

UNC School of Social Work Clinical Lecture Series

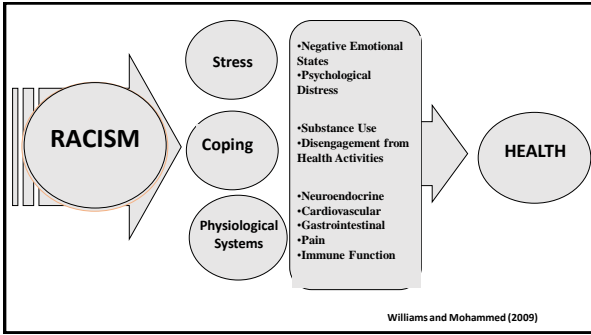
**Cultural Sensitivity and Humility in
Cognitive-Behavioral
Interventions for
Racism-Related Distress**

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TALK OVERVIEW

- Background and Motivation: Laying the Foundation
- CBT Approaches for Racism-Related Distress
- Data Blitz and Clinical Application
- Recommendations and Future Directions
- Conclusion

BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION



CULTURAL HUMILITY (Tervalon & Murray-García, 1998)

- A “static notion of competence” (120) is not possible.
- Commitment to ongoing self-reflection and self-critique
- Examine patterns of racism, classism, etc.
- Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills

COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPIES
(Williams et al., 2016)

- Cognitive Restructuring + Behavioral Techniques
- Targets Cognitive Schema and Automatic Thoughts
- Ethnoracial Factors Influence Schema and Thoughts
- Research on Application of CBT With Diverse Populations Scarce

COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPIES, cont.

- Assumes distress to be product of distorted/irrational beliefs about one’s environment
- HOWEVER, behavioral and emotional difficulties may be result of *lived experiences* and socio-cultural factors that *genuinely* impact one’s life
- Thoughts are “not simply cognitive distortions that can be reframed through Socratic questioning” (65).

CBT APPROACHES TO RACISM-RELATED DISTRESS

CULTURALLY-SENSITIVE CBT COMPONENTS
(Schwartz et al., 2007)

- Inclusion of Families
- Emphasis on Empowerment
- Acknowledgment of Stress Related to Minority Status
- Identification of Stress Related to SES (e.g., limited resources)
- Culturally-Sensitive Content

CULTURALLY-SENSITIVE CBT COMPONENTS
 (Schwartz et al., 2007)

- Awareness of Stigma Surrounding Mental Health Problems
- Mistrust of Research
- Availability of Community or Home-Based Intervention
- Flexible Scheduling
- Training in Cultural Sensitivity for Providers

PROMOTE POSITIVE ETHNORACIAL IDENTITY (ERI)

- Assess/Consider Stage of Identity Development
- Support Clients in Exploration of ERI
- Discuss Positive Aspects of ERI

PROMOTE POSITIVE ETHNORACIAL IDENTITY (ERI)

- Encourage Learning About History and Achievements of Ethnic/Racial Group
- Encourage Rejection of Pathological Stereotypes
- Encourage Involvement in Traditional Cultural Activities

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY & CBT (Graham & Sorenson, 2013)

- Therapeutic Stance
- Inviting Conversations About Marginalized Statuses
- Enhancing Psychoeducation
- Adapting Cognitive Restructuring
- Modifying Exposure Situations

THERAPEUTIC STANCE (Graham & Sorenson, 2013)

- Educate self about modal experiences of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds
- History, Beliefs, Values, Marginalization Experiences
- Understand how microaggressions operate
- Read texts related to treatment of diverse individuals

INVITING CONVERSATIONS (Graham & Sorenson, 2013)

- Introduce own identity and check in with clients about any concerns surrounding differences
- Initiate conversations about marginalized status and relevant experiences
- Ask client whether identity of individuals they are interacting with influences the presenting problem

ENHANCING PSYCHOEDUCATION

(Graham & Sorenson, 2013)

- Connect aspects of psychoeducation directly to clients' lived experiences

ADAPTING COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING

(Graham & Sorenson, 2013)

- DON'T question validity of fear that racism is possible
- DO validate and allow client to talk openly about experiences
- DON'T challenge that these incident exist or that a specific incident was discriminatory
- DO address biases in what the experiences mean about the client (e.g., intelligence/competence)
- GOAL: Develop defense against internalized racism

MODIFYING EXPOSURE SITUATIONS

(Graham & Sorenson, 2013)

- Use knowledge of clients' modal experiences to tailor in- and out-of-session exposures and homework assignments

CULTURALLY-SENSITIVE ADAPTATION TO EVIDENCE-BASED CBT FOR SOCIAL ANXIETY (Graham-LoPresti et al., 2017)

- Veronica is a 22-year-old heterosexual, Latina woman presenting for treatment for SAD
- “the only brown person”
- Fears social evaluation (intelligence/competence)
- Experiences stuttering; preoccupied with scripts detailing things she needs to say in social contexts

COPING WITH RACIAL TRAUMA (Jernigan et al., 2015)

- Acknowledge
- Discuss
- Seek Support
- Self-Care
- Empowerment Through Resistance

Racism Recovery Plan Steps (Jernigan et al., 2015)	
Racial Wellness Toolbox	Describe what you feel like when you are managing racism in a healthy manner.
Daily Maintenance of Centeredness in the Face of Racism	Describe some ways you can stay grounded, healthy, and caring of self when encountering racism.
Racial Trauma Triggers and Response Plan	When do you experience racial trauma? List experiences that tend to result in racial trauma symptoms.
Racial Trauma Early Warning Signs & Response Plan	What does it feel like when you encounter racial trauma? Identify strategies to combat symptoms.

Racism Recovery Plan Steps (Jernigan et al., 2015), cont.

Acute Racial Trauma & Response Plan	List signs that you are experiencing acute racial trauma. Identify action plan.
Crisis Planning	Ask yourself how you would know if experiencing crisis due to racism.
Post Crisis Planning	List ways of reconnecting with self and community to regain centeredness.

SUMMARY

- Attend to own biases
- Self-educate
- Maintain Openness to Diverse Experiences
- Tailor Assessment and Psychoeducation
- Challenge Negative Self-Thoughts, *not* Experiences of Discrimination
- Tailor Exposures to Reflect Clients' Experiences
- Identify Tools and Resources to Help Clients Negotiate Racism-Related Distress

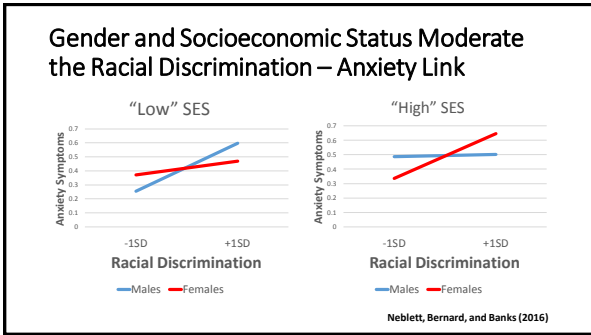
DATA BLITZ AND APPLICATION

The Moderating Roles of Gender and Socioeconomic Status in the Association Between Racial Discrimination and Psychological Adjustment

Neblett, Bernard, and Banks (2016)

RATIONALE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Racism-related stress poses a significant risk to the mental health functioning of African American youth during the transition to adulthood.
- Personal and social factors might influence this association.
- Do socioeconomic status and gender moderate the association between racial discrimination and psychological adjustment?



DISCUSSION

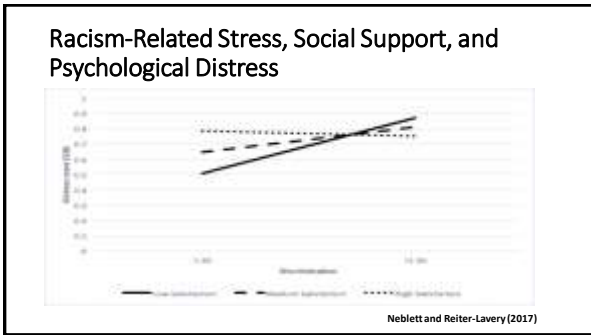
- Racial discrimination associated with symptom and interpersonal functioning distress.
- Young men from lower SES backgrounds and women from *higher* SES background most vulnerable to racial discrimination.
- Clinical Implications
 - Assessment of racism-related stress experiences
 - Visual imagery, culturally-informed CBT, mindfulness?

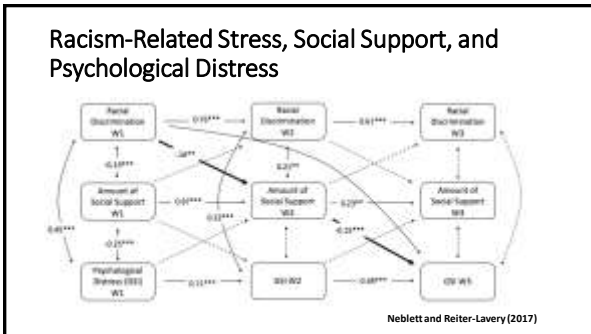
Racial Discrimination, Social Support, and Mental Health

Neblett and Reiter-Lavery (2017)

RATIONALE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Racial discrimination associated with detrimental mental health outcomes.
- Social Support may play a role in the association between discrimination and psychological distress
 - *Social Support Buffering* (Cohen & Wills, 1985)
 - *Social Support Deterioration* (Barrera, 1988)
- Does social support moderate or mediate the discrimination-distress link over time?





DISCUSSION

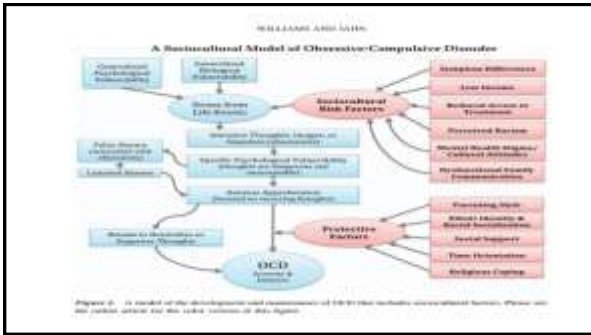
- Racism discrimination associated with psychological distress over time.
- Social Support Amount vs. Social Support Satisfaction
- Clinical Implications
 - Significance of social support satisfaction
 - Importance of bolstering social support for students experiencing racism-related stress

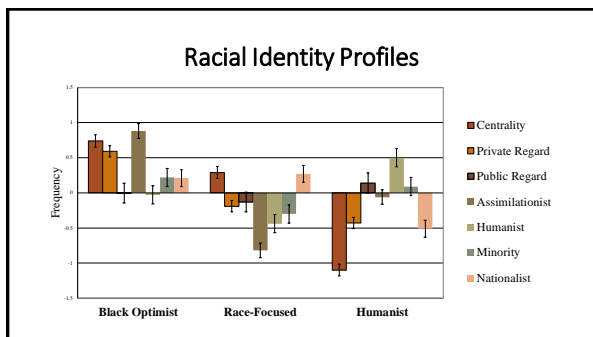
The Associations Among Racial Discrimination, Racial Identity and Obsessive-Compulsive Symptoms

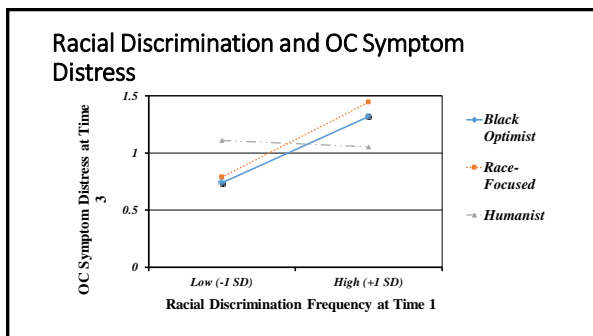
Willis and Neblett (2017)

RATIONALE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Few if any studies examining discrimination-OC link.
- Racial identity shown to moderate the association between discrimination and psychiatric symptoms (e.g., Banks and Kohn-Wood, 2007)
- What is the longitudinal association between discrimination and OC symptom distress?
- Do racial identity profiles moderate the discrimination-OC link?







DISCUSSION

- Racial discrimination (RD) associated with OC symptom distress over time.
- Racial identity patterns moderated the association between RD and subsequent OC distress.
- Protection vs. Vulnerability?
- Underlying Mechanisms (e.g., cognitive distortions and threat overestimation)

RECOMMENDATIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Recommendations and Future Directions

- Adapt Key CBT Components to Reflect Cultural Experiences and Ethos of Individuals Who Experience Racism-Related Distress
- Consider Intersectional Identities in Tailoring CBT Approaches
- Identify Key Factors That Mitigate Racism Experiences to Inform Clinical Mental Health Practice (Williams et al., 2016)

CONCLUSION

- Racism-related distress acts as a catalyst for the development of psychopathology and *should not* be treated as a cognitive distortion.
- CBT approaches can be adapted to alleviate the mental health suffering of individuals who experience racism-related distress.
- Cultural sensitivity and humility require ongoing self-reflection and self-critique to build the requisite knowledge, attitudes, and skills for effective intervention.

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