts and experiences with the data so it has meaning, and prevents them from infusing their ideas on the codes (McCann & Clark, 2003).

Even though CGT is birthed from Grounded Theory, the differences are notable. That deep discussion is one for a later time, so we now turn to a brief description of CGT as it related to a theoretical guide for this research methodology. CGT was created by Kathy Charmaz (2009), and was designed based on a constructivist epistemology. Charmaz describes CGT as “an umbrella covering several different variants, emphases, and directions.” Charmaz’s basic definition, as quoted in (Wadsworth, 2015) of CGT is that it:...sees knowledge as socially produced, acknowledges multiple standpoints of both the research participants and the grounded theorist, and takes a reflexive stance toward our actions, situations, and participants in the field setting – and our analytic constructions of them (2009, p.129).

Understanding reflexivity and its importance to this research underscores why CGT as a methodological theory was so important: CGT emphasizes that a researcher should continually analyze their positionality from a reflexive stance, which means they should have an ongoing dialogue, evaluating how one’s experiences might influence their research. The reflexive process also describes to readers if the researcher has performed

the research in a manner that represents the participants both in the results and analysis (Charmaz, 2006).

Charmaz (2009) further illuminates why reflexivity is so important to this study and posits that knowledge creation is not a silo, but rather is connected to social constructions, and is inseparable from the influence of pre-existing structural conditions which have influenced both researcher and participants. CGT views knowledge as socially produced, and recognizes all standpoints of both the participants and the researcher.

The following is a synopsis of components of CGT that we considered to be most valuable to this research:

- Charmaz (2009) says CGT types of research dig deep into the research process while trying to understand both perspectives of the researcher and the participant, which should uncover complex and reflexive analysis. Fortunately, I am a member of this population and I joined with participants to uncover the complex issues that came up as we discussed subject material, revealing various perspectives about the intervention benefits, successes, while exposing challenges they may have with racism, IB and IR.
- Charmaz, (2009), as well as McCann and Clark (2003) proclaim that data should be accumulated mutually from all parties during the interactions, while also alerting researchers to embrace the data even though it might appear scrambled and messy. In

order to accomplish this, I stringently examined the implications regarding my status and positionality in community (see Researcher Positioning).

This proved relevant because it caused me to evaluate and monitor my potentially perceived status of “authority figure,” real or imagined, which could have diluted the quality of this research, for two reasons: It would have caused me to teach, collect, and interpret data from a skewed stance, (i.e., is data really messy or am I missing something?), and secondly it would have possibly hindered the interaction of knowledge building because we would not have been seen as equals with the same goals.

- McCann and Clark (2003) mention that a study practicing CGT pays attention to the micro and macro cultural issues impacting the participants. CGT also promotes that research should make a stringent effort to unearth and describe what participants mean and or do, and to make the connection between the personal thoughts and actions and the micro and macro levels of our social structure (Charmaz, 2009).
- CGT research not only looks for the obvious messages in the data, it also plunges into the silent pool of knowledge in order to unveil the hidden meanings and actions of researcher and participant. In order to do this the researcher must “break open” the beliefs of all parties to allow for self-examination to happen (Charmaz, 2009, p. 142).
- CGT attempts to explain a phenomenon in a fashion that has value and merit, and is tied to a theoretical orientation as related to a historical and sociopolitical context as we did in this study (Wadsworth, 2015). CGT research also looks at literature as a

means to enhance the study's theoretical sensitivity and assist in helping to identify emerging new theory, throughout the research process (McCann & Clark, 2003; Charmaz, 2009).

A feminist theoretical standpoint has parallels and resonates with the CGT in that both paradigms: a) consider the view from the personal experience as the key to knowledge production, b) acknowledge that learning is contextual and relational, c) challenge and question the influence of the societal forces on one's behavior, and d) are capable of advocating for social change (Charmaz, 2006; Wadsworth, 2015).

Following each one of the interventions, we conducted a brief data analysis. During the discussions, we debriefed what happened and decided if any changes should occur to subsequent interventions.

After the conclusion of all five groups, the tapes of the groups were transcribed. With CGT as a guide, I first examined the transcriptions for themes. To create themes from the data results, I reviewed the data three times to assure saturation occurred. First, I read the transcripts and the questionnaires, to familiarize myself with the material. I then created an initial set of themes. Most of these themes mirrored the curriculum of the intervention. During the second review of the data, I refined and created a master list of themes, based on answers related to research questions and unexpected information revealed by participants. Finally, during my third review of the data I used my master theme list to code the data. The master code list was this: Slavery, Labelling, Racism and

Implicit Bias, Internalized Racism, Mental Health and Trauma, and Change. A separate section of the findings was also written summarizing the focus groups. When I returned to each theme to write that part of the findings, I often coded the data further into subthemes. These subthemes are reported in the findings.

To make sure themes accurately reflected the participants' experience, my dissertation committee chair reviewed a draft of each theme of the findings to ascertain that we agreed on the meaning of the theme and the quotations. Triangulation allowed me to compare themes and findings from the intervention focus groups, observations, and questionnaires. As a final element of analysis, I journaled my thoughts, reflections, and experiences throughout the research process.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data were examined using descriptive and inferential analysis using IBM SPSS (formerly the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), and for the Pre and Post analysis, paired sample t-tests were used in an exploratory fashion to determine the statistical significance of selected survey questionnaire responses.

Chapter 4: Findings

Here I present findings from all sources in the study that are relevant to the overarching themes used to answer the research questions. The overarching themes are: Slavery Connection Theme, Labelling Theme, Racism and Implicit Bias Theme, Mental Health Trauma Theme, Church Theme, Effect on Interaction Theme, How Participants Changed Theme, Interaction Skills/Tools Learned Theme, Intervention Change Theme, and Focus Group Themes. The qualitative and quantitative findings indicate that the intervention was very successful, which is shown in this chapter.

Slavery

My data revealed that all of my participants achieved a basic understanding of how slavery is connected to their daily lives in a variety of ways. An analysis of the transcripts revealed two topics that were particularly revelatory for the participants: 1) how Europeans turned Africans against each other, and 2) how Europeans used alcohol to bolster the slave trade.

How Europeans Turned Africans Against Each Other

Most participants initially were unaware of how Europeans were able to go into Africa to capture and enslave Africans. One participant asked, “What allowed Europeans to exploit our differences among one another?” Group interactions helped all participants gain an understanding. Participants in one group presented their version of how this coercion happened: “We might be enemy tribes. I don’t know you. You don’t know me. I

don't like you. You don't like me." Another participant commented, "All of them (Africans) had different, you know, tribes. Everybody had a different way of speaking, acting- and beliefs."

Another member mentioned the movie *Roots* as an example and stated: "There was a part on *Roots*, when chained up, they (slaves) were talking about how they're going to get out and everybody started talking different languages, and they'd say we've got to get out," which implied that the slaves could not understand each other's language, thus making it difficult to plan an escape. Another group explored the notion that rival tribes in Africa did occasionally wage war against one another. The prisoners of these wars were then sold into slavery. The group tied these early experiences of African conflicts to "Tribal Wars." Here is the group interaction among four participants, regarding this topic:

Interviewer: "Are we fighting or are we not fighting?" (amongst ourselves)?

First participant: "We fight."

Second participant: "Believe me, I've read material, based on the premise that our forefathers did have conflict between one another."

Third participant: "We have been divided and conquered."

Second participant: "That's the point."

First participant: "Well, they (whites) got in their head (Africans). We are the original victims of brainwashing."

Fourth participant: "I call it the slavocracy mentality."

All groups were able to connect this early “brainwashing” to the gang activity plaguing many of our Black communities today, as the following comment reflects: “You know what’s cold about all that? As soon as you were talking about the tribal traditions in Africa (tribes fighting), it reminded me of our tribes here, Bloods, Crips, Vice Lords and Gangster Disciples,” amplifying the fighting between Black gangs. He also discussed “drive-bys” and turf wars over drugs as being similar to Africans taking territories from other Africans for their own gain.

Individual comments two weeks after the workshops showed that participants were still concerned with the topic of why we fight each other: “Because they've (Black males) been programmed, they're going to do what the master has taught them to do.” Another participant said, “It's institutionalized and by design.” He then summarized his feelings: “They're (Whites) uncomfortable with us on a level playing field and designed (the system) to keep the ones in power (whites), in power.”

How Europeans Used Alcohol to Bolster the Slave Trade

Participants became aware of how the Europeans’ historic use of alcohol, drugs and guns was used to enslave Africans in the past and present. The workshop curriculum helped them gain an understanding of how drugs are used as a substitute for alcohol to enslave Black Males up until the present day. The following responses reflect the participants’ experiences: “What’s the current (version of) alcohol?” Meaning the current day equivalent of “port wine,” an alcoholic product the Portuguese often traded for

African slaves. One participant responded: “Crack and meth,” and another added: “Ecstasy, all of that.”

One participant referred to what he learned from reading Frederick Douglass about how alcohol impacted Black folks: “The White man would work them (slaves) all week. But on Saturday and Sunday, they got to drink alcohol, brainwashed being controlled by somebody, and then they let you get drunk on one day. So, that's all we look forward to,” implying that even now we repeat the same behaviors. He continued: “They (Black Americans) was conditioned to drink on the weekends. Go to the club and get in a fight or do whatever they do. And he (white persons) saw the destruction in the alcohol they was using.”

Participants also took this discourse to another dimension and brought up the fact that Europeans learned they could capitalize on multiple opportunities from the slave trade. One man said, “I never realized how deep that was (about slavery). When they started making money on the slaves, they made money on selling the wine and they even sold handcuffs and chains and things like that?” Another participant chimed in, proclaiming: “They got a double-up,” a term used in drug dealing indicating you doubled your return on your drug investment.

It needs to be mentioned that many participants attended Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) programs and, therefore, they were extremely interested in understanding this critical detail. There were other aspects of slavery that were also noted as relevant. One

participant made a comment about slave ships: “What stuck out to me was, how they (slaves) were packed (on slave ships), and seeing we still doing that (meaning prisons).”

Another group discussion that developed was related to whether or not a law was in force, stipulating one must have auto insurance while operating a vehicle. A discussion developed on why Blacks were required to have their insurance papers on them at all times.

First participant: “Is it against the law not to have your insurance papers in your car?”

Second participant: “Yes.”

Third Participant: “Well, we got a bill passed that they can’t really stop you anymore, unless it’s really something that stands out.”

Fourth participant: “That stands out.”

Third participant: “They have to stop you for lights and all that.”

Interviewer: “Think back to the slavery in Early America. What did they do to Black men? You had to have the proper papers to walk onto the street.” [Several agree strongly]

Third participant: “Yeah!”

Interviewer: “And it’s still a toxic issue for us right now.”

First participant: “That’s right.”

Fourth participant: "If you was a freeman, you had to show your papers."

First participant: "Even with that, they was still snatching slaves and putting them back into slavery."

One participant talked about the impact slavery had on his family:

You talked about being indoctrinated, right? As a young Black male, coming up poor, mom's side was from poor little backwoods Mississippi, dad's side was from Texas, Fort Worth, where there's lot of murder, self-hate, et cetera, where we know it was one of the biggest slavery states. Well, we're considered three fifths of a human in their eyes. We're not even considered humans. That's what they've been doing since the beginning (slavery).

Others said,

I'm not so quick to judge or do things to my fellow black men today because I understand that they probably don't understand the formality of how deep the slavery mental part, the thinking and all the things that was portrayed, to be not good... everything that slavery was taught, it's just modified, it's not hanging and lynching no more.

If you come to the training, it's self-explanatory where it started from and how we were taught to hate on one another. You know? It's just something that's been taught. And man, our race is running with it. You know?

A final participant comment details what they learned about slavery in the past and in the present:

It showed me more of where I come from. Unless you know where you come from, you don't know where you could go. You don't know that you're being programmed, you don't know what hereditary trauma passed on. So, it just helped me recognize. And you pointed out, this is where we come from. You were able to tie the past to the present.

Labeling

All participants gained general knowledge of how being labelled as Black Males altered their lives. This theme kept on coming up during in group activities, in which over three quarters of the participants described how being labelled affected their lives. All participants found this part of the discussion particularly revelatory. There were two sub themes that kept emerging out of the conversations: a) understanding labels and how they are used on a daily basis, and b) how media uses labels to shape society's view of Black Males.

Understanding Labels and Their Daily Lives

Participants explored what kinds of labels shaped their lives and how these same labels can be traced back to the institution of slavery. Participants were asked about the specific negative labels that have been applied to them as Black Males throughout their

lives. The participants agreed on a set of labels that have marked them throughout their lives: “angry,” “untrustworthy,” “dumb,” “stupid,” “abusers,” “thieves,” “animals,” and “criminals,” just to list a few examples. Another observation that all participants were able to agree on, concerning the concept of labelling as a social-construct, is that a Black Male wearing a “Hoodie” and one’s ethnicity are different types of labels, yet these two disparate characteristics congeal to make the societally-shared image of the “Black Male,” as described by this participant: “What about the physical characteristics that’s designed in America, our nose, our lips versus the blond blue-eyed (person)?”

Participants, thus, realized that this demarcation of physical characteristics, generated during slavery to justify enslavement and the mistreatment of Black males, has resurfaced in contemporary labeling strategies. One participant told of an experience he had while in a local Safeway store, where he felt he was treated like a labelled criminal, just for going in to shop. Here is his story, including his thought process and feelings: “That’s how I feel sometimes when I go into the Safeways or stores.” He was aware that he was being perceived as a shoplifter, from the moment he entered the store. As a result, he was hesitant to put his phone in his pocket for fear of the security guard thinking he was placing a stolen item in his pocket. He continued,

I know the security guard, because maybe of how I’m dressed (theorizing he may be being watched because of his dress), I’ll be sometimes nervous to even just put my phone in there (his pocket) just because I’m already mad that you’re looking at me like that. And if I do put my phone in there (pocket) and then you come over here and act like that, I might blow up. I...I buy in here.... you all see me

buy all my stuff ... I come in here every day... so is this a personal thing? Do you want to challenge me personally?

The group showed their grasp of the labeling concept and talked about the connection between labeling and religion. They mentioned that Black folks were first victimized through the system of labeling used first by slave traders.

They dumbed (label) us down. They treat us like animals and criminals (labels). And then they give us the Bible with a European Jesus to say, hey, we can make you upright. ... And I'm not talking about Christianity, in itself (meaning critically). I'm just making a correlation.

Another participant compared the psychological damage caused by being the recipient of harsh labels, to the travails experienced in the sex work industry. "It's kind of like pimpin', you know...you break the person down or whatever, they come in, they be weak, confused....Then, you come in like the savior and go, hey, I got something good."

Regarding labeling, one participant stated, "Even the color Black itself is coupled with negative connotations." Another said, "when we get in the drug gang, the alcohol gang, we end up playing those roles." And a third reported that Black Males are always seen as thieves by the Caucasian population: "They got it in them that all Black People steal, you know?"

How Media Uses Labels to Shape the View of Black Males.

All participants were able to gain an understanding of how the media uses labels to create a false notion of Black males, built upon negative beliefs that started during the time of slavery, and continues to disseminate a prejudiced perception of Black males as born criminals. One member summarizes how most participants felt. His comments indicated that this psychological process was intentional: “Most of us think that this is a happenstance. It is not... These people are wickedly wise.” Another said, “Most movies, whenever you see the Black man, it is a negative? Unless you see them dancing.”

Participants also commented on how media’s depiction of Black athletes often engenders more negative labels. For example, a participant stated:

This was a couple weeks ago. And he (the T.V. sports broadcaster) was describing basketball players. And he was describing... the top five. And he was calling them killers.... He said, “Dang, he’s a killer.” Then he said, “He’s a serial killer.”

Participants in all groups offered comments about how the movie industry utilizes images that bring the labels applied to Black males to life. A participant commented:

To me, there was two movies out of Hollywood that devastated the Black community. The first one was Super Fly, the second one was New Jack

City. Blacks didn't use cocaine, So I seen the impact that those two movies had upon the Black community.

These comments implied that since both lead actors in both movies were Black men playing characters who dealt cocaine, they were examples of the label "Drug dealer/criminal Black Man." Thus, they made it look "cool" to use and deal cocaine within the Black community.

Racism and Implicit Bias

All participants were exposed to information about how racism and IB follow them throughout their lives, as the curriculum is designed to teach. Building on what the participants learned about the racist foundations of slavery and labelling, as previously discussed in themes one and two, participants learned what IB is and the difference between a racist and biased person. The data revealed three important findings: a) participants learned what kinds of characteristics a biased and racist person might share and the difference between a racist and biased person, b) Participants learned why it is important to know the difference between the two types, and c) Four out of five focus groups reported that this was one of the most important components of the first half of the training.

Participants Learned What Characteristics a Biased and Racist Person Might Share and the Difference Between a Racist and Biased Person

Most Black males who have been involved in the criminal justice system are aware of what racism looks like. However, group discussions among participants exposed that there were varying perspectives on what is or is not racism, as the following group discussion shows:

Interviewer: "Anybody got a definition of racism?"

First participant: "From what I understand, racism is that... So, like gentrification, it's racism where I be at because they have the power to move us out of here. And sometimes prejudice, the word prejudice and racism can get mixed up. Like as a Black person, I can be prejudiced."

Second participant: "You know, based on my experiences, we have all biases and prejudice. Racism, to me, is that particular situation where the powers that be uses that power to keep homie back."

Third participant: "Racism is prejudice plus power."

Interviewer: "Good. Good. Anybody else got a definition...?"

Fourth participant: "Racism is based on discrimination of other races that is not your own... You don't have to have power to be racist. You see what I'm saying? You could be racist... When I was coming up as a kid, back in the 50's and 60's—"

Interviewer: "Okay, just define it right now because we've got—"

Fourth participant: “All I’m saying is that racism is based on your...your upbringing and your teaching from your elders. Hey, those is niggers. And those is Whites. And those is---”

First participant: “That’s prejudice though.”

Participants, thus, learned from these types of interactions that they already have the basic knowledge and skills to identify racist acts and behaviors. However, racism can look different based on an individual’s perspective. The fact they already had the general ability to identify a racist, was reinforced in a supportive fashion so focus could be directed toward helping participants learn about IB, which is far subtler than straightforward racism. In order to do so, the word “implicit” was dropped so participants would be familiar with the more commonly used term “bias.”

In regards to bias, initially most participants had little knowledge or understanding of what "bias" is or how it shapes their lives. One participant, after learning about "bias," voiced his frustration, while insightfully displaying his analysis of the concept:

You have a clear definition of what the racist is and what the biased person is, my problem is that, when that biased person is in the room with racists, if they don’t take the time out to challenge that racism.... tie (apply this concept) this to them becoming ambassadors, including bias folks to step up in white spaces!

Participants learned about the benefit of knowing the difference in that they could now avoid stressful interactions with racists while engaging with those who may have “bias,” since that person is merely ignorant rather than hateful and, thus, could learn to change their behavior. Instead of wasting energy on a racist, the participants agreed that it was better to “Keep movin’,” “Leave them alone,” “Don’t pause to interact with the person,” and “Let it go.”

Why Is It important to Know the Difference Between a Racist Act/Person and a Biased Act/ Person?

Participants learned the importance of differentiating between racist and biased acts/persons. Both reasons focused on personal wellbeing. The group members mentioned stress and physical attacks as the main reasons. Participants talked about their stress after having racialized encounters and used descriptive phrases to reveal their level of stress. One participant said he experiences a “Fight or flight” reaction. Another said, “They say you’ll be mad at that person that cut you off for five blocks (while driving). And you’ll be cussing at them. He’s way gone.”

A final group dialogue between two members shows how the stress stemming from racial encounters causes “anger,” a stress emotion which was mentioned often by participants: “I mean how do I deal with that anger that is inside of me?” A participant replied, “Because it could be detrimental to your health being stressed.”

The danger of experiencing physical attacks was clear to participants, and they were able to realize how the mishandling of a racially-tinged situation can become a life-

or-death situation. Many personal tales were shared by all groups, powerful stories of when they were physically beat because of racism.

After this information was presented, one member described, in graphic detail, what happened to him when he reacted angrily to being called “Boy.” Keep in mind, he was imprisoned in a rural community and outnumbered by prison guards:

I was in Pendleton, Oregon (checking into a new prison) And they (guards) said why you keep walking like that, Boy? And I went off, they took me to segregation and when I got naked, they beat me up. They pulled my hair, my face hit the wall, and all that, threw me in a cold cell. Man, I was outnumbered, there was about five of them. And that’s when they put the boot to me, Whoop my ass. Put me in a cold cell and everything for three days.

He told this story to educate other group members of a real-life example and why it is important to know the differences between racist and biased persons and acts.

Another group member referenced the fear of death as being the ultimate reason to understand the differences between racist and biased persons: “I’ve heard that we are the most endangered species in the world, Black men, because we’re the first ones to get killed by the police.”

The focus group held at the end of the first half of the training revealed that participants highly valued the experience of learning how racism and bias have influenced their lives. When asked as a group, what was the most valuable part of the first half of the training, the comments reflected the importance of this learning module.

Group 1 participant: “I think all of it. Being able to recognize racism and bias.”

Group 2 participant: “For me, you really can’t say one was more valuable because it was, for me, the bias and then the plan and then the... I mean that is... I mean I can’t put one over the other.”

Group 3 participant: “The difference between bias and racism.”

Group 4 participant: “The best part that was more important and valuable to me was the difference between bias and internal racism. Just like you say, you can have a better chance of dealing with a person that is biased...than one of these just straight-out rednecks, you know?”

Group 4 participant: “The most valuable part to me was learning how to separate, like somebody mentioned – I think it was you, [name deleted] – about separating racism and bias and how to deal with it, you know.”

Group 5 participant: “Yeah. We have to be mindful of this ongoing attack on us and how to identify it.”

Internalized Racism

Initially, participants had little knowledge of the term “internalized racism,” as they indicated when asked. They were comforted to know that they would learn its definition and the impact it had or has on their lives. Participants progressed from having little or no knowledge to gaining a basic understanding, as shown in the responses of the participants. The group's members came upon three different types of internalized racism:

A) Self-hatred, B) Black-on-Black hatred, and the C) Conflict that occurs when embracing an American structure built upon racial oppression.

Self-Hatred

In order to help participants understand IR, a basic definition was presented: internalized racism happens when Black males turn racist attitudes and actions inwards against themselves and other Black males. The definition was followed with a quick review of the previous learning modules (slavery, being labelled, and dealing with racism and bias), to show participants the cumulative effect that these three dynamics have, and how they collectively cause psychological damage. “Brainwashed, programmed, subliminally programmed,” as described by various participants.

One participant proclaimed Black males had become victims of a “con-game.” Other participants offered their personal stories of how they realized that they had IR, after learning what it is. One participant reflected on the psychology behind internalized racism in the black community and how this has affected his own life:

I use the terminology, ingest the trauma (IR), that was coming our way and it becoming a of an everyday fulfillment, I had to have a portion of it. And what I learned (from the training), was to cut my diet of ingesting things (IR), and the mental trauma that I lived through, going to prison, and living through the mind-washing that prison gives you. Every day you're in that confinement, you're in that world where you can't advance out, so you are stuck with everybody else's negativity (IR), and that becomes your daily ingestion of reality, which is not true.

One participant mentioned the 1940s doll study, conducted by Black psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark, to identify self-hatred: “It was a study they did I guess in the 50’s or 60’s where they gave kids a black doll and a white doll. And they asked them to describe attributes like tell me, is the white doll good or not? Is the black doll good or bad? Everybody associated black with the negative.” The group responded in amazement about the study.

Several members added the use of N- - - r among Black People as an example: “Jackie when I when I hear the N word I'm offended, it really infuriates me.” Another commented, “N----r being okay? It will never be okay with me” (expressing his disgust at being called the N word by other Black People).

A final example showed how participants understood how self-hatred’s relationship with IR was generated from the *King Kong* movie clip used in the training. Participants talked about the similarities of how the movie seemed to relate the physical characteristics of the monster with Black males, i.e., monster’s size, being an uncontrollable animal/beast (monkeys, apes, and beast are descriptors often used when referring to Black males), and how the film’s plot of King Kong being captured by a group of white invaders who take him from Africa to America for financial gain as closely following the general narrative of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade.

First participant: “And you know what? And I keep going back to this (as if disgusted with himself). It’s amazing how I’ve seen all of them (*King Kong* movies). And I didn’t connect that....”

Second participant: “Yeah. You didn’t equate it to---”

First participant: "I didn’t connect that (the racist elements of the movie related to the enslavement of Black men) from the *Kong* movies. Because I’ve become conditioned.”

Another topic that developed from the discussion of self-hatred was “colorism,” the interracial conflict between dark and light skinned Black Males. Here are two examples with important quotes that detail how participants applied what they had learned from the discussion group to their own lives, giving them a new perspective on how their family dynamics were influenced by self-hatred and IR.

My mom's siblings and family hated on me. They... There was times that they called my mom an N-lover, even though they Black. But they were taught. And, for some reason, when we, as Black People, it seems as if, when we see our own doing well and doing the right thing, instead of praising them for doing the right thing, we want to create something that makes them look bad. And then, growing up in the neighborhood, having to fight the brothers. Because, Oh, you're just a yellow boy. You ain't no brother. That’s what crabs do. A crab isn't going to never let the other crab get out of the tank. He going to pull him back down.

In his follow-up interview, another member detailed his experiences and feelings about family and “colorism,” as it related to IR.

Well, it helped me see that even though my father was half white, I don't want grade all white people as the same. Because when I seen and I heard the talk, (referring to this training) and when I was a kid and I would listen (to his parents talk) to hear them say the way that they were treated (by whites) and my first impression (what he had learned from listening) is that all white people were bad, they had something against us. And I really couldn't put my finger on it but it must be true if mom and daddy was saying that about it. But see, I wasn't old enough to decipher between that incident that happened and all people.

Black on Black Hatred

Black on Black hatred made more sense to the participants after they grasped the concept of internalized racism and self-hatred. They were then able to see the connection between Black-on-Black mistreatment and internalized racism, offering several examples.

The de-valuation of a Black life versus a White life. For instance, those on death row... Most of the people on death row are there for killing a White person. My Mother explained to me that, as a little girl, they were taught that a Black...killing a Black, you can get away with it, but you better not touch a White person. And it's that same condition that's with us today. That's why these young Black men are so out to get one another.

The following dialogue summarizes and provides further indication of the participants' understanding of why black people occasionally express hatred toward one another.

Interviewer: "Make sense? Okay. So again, when we... As Black Men, when we experience racism, we experience bias, then we have---"

First participant: "Internalized racism."

Interviewer: "---internalized racism. "

Second participant: "And don't even know it."

First participant: "Against other Black people (meaning we treat each other like we have been taught)".

Conflict That Occurs When Embracing an American Structure Built Upon Racial Oppression

This sub theme of IR generated vigorous debate in one group, as participants struggled with the issue of entering white dominant cultural spaces, where we are not wanted. The following is an exchange from one group:

First participant: "The more I sit here, as Black Men, it's almost embarrassing. It's like why are we still at a point where we are trying to force ourself into a system."

Second participant: That don't want us.

First participant: "That don't want us? How are we going to integrate the system of White supremacy? I'm asking you?"

The participants began challenging me as the facilitator of the discussion group.

Vociferously emphasizing his point, the first participant in the above conversation continued: "So, you're saying you are dependent (On using white institutions.) And in order for you to get it (achieve wealth), you've got to go through them (white institutions and persons) to get it? Is that what I'm hearing?"

Interviewer: "Well, I've got to go through them in a sense to be able to get wealth. If I want my grandkids to have wealth, yeah, I have to go through them. And I did have to go through them."

First participant: "I respectfully disagree. We've been here four hundred years. And you haven't got it yet and neither did your father or your father's father". What makes you think your grandson going to get it? I'm just saying... I'm asking?"

Realizing that Black males have few role models that are everyday millionaires and to counter act his assumption, I took a risk and revealed to the group I own 13 houses, a major commercial building, and two thriving businesses, all of which are to be left to my children and grandchildren. I made the point that I was funding this research as a Black Male to help our community and give the participants \$100.00 each, something researchers rarely do when involving Black males with their work.

This move turned out to be beneficial to the group, as it provided an opportunity to help them understand why the training is useful, because they will have to enter white

spaces to get a job, work with POs, get a bank account, or even go to a store, just to name a few examples. Also, they were reminded that they live in the Pacific Northwest, a region of the country that is predominately white. Interestingly, the participant in this example was offered an opportunity to go to truck driving school (white institution), which he completed and got a job. The following comments in his follow-up interview reflects the value that the discussion group had for the participants. The participant responded, when the interviewer asked “Has the training made any difference in your life?”

Well, yeah, because what it does is reinforce pretty much what I already knew. But to hear from another brother, that means it's a growing awareness amongst our people, man. That ain't nobody going change us but us. No one else has this invested interest in seeing our condition change. Everyone else have a vested interest to stay the same, because they're profiting off our exploitation. I would say, keep doing what you're doing, brother, because there's an energy in it that we can't even see it, man. We don't even understand how important this is. Because it's a vision. So, we haven't seen it come together maybe the way we would want it too yet. But as long as we stay on the road (we can accomplish the goal).

It needs to be mentioned that the purpose of this training and research is to help Black Males who have been involved in the criminal justice system learn to deal with and heal from the insidious effects of racism in a positive way, while realizing there are good white people who we need as allies and institutions who are willing to assist Black Males. This message was promoted throughout the training and received by the participants.

Mental Health

It needs to be mentioned that it was not the intended goal of this training to delve deeply into mental health issues with participants, since learning about trauma in their lives might make participants feel uncomfortable. Realizing this, the researchers attempted to create a safe enough environment to reveal their mental health positions, making participants feel supported and open to getting some helpful advice. This module is based on research around the relationship between mental health and trauma. This discussion will detail the findings in the following order: mental health and generational trauma (sometimes called “intergenerational trauma”), and then mental health and individual trauma.

In regards to mental health, most participants showed a hesitancy initially to entertain the fact that they may have a mental health issue that has affected their lives. I sense that it is due to a lack of institutional trust, stemming from previous efforts to do research on the Black community that harmed us, such as The Tuskegee Study that studied the effect of syphilis, which was conducted without the participants ever being notified that they were a part of it and being denied treatment. One participant, who was a community activist, described a recent interaction he had with a Black Male who was asked by the court to complete a mental health examination. He said the client replied to the court and judge with: “I’m not going for it, you telling me I’m crazy.” To strengthen his argument, he added, “you’re not going to make me take an evaluation to see where my moral compass is.” Concluding his comments, the accused man emphasized “You’re not going to just do me like that, take me to court...send me to jail because I’m not taking

that label that you're putting on me." The community advocate summarized his feelings related to this situation. "These young Black guys, they're not going for that stuff" (an unfair mental health evaluation). "They're fighting back, they don't care if they honor the Judge?" He then repeated what that man adamantly told the judge: "You're not honorable. Why would I honor you when you're not honorable?"

In order to defuse the resistance of participants, the training, as designed, provided them with information on what trauma is (a -5 mental health diagnosis), what it looks like in their lives and how it has influenced their lives in three ways: generational trauma, individual trauma, and second-hand trauma.

Generational Trauma

By the time participants get to the trauma section of the training they have already gained an understanding of how slavery and racism have altered their lives, past and present. A review of the previous themes provides insight on how the workshop has collectively drawn a picture of the harsh treatment experienced by Black Males, dating back to the beginning of the slave trade. Importantly, participants learned that Europeans and Americans used racist strategies to dehumanize Black Males and justify their enslavement, which, in many ways, continues until this very day.

In order to help participants better understand generational trauma, the Jewish community's remembrance of the Holocaust as a traumatic event, even though it happened several generations ago, was described. Participants learned the Jewish community makes it a point to acknowledge the event and survivors, so that the global

community doesn't forget how devastating such an event was, and that they still experience trauma that makes them feel racialized and marginalized. This example helped the participants see that they too may have possibly experienced generational trauma.

After hearing this concept, one participant presented a comparative example, tying it together for his group. "Every day, I do my studies," emphasizing his level of knowledge. "And they (the program he was watching) was talking about how Hitler.... to take over the Jews, started making them subhuman, like you said, then the people (Hitler's supporters) was able to get on board and go do it" (persecute the Jews).

Other members in various groups presented their versions of how institutional racism and generational trauma are joined. One participant talked about generational and institutional trauma in education, based on his personal experience: "Education in the inner cities was substandard," he said, detailing his personal experience of being transferred from a Black school, where he did not learn the fundamentals of writing, to a white private school, where they were taught differently. He described feeling stress in this new educational environment. "There would be a mid-term, term paper" a task he had no experience doing.

I realized that I was behind. And I come out... the school system didn't teach that (how to write a term paper),.. Some of these kids, in this private school system, they'd already taken Pre-SATs(Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Tests) had already taken placement exam, and they knew what college they would go to.

Another participant described the generational trauma experienced by Black males and families as abusive. “We got to tie this to domestic violence because we live in a house, a White house and they’ve been abusing us for four hundred years.”

Other members also offered examples of how generational trauma has been caused by institutional racism, which has impacted their families on a structural level. One member described his family situation: “Man, they put crack cocaine in the neighborhoods and then they started taking my father, my uncles and all of them people away from me by sending them to jail for a long time.” He expanded this comment to illustrate how family trauma caused him to become a man “without that guidance” of a positive Black male. He then shifted, looking back on his childhood and described his mother and other Black persons, saying “ That n- - - r ain’t shit,” about his male relatives who didn’t help his self-image, resulting in second-hand trauma: “It was an attack on us. Not even knowing we was plotted against, Mom.”

Importantly, a family discourse concerning Black women and men emerged on several occasions, as participants seemed to realize that a major cause of the problems derives from our experiences of relationships, which further indoctrinate us with learned institutional behaviors, dating back to slavery, which divide us and pit us against each other. The following discourse represents how one group connected the dismantling of the Black Family and the harm caused by generational and institutional trauma, including the way in which public assistance affects Black Families.

First participant: “They took the Black Male out of the house and made women dependent on their husbands which was that money, that welfare.”

The second participant concurred: “To get a check, you can’t have a man in your house.”

Third participant: “And they actually say that you can’t have no man around.”

Second participant: “They’re still doing it right now.”

Fourth participant: “Right now.”

First participant: “Right, right.”

Deeper discussions took this topic in different directions, as one participant talked about the conditioning aspect engendered by the ‘divide-and-conquer’ strategy.

“Psychology was to always esteem her and make her independent like a man and always make him like a boy.” Significantly, when participants became aware of the generational impact of trauma on the Black Family and various relationships, they voiced their ideas about how to improve the training.

One participant said: “My suggestion is, Black Women should know about this, too.” Another member agreed: “This is an awesome experience; this is valuable to not only men but women need to know about it too.”

Participants learning about generational trauma primed them to better come to terms with their own experiences of trauma on an individual level, stimulating a desire to learn more about how generational trauma has impacted their lives. “The reason that I’m

here is I have a hard time dealing with that (the past generations of trauma), even though I know it's in the past, I mean, how do I deal with that anger that is inside of me?"

Individual Mental Health and Trauma

After participants gained a grasp on the concept of generational trauma, they were ready to learn about individual trauma. In order to give them an easy way to realize they had experienced trauma, I walked them through the Driving While Black Trauma Self Trauma Test (DWBSTST), a test exercise I created as a simple way to help Black males understand they may have experienced trauma without knowing it. In this section, I describe my responses when I'm followed by a police car, including sitting up, keeping my hands on the steering wheel, making sure I don't swerve or make any sudden movements, wondering if my insurance card is there without searching in the glove box, attempting to be calm. The test is an exercise in which I ask the participants the question: "What do you do when a police car gets behind you while driving and follows you for several blocks?"

The responses by the participants were wide ranging but consistent across all groups, as they voiced their feelings and reactions:

First participant: "You gasp your breath?" to calm yourself out of fear of what might happen.

Second participant: "Well, I try and find the first place and turn off," thinking that he doesn't want to be seen as a flight risk, "... start going through my mind of how I'm going to handle this."

The third participant revealed: “Well, my first thought is...I’m looking for an escape.”

Fourth participant: “I put my hands up or put them on the steering wheel,” behaviors that he hopes will help avoid an overreaction by the police officers that could be fatal for him.

Speaking again, the first participant wondered: “How am I going to explain this to my PO?” This exercise opened the flood gates, allowing members to offer their own reflections concerning their individual traumatic experiences.

Several participants mentioned self-hate as an aspect of individual trauma and how it impacts their morale. “When self-hate is so deeply ingrained, that trauma is so heavy.”

Others commented about what happens to them regularly in their communities that causes trauma. Members detailed that when they go into stores, they are automatically viewed as a criminal. One participant said: “They follow you, thinking you will steal something.”

Other members offered their own impressions of being viewed through a lens of criminality. They described how simply strolling through their own neighborhood can result in a traumatic event. “When you walking down the street, a White person will come by and they’ll hold their purse,” as if the participant was going to attack them and steal their purse, “Or they’ll cross the street so that they ain’t on the same side of the street with you.” Several members shared similar experiences while shopping. One said,

“They follow you,” alluding to store officials’ reactions to him, which made him feel like he was being type-casted as a criminal.

Participants expanded their comments to include the traumatic experiences they had in relation to the CJS, as in this conversation.

First participant: “Myself, personally, being hung outside a cell in chains for a week, getting beat.”

Second participant: “I think that’s important,” referring to his comments. “All of us has been in prison. When we go through the prison system, everybody is against us. Administration, the Whites, the Mexicans, they all out to get us.”

Third participant: “Hold on I got to say something, Brother, we’re still in prison I think that is the greatest misunderstand we have.”

The fourth participant in the conversation agreed, noting that “I’m on parole for life.”

In order to deepen their knowledge on the topic of individual trauma, the group discussed how trauma can occur in indirect ways, via “second-hand trauma,” a concept many knew little about, as evidenced by one participant’s question: “What’s secondhand...?”

Participants were introduced to the concept: “That means if something happens to [name] and not to you, but you see it.” This explanation generated a plethora of responses. One participant commented “Well, when I was a kid, I seen the police beat my

brother down in front of my mother's house. That's how I was traumatized. I came up hating." Another responded,

"More like when they (police) beat you in front of your son." Still another stated "I've seen, George Floyd... (killed under police custody)." One member succinctly summarized how all participants felt after learning about generational and individual trauma in their lives: "It's impossible for you to be Black and not be traumatized; It's impossible."

Mental Health Interactions

A final finding related to mental health was the need of the facilitator to become involved in mental health interactions with participants, both for groups and for individuals. One example of a group intervention happened between two members who were in conflict with one another before becoming involved with the training. Their issue came up during a discussion about the model that details how to work through a tough situation in a positive way. In this situation, two members explained to the group they had been in a recovery group together. One participant admitted that he had said something that was "hurtful" to a fellow participant by calling him a "people-pleaser."

Realizing this was a potentially volatile issue, I asked for permission from the person who was offended if he wanted to stay and discuss the issue or leave. He decided to stay: "I'm cool with it." He used this situation as a chance to heal the discord and learn to use the model that we were discussing. Eventually, we were able to get through the model and help both members relieve their disagreement. As a result, the first participant

learned to listen to his recovery group members: “I hear other members in the meeting saying that I keep repeating things over, you know, saying things that hurt.” I responded by telling him: “that’s when you’ve got to check yourself.” He replied, “Okay, I’m learning, Man.”

The participant who had been insulted also revealed that he was pleased with the outcome, as he voiced his opinion two weeks after the incident: “There was a situation I had, with a brother in there, and I didn't react when the brother used me as a demonstration (role-play)... I probably would've... fisticuffs (fought), you know what I mean?” He then concluded by saying that the way I implemented this model into a real-life situation was helpful and made him feel more at ease while participating in the process: “Because I didn't feel any pressure, all the focus was not on (himself.) Thank you.”

In addition to addressing mental health concerns in the groups, we discussed mental health issues during our follow-up interviews. Members presented a host of situations related to potential mental health problems, requiring me to listen in a supportive way or to offer advice about who they should contact to receive further support with their struggles.

A member talked with me about feeling better: “In recognizing certain behaviors in myself that there are times that I’m in a certain mood that I can handle things better....Those are the things that I'm dealing with.” He then added to his list of things to work on: “The self-hatred and changing that, the mind frame and the thinking that I

have.” Sensing there was something else happening on a deeper level, I asked him how he relaxes after work. He responded: “I drink a few, I don't want to, I couldn't sleep because I was so tired after work (as an excuse) I just started doing that.” My response to him was to remind him about the part of the training on how alcohol was used to enslave Africans. He said that he understood and seemed motivated to reconsider his drinking habits, proclaiming “I told my woman this morning. I said, ‘This ain't right for me.’ You know what I'm saying? Because I do have that positive side of me.” The participant ended up saying that, when it came to relaxation, he would swap out alcohol for meditation. “I got to get on a healthy path, I got to stop (drinking). Meditation is a healthy path.”

Another participant wanted me to just listen, as he detailed his feelings following the death of one of his fellow inmates. He described the second-hand trauma he was wrestling with: “Listen, my first brother that got killed was named [name deleted], Well you're talking about doing something to us based upon our color, I have no choice but to go to war,” (getting revenge on the perpetrators). “I'm just saying that I've been through (second hand trauma). And, when I... (found out his friend was dead) ..., I was like homicidal for real, I really, truly was,” describing his mental health.

One participant took the opportunity of our meeting to review and make sense of how mental health issues plagued his family history. “Well, you talked about being indoctrinated as a Black male, coming up poor, from little backwoods Mississippi, mom's side was poor, dad's side was from Texas, Fort Worth, where there's lot of murder, self-

hate, et cetera. It was one of the biggest slavery states....And so, I got into crime, What was important was capital.” Not to place blame on his mother, “Mom did the best she could, but she was 15 years of age. So, she was a kid raising a kid, she is only 15 years older than me.” Taking his reminiscing to a new level, he recalled that “She dealt with a lot of trauma... mental health of her own.....” further displaying the generational impact of mental health problems. In particular, he talked about his grandmother, “My grandmother was deeply in her alcoholism and oppression from being from Mississippi, illiterate, coming up here to a city (Portland, Oregon), where it's not illiterate, and trying to make a way,” implying that he was traumatized by poverty.

A final example concerning mental health issues came from a participant who openly admitted his struggles with mental illness. “Sometimes I just (need to) be still, because I got OCD [Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder] and I have to always be doing something and going somewhere and all that. So, twice out the week I just stay home.”

Training Effects on Interaction

This code reflects how the training affects participants’ ability to interact with people who are racist, biased or suffer from internalized racism. Participants demonstrated they learned how to interact with people during a racially-tense situation. The training

accomplished this task by utilizing a variety of strategies to help participants learn to handle these kinds of interactions.

Instructor Coaching

The fact that the meetings were administered by a facilitator, as well as a community co-facilitator who closely supervised and scrutinized all of the group's interactions was a key component that made these meetings a success, in that they presented participants with a variety of communication skills that can be used when interacting with people from different backgrounds. Another aspect that the participants appreciated was the small-group seminar style of dialogue used during the sessions. As an example, here is an interaction between the lead facilitator teaching the participants the steps of the interaction model, which can be used when interacting with difficult people. This three-dimensional model helps participants learn to both "explore" and "understand" the situation, leading to an appropriate "action." In this example, I made sure all the participants understood the concept, while looking for indicators of knowledge-acquisition from the participants to make sure they were following me.

I first primed the group by giving them the easiest part of the model (Explore) to see if they all remembered what had recently been discussed. After confirming the group's understanding of the model's exploratory dimension, I looked for feedback to see if the participants had a grasp of the model on a wholistic scale by asking, "So this is the

model, Explore first, so you can?” ... pausing to allow for responses, questions, or looks of bewilderment, which indicated how well the participants retained information.

One participant jumped right in and said “Understand” which is the next step in the model.

Continuing this form of inquiry, I then asked the group, “Then that leads you to?”— (pausing again while hinting the final step).

Two participants responded in unison, “Action.” Two other members showed me that they had the concept down when I asked the group one last question concerning the model: “Does everyone understand a little clearer?”

They responded: “Right.”

The facilitator and community co-facilitator also played a significant role, helping the participants learn to interact in racially-tense situations by coaching them through the process of how to implement the model they learned in their everyday lives.

Role Play

After participants learned how to best interact with people who are either racist, biased or self-hating (IR), they were asked to participate in a role-play exercise that was designed to transform what they learned into everyday applications. Before letting the participants conduct the role-play activity, the facilitator and community co-facilitator did a role-play scene in front of the group to demonstrate to the participants what they were expected to do. In the process of doing the role-play exercise, the lead facilitator

described the various phases of the Interaction Plan: a) Anger Control, b) Explore, c) Understand, d) Action, e) Debrief, and f) Healing Activity. Particular attention was paid to making sure participants were not stressed by having to practice in front of each other. Eventually, their confidence grew, and they were able to ask any final questions they had before participating in the role-play activity. (They were informed ahead of time they would be expected to participate in role plays). All participants were asked to do two rounds of role-play. They were provided with several scripted life examples to choose from. Participants had to take on alternate roles, rotating between the role of both Black and White people. The purpose of playing both roles is to show participants the importance of empathy, putting one's self in the mind of the other before acting out. Participants seemed to benefit from this role reversal. "I like both of them because you get a chance to play both roles," meaning they enjoyed playing the roles of both Black and White people. Another described how being able to "Switch it around," was what he valued the most from the role-play activity.

Participants stated additional reasons as to why they valued the role-play exercise. One commented that the role-play activity was good for him, as it portrayed real-life situations: "It brought up everybody's life situations, we might have made some mistakes (doing the role-plays) but I think we'll be able to do it differently when we are in... (real-life). Another thought this segment was "very informative," because it showed him how to "act out" according to the model of behavior discussed above: He reasoned as such: "If you have a chance to do something, you can understand it better. And doing it gave you a hands-on experience." Additionally, a participant offered his evaluation of the

role-play activity, declaring it to be: “Very helpful, and it really enlightened me about how to deal with certain situations, instead of flying off the handle. I can use this as a tool.”

Further reflection of the participants’ receptiveness to role-playing was exhibited during the second focus group of each training, when four out of five groups, after being asked what was the most valuable part of the second half of the training, replied with: “I think it was the playing,” “I like the role-playing, personally myself,” “The role-playing,” “Yeah, that role-playing,” “The most valuable part to me was the role-playing. [Another agrees],” “I have to say the role-play as well.” [Another agrees.] These comments were often backed by supportive comments from the participants: “Me, too,” “Yeah,” or “I was going to say the same thing,” which indicated that the participants shared an understanding of the value of role-playing.

A final testament to the value of role-playing is that some members got the chance to use the model within two weeks post training, generating positive results. One member described how he avoided an altercation “The very next day, after we finished up down there at the church,” referring to the training. “It was fresh in my mind” (interaction model). This same member recounted his steps: “I started to jump the gun, but I said, ‘No. I got some skills. I can do this another way.’ And boom, it jumped off and it worked wonderfully, because it made him step back and see what he had done.”

A different participant said he had experienced road rage with a white person who confronted him angrily and “rolled his window down” and started saying, “How come

you didn't move?" The participant then detailed himself as someone who used the model like an angry person: "And so what I did, I listened, let him finish what he was saying, and said, "Sir, now, can I say something?" The participant was able to explain his position to the other driver and settled the conflict without further escalation. In turn, the member was complimented by me on his textbook use of the model. One final example presented by a participant was about an interaction he had at work with a group of racially mixed adults and children "I think it was a Mexican man, a black and a white guy had a bunch of mixed kids." He then detailed a work experience in which one child's spilled soda made a big mess. He maintained his cool, an act of self-restraint that derived from the anger control part of the model. He began mopping up the mess, as the people apologized. He responded to their apologies: "Excuse me, that's nothing to apologize for, that's a child, she dropped the soda." Adding jokingly, "And this is job security, me standing here, mopping this floor." He concluded his story by recalling the actual steps of the model and, even though he was not exactly correct in naming the steps, he had a good enough grasp of the model to accomplish his objective. "I'm using the model of direct contact. You had a three-step.... (model), the problem (explore), the action (understand), and the solution (action)." This example also shows the participants' creative use of the model across various cultural groups.

How the Training Affects Participants' Ability to Deal With Racism While Interacting With Others

In order to determine how participants were influenced by the training, regarding this area, we looked at the questionnaire responses after the training completion. An

analysis of the participants' responses revealed that 18 out of 22 participants (82%) said on their questionnaire that learning to use components of the interaction model (Anger Management, Explore, Understand, Action, Debrief, and Healing) was an important part of the discussion. Other topics that were mentioned included honing one's listening skills, the importance of patience and how to soberly analyze social interactions so as not to react too quickly when involved in a racial situation. Of the four remaining participants who did not fit in with the previous categories, one member explained how he gained a better "knowledge of self," which would help him in his daily interactions. One participant said "prayer" or "letting it go" was his method.

Table 2, Column 2 (Skills after the training) shows all participants' responses on their individual surveys about what tools/skills they gained that affected their ability to deal with racism while interacting with others.

How Participants Use "Communication Conflict Resolution Skills" Taught

A barometer to show how participants will use or have used the "communication conflict resolution skills" can be seen by examining participants' self-analysis during the follow up surveys, conducted two weeks post workshop. All participants were asked the same questions: "Do you have the skills you need to handle racial situations... What are those skills?"

The responses varied greatly but 22 of the 22 (100%) participants indicated they learned at least one skill that they can use to improve their ability to communicate with

others or resolve a conflict, as they move forward with their lives. Table 3 (Skills 2 Weeks After Training column) shows the individual responses of the participants.

Table 3

Table 3 Skills Learned

Participant #	Skills After Training	Skills 2 Weeks After Training
1	Model Learned	I'm more aware, I learned to be a little bit more patient.
2	Model Learned	I keep that in my mind now, Jackie, because that's it right there. How you talk to people and how people talk to you, stop altercations. And man, that's beautiful.
3	Model Learned	Yeah, like I said, it was food for thought, once you're thinking about something, you're more prepared to deal with it.
4	Model Learned	I learned to first assess the situation. Ask questions, determine where they're coming from, which way they're coming from and then make my opinion.
5	Model Learned	I've tapped more into emotional regulation tools. When someone is giving me that look, and I'm aware of what that look means, it's like I'm three moves ahead of them already.
6	No Mention	Recognizing certain behaviors in myself that there are times that I'm in a certain mood that I can handle things better, I recognize that more so now than I did before I had the class.
7	Knowledge of self	I learned even when you're dealing with adversaries and enemies, there's rules to engagement. We have to be able to put our emotions aside and think through the situation.
8	Model Learned	It gave me the idea of wait a minute, first inquire and find out if he has actual racial inclinations, or if he just don't know. Because, sometimes it's true people just don't know.

Table 3 (continued)

Table 3 Skills Learned

Participant #	Skills After Training	Skills 2 Weeks After Training
9	Model Learned	Well, the workshop, pointed out the beginnings from slavery to right now, you were able to shed light.... systemic racism, it helped to affirm the reality of the society that I'm in.
10	Model Learned	One skill I picked up was to assess the situation first. Secondly, I listen to see where they're coming from, and if they're asking me a question, then I would try to answer to the best of my ability.
11	Model Learned	The role-playing skill because I can walk away, If I walk away from it... I put energy in.... I need to process it after the fact, but as far as being able to when it happens, I need to keep moving.
12	Model Learned	I'm thinking this is helping me with resources, because it broke it down just that simple.... that small of an idea, like everybody could receive.
13	No Mention	When I hear something racial, "that fucking n----r" at first, I would confront the person, now I'm not.
14	Model Learned	I'm not so quick to judge or do things to my fellow black men today because I understand that they probably don't understand the mental part, so yeah, I have more compassion and patience.
15	Model Learned	Roleplay, especially the skits-- That was a chance for me just to be myself, when you were in the roleplay, you were able to use the skill ... explore, understand, and then you're ready for action.
16	Prayer	I'm really in tune with God, If I run across somebody that's real abrupt and short with me, first thing I do is pray, if they call me a n----r or something, I just walk off.

**Table 3
(continued)**

Table 3 Skills Learned

Participant #	Skills After Training	Skills 2 Weeks After Training
17	Model Learned	I have learned to have patience and try to think a situation out rather than just jumping in... leaping without looking, just being patient, talking it out, and seeing what happens.
18	Model Learned	Stop, listen, assess the situation, ask the person what they intended to say, once we reflect it back, they should give us nod that they understand or they don't, at that point we can decide to move on.
19	Model Learned	I realize that I don't have to feed the negativity If something doesn't seem like there's a solution, just leave it alone, go the other way. But at the same time, be mindful of the way that I talk to people.
20	Model Learned	Well-- being diplomatic to things and try to think it through in my head, and take a positive approach to it, not negative. I try to be calm.
21	Model Learned	I stop, take some deep breaths and not react quickly, and just try to use common sense and realize that the person may not be an intentional racist.
22	Model Learned	I'm using the model, the problem, the solution, the action... a little more patience, a little more realizing it's not just myself that you're dealing with. That's the biggest thing I picked up.

Personal Change

This theme reflects how the workshop changed participants, as revealed during their follow-up interviews. Data analysis uncovered three formative changes in how the participants: a) responded to racism, b) regulated their emotions and c) changed how they view racial matters.

Responding to Racism

This sub theme generated the most amount of engagement from the participants, as evidenced by the commentary by eight participants (see Table 4).

“Well, yeah, it changed how I expressed myself to people, and it changed how I should handle different situations.”

“Absolutely, Yeah, it gave me hope. It changed the way I respond rather than react.”

“Well, I stop, take some deep breaths and not react quickly. And it’s too many people that are incarcerated now because they didn’t think... just try to use common sense and realize that the person may not be an intentional racist.” See Table 4 for all comments.

Regulating Emotions

Many participants now felt that they had the proper tools to help them confront racism, bias or internalized racism while maintaining a balance between their emotions and their intellect. “Some of those changes helped regulate my emotions.” A participant explained that he is now better at controlling his anger: “It changed the way that I approach racism. I don’t have to be angry. I just have to analyze the situation. Think about it. Take the time out and then address it.” Additional comments about emotions are presented in Table 4.

Participants also learned how to be patient when dealing with racial matters: “Well, I learned to be a little bit more patient.” Another participant said he learned to delay his reactions in a racial situation. “It gave me the idea of, wait a minute, first inquire about it, and find out if he has actual racial inclinations, or if he just don’t know. Because, sometimes it’s true. People just don’t know.” And another commented: “I don’t react as quick and I’m more calmer, I have more patience and empathy.” As a final example, a participant described how he was changed by the discussion groups: “Patience, a little more patience, a little more realizing it’s not just myself that you’re dealing with. This is a change....this is not a change, this is acceptance, is what I picked up. I say this to my wife a lot in the last couple weeks.”

Thinking about Racial Situations

Many participants were able to voice how the training impacted their thinking. “It caused me to make some changes in my thinking.” A participant described his shift in thinking

when handling racialized situations: “I hold no opinions no more... Just changed my way of reacting when I see someone racist or biased, I just try to defuse situations, and don’t get upset.”

Two other participants shifted their perspective on white people:

“It helps me not neglect good white people, because, for a while, I was looking at them all the same.”

“It helped me see that even though my father was half white, that I don’t want grade all white people as the same.”

And another participant said, “I think it just empowered me more, because it was confirmation. And when you was going over the material, I say... Mm-hmm (affirmative)... I wasn’t far off.”

Table 4

How Participants Changed

Participant #	Participants responses to the question (Two weeks after intervention): Did the training change anything for you?
1	“Well, yeah, it changed how I expressed myself to people, and it changed how I should handle different situations.”
2	“Learning how to control stress, learning how to observe the people that I'm coming in contact with, ask questions before I make a determination.”
3	“Some of those changes were it helped regulate my emotions.”
4	“Well, I learned to be a little bit more patient.”
5	“It made me think about what I was absorbing from the books I read like Native Son, I see 'em in a different light now, In fact, I'll probably go back and read them again.”
6	“I learned from your class, brother, is even when you're dealing with adversaries and enemies, there's rules to engagement.”
7	“It gave me the idea of wait a minute, first inquire about it, and find out if he has actual racial inclinations, or if he just don't know. Because, sometimes it's true. People just don't know.”
8	“It changed the way that I approach racism, I don't have to be angry. I just have to analyze the situation. Think about it. Take the time out and then address it.”
9	“Absolutely, Yeah, It gave me hope, It changed the way I respond rather than react.”
10	“It makes me aware that minorities carry some type of a dysfunctional behavior because of what they went through in society.”
11	“I think it just empowered me more because, It was just confirmation. And when you was going over the material, I say... Mm-hmm (affirmative). So I wasn't far off.”
12	“It caused me to make some changes in my thinking.”

Table 4 (continued)

How Participants Changed

Participant #	Participants responses to the question (Two weeks after intervention): Did the training change anything for you?
13	“Yeah. It helps me not neglect good white people, because yeah, for a while there, I was just looking at them all the same.”
14	“I don't react as quick and I'm more calmer, I have more patience and empathy.”
15	“Just changed my way of reacting to when I see someone racist or biased, I hold no opinions no more. I just try to diffuse situations, and who's ever experiencing that I try to share with him that's that problem, don't get upset.”
16	I'm really in tune with God. So if they call me a n- - - r or something, I just walk off If it's really racism I pray for them, walk off, say, ‘Hey, have a good day.’ Before I would fight.”
17	“It made me feel more encouraged that we're starting to really look at racism, how it impacts the overall behavioral health and emotional well-being of black men.”
18	“If something doesn't seem like there's a solution to it, just leave it alone. Just go the other way but at the same time, be mindful of the way that I talk to people.”
19	“Well, it helped me see that even though my father was half white, that I don't want grade all white people as the same.”
20	“Just having a little more knowledge about how to deal with situations. I'm not just gonna be a reactive person, I'm trying to be proactive.”
21	“Well, I stop, take some deep breaths and not react quickly. And it's too many people that are incarcerated now because they didn't think... Just try to use common sense and realize that the person may not be an intentional racist.”

Table 4 (continued)How Participants Changed

22	“Yes. Patience, a little more patience, a little more realizing it's not just myself that you're dealing with This is a change....This is not a change, this is acceptance.” is what I picked up. I say this to my wife a lot in the last couple weeks.”
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Intervention Changes

How the intervention changed was an important part of this research because it was a catalyst to accomplishing the dissertation’s Aims and Goals (see discussion in Methods section), resulting in participants gaining knowledge and skills that they deemed as beneficial. The study relied on three sources to gather information about how we need to alter various components of the training.

This writer was the first source of information about changes that needed to happen because I created the model, I have over 35 years conducting trainings, and the co-facilitators were being trained by me to possibly become future trainers. The co-facilitators were a source of information even though they were so entrenched with absorbing this new- to- them information, they thought all of the training was good and mainly offered validation that the delivery of the information, and the receptiveness of participants to receive the curriculum happened. One co -facilitator did help minimize discussions after the first group he helped with failed to do the role plays because they extended their discussions too long on each topic. The final input came from participants

who offered their input during the focus groups held at the end of the first and second halves of the trainings. The findings of the five focus groups provides data that they all approved the training as is and wanted more. The aforementioned sources guided the alterations made to the intervention as mentioned in the following discourse.

Changes After Group One

Modifications after Group One were minimal because the co-facilitator was newly exposed to the curriculum and thought all components of the training were great. “I believe that this specific curriculum should be inside of facilities where we're being held captive against our will. I think it's therapeutic, the knowledge about how to address certain racially motivated situations... not just racially motivated situations, but even interacting with your wife, with your girlfriend, or even with your friends, I think it's very therapeutic.” The participants were also equally pleased with the workshop.

,Based on information from my sources and my experiences I made the following modifications for the next training:

1. There was too much information in the power point handouts, which caused the participants to lose track of where they were while paying attention to the discussions and lectures. Therefore, I simplified and reduced the wording and changed the graphics on several slides and eliminated some as well.
2. An additional change made for the next training was to try to be more conscious of time to make sure I got through the material as comments from

members expressed their desires P7: Need more time.... [Others agree] P5:
You need like an overnight retreat or something. [Several agree] ... This is
good. [Several agree]

Changes After Group 2

This group caused the most important changes regarding the evolution of the workshop mainly because participants were very diverse (Muslims and Christians) in their comments and positions on almost each topic or idea presented, causing the time planned for each exercise or topic to expire. Also, they seemed to enjoy informing the group and facilitator about their high level of knowledge on many subjects, resulting in me being directly challenged on multiple occasions. Understanding the need for these men to have ample time to digest and process this newly formatted information I accidentally let their discussions go on too long. As a facilitator I had been intimidated from being challenged by this group, and failed to control the discussions causing time overruns on topic discussions, preventing this group from doing the role plays, an important part of the training.

Based on information from my sources and my experiences I made the following modifications for the next training;

1. I redesigned the power point handout again by shortening the information on the slides in order to reduce the opportunities for future groups to not get bogged down on information on slides that was interesting but not a main element.
2. Secondly, I decided to over emphasize in the ground rules and the need for members to write down their questions and I would answer questions they had during the break times.
3. The final change to happen was a redesign of my confidence because the strength of this group had challenged me but I held my own based on their comments-- even though it felt like I had done a less than perfect job.
4. The final change to be made happened within myself. After being challenged so aggressively, my internal processing revealed that I did not have to try to convince members that my training was the only way to approach racism, because it is my story of what I learned about how racism affected my life, how I learned to deal with it, and members could take my story if it resonated with them, or leave it, if not. I now had an increased dose of self-confidence.

Changes After Group 3

The changes that happened after Group 2 were implemented for this group and proved to be effective (see focus group section) and this workshop ran efficiently.

Changes After Group 4

By group four the group size was reduced (four members) which allowed for more time to be dedicated to all activities. There were no modifications made to the training after this training.

Church

The importance of church and spirituality in the Black community was unearthed during a review of transcripts. Once the church theme was revealed, a cornucopia of connections to the church became apparent. To begin with, four out of the five group meetings were held at churches, who provided good accommodations and support as needed, whether it was tech assistance or food storage, etc. The fifth group was held at a community-based Alcohol and Drug abstinence organization with a spiritual foundation (AA), who were just as accommodating as the church. The setting may have contributed to the spiritual camaraderie that prevailed throughout all five group meetings, as exhibited by the regular usage of terms, such as “my brother” or “our brothers,” showing a mutual respect between members. Here are a few examples: “I want to listen to what you’ve got to say, Brother,” “I would just say like what that brother just said about that emotional part,” and finally, “Thank you, Brother.”

In addition to the respect shared between the participants, there was also respect in regards to an appreciation of Black Males coming together as a collective trying to

effect positive change. “The input that’s come from all the brothers here, as well as the curriculum that you’re presenting, it all is important.” Another offered similar input: “I think everything starts with self, because if I can learn to love self then I can probably learn how to love my brothers.” A final comment escribed the synergy between group members:

I go by the vibes or the spiritual connection with my brothers. It (the training) helped me... it gave me a chance to be around like-minded individuals, brothers seeking knowledge, an understanding, and a new way of looking at situations.... Talk about serious stuff, instead of talking about who they smashed (beat up), how much money they got.... How to handle things in the spiritual sense.

In addition, the church setting influenced our interactions between me, the facilitator, and the group members. As noted, “The Black sermonic tradition, or Black preaching tradition, [is] an approach to construction and delivery of information practiced primarily among African Americans in the Black Church, and seeks to preach messages that appeal to both the intellect and the emotive dimensions of humanity” (“Black sermonic tradition,” 2021). Both emotional and intellectual approaches were in full effect during the group meetings. This overarching technique has been regimented into a Black Preaching Style known as “Call and Response,” a technique that requires congregational participation. The sermon’s success is judged by its connection to the congregation, and affirmed by positive congregational responses. The use of this

instructional format was valuable, because it harkened back to a past, shared by the participants, growing up in the Black church. The model also allowed participants opportunities to give feedback and ask questions about what was important to them. This style of teaching also allowed me to make sure all members grasped the concepts I wanted to get across, because I was able to ask direct questions towards specific members to see if their answers reflected an understanding of the lessons being taught.

The following interaction between the facilitator and the group members provides an example of this type of interaction. The discourse details a comparison between slavery and today's prison industry:

Facilitator: "It goes back to the power. See how everything is interconnected? But the key is that you understand how far back all this stuff was happening, because even the prison industry right now (Pause) what is it about? "

First participant: "Ware-housing."

Facilitator, shifting the discussion: "And making money. How do they make money off of prisoners?"

The first participant responded: "Slaves."

Facilitator drops a hint to aid the participant: "They sell---" waiting for a response to make sure everyone is following the conversation.

The first participant responded: "Slave-labor."

Facilitator shifts the discussion and provides hints “They sell toothpaste. They sell... Who’s making that? Somebody’s making money,” (pause waiting for responses to make sure the participants are following).

Second participant: “Making license plates.”

The facilitator reviews what was said then repeats “Making license... Who’s making that money?”

A third participant responded: “A quarter an hour. Come on now.”

Facilitator concludes this discussion, because members display a level of understanding: “Who’s making that money? You see what I’m saying?”

The third participant replied: “And they privatize it too.”

This style of dialogue was successful only because participants respected my leadership role like that of a preacher, even though that was not by intention. One participant made a remark after I explained a concept: “Sounds like my Pastor... You’d make a real good Pastor.”

A participant made the following statement during his follow-up interview, detailing how he felt about my pedagogical style:

You know, I even made the statement to (friends); they had pictures of Obama, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, some brothers (who were) jailed. And I said it to a few brothers that if Jackie Strong was doing this (conducting the trainings) back in the late '60s, early '70s, his picture would be up there, too. (implying that the training was good enough to be classified with lessons taught by aforementioned leaders).

A final opinion came from one of the co-facilitators, who is also an esteemed church deacon: “Jackie, I want to say this. I appreciate what you're doing, everybody's not conscious enough to even think like you think, and what you think we need...we need this.”

Focus Groups

Each group included two mini-focus groups used to evaluate the trainings. Here the findings from each focus group are briefly presented.

First Group: First Half Focus Group

Participants in group 1 generally agreed about what was the most important part of the first half of the training. There was a consensus of opinions voiced by all about what was most valuable. As one participant stated, “All of them, to me I thought it was great,” meaning he found value in all of the learning modules. He received support from a fellow member who said “Right-- all of it is pertinent to me.” Another member agreed, “I think all of it” then added that, “Being able to recognize racism, internal,--- and bias” was his most valuable lesson.

Concluding the first half focus group, participants were asked if any parts of the first half were not helpful? Two participants said no, meaning they thought everything

was valuable which was supported by the rest of the group: “No, all of it is good. “I think everything was worthwhile.” “I think everything is helpful.”

First Group: Second Half Focus Group

Participants were again asked at the end of the training, What was the most valuable part of the second half of the training for you? Participants mentioned that the role playing was the most valuable part as their comments reflect.

“I like the role-playing, myself.”

“Yeah, me, too,”

“I was going to say the same thing, yeah, that role-playing...”

The group presented why they valued the role plays, saying, “I like both of them because you get a chance to play both roles, you get a chance to be the one that asks all the questions. And then you get a chance to be the one that responds,” meaning he thought playing the role of a white person was valuable. The switching of roles was intended to help participants empathize with a white person who is biased during an interaction, because they may possibly change their stance about the biased act they committed and become an ally to Black Males because you have given them another perspective related to how they interact with a Black Male. One participant added about the role plays, saying he not only enjoyed the role plays but also valued using the interaction plan as he did his role play, saying, “It was good to experience doing the action and doing the model.”

Concluding this group's discourse, participants were asked if there were any suggestions about the second half that we need to do or work on to improve. This question generated the following responses: "No," "No. It was that good, It was very interesting," "I thought both sessions were really good. I got something out of both of them," and "There's not a boring minute. You learn everything. I didn't have any time when I said I don't want to hear this."

Participants did offer some changes that could improve the training which centered around time and pacing. "I would say maybe take it a little slower...slower and don't be so time-conscious." "You could start a little earlier. As an option to slowing down." One member took opposition and said, "When it comes to something like this, he plans himself not to be in a rush. [Several say right] continuing, If you're coming to take the course, whether it be three hours, whether it be four hours... because you're going to get something out of it." Finally another participant offered his opinion about why the pacing was ok, as is, "Well, you laid it out, Jackie, to where we could understand, and if not, you would go over it. And so, you know, that's good for me, you know. That's good."

Second Group: First Half Focus Group

Participants were again asked at the end of the first half of the training, what was the most important or valuable part of the first half? The group agreed with the participant who emphasized strongly, "Every bit of this has been valuable, it's all important, Brother." This person's use of the word "Brother" also reflects this group's

level of respect that they had for each other, stemming from having a chance to come together as a group of Black Men, to create knowledge while empowering them at the same time. As one member spoke about what he thought was the most valuable part of the first half, “The input that’s come from all the Brothers here, as well as the curriculum that you’re presenting, it all is important..... You know, we can’t move together if we don’t understand each individual perspective or not willing to listen to it or, you know, if we don’t have that open dialogue.” Showing support, another commented, “Excellent.” One participant offered a conclusion highlighting two things most valuable to him related to the Black Men connection: “I’m going to say I think everything starts with self, and understanding that internalization (IR) part, because if I can learn to love self, then I can probably learn how to love my brothers.” Continuing his narration, he emphatically concluded, “I can obtain money, wealth and all that, but if I have a hate for myself, I ain’t going to give my brothers a chance.”

Last comments about the first half were suggestions about flow of the workshop because this group had so much to say, and pent-up desire to learn the concepts that every topic discussion produced input and an energy at a level that disrupted the programmed delivery of the training. “That spark, it ignited about the system awareness that I have a responsibility.” Two participants tactfully delivered to the group their remedies of how to stay on schedule. “I think we should have reflected and wrote some of those things down [another agrees,]” explaining to the group to write down important questions instead asking questions because, “We could have got through more curriculum.” He went on to say he understood that, “This is a sensitive subject, and it’s going to strike chords and

nerves, and I get it because it's all helpful. But we still need to just move forward" and get through the lessons. He continued and made the point of how serious it is to get through the curriculum implying that the group needs to understand this is not an everyday conversation interaction like what happens while watching sports with the fellows. He said "This ain't like we're talking about the Blazers (the local NBA team). This is real life. People been to prison, still in prison, like my brother said." This was his way of saying temper your questions and input in order to get through the curriculum. He then turned his attention to me, the facilitator, and suggested in a positive proactive way, "I guess just make it known," what I should tell group members when they take too long on a subject and to emphasize to them, "I know there's going to be a lot of questions, however, please just bear with me," and let me stay on track with the curriculum.

A final topic brought up by this group was whether or not this training could be delivered by Zoom to other Black Males. "As a result of Zoom, I'm part of a study group of men..... meet every Wednesday night and have a discussion about recovery. If the utilization of Zoom began this year we could (pausing to think about frequency) maybe a weekly basis." He continued saying that it would be a good way "to have a forum or curriculum to bring this information," and that it could be a vehicle to spread the word about the training, making it available to a larger audience, "And as we go on our travels, to invite other Brothers in."

Second Group: Second Half Focus Group

Participants were again asked in the second focus group what was the most valuable part of the second half for you, eliciting different responses.

“Mine was to listen, assess and then act.”

“For me, really can’t say one was more valuable, for me, the bias and then the plan...I can’t put one over the other one.”

He was joined in agreement along the same lines by another participant: “For me, Man, all of this is (good)...I came out of prison at the right time, I see that, this really is like so cool for me” (expressing his being fortunate that he was released from prison timely enough to participate in the training). This participant’s summation of what was most valuable generated a harmonious consensus:

This is preparation, as we venture out in our lives on a daily basis, we know racism exists, we know we’re going to encounter racism. But the question is to have something to deal with it and for me to not allow my emotions to overrule my reasoning, be balanced in my approach and deal with the situation.

Final input from the last members about the training compared the program to the AA model mentioning and implying it could be used as a re-entry program for Black Males:

Before Brothers even get out (of prison) they can be institutionalized. This is good information like recovery, and like AA, they come out prepared, so the same things that you’re doing here now, it could happen for some brothers in prison.

Another participant tied his statements to the training, proposing it could be a key to survival after release.

I just don't see how we can survive in this place without going through these types of studies. Because a lot of time we don't even know these are the facts because we have to dissociate to survive.

It needs to be mentioned that the discussions were so in-depth with this group that we were not able to go into the role plays, which are a key element of the training, which was picked up by the co-facilitator, who recruited this group, and wanted to bring to their attention. Co-facilitator:

I know people are just getting out of prison, they want to say what they need to say, but there always should be order and with Black men, we should learn how to conduct ourselves properly, because this is for teaching, that's what you told me (to the instructor). You said this is strategically put together, we have to operate in a strategic manner.

Third Group: First Half Focus Group

Participants in Group 3 offered different reasons about what part of the first half was most valuable to them. "I think that internalized racism and maybe the difference between bias and racism." He was joined by P2 who thought "internalized racism" and "The re-education of the Atlantic slave trade" were the most valuable parts of the first half. Another member found value because he could now look back and recount the

mental impact of racism on him as a child “When I was a little boy, Mama and them told me to not like them White people, it was embedded in me, as a little boy,” he continued his comments and said, “I think the awareness of when you went back to the slave trade... how they were transporting them... and then embedded it in their minds, that this is how it’s going to be.” One participant said that he gained an understanding of racism and the “The overall connection...how it happened back then and how it’s still happening now.” As a final comment about what was most valuable, one member, in disgust, mentioned he learned how religion was used as a colonization tool of Europeans he said, “The Christianity piece...., how it’s used as a leash to suppress the spiritual, the emotional, People don’t know that’s by design.”

Concluding the first half discourse, focus group participants were asked if they had any suggestions for the first half, and if any parts of the first half were not helpful? This question yielded full support. “I love how it’s almost like an easy read. If I had to classify it, you took knowledge a little more deeper, but it’s an easy read. I love it.”

Yeah, like you say, we never get this lecture...this racism thing (knowledge about how racism impacts their lives) This is the first time I ever sat down in front of it, even if it might have been going on, this is the first time, in my almost fifty-seven years.

A couple of participants suggested what they would like to see happen to provide more learning opportunities and spread word about the training “Need more time,” and “You need an overnight retreat or something. [Several agree] This is good. [Several

agree] this is an awesome experience, this is so valuable, to not only the men but the women need to know about it too. (Clears throat) So, my thing is keep this going. Let us get this out to the world.” In agreement one person said, “You can gauge where you’re at with this (knowledge from the training). And I always be thinking about it (how he is affected by racism). I’m always under construction.” One participant made a final comment about the most valuable part and connected what he learned to his mental health wellbeing: “I just want to let everybody know racism is why I went to the penitentiary. My charge was racially motivated. So, this is extremely therapeutic for me.” He continued comparing his incarceration to a failed test in life. “Because if you flunk a test you’ve got to take that test over some point in in your life (referring to being released and having a second chance in his community, which he was not going to squander by re-offending), in order for you to pass to the next level.”

Third Group: Second Half Focus Group

Participants were again asked at the end of the training, what was the most valuable part of the second half of the training for you? All participants said, in agreement with this participant, “The most valuable part to me was the role-playing.” Other members offered reasons why they agreed. “I have to say the role-play as well. [Another agrees], it showed you, what we could work on ourselves” (how to use the interaction model).” A participant provided one last comment, “I think definitely the role-playing and it brought up everybody’s life situations (meaning that he thought the role plays presented real life situations that they may encounter). We might have made some

mistakes, but I think we'll be able to do it differently when we are--" His sentence was finished by another participant, "in that situation."

Shifting the discussion, participants were next asked their suggestions and thoughts about the second half. One participant answered,

I think we should have more classes like this to be informed on why we act the way we act, especially younger men... It's more polarized and more guns out there, more drugs, so I think we need to be informed, get these classes going more often.

One participant thought the class was so important that women needed to be included. "My suggestion is, more people could use this... more Black Males and Black Women should know about this, too." His suggestions about involving Black Women received support from a co-member who theorized, from a mental health perspective, that the training might be beneficial to help reduce intercultural abuse of Black Wwomen by Black Males. His answer to the question "Are there any suggestions for the second half of the training?" was framed in questions to challenge the group,

I did, there was a couple questions. One, the overall mental health aspects that from the beginning to now, how is it affecting us today? And how is it affecting us in regards to what the Black man has gone through, I believe that the women take the repercussions, because we're angry. A lot of us, some men put their hands on the women.

In agreement, another participant said, "Take it out on the woman."

One participant made a final comment showed how important the training was to him, and offered the group to help recruit for the training.

If there is anything that we can do to spread the research.... You know what I'm saying? Because I most definitely feel like... especially cats my age, middle age, kids, young men growing up, I feel like this would be helpful as far as an understanding level.

Fourth Group: First Half Focus Group

Most of the participants in Group 4 mentioned that learning to identify the difference between a racist or biased person was most important. "The best part to me was the difference between bias and internal racism. Just like you say, you can have a better chance of dealing with a person that is biased...than one of these just straight-out rednecks." His comments reflect a main goal of the training which is to help participants make that distinction between the two types. Another member said, "For me, learning more about our history" (was most important to him, then he shifted to say) "but also realizing and knowing the difference between racism and biasness" (was equally as important.) "You know, racism is probably going to stay racism. And bias can be changed. There is hope for people that are biased." A third participant wanted all members to know that he learned, proclaiming. "One more thing, also what is important for me is to recognize how I've lived up to the stereotypes that they've put on me, how I've did exactly what they said." The first participant stated, "The most valuable part to me was learning how to separate, like somebody mentioned about separating racism and bias and how to deal with it."

Concluding the first half discourse, focus group participants were asked if they had any suggestions for the first half and if any parts of the first half was not helpful. This question yielded the following responses:

“No, it’s knowledge, all of it’s insightful. I needed it.”

“No, I think it’s great.”

“Everything was right..”

Fourth Group: Second Half Focus Group

Participants were again asked at the end of the training, What was the most valuable part of the second half of the training for you? All participants in this group stated that the role plays were the most important part of the second half.

“I think it was the playing.”

“Role-playing”

“Yeah”

“Yeah.”

In addition to participants valuing role plays, they also voiced what they thought was most valuable to them. “You know different things I seen, I didn’t believe in no trauma, I believed I created my own things, but now that I sit here and did this class, you know, a lot of that was imposed upon me as a child.” Another participant said about the training, “This is very helpful, and it really enlightened me about how to deal with certain

situations. Instead of flying off the handle, I can use that as a tool to help me.” Another participant added to the comments, “I think the whole thing about the Black Male and the negative stereotypes... you showing the history of all the Black Men that they’ve demonized, thugged out and criminalized, that’s really powerful.”

Concluding this group’s discourse, participants were asked if there were any suggestions about the second half that we need to do or work on to improve the training. This question generated the following responses.

“I think you’re doing a fabulous job. I would have it more (more trainings) but from my first initial viewing of the whole thing, you’re doing a great job.”

This group did present the possibility of increasing group size to reach more Black Males and taking the training into the local prisons.

I don’t know what the criteria is that you can only have six people. But I think it would be good to see if you can broaden your capacity level. Then you get a chance to interact with a big group of people... the message, information is important.

Expanding his feelings and proclaiming that the training would be beneficial to others, he continued, “Once you get this out, this would definitely work at some place like Columbia River (a detention facility for offenders), where they got programs centered for Black men...coming out.” A different participant added his opinion, emphasizing that “re-entry programs” should incorporate this training into their

curriculum because, “They ain’t got nothing about racism in their lessons and I wonder why?” He was looking for an answer, which generated a response from another participant: “Well, a lot of times, they want to keep us in the dark.” A couple of participants postulated they were not sure if institutions would be open to the training. “Do you think this would work in... Would they allow something like this in a prison setting? Or would this be too much for the system?” Another participant joined him, stating, “I don’t if they would allow it.”

Concluding comments reflects this group’s feelings about the training. “This could go a long way to saving Black people’s lives.” In agreement, another participant said, “Yeah. I’ve got to say, magnificent.”

Fifth Group: First Half Focus Group

Participants in Group 5 offered different reasons about what part of the first half was most valuable to them. One participant commented,

This is an ongoing situation that needs to be addressed.... because you’ve covered a lot of things that the average person is not aware of...and would never be aware of because they’re ingesting the negative. I’m very enlightened, I could understand it. I can digest it.

He was joined by another member who said, “Yeah, we have to be mindful of this ongoing attack on us and how to identify it and also have coping mechanisms.” A participant echoed similarly “Yeah, because you can’t internalize all this stuff, it would be too much.... So, you’ve got to have folks to kick it with and bounce stuff off of, even

a personal therapist...like the White folks have.” A final comment from a participant detailed what was important to him: “See, this is something for me because I went to university....and I wasn’t introduced to Black history until I got to college. And I’ve been thinking about this stuff all my life, and I’m glad to see that there’s other Brothers thinking like me!”

Concluding the first half discourse, focus group participants were asked if they had any suggestions for the first half, and if any parts of the first half was not helpful. This question yielded full support of one participant’s summation of the first half:

I think your presentation is good, I think the information is good. And you know what? I’m going to say it on my own behalf and everybody here, we’re here because we’re interested, and you kept us interested. That’s a success when you can keep a crowd of people riveted into where you’re going... it’s manifesting something that we can use.

Fifth Group: Second Half Focus Group

Participants were again asked at the end of the training, what was the most valuable part of the second half of the training for you? They gave varied and limited information compared to the four preceding groups, with one person stating that learning to use the interaction model was most valuable to him saying the “Explore, Understand, Action” plan was the most valuable.

Another participant mentioned he liked the stress relieving tools provided “I liked the therapy stuff to relax, these gadgets.” He didn’t stop there: “Very informative...with

the interaction, you got to act it out so you know... if you have a chance to do something, you can understand it better, and doing it gave you a hands-on experience.“ Another participant contributed his opinion about the gadgets “What I liked was the self-help stuff... That you don’t have to go to the professionals to get it, that you can get some stuff like this and you can do it at home, in your own time.”

Interestingly, when asked for suggestions this group presented a discussion about the importance of providing food for participants, as the following exchange between members illustrates.

“I think if you brought the food out a little earlier because I was getting pretty hungry. That kind of helps...gave me energy to hang in there.”

“You know something, it’s wrong to be occupied beyond a certain amount of time out of concern on their physical. Because food, the mental is nothing without the physical. And if you deprive the physical, you deprive the mental.”

No, we didn’t; we got a butter cookie and a carton of milk, That ain’t breakfast.”

“No, that’s not breakfast, no nutrition.”

Final thoughts expressed by this group were: “I’m going to be for real about it with the not knowing (what the training would be like.) You’re always hesitant because, I work Saturday. It’s an important day at [RESTAURANT]. I’m in charge of stuff in the kitchen..... You don’t know (pausing, to weigh the value of attending the training versus going to work concluding) I’m glad that I took off work.”

Last comments about the second half came from another participant:

You know what I like about learning this is you don't have to feel like you're being attacked (meaning it was a comfortable environment to learn in) You can get confidence in who you are, got the confidence that I can say what I need to say and I don't have to be abrasive or that kind of stuff. I can just talk calm. And people will say, where did that n-----r learn that from? [Group chuckles in support].

Quantitative Findings

The first quantitative finding was a simple descriptive rating the participants were asked to make in the follow up interviews. They were asked to rate the overall training from 1 to 5, where 1 indicated that the training was not helpful and 5 indicated the training was very helpful. Of the 21 participants who answered this question, 82% (18) rated it a 5, the most helpful category, and 18% (3) rated it a 4, the next most helpful category. No one rated it lower than a 4.

Each participant filled out one survey at the beginning of the group meeting (the pre-test), and another one again at the end (the first post-test). Three questions were included in both versions of the survey. These three questions were also posed again in

the follow-up interviews two weeks after the intervention (second post-test). The three questions that were asked are these:

1. How well do you handle racially charged situations with Black, White and other persons?

Not well 1 2 3 4 5 Very Well

2. Do you have the skills you need to handle racial situations?

No skills 1 2 3 4 5 Many skills

3. When you experience racial situations what is your stress level?

Low stress 1 2 3 4 5 Very stressed

First, the averages and distributions of the participants' scores were compared from pre-test to first post-test. Then the averages and distributions of the participants' scores were compared from pre-test to follow-up interview. These comparisons were made using paired samples t-tests. T-tests were conducted in an exploratory (not a confirmatory) way, just to roughly assess the differences.

For Question 1, regarding self-assessed ability to handle racial situations, the average scores increased, indicating increased competence in handling racial situations from before to immediately after the intervention. The average for the pretest on Question 1 was 3.0 (SD =1.1) and the average for the first post-test for Question 1 was 3.9 (SD = 1.0). The findings showed significant improvement from pretest to first post-test, $t(20) = -$

3.15, $p = .003$. The scores also significantly increased from pretest to follow-up (mean of 4.3, $SD = .8$), $t(21) = -4.3$, $p < .001$.

For Question 2, regarding self-assessed skills in handling racial situations, the average scores also increased, indicating an increased number of skills in handling racial situations from before to immediately after the intervention. The average for the pretest on Question 2 was 3.5 ($SD = 1.1$) and the average for the first post-test for Question 2 was 4.3 ($SD = .8$). The findings showed significant improvement from pretest to first post-test, $t(20) = -2.5$, $p = .01$. The scores also significantly increased from pretest to follow-up, where the mean was 4.6 ($SD = .5$) $t(17) = -3.46$, $p = .003$.

For Question 3, stress levels in handling racial situations, the average scores decreased from the pretest (mean of 3.8, $SD = .9$) to immediately following the intervention (mean of 3.1, $SD = 1.0$), indicating less stress in these situations after the intervention. This change was also significant, $t(20) = 2.75$, $p = .006$. The follow-up showed even more decreased stress in handling racial situations, falling to an average of 1.8 ($SD = .67$). This change was also significant in the t-test conducted. $t(18) = 8.7$, $p < .001$.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Research Questions and Discussions

In order to determine the success of this research it is important to evaluate what happened and determine whether we have answered our research questions:

1. To what extent do participants gain awareness about the historical connection between slavery and racism, IB, and IR and their life experiences as Black men involved with the CJS? To what extent can participants connect these phenomena (IB and IR and trauma) with their own life experiences and experiences with the CJS? Does this understanding help in dealing with the traumatic aspects of experiencing racism?
2. To what extent is the intervention helping participants respond, both internally and interpersonally, to explicit and implicit racism, IB, and IR in ways that they consider successful?
3. How can the intervention be improved to better achieve its goals?

The findings reflect that this study answered the research questions in a strongly punctuated way as the following discourse supports. Since Question 1 has three sub questions or parts, and Question 2 has two subquestions, I will answer the sub-

questions as independent parts related to the whole question, to make sure all components of the research questions are clearly addressed.

Research Question 1

Part 1. To what extent do participants gain awareness about the historical connection between slavery and racism, IB, and IR and their life experiences as Black men involved with the CJS?

Data revealed that all participants gained awareness and understanding of how slavery of the past is connected to their daily lives and their involvement in the CJS. Group participants first noted that they learned that Europeans used a divide and conquer strategy as a way to foster and maintain slavery. They also realized that the Europeans' divide and conquer strategy was a precursor to Black Males' involvement in the CJS via gang activity. They expanded their discussion about tribal differences and mentioned that the war among African tribes was a catalyst to the slave trade, as the powerful tribes would often sell captured slaves to the Europeans. They equated this behavior to today's criminal gangs. One participant said, "I call it the slavocracy mentality," implying we are still suffering from effects of slavery. Another group discussed how learning about these old grooming tactics opened their eyes about being divided. "I'm not so quick to judge or do things to my fellow black men today because I understand that they probably don't understand how deep the slavery mental part, that slavery taught, it's just modified, it's not hanging and lynching no more.". This comment received support from a co-member

who expressed his understanding. “It’s self-explanatory where it started, we were taught to hate on one another...It's something that's been taught, and man, our race is running with it.” One member succinctly summarized what most participants learned about slavery connections to their involvements in the CJS: “It (the training) showed me where I come from. Unless you know where you come from you don't know where you could go. You don't know that you're being programmed (to be in the CJS), you don't know what hereditary trauma passed on....It (the training) just helped me recognize this is where we come from, you were able to tie the past to the present.”

Part 2: To what extent can participants connect these phenomena (IB and IR and trauma) with their own life experiences and experiences with the CJS?

Group discussions showed the members understood the connection of racism, IB, IR and trauma to their lives, and talked about events that happened to them. Several members spoke about how their family was affected. For example, one participant reviewed his family history related to mental health, trauma, and his involvement in the CJS: “Well, you talked about being indoctrinated as a Black male, coming up poor, from little backwoods Mississippi, mom's side was poor, dad's side was from Texas, Fort Worth, where there's lot of murder, self-hate, et cetera it was one of the biggest slavery states.” Continuing his story, he said, “And so, I got into crime.” A different participant detailed his family dynamics related to his trauma and path to a life in the CJS. “Man, they put crack cocaine in the neighborhoods and then they started taking my father, my uncles from me by sending them to jail for a long time.” Another group discussion

unearthed how systemic racism controls and dismantles low income Black families, by not allowing the Black Male to live in the home with his family if the mother is receiving aid from a state agency. They equated this level of government control to that of slavery where the plantation owner (the state) controlled the economic destiny (welfare) and structure of the Black family by controlling their lives and finances. “They’re still doing it right now.” This discourse shows yet another pathway to involvement in the CJS: if the Black Male is non-compliant paying child support, has no job and is forced to live in the home because his only other option is homelessness.

Part 3. Does this understanding help in dealing with the traumatic aspects of experiencing racism?

The previous discourse illustrates that participants were able to learn how the trauma from slavery, and current day racism still influences their lives. Their learning primed them to want find an answer to the question asked by one member, detailing why he was participating in the training: “The reason that I’m here is I have a hard time dealing with that (the past generations of trauma), even though I know it’s in the past, I mean how do I deal with that anger that is inside of me?” To answer this question participants learned that trauma can cause them to react in negative ways, when triggered by a racially charged situation. Participants learned that the constant exposure to racial situations can lead to mental health issues even though they may not cognizant. As stated previously, conducting Driving While Black Trauma Test DWBTT with participants help them realize their trauma- based thoughts and actions. This group exercise provided a

safe avenue for members to open up and discuss the individual trauma they have experienced from being viewed as a criminal.

Participants additionally provided comments about their individual traumatic experiences in the CJS, including physical abuse. “We’re still in prison. I think that is the greatest misunderstand we have.” His sentiments were echoed by another who professed, “I’m on parole for life.”

Participants showed their understanding of how the communities they live in have been influenced by racism, causing them trauma. Participants mentioned being traumatized when shopping at a store, because they are being watched by security and treated as potential thieves.

Participants also learned about secondhand trauma, a concept many knew little about and asked about. The group discussions provided examples to help them learn about what second hand trauma is. Participants were first told that observing a traumatic event as a bystander, being told of a friend or relative who had a negative racial encounter from a racial matter, and watching or a news broadcast can cause a Black Male to have a traumatic reaction. This explanation generated a plethora of responses from the participants about the trauma they had encountered, from seeing Black Male relatives beaten by police, or watching George Floyd be killed. One said, “Like when they (police) beat you in front of your son.” Another said, “It’s impossible for you to be Black and not be traumatized. It’s impossible.” Understanding the impact of trauma motivated the participants’ eagerness to learn how to manage the impact of Racism, IB and IR trauma.

Research Question 2

To what extent is the intervention helping participants respond, both internally and interpersonally, to explicit and implicit racism, IB, and IR in ways that they consider successful? I will answer this question in three sections, like the components of this question.

Part 1: To what extent is the intervention helping participants respond internally to explicit and implicit racism, IB, and IR in ways that they consider successful?

In order to help participants respond internally participants first learned that the tribal and cultural differences between the various African tribes often hindered them from coming together to counteract the slave trade. “We have been divided and conquered.” All groups were able to connect this early “brainwashing” to today’s issues related to the gang activity plaguing many of our Black Communities. A final comment from one member summarizes what participants learned about divide and conquer: “That’s what crabs do. A crab isn’t going to never let the other crab get out of the tank. He going to pull him back down.”

To help participants internally, they additionally gained knowledge of how the Europeans used alcohol to enslave Africans in the past, and how alcohol and drugs are used in the same manner today. They mentioned Crack, meth (methylphenidate) and Ecstasy as the new versions to enslave Black Males and their communities. One

participant mentioned that during slavery “The White man, would work them (slaves) all week, but on Saturday and Sunday, they got to drink alcohol. So, that's all we look forward to,” implying that even now we repeat the same behaviors. He continued “They (Black Americans), was conditioned to drink on the weekends... Go to the club, get in a fight or do whatever they do.”

To help members deal and heal internally, participants learned what Racism and Bias are, and the difference between both, so they could “Keep it movin’”, “Leave them alone” and “Let it go” with a racist, and not get stressed out from an encounter because racists are unlikely to change. They also learned that some white persons are biased and unaware of their micro- aggressive acts, often are willing to have a dialogue about the situation, and might be open to a change of mind. Being able to make this internal assessment is important, because it is likely that participants will have multiple racial encounters throughout their life spans at work, with the CJS, possibly in academic places advocating for their children, and in their communities where they live.

To help participants internally, they learned how the accumulated impact of slavery traditions and the absorption of racist dynamics causes them to internalize all that they have been exposed to. Most members progressed from no knowledge of IR to becoming astute identifiers of the myriad of ways Black Males have IR. Data revealed that the most important element they learned about IR was how it can cause self-hatred. One participant offered, “I think everything starts with self, and understanding internalization (IR).”

In order to counteract the internal bombardment of self-hatred messages, participants learned that the media has played a significant role in portraying Black Males in a negative way. “I think the whole thing about the Black male and the negative stereotypes... you showing the history of all the Black men that they’ve demonized, thugged out, and criminalized, that’s really powerful.”

The last area participants learned about to help them internally was that consistent exposure to racism has caused them to be traumatized, a mental health condition. Participants first learned about generational trauma. One participant equated generational trauma to Black Males being in an abusive home: “We got to tie this (racist attacks) to domestic violence because we live in a house (America), a White house and they’ve been abusing us for four hundred years.”

Participants also learned that they have experienced individual trauma and presented a variety of examples how it happened, which is a positive because self-acknowledgement is the first step to dealing with and healing from a mental health issue. Finally, participants learned about second hand trauma and realized that exposure to violent acts from a distance can be as harmful as direct assaults.

Collectively all of these learning dimensions helped participants internally respond to Racist, Biased, and IR incidents. Participants’ comments two weeks after their participation show that they changed internally, by changing how they regulate their emotions and how they think about racial situations. Five revealed that their ability to manage their emotional reactions to racism, Bias or IR had changed. For example, one

said, “It changed the way that I approach racism, I don't have to be angry. I just have to analyze the situation: Think about it, take time out and then address it.” Several participants learned to be patient when dealing with racial matters. (see Table 4) ”Just changed my way of reacting, I hold no opinions no more...I just try to diffuse situations, and don't get upset.” Two other participants shifted their standpoints on how they viewed white persons. One said, “It helps me not neglect good white people, because, for a while, I was looking at them all the same.” Another noted that the training in general had affirmed and confirmed his views on race and dealing with racism. The quantitative findings showed that participants improved in their ability to handle racial situations from before to after the intervention, additionally participants stress’ in handling racial situations decreased from before the intervention to after the intervention.

Part 2. To what extent is the intervention helping participants respond interpersonally to explicit and implicit racism, IB, and IR in ways that they consider successful?

In order for participants to respond interpersonally in an effective way they were first taught a 4-step plan: a) Use your Anger management skill of choice to calm yourself before interacting, b) Use the interaction model which focuses on listening so you can learn information you need to know, which will help you make the right decision of how to proceed to a solution, c) After an encounter, debrief with someone who is positive, supportive, and will be honest with you, and d) Participate in an activity to move on from the stress (exercise, meditate, music, massage, etc.)

Armed with positive internal ways to respond to racism, a plan to use when confronted with a direct or micro-aggressive act, participants were ready to operationalize what they learned and were given opportunities to do so by participating in scripted role plays, with a fellow member portraying to be racist, Biased or influenced by IR. The role plays proved to be both fun and productive as the majority of participants proclaimed in the focus groups that this was the best part of the second half of the training.

At the two-week follow-up interview, eight of the twenty-two participants commented that the intervention changed their ability to deal with racial matters. “It changed how I expressed myself to people, and it changed how I handle different situations.” Another commented, “It gave me hope, it changed the way I respond rather than react.” A final participant said what he now does in a racial situation: “I stop, take some deep breaths and not react quickly....just try to use common sense and realize that the person may not be an intentional racist.” (See Table 4 for all comments.)

Part 3. To what extent is the intervention helping participants respond to explicit and implicit racism, IB, and IR in ways that they consider successful?

The best way to answer this final part of question two is to defer back to adult learning principle that postulates the learner should focus on what they think is important. We already mentioned mastering the role plays made the participants feel they could be successful managing a racialized situation, in addition they offered specific feedback about why they felt the intervention helped them in ways they consider successful. Several mentioned they learned to be “more patient.” Another commented that he learned

“how you talk to people and how people talk to you, stop altercations.” A final comment by a member reflected what he learned: “I’ve tapped more into emotional regulation tools. When someone is giving me that look (that they may be racist, Biased or have IR) it’s like I’m three moves ahead of them already.”

Research Question 3

How can the intervention be improved to better achieve its goals?

This research in its current state achieved the study’s goals and at this time cannot be improved. The following discourse related to the stated intervention goals reflects why we state this position.

Goal 1. To empower Black Males who have offended by providing them an opportunity to talk about and understand their life experiences with Racism, IB, and IR related to their involvement in the CJS and criminalized behaviors.

Participants stated they were empowered by having an opportunity to talk with a group of like-minded persons. “The input that’s come from all the brothers here, as well as the curriculum that you’re presenting, it all is important.... You know, we can’t move together if we don’t understand each individual perspective...or not willing to listen.” Participants often expressed their desire to make this training available to other Black Males, because they had been empowered by participating, and wanted to spread the

word to others. Another member suggested meeting regularly “maybe a weekly basis,” and to use Zoom as ways to provide opportunities for more Black Males to participate and become empowered, like what happened to them. .

Goal 2. To help Black Male offenders understand and ameliorate the traumatic impacts to their psyches that have resulted from being labeled criminals, from IB and IR, and from their involvement in the CJS, which can stymie their attempts to stay out of the system.

Goal 2 was accomplished by helping the participants understand and ameliorate the traumatic consequences they experience stemming from being labeled criminals, caused by racism and their involvement in the CJS. Participants were taught about the history of slavery and how it morphed over time, carrying over many of the racist traditions, fashioned to label Black Males as criminals and keep them in bondage (prison) today. They also learned about how these forces over time have caused trauma to them without their knowledge, often leading to a life of CJS involvement. “Before Brothers even get out (of prison) they can be institutionalized, this (training) is good information like recovery, like AA (Alcoholics Anonymous), they (offenders after participating in AA) come out prepared... the same things that you’re doing here (conducting the intervention), could happen for brothers in prison.” Another member said the training could be a key to survival after release from prison “I just don’t see how we can survive in this place (America) without going through these types of studies. Because a lot of time we don’t even know these are the facts because we have to dissociate to survive.”

Learning the information contained in the training sparked the participants to ameliorate the draconian effects of racism they experienced.

Goal 3. To present communication, conflict resolution and stress reduction tools to utilize by the participants when confronted by individuals displaying aggressive and microaggressive attacks of Racism, IB, and IR towards participants.

Finally, we accomplished Goal 3 by teaching participants communication and conflict resolution tools (How to ID a racist person, The Plan, etc.,) that they were able to talk about, ask questions about and successfully practice by acting out scripted life like scenarios. Participants were also shown mindfulness strategies to help them mentally and physically deal with the potential trauma stemming from a racialized encounter.

Importance to the Field of Social Work

The importance of this study to the field of Social Work is immeasurable, because extensive search for something similar revealed it is the first of its kind in which Social Work or any other discipline has conducted research on an intervention that teaches Black Males who have been involved in the CJS how to deal with the insidious harm that happens to them as a result of trauma from racism. The positive results of this study can be instrumental for Black Males in the CJS, because it can aid in developing effective culturally specific trainings, can assist in establishing new standards of treatment and

programming for Black Males in the CJS, and can promote further research on racism's impact on this neglected population.

Another reason for Social Work to embrace the importance of this research is, intentionally or unintentionally, social work has failed to provide adequate services to this marginalized community. According to our standards as outlined in the preamble to the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (2018) "The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty" (NASW 2018). As stated, the core element of the NASW mission statement is to empower those who are oppressed. We believe this study is well suited to aid in filling the void, as participants voiced they were empowered from participating.

In conclusion, I again return to the NASW code (2018) which states, "Social workers practice within their areas of competence," and "Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession." (NASW 2018). This study contributes to the knowledge base of SW. However, if one dissects this principle, it also underscores why social work with Black Males has failed. I surmise this lack has occurred because Social Work is a majority female discipline dominated by white women, with few Black Male providers, and even fewer who have had involvement in the CJS and are in a position to make this altruistic ambition a reality. This study is an example of what that principle might look like for Black Males because this study is a

grassroots model designed and created by a Black Male who offended and experienced racism. It was refined by other Black Males (in the pilot study) who had similar experiences in the CJS, making this study very important to Social Work and the Black Male community.

Importance to Black Studies

This study is valuable to Black Studies for a variety of reasons. It was created with the ambition of solving a social problem by helping Black Males who have offended deal with the draconian consequences of racism in a positive way. Secondly the research has the potential to become evidence based, and can be an addition to the body of knowledge of Black Studies because it was created by a Black Male who offended. Thirdly, the research was grassroots inspired, as vetted by a successful pilot test and confirmed by the participants in the study who gave their overall approval. This research has amplified relevance to the Black Studies research community, because it is unusual. It was self-funded, which allowed it to be creative and innovative in many ways, without the restrictions of a dominant culture framework. This research focuses on a training for Black Males about how to deal with racism, which heretofore had been lacking. This research illuminates the value of Black Studies as a resource for other disciplines who study or work with Black Males.

Importance to CJS

Considering the disparities and challenges Black Males who have offended face, the value of this study to the criminal justice field is immense, as exhibited by mass incarceration and dismal racially disproportionate recidivism rates. As mentioned previously it is the first study and intervention to offer Black Males who have offended, knowledge and new options to address racial issues they may encounter related to their involvement in and out of the CJS system. This research is also important to the CJS because it has the potential to inform players in the CJS of new approaches to better support Black Males who offend. Finally, CJS policy makers can use this research as a template to better understand this population, build sound policies and award dollars to programs that can actually decrease mass incarceration, improve re-entry rates and improve abysmal recidivism rates. Racism in the CJS is persistent, and continues to impact how Black Males fare.

Importance to Mental Health

The participants reported beneficial mental health effects from the intervention. They expressed relief and a release from the emotional baggage of experiencing racism.

This research is also important to the mental health profession if it aims to be an advocate for this population, because contrary to the notion Black Males are less likely to participate in mental health services, this study's results shows Black Males who have offended are willing and eager to learn about how trauma from racism impacts their lives,

and what they could do to ameliorate the consequences. The Black Males who participated in this study actively engaged in all discussions about mental health issues because, I believe, we created an environment that was safe, empowering, and culturally sensitive to their needs.

Relative to cultural needs, it is well known that the mental health discipline is dominated by white providers and since that is not likely to change, these study results can help mental health professionals because they can learn effective strategies to work cross culturally with Black Males, gain insight about how deeply trauma influences them, and modify their treatment strategies accordingly.

As a final element of enlightenment to the mental health field, this study offers details of how to conduct effective group treatment with this population (see next section). The importance of being able to do effective group treatment is due to the shortage of mental health providers, Black or white, Male and female, causing a shift towards more group treatment to counteract the shortage of mental health providers.

Implications for Andragogy/Afrocentric Models

This study successfully used principles from Andragogy and the Afrocentric paradigm to create valuable information that can build the body of literature across many disciplines (SW, Black Studies, Education, Psychology, etc.) about how to work effectively in group settings with Black Males who have been involved in the CJS.

Andragogy, a multiple dimension process model of teaching that focuses on how *adults learn best*, along with the Afrocentric model, provided direction to make sure the “process of learning” was not harmful to the participants based on the possibility participants may have been traumatized from previous school experiences. School systems use a traditional pedagogical model, or content model of instruction that does not seem to working with Black Males as exhibited by poor school performance. Additionally, the content model is dependent on the educator transmitting knowledge and skills they deem as important (via lecture, lab exercises, readings, etc.), versus the participant’s co- creating knowledge with the educator (Knowles, Holton, Swanson, 2015).

As a platform, the Andragogical approach to learning was valuable to this study because it allowed me to present information in a way of thinking that meshes with Black Males’ cultural psyche, and is rooted in a strengths-based, anti-oppressive format. They could choose to learn what was most valuable to them. This model was very useful because it prepared the learner by informing them they had skills and knowledge about racism, and their learning would be self-directed based on what they thought was important. In the same vein this model enabled participants to achieve what they wanted to achieve, and to perform at the level at which they wished to perform, by helping them realize the gap between where they were at the start of the training and where they wanted or needed to be afterwards. Finally, the participants were able to do assessments (survey) which aided them to see where they were at the start of the training compared to where they were after the training after acquiring new skills. Concluding this discourse,

Andragogy promotes the notion that adults need to know why they need to learn something before becoming involved in the process, and the group facilitator must create an environment that stimulates the learner's desire to acquire a deeper level of knowledge about the topic. We were able to accomplish this vital component by infusing the Afrocentric paradigm into the Andragogy process model.

The Afrocentric paradigm was valuable to this study for a variety of reasons. It is an approach that emphasizes the reality that Black folks have been oppressed by Eurocentric paradigms dating back to slavery (which participants learned). It allowed me to present information in a way of thinking that allowed us to mesh in a "kindred psyche" rooted in a strengths-based, anti-oppressive and holistic notion, that "Black male development evolves in a context of people, places and institutions that impact and form their ecological context" Livingston and Nahimana (2006). Finally, it is based on traditional African philosophical assumptions, which emphasize a holistic, interdependent and spiritual conception of people and their environments (Schiele, 2000).

These important nuggets showed their dominance in this study, mainly reflected by the presence of the spiritual connection to the church as revealed by members comparing me to a pastor, and to past spiritual leaders who were criminalized unfairly, due to their status of Black male leaders in their communities, Malcom X and Martin Luther King (take note I am not worthy of such comments, but the comparisons do reflect how transformative their gained knowledge was to them). Additionally, members mentioned enjoying the food and appreciated the money they received. I believe that

since Black Churches have always stepped up in the Black communities providing food and money to those in need, amplified by the fact that Covid was ending and money was tight for all Americans, these small gestures gave participants a level of trust and comfort in the notion that they were not being taken advantage of by some random research project. The connection to the church community was also important because they embraced having the groups (4 out of 5), which aided the participants getting to the trainings because they were held at familiar churches on bus lines they knew, equating to a high rate of punctual attendance.

A final Afrocentric church related connection that proved to be important was the interaction between the participants and the trainer. The call and response technique, related to the Afrocentric oral tradition, was valuable, because it was different from the traditional “listen to me” lecture format that has not been effective in teaching Black Males. This form of teaching allowed the group members to ask questions about what they missed or to help them deepen their knowledge of what they thought was important as confirmed by my response to their questions. This style also provided an opportunity for other members to hear the answers while giving them the confidence to ask questions they might have, with the assurance they will not be shamed in any way. I learned that this format of check in with the individual members was a way I could support those members who may not understand a concept or exercise.

The group format aligned with the collective components of the Afrocentric world view. The groups, as noted earlier, became cohesive and the members supported each other. The oral tradition of sharing stories that highlight insidious effects of

intergenerational racism was central to this intervention. The Afrocentric qualitative approach yielded compelling personal narratives. In conclusion the Afrocentric model allowed this researcher to secure information from Black Males by asking questions and seeking new knowledge in a manner that honored and respected their unique position (Black Male Offender) in our hierarchically arranged social world (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

Implications for Constructivist Grounded Theory

Operationalizing CGT through the Afrocentric lens allowed us to review the data in a culturally sensitive way. CGT allows the researcher to join with the participants to create knowledge, which works particularly well in the Afrocentric paradigm. CGT methods combined with the Afrocentric approach helped us to discover unexpected gems in the data. For example, the importance of “call and response” sermonic interaction was unforeseen but important to the process of learning. This combination of approaches has promise for similar studies.

Strengths and Limitations of Research

This research has several strengths beginning with the fact that is a grassroots designed research built on contributions from the marginalized community being researched. I am a Black Male who offended. I formulated the concept based on my autoethnography, detailing my experiences with racism. This led to a pilot study exploring whether or not this problem was worthy of study, and this research study has been vetted by participants who claimed it was valuable to them. On a larger scale this

research also has the ability to help strengthen the African American community by providing guidelines for understanding and teaching Black Males about what has happened to them as a result of racism and how they might deal with it.

Another strength of this research is that it offers a template about ways to help this population learn best. We did so by incorporating different theoretical constructs that emphasize empowerment like Social Work with Groups, Andragogy, Theory of African American Offending and the Afrocentric Paradigm to create a learning and healing environment that maximized their ability to learn, regardless of challenges they may have had based on previous academic experiences.

A final strength of this research is that the intervention has potential to become an Evidence Based Program, as it is supported by positive qualitative and quantitative data reflecting participants valued and learned skills from their participation. Again, there are few if any research studies designed by a member from this community. This research has the potential to not only help the participants but also to offer knowledge to a variety of disciplines, because the impact of Black Males being criminalized echoes outside this focused area of Social Work Research.

In spite of the seeming success of this research there were some limitations. The first limitation is that the research was a short intervention and the participants wanted a more continuous version that extended over time, even though this was not an intended purpose. Along the same lines of time, a limitation of this study was that it lacked a long term follow up component to see if participants could maintain what they learned longer

than a two-week period after the training. The benefit of ongoing follow up would help us see if the intervention is a conduit to their successful re-entry, in turn decreasing recidivism of participants.

In regards to evaluation, this study is limited because I did the majority of evaluations. The value of having varied evaluators is that could offer different opinions regarding the coding process in turn revealing elements of the data I might have missed. In the two week follow up interviews a different evaluator or co facilitator would be beneficial because participants may have been hesitant to reveal their true feelings about the training because they did not want to make me feel bad.

Another limitation of this type of research is whether or not an organizations or researchers are able to secure funding to conduct this type of study without having to adhere to strict budget requirements that can hinder creativity. To avoid this restrictive compliance, this research was funded by me and allowed us to feed the participants a good meal and compensate them for their transportation, time and contributions to the research.

The sample did not include many younger adult Black Males. It would be good to see if younger aged Black Males would embrace and be empowered as the much as the research participants were. Black Women experience similar problems stemming from their involvement in the CJS similar to Black Males, therefore a limitation of this study is that it is not designed for Black Women, even though the concepts may have

applicability. Similarly, this study and intervention have not addressed Nonbinary Black People. This study may however provide a pathway for future research to happen with Black Women and Black Nonbinary People related to their involvement in the CJS, if the curriculum is adjusted accordingly.

Future Research

The previous discourse concludes that this research produced a final training model that requires no modification at this time, however future replications of this training should continue to evaluate and explore ways to make it better, by curing the model over a longer period of time allowing for more data to be collected from a larger sample size to inform us if this training is in its best form to accomplish its goals. Participants suggested possible variations in the format of the training, including over Zoom, in larger groups, and over longer time periods, which should all be investigated.

A final suggestion presented by several group members was to explore inviting Black Women to this training, which I believe is a great idea, but a determination of whether the groups should be gender specific or integrated needs to happen. This study showed that gender specific groups can facilitate group bonding and empowerment like it did with the Black Males in this study. On the other hand, a mixed gender group might be beneficial because it could foster a better understanding between the genders and be a catalyst for improving Black Male and Female relationships as they jointly learn how

racism impacts themselves and the Black Family. Lastly the training could be useful to households headed by Black Women because it could be used as a template to understand the racial forces their Black Male sons might encounter while providing them with strategies to help them thrive versus survive throughout their lifespans.

Summary

This mixed methods research accomplished its aims and goals and answered the research questions more than adequately. It exposed valuable information that can greatly assist Black Males who have offended deal with racism both in the CJS and in the greater communities where they live. The findings showed participants were able to learn how the past racist traditions of slavery are still in effect, often cloaked in biased behaviors. Participants learned that the accumulative impact of ingesting regular doses of racism and biased acts can cause them to internalize the attacks. For many Black Males this trauma begins in elementary and high school and continues in the CJS, the communities where they live, and sometimes in their families of origin. The theoretical framework supporting this research counterbalanced these experiences by considering trauma's impact on their ability to learn, and fashioned the curriculum based on Afrocentric, andragogy adult learning and Social Work with groups principles, all of which are concepts favorable to doing group work with marginalized communities of color like the Black Males in this study. This design enabled participants to learn what was valuable to them and actively engage in the learning activities and discussions.

Findings reflected that participants learned how to respond both internally and interpersonally in a positive way by operationalizing a four-step plan they could use when faced with a racial encounter, and also learned mindfulness strategies to regroup after an encounter. Collectively what the participants learned, combined with the comradery that happened from the members joining together to create knowledge, facilitated them leaving feeling unified, empowered, and wanting more.

In conclusion, this is a first of its kind intervention and research, that teaches Black Males in the CJS how to deal with racism, and has the potential to fill a large gap in the body of knowledge of multiple disciplines if used as a template. As important, this intervention and research have the potential to impact poor re-entry and recidivism rates and mass incarceration, which greatly impact Black Males who have offended.

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Appendix

Forms Used in Study

Consent to Participate in Research (before training.....Attachment #1)

Project Title: “Assisting Black Males Deal with and Heal from Racism” (ABMI)

related to

Criminal Justice System Involvement

Researcher: Darnell Jackie Strong, Social Work
Portland State University

Researcher Contact: jackiestrong@comcast.net / (503) 309-2460

You are being asked to take part in a research study. The box below shows the main facts you need to know about this research for you to think about when making a decision about if you want to join in. Carefully look over the information in this form and ask questions about anything you do not understand before you make your decision.

Key Information for You to Consider
<p>Voluntary Consent. You are being asked to volunteer for a research study. It is up to you whether you choose to involve yourself or not. There is no penalty if you choose not to join in or decide to stop.</p> <p>Purpose. This research is being conducted to assist Black Males who have offended avoid reoffending by learning new knowledge, a conflict resolution model and skills to deal with the effects of racism. In addition to you learning new knowledge and skills, your participation and feedback will be used to strengthen future interventions like this.</p> <p>Duration. The amount of time we are requesting from you is 4 hours. The study will be broken up into two 1.5 hours sections with a 10 minute break each half. There will be a brief break (30 minutes) with snacks after the first half of the training. We will also ask you to participate in a brief follow up phone call approximately two weeks after your participation.</p> <p>Procedures and Activities. If you decide to participate we will ask you to talk about your past experiences being criminalized, so others can learn from your experiences.</p>

We will ask you to watch videos, participate in role plays and exercises to help you learn how racism works. Additionally the exercises will teach you skills to counteract the harm that can happen from racist and biased acts. Finally we will have you participate in two short focus groups: one at the half way point of the study and one at the end of the study. All of these activities study will be recorded for later transcription.

Risks. There is a small risk that talking about your past experiences or listening to others may trigger feelings or emotions related to the activities and discussions (frustration, sadness, slight anger). Another small risk is in regards to Black Males level of mistrust related to being subjects of research. The history of racism in research is well known and underlies Black Males' potential mistrust.

Benefits. We believe that you can benefit from participating in this study because you can learn skills and information that can be applied immediately with plenty of chances to practice what you learn. Another benefit is that learned strategies may help you avoid recidivating and possibly help others. A final benefit is that you will be equipped with a model to respond in a positive way to overt racist and biased micro-aggressive acts.

Options. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and the only options are to participate or not.

What happens to the information collected?

Information collected from you for this research will be used in the dissertation and any related presentations and publications. When that happens your individual identity will not be exposed and you will hence remain anonymous. In other words when I write or talk about what was learned in this study, I will leave things out so no one will be able to tell who I am talking about.

How will I and my information be protected?

We will collect your name and phone number to allow for a follow up call approximately two weeks after your participation in the intervention. In order to keep your information secure we will first assign numeric codes to each participant along with their contact phone number. Secondly we will keep participants names and study identification codes stored in a secured location separately from other study data, so there will be minimal chance they can be identified.

We will take measures to protect your privacy and we won't tell anyone if you decide to take part in this study or not. When we write or talk about what was learned in this study, we will leave things out so no one will be able to tell who we are talking about.

It need be mentioned that if, in the course of the study you disclose that you are, or are intending to, harm yourself or others, I am ethically and legally required to notify the appropriate authorities. Despite taking these steps to protect your privacy, we can never fully guarantee that your privacy will be protected.

To protect all of your personal information, we will keep all hard copies of questionnaires secured by keeping data in a locked file cabinet in a secured office. In order to manage the sensitive data maintained on computers we will do the following: a) We will manage access to data, and limit access to only those with permission to have access and those who have the access codes, b) We will store the data on a personal computer and keep the computer and obtained data in a locked office, c) We will secure the data in the devices by using anti-virus software and special pass codes, ending inactive sessions, and using firewalls, and d) We will manage data responsibly by not gathering unnecessary information and by only gathering information as approved by the IRB process, and e) We will store the data for a period of time according to principles for publication. Despite these precautions, we can never fully guarantee that all your study information will not be revealed.

What if I want to stop being in this research?

You do not have to take part in this study, but if you do, you may stop at any time. You have the right to choose not to join in any study activity or completely stop your participation at any point without penalty or loss of benefits you would otherwise get. Your decision whether or not to take part in research will not affect your relationship with the researchers or Portland State University.

Will it cost me money to take part in this research?

There is no cost to taking part in this research, beyond your time.

Will I be paid for taking part in this research?

For participating in this Study you will receive \$100.00 cash at the conclusion of the 3- 4 hour study. The money is a way of saying thank you for your time and contributions to this research.

Who can answer my questions about this research?

If you have questions or concerns, contact the research team, you can talk to the project lead, Jackie Strong at (503)-309-2460 send emails to jackiestrong@comcast.net, or you can contact Maria Talbott lead professor at Portland State University about your rights as a research participant. Send e-mails to talbottm@pdx.edu; or jackiestrong@comcast.net.

Who can I speak to about my rights as a research participant?

The Portland State University Institutional Review Board (“IRB”) is overseeing this research. The IRB is a group of people who review research studies to make sure the rights and welfare of the people who take part in research are protected. The Office of Research Integrity is the office at Portland State University that supports the IRB. If you

have questions about your rights, or wish to speak with someone other than the research team, you may contact:

Office of Research Integrity
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207-0751
Phone: (503) 725-5484
Toll Free: 1 (877) 480-4400
Email: psuirb@pdx.edu

Consent Statement

I have had the chance to read and think about the information in this form. I have asked any questions I have, and I can make a decision about my participation. I understand that I can ask additional questions anytime while I take part in the research.

- I agree to take part in this study
- I do not agree to take part in this study

"ABMI" Participant Questionnaire (before training)

1. What is your age? _____

2. How well do you handle racially charged situations with Black, White, and other persons?

1	2	3	4	5
Not well			Very Well	

3. Do you have the skills you need to handle racial situations?

1	2	3	4	5
No skills			Many skills	

Please list skills:

4. When you experience racial situations what is your stress level ?

1	2	3	4	5
Low stress			Very Stressed	

What do you do to handle stress? _____

5. Do you understand why Black Males sometimes mistreat other Black Males? Yes ___ No ___

Briefly explain:

6. Are you currently on probation? Yes _____ No _____; Off probation/parole date: _____

7. If you are interested in a follow up check in call, please provide your Name, Phone Number, and email so we can contact you in two weeks.

Name
(print) _____ Date _____

Phone
Number/s _____ Email _____

“ABMI” Focus Group questions (Attachment #3)

These Focus group questions will be used as guides, to lead the discussions, and gather information from the participants, related to each learning module. The first learning module is the Trauma module followed by the Healing module. The questions are framed to yield data on the “intervention” and the “study”.

Trauma Module questions:

1. The Intervention:

- What part of this first half did you find most important/valuable to you?

2. *The Study:*

- Now I would like to hear from you about your thoughts and suggestions about the first half of this training? (Any parts that weren't helpful?)

Healing Module:

1. *The Intervention:*

- What part of this second half did you find most important/valuable to you?

3. *The Study:*

- Now I would like to hear from you about your thoughts and suggestions about the second half of the training?
- Do you have suggestions that might help us improve the overall training?
- Would you refer others to this training?

“ABMI” Participant Questionnaire (After Intervention)

1. How well do you handle racially charged situations with Black, White, and other persons?

1 2 3 4 5

Not well

Very Well

2. Do you have the skills you need to handle racial situations?

“ABMI” Participant Questionnaire (Two weeks post Intervention)

Hello _____ my name is Jackie Strong..... In case you don't remember who I am, I am the person who conducted the intervention you participated in about two weeks ago.

This call is to do the follow-up interview we talked about at the start of the training, do you have a few minutes to talk and let me ask you a couple of questions about how you are doing?

1. How well do you handle racially charged situations with Black, White, and other persons?

1	2	3	4	5
Not well			Very Well	

2. Do you have the skills you need to handle racial situations?

1	2	3	4	5
No skills			Many skills	

Please list skills _____

3. When you experience racial situations what is your stress level?

1	2	3	4	5
Low stress			Very Stressed	

4. What do you do to handle stress?

5. Do you understand why Black Males sometimes mistreat other Black Males? Yes___No___

Please explain;

6. Thinking about the training now after a couple of weeks,

How would you rate the overall training (circle the number)

1 2 3 4 5

Not Helpful

Very Helpful

Comments:

7. Did the training make a difference to you? Yes___No___

Comments:

8. Did the training change anything for you? Yes___No___

Comments:

9. How do you feel about the training now?

Comments:

10. Is there anything else you want to say?

Comments:

Thank you very much for your time.