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## Lean on Me: Increasing Help-Seeking Behavior in Black College Men Through Institution Based Intervention Programming

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Running head: INCREASING HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOR IN BLACK COLLEGE MEN

Lean on Me: Increasing Help-Seeking Behavior in Black College Men Through Institution Based  
Intervention Programming

Senior Project Submitted to  
The Division of Social Studies  
Of Bard College

by  
Zien Hodge

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

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## **Abstract**

The disparity between the academic success of Black males and their White peers in the United States is robust. Research supports the disparity is not only the result of low financial status but also racial and gender barriers that affect how Black males navigate academic environments. Intervention programs to improve Black males' quality of life through mentorship and motivation enhancement have impacted the academic success of Black males greater than those that provide financial resources. Yet, these interventions do not target Black males in primarily white education settings where academic stressors are greater, racial and gender barriers more commonplace and ability to successfully cope with stress is crucial to academic success. Although research supports that the use of maladaptive coping strategies by Black males negatively impacts academic success, few intervention programs have focused on improving college stressor coping strategies. Thus, the proposed intervention utilizes the concept of metacognitive feedback, or the process of "thinking about how one thinks", to instruct black men on how to use help-seeking as an adaptive and problem focused coping strategy. The intervention supports cognitive and behavioral change by instructing black men to consider how negative attitudes, discouraging subjective norms and low perceptions of control affect coping strategy. After the semester-long course students in the intervention should report higher intentions to seek out professional counseling services. Significant results for this proposal could potentially increase Black males use of available college help services, enhance this populations overall well-being and be a primary factor contributing to greater academic success.

## **Chapter 1: What to know about Black men in the school system.**

### ***Scope of the Problem***

Black men in the United States are a unique population that experience disparities in education marked by their both race and their gender. Historically, Black men graduate from institutions of higher education at rates lower than both Black women and White students of both genders. For example, The U.S. Department of Education reported that between 1996 and 2010 White men, aged 18-24, were 52 percent more likely than Black men to obtain a Bachelor's degree from a 4-year postsecondary institution (Snyder & Dillow, 2010). Comparatively, Black women are 37 percent more likely to graduate from a 4-year institution in comparison to their male peers. Furthermore, White men between 2015-2016 were 55 percent more likely to obtain a Bachelor's degree in any field of study compared to Black males (McFarland et al., 2018). The data recorded over multiple decades fails to show an improvement in graduation and enrollment rates in Black male populations (Snyder, Brey & Dillow, 2019). On the contrary, compared to data from 2010, statistics reported in 2018 indicate an 8 percent decrease in Black men enrollment in all undergraduate academic program in comparison to the enrollment of the general population (McFarland et al., 2018; Snyder & Dillow, 2010).

While education is not the only accepted predictor of lifelong success, Black males are also seen to statistically overpower other populations in unemployment status and incarceration rates (DiPrete & Buchmann, 2006). Research indicates that these statistics are by no means unrelated and in conjunction with one another paint an increasingly dismal portrait of the life of a Black man in the United States (Koppie, 2017). Moreover, the portrayal of the Black man, as an individual who is more likely to become a prisoner over a college graduate does in fact affect how policy makers define Black men as well as shape their willingness to allocate additional funds

and resources to this population (Wald & Losen, 2003). Hence, it is all too common for Black males to retain the highly critical label of “underperforming” in educational settings.

### ***The Achievement Gap***

The majority of academic institutions in the United States contain classrooms with students that fit the statistics described above. Collectively underperformance in this population is referred to as the Black-White achievement gap. In other words, the Black-White achievement gap is the term used to collectively define the overwhelming disparity between the academic success of Black and White students (Barton & Coley, 2010). Although historically the term developed from the observed differences between math and reading standardized test scores between low-income black students and white students, presently the term describes a range of academic disparity. Thus, the term not includes low performance, lower grades, low inclusion in particular fields of study, drop-out rates, high school graduation rates, and college completion rates. Most imperatively, the disparity between Black and White students is reported to begin as early as elementary school, and also act as crucial factor in predicting the future success of Black students (Barton & Coley, 2010). For example, The National Center of Education Statistics reported that grade differences in Black and White high school students have not significantly decreased in the ten years between 2007 and 2017. Likewise, a lack of improvement in Black student populations also extends to college and university settings. However, the Black-White achievement gap as a definition that is used to support education policy the concept warrants critic.

Based on the original definition, the Black-White achievement gap identifies Black students as underperforming due to their low socio-economic status. Thus, it is often the case that education policy that uses the Black-White achievement gap to define the problem often conclude that the most viable solution is to award more significant financial resources to Black students.

This problem-solving process has proven itself to be invalid (Koppie 2017). However, despite a 15 percent increase in education expenditures reported by The National Center of Education Statistics between 2006 and 2018, there has not been a significant decrease in the Black-White achievement gap at any educational level. The failure to close the gap between Black and White students by providing financial resources alone indicates that the scope of the disparity is more complicated than insufficient financial resources. Thus, the Black-White achievement gap may not be the most beneficial and resourceful definition to defining this problem. Thus, alternative perspectives and approaches to the problem should be considered.

### *The Opportunity Gap*

The opportunity gap, defined as the inequitable distribution of both financial resources and opportunities has provided an alternative and more robust method of viewing the variances in the academic success of Black students (Barton & Coley, 2010; Koppie, 2017; Linn & Welner, 2007). Compared to the definition of the Black-White achievement gap, the addition of the word, "opportunity" supports a new approach to viewing education of the Black male.

The opportunity gap by definition extends beyond harsh statistical markers of academic success, such as standardized test scores and aims to view students in a holistic sense. Viewing student populations through the lens of unequal opportunity has been especially revealing for disparities seen in the performance of Black male students. The opportunity gap has shown that Black men are underperforming in education, not due to idleness, lack of ability, or financial reasons but because critical social and foundational support networks are lacking in their environments. Furthermore, support networks are insufficient as a result of the systematic oppression of the Black community in the United States (Koppie, 2017). For example, due to the high incarceration rates of Black men, the family networks of young Black males are often broken

and unstable due to missing father figures. Fathers play a critical role as financial supporters in families however research has also shown that the absence of a father figure has significant adverse effects on Black male student's motivation, confidence, ability to understand their identity, and academic achievement (Koppie, 2017; Walters, 2017). Unstable support frameworks and a lack of encouraging male role models in a young black man's life has shown to translate into lack of confidence and have a significant impact on achievement by negatively affecting classroom comfort and identification in classroom environments (Koppie, 2017; Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007; Walters, 2017).

Thus, by altering the definition of the problem, research has now identified more intrinsic factors affecting the success of Black male students. These new perspectives support a push to develop interventions that target non-financial barriers that hinder black males' academic success.

## **Chapter 2: Analysis of Psychological Intervention Strategies**

Academic researchers, social workers, and educational psychologists recognize that resource availability and opportunity access affect academic success and long-term life outcomes for Black men. Thus, various intervention programs have been developed to target both financial and opportunity barriers experienced by Black students. These interventions typically utilize macro, mezzo or micro level strategies to target barriers at the institution level, at the interpersonal level (i.e., family and social support networks) or the level of the individual (Koppie, 2017).

### ***Macro Level Intervention Strategies***

Macro-level intervention programs target educational policy and the school system. These intervention programs aim to increase funding in schools where Black males are not succeeding academically. However, macro-level interventions can also develop into increased mandated training on cultural competence for teachers or changes in math and literacy curriculums (Koppie,

2017). Regardless, macro-level programs do not target the lack of secure supportive and close social networks for Black male students and are thus often a product of viewing the education disparities through the Black-White achievement gap alone. Hence, academic intervention programs for Black men have become less centered on macro-level changes. Ultimately, these programs provide a resource, but may not be able to change Black male's view of education resources or provide a support network that will assist Black men while navigating academic environments. For example, daily problems with navigating educational spaces for Black male students can include, discomfort in classroom environments, feeling racially othered, and as previously mentioned, lack of confidence in their educational ability amongst other stressors (Smith et al., 2007).

### ***Mezzo and Micro Level Intervention Strategies***

In contrast, mezzo and micro level intervention programs, such as the well-known Big Brother program, that provides older mentors for younger Black students, implements initiatives aimed at improving Black males' relationship with themselves and their environments (Koppie, 2017). Micro and mezzo intervention programs seek to enhance positive relationships between students and teachers by increasing student confidence in learning ability or providing supportive structures and mentorship for students (Gafney, 2010; Turetsky & Sanderson, 2018).

Research has supported that these programs are successful success in improving academic life for Black makes. For example, Koppie (2017) analyzed six intervention studies developed to address the Black-White education disparity at the macro, mezzo and micro levels and found that micro and mezzo-level, intervention programs were more successful in producing long-term improvements in academic performance in Black men.

A critical and unifying feature of these intervention programs is the use of simple tools to provide additional aid to break barriers for Black male students. These programs are more in line with targeting the fundamental problems that cause education disparity. Furthermore, Black males have been shown to favor these strategies as they are receptive to the mentors they receive and speak favorably of many of other programs that provide motivational tools and confidence builders (Watkins, Allen, Goodwill, & Noel, 2017; Watkins, Green, Goodson, Guidry, & Stanley, 2007).

### **Chapter 3: Attitudes Towards Intervention Programs**

#### ***Use of Formal Health Services in Black Populations***

When working with Black populations a crucial problem intervention program often face is the common habit for Black individuals to withdraw from active forms of aid or professional help. Withdrawal from formal help is most profound in health care. For example, 17 percent of Whites reported using mental health services while approximately 8 percent of Blacks report using mental health services of any kind between 2008 and 2012 (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2015). Additionally, 11 percent of White men utilize mental health compared to Black men who reported using mental health services 7 percent of the time (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2015). There are also significant gender differences within the Black population. Black women are shown to seek out the help of private physicians at almost double the rate of Black men even when individual income (a factor that is likely to affecting help-seeking in Black populations), was considered. Furthermore, these differences cannot be attributed to differences in Black men and Black women's need to receive professional help services (Neighbors & Howard, 1987).

In contrast, Blacks are more likely to seek out mental health services after symptoms have significantly impaired daily life. In many cases, Blacks suffering from mental illness begin



treatment or therapy after being coerced by family members or friends (Burkett, 2017). Black populations avoidance of medical practitioners and institutions developed from multiple historical and present barriers. These barriers include; cultural mistrust, alienation, unwillingness to disclose information, counselor insensitivity and perceived racism in professional settings (Burkett, 2017; Duncan, 2003). Additionally, in research conducted by Barksdale and Molock (2009), Black men aged 18-22 years old, indicated negative perceptions of help-seeking behavior expressed in their peer groups and family norms deterred their willingness to reach out for help.

Experiencing discrimination in professional settings has been observed to decrease Blacks continued use of mental health services (Diala et al., 2000). Barksdale & Molock (2009) explored the relationship between Black college student's attitudes towards mental health services through the Molock et al. (2007) model, which theorized that perceived harmful family norms and perceived peer norms can predict Black students use of mental health services. In their 2009 follow up study, a significant main effect emerged for black individuals of both genders. This main effect indicated that higher perceived family norms related strongly to lower help-seeking intentions. Furthermore, this study identified two common patterns of stress response behavior in Black populations. When compelled to receive external aid for managing stressors in their environment, black populations, and more specifically black males, either avoid asking for help or seek out informal help. The following chapter will discuss coping strategies and the significance of an individual's use of specific coping strategies over others.

## **Chapter 4: The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping & The Theory of Planned Behavior**

Collectively research has identified patterns of withdrawal and avoidance in Black individuals when responding to stress. However, in order to understand the significance of coping

style in relation to stress greater detail on the prevailing model of the psychology of stress, coping and planned behavior is required. This chapter is an overview of the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (TMSC) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB).

### **Stressors**

Stressors are environmental stimuli that cause an imbalance in normal cognitive and bodily functioning. In order for well-being to be restored a healthy reaction to the stressor is imperative (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989).

### ***Transactional Model of Stress and Coping***

Transactional Model of Stress and Coping developed by Lazarus and Folkman in 1984 is one of the most well developed and applied models of behavioral stress response in psychology. The TMSC conceptualizes stress as a product of person-environment transactions. The model asserts that the severity of the stress is dependent on the context of the environmental stressor, an individual's ability to appropriately appraise and counteract the stressor, as well as how the individual reappraises their relationship to the stressor after the stressful event has passed.

The TMSC outlines two referential points at which an individual evaluates a present stressor. During the initial appraisal of a stressor, an individual assesses whether the environmental stressor is significantly negative or insignificant. If the stressor is negative, and a bodily response is necessary, an individual will then enter the secondary appraisal process. In the second phase of appraisal, an individual will assess which coping resources are available to manage the stressor. If cognitive and bodily resources are available, often an individual will aim to resolve the stressor using an adaptive problem-focused coping strategy. If resources are insufficient research has shown that an emotion-focused coping strategy is often used. However, these delineations are not mutually exclusive as individual, and situation differences have been shown to affect the success

of appropriately managing specific stressors (Carver et al., 1989). In other words, both problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies can be suited to manage particular stressors. It is in cases when emotion-focused coping is inappropriately used to mediate stressors within a specific environmental context that these strategies prove to be insufficient (Butler, 2018).

### **Coping**

Coping is a response that aims to regulate the stressor. The TMSC categorizes coping responses as either emotion-focused or problem-focused.

### **Emotion-focused coping**

Emotion focused coping is aimed at reducing or managing the emotional distress that is associated with (or cued by) the situation (Carver et al., 1989). Emotion-focused coping has been shown to align with situations in which individuals believe that the stressor experienced has to be endured rather than resolved (Goodwill, Watkins, 1, & Allen, 2018). Common, emotion focused coping strategies include, distraction, acceptance and positive reinterpretation.

### **Problem-focused coping**

Problem-focused coping is aimed at problem solving or performing an action that would change the stressful situation. Problem-focused coping is often used by individuals who believe that something constructive can be done about their stress (Carver et al., 1989). Problem focused coping strategies include, active coping or taking steps to manage the stress, planning, suppression of competing activities, restraint coping and seeking social support for instrumental or emotional reasons.

The TMSC outlines how an individual's assessment of stressful stimuli provoke the interpretation of psychological resources and in turn, produce a coping strategy for managing the

present environmental demand. By the TMSC alone the choice to use one coping strategy over another would be entirely dependent on the stressor and bodily resources.

However, the TMSC does not include how an individual's interpretation of their internal resources can be affected by a variety of other intrinsic and external factors. Consider this example, a first-year college student is preparing to take their first exam in an introduction to psychology course. Due to the novelty of the exam and college structure, the student may appraise the situation as highly demanding. On the day of the exam the student evaluates that they did not get enough sleep that week to properly focus on the exam. The student confides in a friend, and the friend suggests that instead of being distressed as a solution the student should cheat. Essentially, this solution would alleviate the pressure felt by the student and relieve them of many cognitive and emotional demands. Based on the TMSC cheating on the exam in order to avoid failing would be considered a problem-focused coping approach to the demanding exam.

Cheating in this situation may be more beneficial to the student's grade and would potentially alleviate future stress. However, the student decides not to cheat due to a strong commitment to their moral beliefs. The transactional model alone does not describe how an individual's appraisal of their physiological resources includes their interpretation of attitudes, subjective norms and their locus of control. Thus, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Ajzen (1991) outlines how behavior, and in this case coping behavior, is a product of stimuli appraisal, resource appraisal, and the evaluation of various belief systems.

### ***The Theory of Planned Behavior***

The Theory of Planned Behavior developed by Ajzen describes how three types of beliefs, attitudes towards a behavior, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control are factors that shape an individual's intentions to perform a behavior (Gulliver, Griffiths, Christensen, & Brewer,

2012). More specifically, the TPB states that the implementation of a behavior is dependent on motivation (intention) and their ability to control their behavior. Figure 1 shows that in the TPB behavioral intent is the principal component and is most informed by an individual's attitude and their evaluation of how favorable or unfavorable they find performing a specific behavior is based on intrinsic and social contexts. Furthermore, as shown in Figure 1 intrinsic and external beliefs are not mutually exclusive. An individual's attitudes are affected by a person's evaluation of subjective norms in their environment, or the belief that the behavior in question will be supported or rejected by their community or society. Likewise, the extent to which an individual believes they have the control or power to perform a behavior is affected by their attitude and understanding of subjective norms. In summary, subjective norms and behavioral attitudes share a bidirectional relationship that can summate in any direction to effect intended behavior. However, generally, Ajzen's model states that favorable attitudes and agreeable non-conflicting subjective norms produces a higher perception of behavioral control and results in an individual being more committed to successfully performing a behavior (Gulliver et al., 2012).

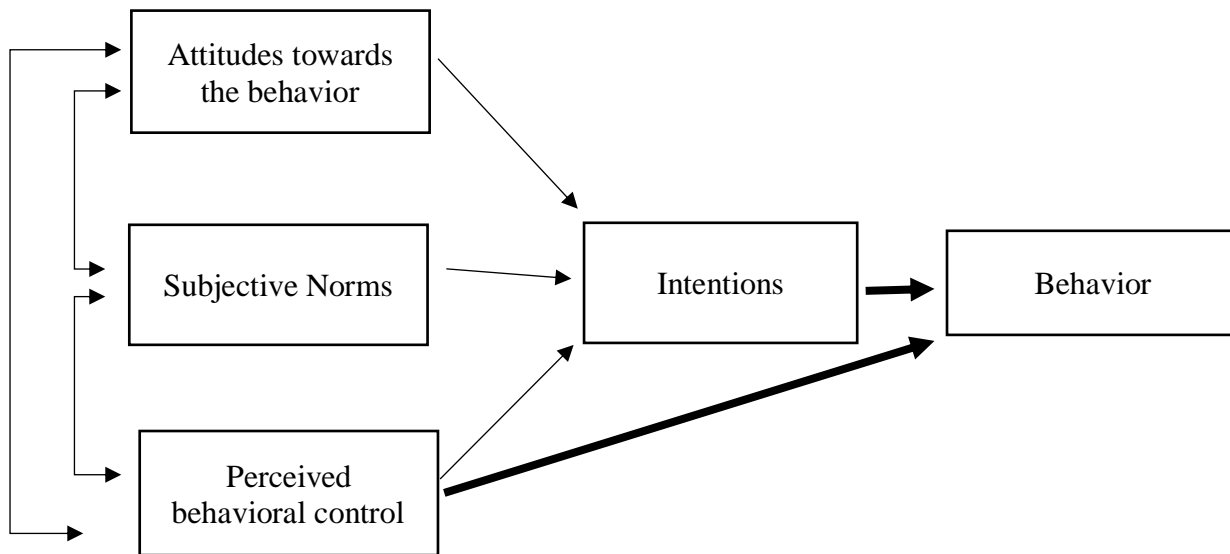


Figure 1. The Theory of Planned Behavior described how attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control summate to influence behavioral intentions. Double headed arrows indicate the bidirectional relationships between attitudes, subjective norms and behavioral control. Bolded arrows indicate that behavior is strongly dependent on intentions and the ability to control behavior.

As exemplified through the case of the unprepared student and the psychology exam, many demanding situations also require an appraisal of beliefs. Research has supported that attitudes towards help-services affect the Black community's willingness to use formal systems of aid (Cauce et al., 2002). Furthermore, family disapproval, perceived negative peer norms, perceived racism, and prior negative experiences in formal help settings have been seen to impact Black individuals' intentions to seek out formal systems of aid when in crisis (Barksdale & Molock, 2009; Burkett, 2017; Diala et al., 2000; Duncan, 2003). The beliefs identified in past research, that contribute to mistrust of formal systems of help as a product of cultural and social beliefs maps clearly onto the three variables outlined by the Theory of Planned Behavior. For example, perceived negative family and peer norms is an evaluation of subjective norms. Likewise, Black people who claim that perceived racism or an inability to control negative racial interactions is a

primary reason for their avoidance of professional settings is reflective of their evaluation of their authority and control.

Control and self-efficacy as defined by the TPB is especially important in contributing to an individual producing a specific behavior. Notably, Ajzen concluded that the relationship between behavior and evaluation of control is affected by past behaviors and second-hand information (Gulliver et al., 2012). Second-hand information received from friends, acquaintances, and internal social cues often defines which environmental contexts an individual can play an authoritative role and which contexts their control is limited.

Burkett (2017) outlines the severity of cultural mistrust in the Black community as a product of continuously minimal use of mental health service. Specifically, historical injustices enacted in the medical and professional field against the Black body begin early as slavery. For example, Dr. Walter F. Jones utilized inhuman, methods of experimentation on slaves, such as pouring hot water on their exposed spines, in order to investigate a cure for typhoid pneumonia. The most famous, but far from recent, medical malpractice against the black body was the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment. The experiment left approximately 400 Black men untreated for syphilis between 1932 and 1972 despite the discovery of penicillin as an acceptable treatment by 1945 (Burkett, 2017). Burkett (2017), interprets the effect of these historical injustices on the Black body to have created a 'collective cultural traumatic memory'. By this definition, the memory held by the entirety of the Black community about the degree of inconsistency in receiving help in professional settings, and fact often meeting harm in these settings, has produced a collective understanding that professional health settings cannot be trusted. The lack of control in professional health settings experienced by the Black community contributes to the present avoidance of these institutions in many Black individuals (Burkett, 2017; Whaley, 2001).

Thus, by understanding the beliefs outlined in Ajzen's theory through the specific cultural lens of the Black community greater insight can be gained about how beliefs factor into the stress response of Black college men. However, in this population, it is key to not only look at their cultural beliefs but also gender beliefs. This population is particularly interesting as Black college men have reported having a positive outlook on counseling and professional help yet still express a reluctance to use of help services. As a result, Black college men are recorded to have low help-seeking behavior (Diala et al., 2000; Smith et al., 2007; Weigold, Weigold, Russell, & Drakeford, 2014). Black college men often attribute their low help-seeking behavior to perceived negative norms in their college or university social environment. Thus, a more detailed analysis of the literature regarding the unique stressors and coping mechanisms expressed by Black college men is required. This literary analysis is crucial to affirming that attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control are most critical in influencing Black college men to avoid campus help services at rates higher than other race and gender college populations.

## **Chapter 5: Unique Stressors Experienced in Black Male College Students**

### ***Avoidance Coping***

As previously mentioned, research exploring patterns of stress response in Black populations has identified avoidance behavior as one of the most commonly used coping mechanisms. By definition, avoidance coping is the psychological or physical act of withdrawing oneself from the center of the problem as a means of managing a present or potential stressor (Altiere, 2009; Gibbs, 1974). Gibbs (1974) assessed the stress response patterns in 87 Black students at a primarily white institution (PWI) and identified that 47% of the sample population used withdrawal or avoidance coping as their primary strategy for coping with stress. Likewise,



Goodwill and colleagues (2018) identified a total of 10 different coping strategies used by Black male college students. Collectively the 10 strategies were categorized into three broad groups; isolated coping (i.e. patterns of relying on the self and anger/resentment/frustration), engaged coping (i.e. using social interactions and relationships, hobbies, physical activities, substance use or fighting/violence) and disengaged coping (i.e., acceptance, not dealing with emotions, cutting off emotions or hiding emotions). The study identified that Black college men utilize a combination of coping strategies in regards to these three categories. However, the majority of the Black student population used isolation and reliance on the self as a tool for managing stress. Isolation in the context of this study can be considered avoidance coping.

### ***Avoidance Coping & Negative Effects on Health***

Various studies have found that the use of avoidance coping strategies in student populations is maladaptive. Specifically, avoidance coping produces behavioral withdrawal and self-isolation. Research has shown that avoidance and isolation prove to be insufficient for managing stress on college and university campuses due to the likelihood that physical separation limits the opportunity for students to connect themselves to resources and aid on their campus (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1992). Thus, the use of avoidance coping by college students is positively correlated with increased stress (Brougham, Zail, Mendoza, & Miller, 2009). In other words, college students that use avoidance coping strategies as their primary coping mechanism are more likely to experience an exacerbation of their stress over time. Furthermore, the use of avoidance coping is also positively associated with an increased likelihood to develop depression (Gulliver et al., 2012). For example, Goodwill et al. (2018) found a significant relationship between the severity of depression in Black college men and their use of avoidance coping to manage racial discrimination on their college campus.

### ***Why Black College Men Use Avoidance Coping***

Black men in college attribute their use of avoidance or withdrawal coping to be a product of a combination of firmly held beliefs and their inability to go against popular belief systems. The beliefs that lead them to choose avoidance coping against other coping strategies include; their inability to control or exude authority in their college environments, the belief that they have no time to adopt more beneficial coping strategies and the belief that other coping strategies go against the gender and racial norms they have learned at home or from society (Neighbors & Howard, 1987; Smith et al., 2007; Watkins et al., 2007). For example, a college male interviewed in Goodwill and colleagues' (2018) study of stress and coping among black men stated, "A masculine man dealing with his mental health would deal with it himself. Would take on his burden of imbalance as if he were the only one who could handle it. That's not to say that is what I think a masculine person should do, that's just what I've observed."

What the young man expresses in this quote is his commitment to abiding by gender norms, despite his ability to reason that gender norms do not always aid him in balancing his mental health. Notably, Black men express a favorable view of programs and services that provide aid and an unfavorable view of the pressure the majority of gender norms place on their life and daily interactions. However, because of the beliefs mentioned previously, Black men do not believe particular behaviors or styles of alleviating stress is accessible for them. Instead, their responses to stress are often dependent on gender norms, as exemplified through their high use of sports and exercise to alleviate stress in comparison to female students ((Lewis, Mendenhall, Harwood, & Hunt, 2013; Powell, Adams, Cole-Lewis, Agyemang, & Upton, 2016). In a second interview conducted by Goodwill and colleagues (2018) a black male student states, "...a masculine male that had to deal with mental health problems, I would go to the weight room and relieve stress that

way. I would go to the basketball court, or I would listen to music or play games or just, you know, things that entertain me to get it off my mind. You know what I mean?" Sports and exercise as expressed by the student are highly intertwined with concepts of masculinity.

Although Black males allow themselves to respond to stress in line with gender and racial norms as the noticeable difference between Black males' belief that professional support networks are helpful, yet their lack of confidence in using the same system warrants closer examination. This examination requires an in-depth look into the specific stressors experienced by Black men in comparison to the general student population. College students as a population are identified to alternate between the use of adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies while navigating college. However, Black men express a consistent pattern of avoidance behavior, and it is this consistent use of avoidance coping that is detrimental to their future success at managing college stressors (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1992; Brougham et al., 2009).

### ***Racial and Gender Discrimination in College Settings Contributes to Stress***

Many Black men in the United States experience a combination of racial and gender discrimination. What is most significant about discrimination is that it moderates campus environments (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1998). Furthermore, these are the same environments that are responsible for facilitating and guiding academic and social growth in students. Black men who experience discrimination on their campus are expected to improve themselves in these environments. However, many situations experienced on campus contribute to additional stress in their life.

When campus climates include discrimination, Black men do not exhibit increased academic growth and social development. Instead, discrimination produces stress and anxiety in Black men (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002). Clark and colleagues (1999) identified that racial

and gender discrimination produces numerous psychological and mental health outcomes, that often include anxiety and depression. Additionally, O'Hara (2015) found a significant relationship between mood-related alcohol use in Black men and the degree to which Black men experience racial tensions on their college or university campus (O'Hara, Armeli, Scott, Covault, & Tennen, 2015). Thomas and colleagues (2015), conducted a study that explored identity, coping and aggressive identification in 128 men college students at a PWI, of which 96% of the participants identified as Black found that Black men weak identity consolidation acted as a stressor for Black men and promoted aggressive ideation and behaviors as a subsequent coping mechanism.

Thus, studies that focus on Black student populations find that more complex patterns of stress and coping emerge when interactions between race and gender are explored. Table 1, summarizes multiple studies that examine which stressors are commonly experienced by Black male students, Black female, White male, and White female students. As depicted in the table Black males experience stressors that differ from other student populations. In many studies that explore stressors experienced by general student populations, use sample populations that are majority White, ordinary college stressors include relationships, grades and balancing new responsibilities and time demands (Table 1). However, Black males have added stressors involving racial identity as well as gender norms. The table below also summarizes significant behavioral reactions to stress expressed by the race and gender populations of comparable interest. The significant differences between stressor type and reactions to stress experienced by Black males and White male and female students supports that race and gender are moderators of stressor type and are factors that impact the coping behavior.



<b>Table 1: Stressors Experienced &amp; Identified Reactions to Stress in College Students Categorized by Race and Gender</b>		
<b>Race/Gender</b>	<b>Stressor Type</b>	<b>Reactions to Stress</b>
<b>Black Men</b>	<i>Thomas, Hammond, Kohn-Wood (2015)</i> <b>Masculinity</b>	<i>Goodwill, Watkins &amp; Allen (2018)</i> Identified three coping patterns. <b>Isolated Coping Engaged Coping &amp; Disengaged Coping</b> <sup>1</sup>
	<i>Watkins et al. (2007)</i> Identified the following stressors: running businesses, <b>taking care of a nuclear family</b> and extended family members, balancing life, being student athletes, being role models to family members, women, <b>pressure to decide whether or not to stay in school or leave to pursue other forms of making money &amp; racism</b>	<i>Gibbs 1974</i> - withdrawal patterns of behavior or <b>high disengagement &amp; less frequently assimilation.</b> <sup>2</sup>
	<i>Smith, Allen, Danley 2007</i> - <b>anti-Black stereotyping, marginality &amp; microaggressions</b> <sup>3</sup>	<i>Barry et al. 2017; O'Hara et al. 2015; D'Amico et al. 2006</i> - <b>Alcohol use</b> as a product of various college stressors
	<i>Marks 2017</i> - <b>Identity conflicts on PWIs.</b>	<i>Thomas, Hammond, Kohn-Wood 2015</i> -Found the expression of aggressive ideation in cases of <b>weak identity consolidation</b> as a moderator of stress.
		<i>Walters 2017</i> - <b>Religious Coping</b>

<sup>1</sup> Examples: Isolated coping; e.g. relying on the self or internalization of anger. Engaged coping e.g. talking with social support networks, participating in hobbies or physical activities, substance use, fighting-violence. Disengaged coping e.g. accepting stressful situation, not dealing with emotions, cutting off emotions, hiding emotions

<sup>2</sup> In regards to adoption to college environments Black men showed primarily withdrawal patterns of behavior or disengagement compared to cultural assimilation or separation.

<sup>3</sup> Identified Black men as experiencing stress as a result of anti-Black stereotyping and marginality and microaggressions in academic, social, and public campus spaces.

<b>Black Female</b>	<i>Lewis et al. 2013 - Gendered racism</i> (the simultaneous experience of both gender and racism)	<i>Lewis et al. 2013 &amp; Gibbs 1974</i> - Identified three patterns of coping. <b>Resistant Coping, Collective &amp; Coping, Self Protective.</b> Additionally, highlighted the use of using religion as a form of coping. <sup>4</sup>
	<i>Chang, Watkins &amp; Bank 2004 - Stress and tension as a product of gender inequality.</i>	<i>Chang, Watkins &amp; Bank 2004</i> - Identified use of <b>maladaptive perfectionism</b> <sup>5</sup>
<b>White Men</b>	<i>Brougham et al. 2009</i> - Academic responsibilities, financial Pressures, work-home life balance, time Demands, relationships	<i>Brougham et al. 2009</i> - Use of <b>self-punishment &amp; healthy coping strategies</b> <sup>6</sup>
<b>White Female</b>	<i>Brougham et al. 2009</i> - Compared to men, women in a majorly White sample (70%) indicated greater stress for familial relations, social, finances, relationships and daily hassles.	<i>Brougham et al. 2009</i> - Greater use of emotion-focused coping strategies, self-punishment and self-help in response to stress compared to men.
	<i>Chang, Watkins &amp; Bank 2004</i> - stress and tension as a product of gender inequality.	<i>Chang, Watkins &amp; Bank 2004</i> - Identified use of adaptive perfectionism (healthy pattern of striving for perfection or high standards) with a significant relation between lower stress and positive affect.
		<i>Szabo &amp; Marian 2017</i> - Self-criticism

<sup>4</sup> Identified three patterns of coping. Resistant Coping i.e. using ‘Voice as Power’ & ‘Resisting Eurocentric Standards’; Collective Coping i.e. Leaning on Support Networks; Self Protective i.e. ‘Desensitization’ & ‘Black Superwoman (or high involvement to represent strength and resilience). Additionally, highlighted the use of using religion as a form of coping.

<sup>5</sup> Maladaptive Perfectionism is the unhealthy pattern of striving for perfection or high standards, has been shown to moderate stress and negative affect.

<sup>6</sup> Use of self-punishment to cope with family stress. Use of healthy coping strategies for financial and social stress. General use of avoidance strategies.

### *Relationship Between Gender, Race and Stress*

Research has identified that race and gender are essential factors involved in which stressors individuals are more likely to face. Critical differences in the stress experience impact how Black male students respond emotionally and strategically to various situations and circumstances. Marks and colleagues (2017) examined stressors in Black men college students and found that Black college-aged men are more likely to experience stress as a result of situations that threaten their racial identity. Black men express that due to the underrepresentation of Black men in academic spaces they often feel limited by their racial identity in college and university settings. Thus, conflict regarding racial identity for black male populations is a barrier in their academic life. Black men have an overwhelming desire to express pride in their Black identity on college and university campuses. However, expressing pride in Black culture and identity is more likely to occur when in the presence of individuals of similar race or gender and not likely to occur in mixed or White spaces (Marks, Smith, Madison, & Junior, 2017).

Unique stressors and coping responses are also dependent on the interaction between gender and race for black male populations. Harrell (2000) suggested that the reciprocal relationship between race and other stressors (i.e., gender, socio-economic status, and sexual orientation) must be acknowledged in order to comprehend total well-being and life stress experienced by particular populations. Gender and race can interact to mediate stressors and thus be more burdensome than stress derived from gender or race discrimination alone. For example, in a multivariate analysis study by Dyson and Renk (2006) ,in which 62.2% of the student participants identified as White and 10.8% of student participants identified as Black there, were no difference between male and female participants regarding stress levels, coping strategies and depressive symptomology. Dyson and Renk (2006) speculated that due to change in sex



expectations and more significant gender equity their research contrasted with research published in earlier years that found significant differences between gender and stressor appraisal and emotion-coping mechanisms for male and female college students. However, a pivotal caveat to Dyson and Renk's study is the use of a majority White student population to assess the relationship between gender, stress, and coping. Research that analyses the role of gender and race on stress and coping using non-White participants has shown that coping mechanisms between Black male and female students has not been resolved over time by greater gender equity (Lewis et al., 2013).

### ***Significance of Institution Type***

The degree to which a Black male student feels free to express their racial identity on college campuses, and whether or not racial conflicts are a significant stressor, is also dependent on academic institution type (Dzokoto, Hicks, & Miller, 2007; Marks et al., 2017; Watkins et al., 2007). Compared to Black men attending historically Black colleges and university (HBCUs), Black men attending predominantly White institutions (PWIs) are more likely to feel stress over racial or outgroup conflicts (Walters, 2017). Walters (2017) found that Black men attending PWIs identified themselves to experience stress involving racial identity conflicts more frequently because they navigate college spaces that are unlike the environments they experienced in adolescence and childhood. Furthermore, this student population feels as if their Blackness or male status draws negative attention to their personhood, or promote "hypervisibility" (Walters, 2017).

Similarly, the inability for Black males to feel secure in their racial identity may stem from microaggressions. Microaggressions are normal experiences of racism, such as subtle invalidations and are often the result of individuals expressing implicit racial biases. An example of a microaggression is a White student mistaking a Black student as the college's custodial worker or a White student drawing attention to herself locking her apartment door because a Black male

student is walking nearby and she expects him to be likely to steal (Walters, 2017). Racial conflicts are also reported to occur more frequently in the daily lives of Black men students at PWIs (Harrell, 2000; Marks et al., 2017; Watkins et al., 2007).

In contrast, Black men that attend college in settings that mirror their upbringing, family and socio-economic status (SES), as is the case with HBCUs that were initially funded to support the education of Black students, do not find racial tension to be a significant stressor while navigating college and university setting. Thus, Black men at PWIs, stressed by racial tensions, are more likely to turn to alcohol consumption as a coping strategy compared to Black men at HBCUs that face family stressors (Barry, Jackson, Watkins, Goodwill, & Hunte, 2017). As alcohol use can be detrimental to college students' ability to balance academic work life, it becomes increasingly apparent how important it is to assess environment type as a factor involved in creating specific stressors and eliciting particularly harmful coping responses in Black men students.

## **Chapter 6: Help-seeking in Black Male Student Populations**

The previous chapters discuss the degree to which Black male college students depend on avoidant coping strategies when dealing with stress. Preferentially, Black college males use avoidant coping in academic settings, particularly in response to gender and racial discrimination on the scale of both microaggressions and in more explicit contexts (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1992; Brougham et al., 2009; Walters, 2017). Avoidance coping behavior in response to racial and gender-based stressors result in physical withdrawal from college spaces and on-campus help services. Thus, stress is continuously exacerbated in this population rather than reappraised over time (Harrell, 2000; Walters, 2017; Watkins et al., 2007). Furthermore, because avoidance coping in academic contexts proves to be maladaptive Black college males are more likely to use harmful

alternative coping mechanisms, such as self-medicating via alcohol consumption or become likely to fall into an aggravated or an aggressive, depressive state (Barry et al., 2017; O'Hara et al., 2015; Thomas, Hammond, & Kohn-Wood, 2015).

However, collectively research has shown that the second most common pattern of coping identified in Black college men is reaching out to informal networks of aid, such as friends or church groups (Goodwill et al., 2018; Walters, 2017). Behaviorally, this pattern of coping falls within the category of active problem solving through the action of help-seeking. Although, Black males are less likely to utilize formal systems of aid in regards to a variety of problems ranging from mental illness to simple academic help, Black males use of informal aid is a significant find and is key to identifying intervention strategies that would be accepted and trusted by this population.

### **Help-seeking**

Help seeking behavior is the act of communicating with others to obtain assistance in terms of understanding, treatment, or general support in response to a problem. As aforementioned, seeking out help can include, reaching out for professional aid as well as connecting oneself to friends and associates for problem or emotion focused help (Barksdale & Molock, 2009; Roll, Alevan, McLaren, & Koedinger, 2011).

College and universities provide a multitude of services to assist students with issues that arise while they navigate academic spaces. Help services on college and university campuses can include deans, mental health and counseling services, gender and equality offices, tutors, career services, academic advisors, student support groups and clubs, academic mentors, the security office, campus ministry, and residence life directors. Each of these networks has the potential to address academic, social and personal problems.

However, Walters (2017) identified that not all forms of aid are accessible or resourceful for Black men. 60 % of Black males at PWIs reported that they received no support from residential assistants and 66 % of Black men reported a lack of substantial support from college counselors and therapist. In contrast, a large percentage of the same sample (61.7%) reported receiving sustainable help from roommates and friends.

A significant similarity between Black men reporting the use of friends and religious sources as resources for help is the success of micro-level intervention programs that use informal aid, such as mentorship, as strategies for improving Black male commitment and engagement with academic spaces. Micro-level interventions that provide mentorship or other forms of advice and social support target the opportunity gap by aiming to build confidence and break down intrinsic barriers that affect Black males from reaching their academic goals.

Interventions that provide informal mentors to Black students are increasingly successful at impacting academic performance in these populations (Turetsky & Sanderson, 2018). Furthermore, the use of informal aid in Black populations reflects the compelling disjunction previously identified, where Black men have positive attitudes towards help services but use help services at lower rates than other college populations. Behaviorally this conflict exhibits itself as Black men's ability to recognize more adaptive coping strategies such as help-seeking, but consistently emotion-focused withdrawal strategies in response to stressful situations

The research discussed in this chapter suggests that this disjunction is potentially due to errors that occur when black males appraise the available cognitive and spatial resources available to them for managing demanding stressors. Intervention programs, such as those that provide mentors, indirectly target Black men help-seeking behavior by providing an informal source of aid. However, few intervention programs have aimed to develop and implement strategies that

would directly improve help-seeking behavior in college men and encourage their use of formal systems of aid on their college or university campus. The literary analysis presented in the following section provides a more in-depth analysis of intervention techniques that will be used to create the framework for the proposed intervention program that improves help-seeking behavior in Black college men.

## **Chapter 7: Notable Interventions**

The goal of the proposed intervention is to improve upon the help-seeking attitudes and intentions expressed by Black college males. Unlike research that aims to improve help-seeking behavior in entire student body populations, which historically report low help-seeking behavior, the proposed intervention outlined in this work aims to change help-seeking behavior in Black college men alone (Brougham et al., 2009; Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010). Thus, the proposed intervention aims to view help-seeking behavior in Black men through the unique cultural lens and well-recorded cultural norms and attitudes that contribute to Black men choice to avoid or help services (Barksdale & Molock, 2009; Burkett, 2017; Cauce et al., 2002; Diala et al., 2000; Duncan, 2003; Powell et al., 2016; Walters, 2017).

Past interventions that provide mentors for young Black men and Black men on college campuses have managed to improve help-seeking behavior indirectly, by providing a source of aid that is more easily accessible to them. Few interventions aim to improve help-seeking behavior as the target variable. However, two noteworthy, interventions, the 'YBMen Project' and 'The Help Tutor' that aim to improve coping and stress management are reviewed in the next section.

### ***YBMen Project***

The Young Black Men Masculinities and Mental Health Project (YBMen), is a 5-week that aims to provide Black college men attending liberal arts colleges in the Midwest with a social support network that can dispell gender norms that act as barriers to seeking out help for mental health issues (Watkins et al., 2017). The YBMen Project has been shown to reduce depressive symptomology in Black men and enhance the number of supportive social structures on four college campuses to date. The participants in this study have responded positively to YBMen's social media (Facebook) based support platform, alongside their educational and thought-provoking prompts, culturally relevant content, immediate benefits, accessibility in times of crisis and the useful personal relationships formed when using the platform (Watkins et al., 2017, 2007).

However, Black men have also reported feeling disconnected from YBMen's interventions strategies based on the use of unfamiliar and formal language as opposed to familiar colloquial language and lack of in-person interactions as the support networks are entirely online. Nevertheless, YBMen's approach does specifically incorporate the use of black males unique cultural lens, and this allows them to address unique gender and racial stressors Black men face in college. YBMen concludes that within their approach targeting masculinity and mental health stigma is key to improving behavioral changes and promoting positive attitude changes in their target population. The results of the YBMen project in conjunction, with previous literature, support that a highly effective intervention strategy for promoting behavioral change is the use of informal settings as a central framework for establishing favorable interactions and encouragement with Black males.

### ***Metacognitive Approach***

The YBMen Project frames its intervention around the theory of online social support, social determinants of health and the role of gender and culture in implementing health interventions. Although, the study does not highlight a specific method for providing useful feedback and advice to the Black male student participants The Help Tutor used in Roll and colleagues study to improve students appropriate use of help-seeking in regards to mathematical problem solving indicates how systematic feedback can alter behavior in student populations. The Help Tutor provides evidence that giving powerful insight into an individual's thought processes and decision making can lead to the increased use of adaptive problem-solving behaviors.

### ***The Help Tutor***

The Help Tutor uses metacognitive feedback, which is the act of providing contextual information that encourages individuals to evaluate their cognitive processes used for problem solving and conduct performance. Essentially, metacognitive is the act of “thinking about thinking” and feedback is an external or internal practice that asks one to reflect on cognitive thought processes in order to gain greater awareness of potential cognitive errors (Roll et al., 2011).

Roll and colleagues (2011) investigated how encouraging student participants to evaluate the degree to which they use hints during a geometry tutoring system could improve students appropriate use of help-seeking behavior. Specifically, the study sought to determine whether real-time metacognitive feedback on students use of instrumental math hints in a tutoring program impacted students from hint misuse in either the form of hint avoidance, underuse of meaningful hints or the overuse of hints.

The Help Tutor developed allowed for metacognitive hints to generate and present to students during their work session. The hints generated are derived from the programs real-time assessment of students learning a style their normal strategy of answering math problems. In the

third phase of the study supported that moment-by-moment feedback systems driven by a help-seeking model could be used to encourage students to use of appropriate (neither overuse of underuse of hints) behavior in a tutoring system. The study did not find significant improvement in students' completion of open-ended tasks (or cases in which the answer could be variable) as a result of the student's greater understanding of their cognitive processes. However, metacognitive feedback acted to improve help-seeking behavior in student participants in specific learning contexts.

Metacognitive feedback interventions are primarily used to enhance student success in solving complicated math or scientific problems. Therefore, the programs use computer algorithms to determine student's help-seeking errors in real time and output an appropriate solution for nudging the student to enhance or decrease help-seeking behavior. However, the true aim of the metacognitive model is not to teach students how to computationally solve math problems, but to focus their attention on the method at which they learn from correct and incorrect problem-solving processes. Thus, metacognitive feedback is a tool for learning, self-assessment and general self-regulation (Lee, Lim, & Grabowski, 2010; Roll et al., 2011). Self-regulation in regards to understanding the process in which one learns has been shown to enhance fairness assessment, promote planning, monitoring and evaluation when learning to develop appropriate teamwork strategies (Luca & McMahon, 2004). Furthermore, while students may perceive themselves to use metacognitive or self-assessment to a high degree in social problem-solving situations, research has shown that students are likely not to be highly engaged in self-assessment processes to the extent needed to impact future behavior, hence interventions that provide students with metacognitive feedback expose students to a new level of reflection and learning (Luca & McMahon, 2004).



Metacognitive feedback is potentially a useful tool that can enhance black male students' awareness of their conflicting attitudes and ability to reach out to systems of help. Metacognitive feedback could potentially encourage Black male students to evaluate inappropriate choices to avoid reaching out for help when needed. Furthermore, metacognitive feedback would allow black men to evaluate what particular barriers cause them to avoid reaching out for help. As previously discussed, the most common barriers to help-seeking behavior are cultural mistrust, perceived racism, and negative family and peer norms.

For example, the lack of confidence in help-seeking that could be circumvented by metacognitive feedback is emphasized through an excerpt taken from a student interviewed by Gibbs (1974) regarding their tactics of navigating PWIs,

*“...Jim ( an 18-year old freshman) said that he felt different and inferior to both White and Black students and that he felt that no one here really cared about him. He often thinks about transferring to a Black college near his hometown, but feels he would be letting his family down if he doesn't try to make it through Stanford. Lately he has thought a lot about dying and sometimes feels that is the only way out of his unhappy situation.”*

While Jim evaluated a more beneficial form of problem-solving for his academic circumstances would be for him to move home rather than attend Stanford, Jim elected not to change his situation but attempt to change his emotions regarding the situation due to perceived disapproval from his family members. Metacognitive feedback could assist Jim in identifying that the stress of letting his family down could be reduced by potentially speaking with his family about other options or reaching out to campus resources that could help guide a conversation between him and his parents. These options are available to Jim and are marginally greater solutions than his efforts to emotionally cope with academic stress.

## **Chapter 8: Rationale**

As result of identifying a significant deficit between Black males use of help-seeking as a coping strategy in comparison to the general college population the proposed intervention specifically targeting help-seeking as a new and useful coping mechanism that requires improvement in Black male college students (Barry et al., 2017; Butler, 2018; Gibbs, 1974; Goodwill et al., 2018; O'Hara et al., 2015). Moreover, this intervention aims to decrease the use of avoidance behavior or low intentions to seek out professional help as research indicates avoidance behavior enhances rather than relieve their stress for Black college males. Thus, the proposed intervention aims to creates a comfortable group setting between black college male peers and an instructor in which effective help-seeking behavior void of racial and gender barriers will be learned and practiced through metacognitive feedback.

Previous intervention programs have successfully used informal group frameworks to act as support networks to encourage Black male participation, engagement, and comfort with exploring unfamiliar topics, such as mental health and self-advocacy (Barksdale & Molock, 2009; Butler, 2018; D'Amico et al., 2006; Gibbs, 1974; Watkins et al., 2007). The observation that Black males seek out help through channels other than formal therapy has inspired intervention programs to use informal frameworks for targeting Black male achievement. Thus, this is a reasonable approach for any intervention to use as formal or professional spaces are often seen as untrustworthy by the Black community and will potentially hinder Black males willingness to participate in interventions that utilize formal therapy, counselors or easily identifiable therapeutic methods (Koppie, 2017; Walters, 2017).

Past research and intervention programs also support that the consideration of the unique cultural and gender lens is crucial for understanding the severity or presence of particular stressors in an individual's life. Thus, in order to provide appropriate feedback for how to use help-seeking

behaviors, an intervention must understand the specific racial and gendered stressors Black men face while navigating college and university spaces (Burkett, 2017; Butler, 2018; Turetsky & Sanderson, 2018; Watkins et al., 2017). For example, The YBMen Project attempts to restructure Black men attitudes towards mental health services by dispelling the stereotype that men should not seek out help for mental illness (Watkins et al., 2017). However, few intervention programs have sought to assess how metacognitive feedback and awareness of problem-solving responses to racial and gender stress impacts Black college men. Specifically, there has not been past interventions that attempt to draw Black males attention to low help-seeking behavior contributes to additional stress by supporting racial and gender stereotypes that act as barriers to their use of more adaptive coping strategies.

Despite the frequent use of metacognitive feedback to change student's behavior in regards to computational problem solving the concept of becoming more aware of one's method of thinking are a useful tool for learning and changing behavior. As supported by literature on the TMSC and TPB, this intervention proposes that metacognitive feedback will be useful for encouraging Black men to make fewer errors in appraising their available resources for coping. More specifically, Black male college students will be encouraged to assess all available resources on their college campus and evaluate what intrinsic cultural and gender beliefs may hold them back from seeking out these resources.

Black men are especially prone to making cognitive errors in recognizing their ability to use adaptive coping strategies such as help-seeking due to internalized negative beliefs towards help-seeking as gained from subjective norms, negative attitudes and perceived lack of control. The Theory of Planned Behavior describes how negative attitudes and belief can influence an individual's behavior and result in the behavioral patterns exhibited by Black college men (Ajzen,

1991; Burkett, 2017). Although Black men support favorable attitudes towards counseling and formal systems of help, Black men also acknowledge their avoidance of these services based on negative peer and family norms and perceived lack of behavioral control in many stressful situations.

By providing Black men an alternative method of evaluating their environmental stressors and greater insight into how to use help-seeking behavior as a useful coping strategy for navigating college an university spaces the proposed intervention hopes to tackle the opportunity gap present between Black and White students. The opportunity gap considers the unequal distribution of resources between Black and White student groups. Although resources may appear to be equally accessible to an entire college population as discussed use of resources can be contingent on an individual's intentions to seek professional help as guided by their evaluation of fundamental belief systems. Thus, the opportunity gap is seen to remain present despite increased financial resources given to supporting Black men. Again, the argument presented here is that resources are available, but Black college males lack of familiarity with help resources and enacting help-seeking coping behavior limits their use of these services.

College campuses in particular host a wide range of help services for both social and academic spaces. For example, Bard College supports students through the dean's office, counseling services, peer counseling groups, and mandatory academic advisors. Nevertheless, despite the number of resources Black men are seen to use formal help services infrequently, compared to their White peers, Black women, and Hispanic populations who in recent years have been seen to exceed Black men in college attendance (Snyder & Dillow, 2010). Thus, similar to interventions that target self-motivation to enhance Black men's performance in academic spaces

the proposed intervention aims to increase this populations confidence in using help-seeking behavior.

### **Research Question**

The results of this proposed intervention should answer the following inquiry: Can metacognitive feedback aimed at encouraging Black college males to recontextualize disadvantageous cultural and gender derived attitudes, subjective norms and control beliefs increase help-seeking intentions?

### **Hypothesis**

Students that undergo the classroom-based intervention in which students will be instructed on how to successfully implement reflective cognitive processes that disable barriers to help-seeking behavior will score higher on the Intension to Seek Counseling Index in comparison to scores reported prior to student participants completion of the class and a to the scores reported by the pure control group.

## **Chapter 9: Methods**

### **Research Design**

#### ***Participants Selection***

50 Black male students will be recruited from Bard College. By definition, Bard College is a PWI, where more than 50% of the 1,900 undergraduate student population is White (“Bard Class Profile”, n.d.; Butler, 2018). As previously discussed, race-based stressors are more common for Black male students and PWIs (Barker & Avery, 2012; Barry et al., 2017). Thus, Black males may experience additional and more severe stressors at Bard College in comparison to Black male students at an HBCU. Bard College reported that between 2017 and 2018, 54% of White/non-

Hispanic students comprise its undergraduate student population. In contrast, only African American/Black students comprise 8% of the student population (“Bard Class Profile”, n.d.).

Bard College’s status as a PWI will allow for the intervention to address the potential racial and gender obstacles that affect help-seeking behavior in the target population. Thus, participants for the proposed intervention will be selected from Bard College's freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior classes. Turetsky & Sanderson (2018) conclude that college students at younger ages (i.e., freshman or sophomore year) are generally more receptive to interventions aimed at correcting student’s mental health attitudes. However, participants will be selected from the entire Black men undergraduate student population due to the low population size. To exclude upperclassmen (i.e., juniors and seniors) would be unreasonable considering the small percentage of Black students at Bard College. The total reported number of Black students on Bard College is approximately 152, and this includes both male and female students (“Bard Class Profile”, n.d.). Fortunately, Duncan (2003) in a study that targeted Black male college student’s help-seeking behavior found that older aged Black males of low socioeconomic status were more receptive to intervention methods compared to other aged student populations. The results found by Duncan (2003) also suggested that older students may have more experience confronting racialized and gender stressors on their college or university campus. Considerable experience in meeting environmental stressors is ideal for this proposed intervention as it in part aims to utilize personal experiences to discuss stress management and help-seeking behavior. Furthermore, past interventions structured as mentorship programs highlight the importance for Black males to engage with peers of various ages and background (Koppie, 2017).

Black men diagnosed with anxiety and stress disorders are excluded from participating in the intervention program. The proposed intervention discusses stress and stress management, but

acts to be a preemptive strategy for managing stress using help-seeking behavior. The intervention itself cannot substitute as treatment for anxiety or stress disorders. Excluding students with diagnosed mental health disorders follows the methods used by the YBMen Project (Watkins et al., 2017). Exclusionary criteria will be clearly stated in the course description demographics and students interested in the course will be asked to confirm that they have not been previously diagnosed with depression or anxiety in the demographics questionnaire they complete before participating in the course.

In summary, the final selection of students for the intervention will be from Bard College's undergraduate student population. Student participants will have to identify as Black and male to participant and be between the ages of 18-25. Student participants will be accepted into the intervention regardless of class year, but will be excluded from participating if previously diagnosed with an anxiety or stress disorder.

### ***Recruitment***

Participation in the course will be voluntary as research by Duncan (2003) supports that Black men's attitudes towards help services are more positive when counseling or help is voluntary. Students will be incentivized to join the course through financial compensation. The secondary incentive to join the course would be that it would potentially improve stress management and coping behavior.

The course will be listed in the course selection guide before the start of a new academic semester. Advertisement for the course will also be supported by Bard's Office of Access & Equity (BEOP), which aims to provide students of historically underprivileged backgrounds increased support and resources in order to enhance the rate of success of these individuals in Bard College's rigorous academic environment. BEOP is connected with the majority of colored

students on Bard's campus, as the office supports and manages various programs that directly impact students who enter Bard through the Higher Educational Opportunity Program (HEOP) Scholarship, Bard Opportunity Program (BOP) Scholarship, Posse Scholars (from Atlanta) and Early College Opportunity (ECO) Scholarship ("About BEOP", n.d.). Note, each of these financial programs is not defined as minority-based scholarships but aim to provide financial aid to students of who are recognized to need additional resources (Bard College Office of Access & Equity Programs). Additionally, BEOP will advertise the course to students that participate in their voluntary Bringing Theory to Practice, a program that aims to enhance the confidence of Black students pursuing an education in science and academic programs. Bard College's Student Health Services will be asked to advertise the class to the student body and through their weekly counseling groups that teach adaptive coping skills. Lastly, Bard College's various Black and colored student organizations such as Brothers at Bard and the Black Student Organization will be asked to advertise the class to the students that participate in their activities.

### *Data Collection & Class Educators*

Following the format outlined by Watkins and colleagues (2017), classes will be led by individuals who experienced in community interventions and mental health programs aimed at improving the lives of colored youth and adult students. Alternatively, counseling professionals, who have earned a master's degree in counseling, psychology or social work will be permitted to lead the interventions. If needed, current graduate students in Bard College's MAT program and or those currently pursuing bachelor's degrees in community outreach and minority education will be considered for the role. The primary skills required for intervention facilitators include the ability to lead meaningful discussion, ability to manage and support Black men student participants through critical and a high ability to explore challenging topics and enact practical solutions.



Facilitators will be asked to instruct and lead classes as well as collect reported ISCI data when student participants take the survey on the first and last day of class. ISCI surveys will be completed during the first-class session for student participants and on the same day the recruited control group will be asked to take the ISCI as a group in the class environment as well, but at a different time. Post assessment on the 15<sup>th</sup> class day will occur in the classroom environment for both student participants and the control group.

## **Outcome Measures**

### ***Intentions to Seek Counseling Inventory***

The Theory of Planned Behavior supports that a person's intention to perform an act or behavior predict their successful completion of said act or behavior. Thus, the primary outcome measure will be the Intentions to Seek Counseling Inventory (ISCI). The ISCI is used to assess college populations intentions to seek professional level counseling. The scale is comprised of 17-items and utilizes a 4-point Likert-scale. Each item is an issue college student most commonly state to be their reason for attending counseling or an issue that is commonly discussed by college students in counseling (Cash, Begley, McCown, & Weise, 1975). Categorically each of the items listed can be understood to be about academic difficulties, relationship or social problems, identity conflicts, or depression, and substance abuse.

Completing this scale requires participants to rate how likely they would seek out counseling for each of the 17-items or issues from a scale of 1 or 'very unlikely' to 4 or 'very likely.' Scores in the ISCI are obtained by summing the rating for each item. Output scores range from 17-68. Scores that are within the range of 43-68 indicate a participant's higher likelihood of seeking out professional counseling services for the listed stressors. Lower scores on the scale, or

a range of 17-42, indicate that the individual is not likely to reach out to professional help services for stressful situations (Cash et al., 1975; Hobson, 2008; Mosley, 2014).

The ISCI includes three subscales for further evaluation of which type of stressors an individual is more likely to seek out help to resolve. The subscales are Interpersonal Problems (10 items), Academic Problems (4 items) and Drug/Alcohol Problems (Cash et al., 1975). Items in each subscale of the ISCI has been shown to have sufficient internal consistency or 3reliability measuring 0.90 for Interpersonal Problems, 0.71 for Academic Problems and 0.86 for Drug/Alcohol Problems (Hobson, 2008). Scores can be totaled to ascertain a total score of an individual's willingness to seek out professional counseling services and the ISCI's general internal consistency measures range from 0.84 to 0.95 (Mosley, 2014). Furthermore, research has shown that the items used in the ISCI apply to non-White college-aged populations and thus has been used to asses help-seeking attitudes as well as help-seeking behaviors as impacted by racial identity and perceived racism in Black populations (Barksdale & Molock, 2009; Mosley, 2014).

Regardless of the ISCI categorization of each stressor category what is useful about this measure is its applicability to Black students. Due to the relative broadness of each of the 17 indexes participants are asked to rate, the ISCI retains the ability for participants to interpret each stressor as it is specific to them. Notable examples in the index include, 'self-understanding,' 'difficulty with parents,' 'relationship differences' and 'depression.' Broad categories allow for Black male students to address everyday racial and gender stressors such as masculinity, taking care of a nuclear family, the pressure to decide to stay in school, identity conflicts at a PWI and balancing life and various roles as (See Table 1). Furthermore, the ISCI has been successfully used to assess the intentions to seek the counseling of Black college populations assessed by Mosely (2014) and Barksdale & Molock (2009).

### ***Additional Measures***

ISCI scores will allow for the evaluation of enhance help seeking behavior and is thus a suitable measure for investigating the question of interest. However, it is important to note here that ICSI cannot be used in this study to address the any differences in the experimental groups attitudes towards help-seeking, the degree negative subjective norms influence their help-seeking behavior and their level of self-efficacy or perceived ability effectively use help-seeking behavior in the future. Exploration into improvement in these three beliefs would be of significant interest but is not the overall focus of this study.

Since the intervention does aim to promote positive attitudes towards help seeking, discourage the use of stereotypical norms, and promote self-efficacy additional measures could be used in future studies to assess the interventions effectiveness in each of these areas. The outcome measures that could be utilized in future studies are briefly described below.

Attitudes towards stress are most commonly assessed via the *Attitudes Towards Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale (ATSPPHS)* developed by Fischer & Turner in 1970 (Altiere, 2009). A shortened version of the scale developed in 1995 uses a 10-item inventory in which statements are can be rated on a 4-point Likert scale (where 1 = disagree and 4 = agree). Statements, such as, “The idea of talking about problems with a psychologist strikes me as a poor way to get rid of emotional conflicts.” Is indicative of an individual’s personal opinions regarding professional help (see Appendix D). Higher total scores on the scale indicate an individual’s favorable attitude towards professional help. The scale has been shown to have good internal consistency of .84 and retest reliability .87 (Altiere, 2009).

Subjective norms or social stigma could be through the Social Stigma for Receiving Psychological Help Scale (SSRPH) which was developed by Komiya, Good and Sherrod in 2000. The SSRPH uses a 4-point Likert scale to assess (originally including a scale from 0-3 but later

used a 1-4 scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 4 = strongly agree) five questions (see Appendix E). An example of a question in the SSRPH is, "Seeing a psychologist for emotional or interpersonal problems carries social stigma." Higher reported scores on the scale indicate an individual's higher perception of social stigma regarding help seeking. The SSRPH is reported to have high internal consistency with a coefficient alpha of .72 (Komiya, Good, & Sherrod, 2000). Furthermore, scores on the SSRPH correlated negatively with the scores on the Attitudes Towards Seeking Professional Psychological Help (ATSPPH), which indicated that less perceived social stigma contributes to more positive attitudes towards using professional help (Komiya et al., 2000).

The *Self Stigma to Seeking Help Scale* (SSOSH) constructed by Vogel, Wade & Haake in 2006 uses a 10-item scale Likert scale (where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly) to assess whether or not an individual felt that going to a professional therapist or counselor reduced their self-regard and satisfaction with themselves. For example, the first item of the SSOSH is "I would feel inadequate if I went to a therapist for psychological help." (see Appendix F). The measure was shown to have good internal consistence (.91) and like the SSRPH also showed a high degree of a reliability in predicting an individual's attitude towards professional help (Vogel, Wade, & Haake, 2006).

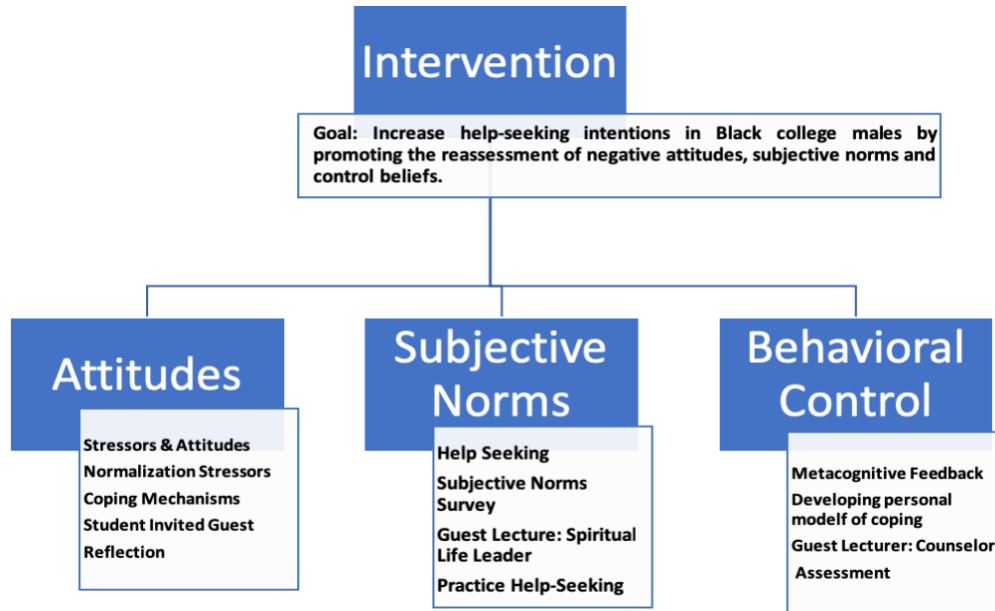
Lastly, Altieri (2009) who explored the utilization of health services through the Theory of Reasoned Action, suggested using The *New General Self-Efficacy Scale* (NGSE) for the evaluation of perceived behavioral control. The NGSE was developed by Chen and colleagues in 2001 and evaluates an individual's perception of their capability to perform a task successfully. In this measure participants are asked to rate on a 5-point Likert scale how strongly they agree with statements such as, "I believe I can succeed at most any endeavor to which I set my mind." The NGSE reported an internal consistency of .85 (Altieri, 2009).

The four additional measures outlines could potentially support the effectiveness of each course module. It would be useful to note here that research indicates that Black men do report favorable attitudes towards help seeking behavior. As discussion of why Black men use avoidance behavior research has indicated that Black men have a favorable view of professional help (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1992; Brougham et al., 2009). Thus, attitudes are not likely to significantly improve through the intervention. It can be speculated that the disjunction between attitude and behavior instead occurs primarily due to subjective norms and low perceptions of control. However, this is speculative and might not be true for every Black male college population, thus the proposed intervention does also aim to encourage positive attitudes about professional help seeking to the same degree as the subjective norm and behavioral control module. Furthermore, to avoid complication in intervention strategies the proposed intervention aims to look at the improvement of help-seeking intentions as a whole rather than improvement within the beliefs that encourage help-seeking intentions.

## **Chapter 10: Intervention & Class Modules**

The proposed intervention is structured to mirror a semester-long course with meetings once a week. In total there will be 15 classes in the semester. Each class will be approximately 3 hours to fulfill Bard College's credit hour goals. All classes will be led by hired leaders working in the field of education or with prior experience in facilitating workshops and community engagement specific to racial and gender education. The intervention itself will use metacognitive feedback to encourage Black males to reflect upon the attitudes, subjective norms and control beliefs that may deter them from using help-seeking behavior in response to critical stressors.

Three modules, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control will be the framework for targeting help-seeking behavior in the intervention as shown in Figure 2.



*Figure 2.* The proposed intervention is structured to improve help-seeking behavior in Black men by focusing class topics on three types of beliefs; attitudes, subjective norms and control beliefs.

### ***Class Modules & Procedures***

#### **Module 1 (weeks 1 - 5): Attitudes**

In this module, students will be asked to engage with how attitudes shape their understanding of stress and coping. Students will be asked to identify sources of stress and follow prompts that ask them to identify their own attitude towards stress and explore sources that contribute to their attitudes. Although the literature discussed suggests that Black men hold positive attitudes towards help-seeking and adaptive coping mechanisms, and point to harmful subjective norms and perceived control as primary factors that hinder their use of help-seeking, this intervention will still cover attitudes as suggested by the framework of the TPB. Moreover,

research has shown that altering attitude can effectively change and improve help-seeking intentions (Gulliver et al., 2012). Thus, this module uses strategies that aim to normalize attitudes about stress, copings and will also be used to introduce Black men to the three psychological concepts used in this intervention: TMSC, TPD, and metacognitive feedback.

### ***Class 1/week 1 - Stressors & Normalization of Stress***

At the beginning of class, students will be asked to individually take a moment to identify points of stress in their life and college career. In this exercise, they will also be asked to estimate how often they spend thinking, reflecting or attempting to avoid thinking about each identified stressor. Then as a group, the instructor will ask students to volunteer to share their stressors and the estimated amount of time they spend thinking about particular stressors. Students estimated time ruminating on a particular stressor are insightful, particularly for stressors connected to race. Harrell (2000) discussed the common habit for people of color to ruminate and replay racialized stressors in an attempt to gain further clarity of a stressful situation or entertain alternative explanations for why the racialized stressor occurred. However, the process of internally reviewing racial stressors can act to further burden an individual's cognitive resources and energy. The instructor will then discuss how the cognitive process of over-reflecting or the process spent attempting to avoid the thought of a racial or gender stressor can overburden cognitive processes. This lecture will introduce stress as defined by the TMSC and discuss stress burden through the model.

### ***Class 2/week 2 - Stressor and Attitudes Continued***

Harrell (2000) identified in a literature review multiple therapeutic measures that are effective in assisting people of color management of racialized stressors. One such therapeutic technique is for individuals to examine their beliefs alongside family and social influences that

affect personal attitudes towards stress. Thus, in this class section student participants will be asked to identify what terms they associate with stress and outline their attitudes towards stress. Student participants will be asked to examine what attitudes or beliefs dictate how they respond to stress and create a map of what concepts most closely related to how they view stress and also outline each person in their life that has contributed to their understanding of stress.

They will also be asked to complete an in-class writing reflection about where they have learned, adopted or built their attitudes towards stress by evaluating a stressful situation they experienced in the past. Students will be asked to swap writing reflections with a partner and respond to the writing and in particular the attitudes and development of attitudes described in their peers writing. In this exercise, student participants will be encouraged to share whether or not they identify with their peers' attitudes towards stressors and will have time to discuss similarities and differences in their attitudes towards stress management.

### ***Class 3/week 3 - Coping Mechanism***

At the start of class, students will be asked to work in pairs to identify a recent or memorable stressful event experienced in college and discuss their immediate and long-term reactions to the stress. The student pair will then be asked to choose one of the stressful events and act out a scenario in regards to the stress and student's stress response for the class. The rest of the class will be asked to respond to the event for the entire class and ask what attitudes may have contributed to the stress response exhibited in the scenario. The instructor can act out the following example to demonstrate how the prompt.

*The instructor acts out a scenario where he is a graduate student at a PWI outside of his hometown and home state. When he returns home for Christmas during his first break he finds that none of his cousins and friends from high school want to associate with him. Instead of congratulating him about his success in college his friends joke about him being a traitor, "punk" and "too good for the folks back home." The instructor can then act out how his response to this stress, which is shutting down and isolating himself from his friends. However, in doing so the*



*instructor expresses that he begins to grow a resentment for his academic career and home environment making him uncomfortable and tense in both settings.*

Students as a group will also be asked to give their personal opinions about their own or other students reaction to a stressful event. The following questions will guide the discussion: Did they find the immediate reaction beneficial or did they find it harmful? Furthermore, why did a student choose to react to a stressor in one way as opposed to reacting a different way? Is the method they respond to a stressor the same in each stressful situation or does their response vary?

The instructor will then lecture on coping mechanisms in regards to the TMSC and describe the difference between maladaptive and adaptive stressors and list out various coping mechanisms. The instructor will also introduce the concept of attitudes as factors that impact coping style as outlined in the TPB. The instructor will then explain how coping mechanism such as withdrawal/avoidance, do not hold specific negative or positive connotations but are adaptive or maladaptive based on situational context.

Students will then be asked to regroup into their original pairs, explain in one sentence what attitude fueled their initial reaction to the stressful situation they first presented then choose an alternative more adaptive reaction to the stressful scenario. The instructor could follow up with the previous example given.

*"In my initial reaction to my friends calling me fake I did not express my feelings to them or anyone else and as a response began to grow a disdain for environments that I would prefer to be comfortable in. I chose to shut-down and avoid the situation because I thought that confiding in my friends about my difficulty with balancing both academic and school life would reaffirm their belief that I was a "softie." Instead, I could have confided in my mother for support, who understands how important going to college is for me and has no issue with telling my friends and cousins to be more understanding of the situation and proud of my accomplishments. They would undoubtedly listen to her because no one in my family crosses my mom."*

Note, Black men in the YBMen project responded favorably to prompts and explanations presented in informal and colloquial language, thus instructors will not be asked to use formal

speech in many of the instructional contexts and will be encouraged to use speech that is respectful and closer to how they would normally speak (Watkins et al., 2017).

#### ***Class 4/week 4 - Student Invited Guest***

Students will invite an on-campus guest whom they believe exerts a positive or negative influence their decision making. Examples of appropriate guests would include; peers, academic advisors, professors, deans, student leaders, controversial class mates. All student participants and student guests will be asked to divide themselves into random groups and share how they believe their attitudes towards particular stressors and coping styles affect their well-being. Furthermore, the groups will be asked to share how they believe other people should view stress and respond to stress appropriately. The groups will also be prompted to identify where they believe they have learned individual attitudes about stress, whether they have learned beliefs about stressors from family members, academic institutions, peers or others. This exercise aims to strengthen relationships between student participants and their on-campus guest and normalize the idea that all individuals deal with stress and respond to stress based on attitudes.

#### ***Class 5/week 5 - Reflection***

During the last class in Module 1: Attitudes, students will be asked to reflect upon the discussions and prompts they introduced to in weeks 1-4. Reflection is open-ended; however, they will be prompted to think about what they learned as well as specific lectures or discussions they found difficult to understand or disagreed with and why. Student participants will be given time in class. Students will then be asked to share key points in their learning, understanding or stressors and coping or points at which they felt they did not resonate or agree with how the intervention taught coping and stress. This discussion will occur in a group format.

### **Module 2 (week 5 - 10): Subjective Norms**

In this module, students will reflect upon everyday college stressors and coping mechanisms in regards to cultural and gender norms. In this module, help-seeking will be introduced and discussed as a potentially unutilized but useful tool for coping despite being unfavorable due to subjective norms. Student participants will be asked to speculate where they believe these norms were first established and analyze whether or not abiding by cultural and gender norms are beneficial to their well-being while in college. Additionally, students will again be instructed to use their campus environment and peers as resources for understanding the relationship between their environment and the cognitive processes they use to manage stressful situations.

### ***Class 6/week 6 - Help-Seeking & Improving Help Seeking Literacy***

In the previous module, students were asked to identify the cognitive choices used in deciding how to cope with environmental stressors. Furthermore, student participants were introduced to models that outline how beliefs affect coping style. Likewise, Class 6 will aim to improve student's literacy regarding help-seeking in regards to gender and racial norms found in both their immediate environment and the culture they were raised within.

Class 6 will open with a lecture on the definition of help-seeking. Help-seeking will be defined as an adaptive strategy in a college context, and the lecture student participants will learn about low reported use of help-seeking behavior in black male college populations. Then the instructor will also discuss research that has shown that Black men and the Black community commonly underuse help-seeking as a coping strategy for problems. Based upon their own experience or knowledge of their community, student participants will be asked to speculate on why low help-seeking behavior prevails in Black communities. This question will lead to a

discussion about the historical mistrust of professional help-services as described in the introduction of this work.

The instructor will then ask student participants to identify in their own words specific racial and gender barriers that may presently affect how they manage stress. The instructor will then lecture on the relevance of subjective gender and cultural norms that act as barriers to asking for help-seeking.

### ***Class 7/week 7 - Collecting an Idea of Subjective Norms in the Immediate Environment***

The goal of Class 7 is to help student reevaluate the degree to which subjective masculine and racial norms are present in their environment. Expectantly, by enhancing their understanding of the positive subjective norms in their environment student participants will be able to more easily reevaluate their conception help-seeking behavior. Ultimately, this exercise supports that black males may have a misinterpretation of the degree of negative subjective norms in their immediate environment and will find that negative subjective norms are not frequent in their social environments.

In Class 7, students will be asked to participate in collecting data on the subjective norms that are in their immediate environment or from their community at home. Students will first be asked to identify the gender and racial norms they believe impact how they cope with stress. The class will then devise questions to ask community members about race and gender - precisely these questions will mirror what student participants believe what perceptions are held about them in the real world. For example, the class may identify that they do not ask for help because their family members believe that men should not ask for help in particular situations. An example question in the questionnaire could ask students to agree or disagree on a Likert-scale with the following

statement, "I believe that Black men should not seek help in stressful situations because as a man they should be able to cope alone."

Thus, community members will be asked to agree or disagree with statements regarding how Black men should cope and what help resources are accessible to them. By performing this exercise, student participant can gain a better understanding of what subjective norms are held for them and if their perception of gender and racial norms are accurate. This exercise also aims to promote conversation about subjective norms between community members and student participants. It is expected that community members will not express the same degree of importance on race and masculine norms in comparison to student participants. The results of this exercise will be used to express to students that subjective norms should be deemed as irrelevant in their choice to seek out help in stressful situations.

### ***Class 8/week 8 - Discuss Results of Subjective Norms Survey***

In this class section, students will be asked to discuss the data that they have collected about subjective norms held by people in their college community. Specifically, students will be asked about the interview process, as collecting data about subjective norms will be an exercise that is not passive but made to initiate conversation between students and their community members. With regards to the interview process, students will be asked about their feelings towards the process, and the depth of attention interviewees gave them when being asked about their normative beliefs regarding Black men. In order to help facilitate conversation in class, as it may not be the case that all interviews were a positive experience for student participants, Bard College's Dean of Inclusive Excellence will be asked to join as a guest facilitator. The Dean of Inclusive Excellence will also be asked to explain their role at Bard College as well as their current work and endeavors with improving the language we use to speak and think about identity. Again, in this class, students

will be asked to challenge how much significance they should place on subjective norms using the data and information collected from their community.

***Class 9/week 9 - Practice Preemptive Help Seeking***

The goal of Class 9 is to practice help-seeking behavior by reaching out to a trusted friend or community member that would be willing to support them through future stressful situations. Thus, help-seeking behavior will be practiced outside of the context of an immediate stress, but will aim to encourage use help-seeking behavior by establishing a relationship between the student participant and an individual they will make reaching out for help easier in the future.

Students will be asked to spend class-time devising a method that would allow them to ask for assistance in times of need effectively. Students will be asked to identify an individual in their immediate environment to reach out to and explain their current placement in the class and ask the individual to act as a person they can reach out to if assistance with stress is needed. Students can choose to contact this individual using any method, such as writing and mailing a letter, sending an email, speaking to the individual in person or contacting them through social media. Student participants can contact a peer, someone in the classroom, a club leader, an athletic coach, professor, or counselor on campus. Students will be asked to put considerable thought into how they reach out to their perspective individual and include information on what area (i.e., social or academic) they believe they may need the most help with during their college career. Students will be asked to present confirmation to the instructor that the individual they reached out to responded to their request. As a group, the class will discuss their initial reactions to reaching out to a local community member or peer. Additionally, students will discuss the responses they received.

***Class 10/week 10 - Guest Lecturer; Spiritual Life Organizer***

Butler (2018) interviewed 300 students and used the data collected to identify that Black students were often able to normalize their attitudes and dispel subjective norms against their stress when viewing their stressors from a religious perspective. Moreover, Black populations have general familiarity and comfort with using religion as a tool to promote active emotion and problem-focused coping (Taylor, Ellison, Chatters, Levin, & Lincoln, 2000). Thus, in Class 10, a spiritual leader available on Bard College's campus will be asked to come to class and discuss stressors and coping from a spiritual perspective. Bard College has a Chaplaincy Department and a Spiritual Life Center, and either resource could potentially be useful tools for Black male students. A leader who desires to be an available resource for students participating in the intervention. Taylor and colleagues (2000) concluded in their research that the clergy often functions as gatekeepers to mental health services in the Black community. Moreover, Walter (2017) suggests that in many cases religion offers Black communities the ability to feel in control in various stressful situations.

### **Module 3 (week 10 - 15): Behavioral Control**

In the final module, student participants will complete exercises aimed at merging the content learned and practiced in the past nine-weeks through metacognitive feedback exercises. Metacognitive feedback on student participants' coping behaviors will be given either by the facilitator and also assisted by input provided by other student participants.

Specifically, the metacognitive feedback provided will serve to improve Black male students' self-efficacy and understanding of their ability to perform more adaptive cognitive processes through the knowledge and practice that they have gained over the entire course. Self-efficacy will be improved through students' real-time use of adaptive problem-solving strategies as well as encouragement at any point they can readjust their method of thinking in order to guide themselves to using active help-seeking behavior. Thus, student participants will form a

framework for how to successfully avoiding the specific hostile attitudes and unhelpful subjective norms that in the past has led them to use maladaptive coping strategies. In conclusion, this module will highlight Black male participants ability to control and manage stressful situations that arise while they navigate their academic career.

### ***Class 11/week 11 - Metacognitive Feedback***

The first class in this module will serve to provide students a general understanding of metacognition and metacognitive feedback. At this point in the course, student participants have practiced metacognition and evaluation of their own thought process in regards to their personal attitudes and the external subjective norms that impact the behaviors they plan to cope with stressful situations. Thus, students will be told that thinking and evaluating thought has already been a concept that they have practices, this concept is metacognition. The instructor of the course will now go further in depth about how metacognition alone is useful in altering thinking patterns that produce behaviors that do not produce favorable results, but with metacognitive feedback, or the use of an external tool or person to help examine and identify unfavorable thought processes can produce more robust learning and behavioral change (Roll et al., 2011). Thus, metacognitive feedback will be explained as the tool that can be used to support the successful implementation of help-seeking behavior.

### ***Class 12/week 12 - Developing Personal Models of Coping***

Class 12 aims to help students create visual models for how to cope with stress using the tools and practices that they have learned in previous classes. Each model will be constructed based on a personal and potentially reoccurring stressor in their life and will serve as a representation for how they can potentially mediate the stressor. Additionally, students will receive feedback on their models from their facilitator and peers. Thus students will practice solving their own stressors



through help-seeking and also gain practice in solving other environmental stressors through evaluation of their peers coping models.

In this class student, participants will be asked to spend time creating a diagram to depict how they resolve stressful events. Student participants will be asked to create these diagrams based on a specific stressful event, such as an instance in which they were not able to complete a class assignment on time. Student participants will be asked to think about the cognitive steps and questions they would typically use to approach the problem and use these steps to construct the diagram. Figure 3 is an example of a diagram that could be constructed based off of one's standard approach to managing stress regarding a late assignment. In this diagram, students will also be asked to identify the beliefs that led them to respond with a particular coping mechanism. Students will then construct a second diagram in which they use their present awareness about attitudes, subjective norms and control barriers to adding how they can reevaluate their thought processes to lead themselves from a maladaptive coping strategy and to active help-seeking behavior.

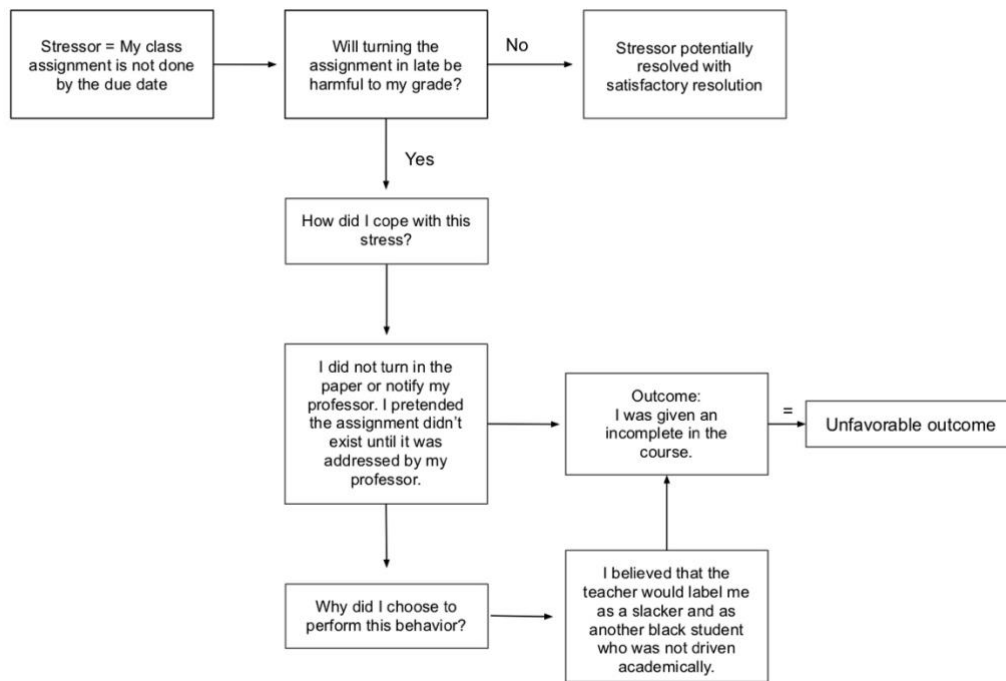


Figure 3. Example of a diagram that can be devised to evaluate how stressful situations can be resolved through help-seeking behavior and appropriate devaluation of beliefs that promote the use of maladaptive coping.

### *Class 13/week 13 - Developing Personal Models of Coping Cont.*

In class 13, student participants will be asked to identify points of confusion or difficulty they experienced when developing their cognitive thought process diagrams. Student participants will then trade diagrams with a partner. Partners will then evaluate the diagram for its usefulness in removing the barriers (attitudes, subjective norms or feeling the situation is beyond their control) that produced unfavorable outcomes or failed to assist with adequate coping. If the diagram is useful, the student participant will add an alternative solution that would allow for the same favorable behavioral outcome to be reached. Student participants will construct this alternative solution by using their understanding of help-resources on their college campus. If the student

evaluates their peer's constructed diagram to hold potential barriers regarding attitudes, beliefs still, and control then they will address this by adding onto the diagram and outlining how their peer could still reach a favorable outcome by taking specific steps in their cognitive process reach a favorable coping strategy. Partners will then regroup and discuss diagrams. The class will regroup, and the instructor will address any further points of confusion and work to resolve them as a class.

***Class 14/week 14 - Guest Lecturer; Health Service Counselor or Administrator***

In order to provide student participants with another convenient resource on their campus, a health services counselor will be asked to facilitate a class. In this class, the counselor will be asked to lead a group counseling or workshop about coping mechanisms. This class section is an effort to familiarize student participants with an active counselor on campus as well as familiarize students with counseling options at their college, such as group therapy or workshops held at health services. Group counseling format will be introduced to student participants in this class as research has indicated that group counseling with like-minded peers is preferred by black college males (Koppie, 2017; Walters, 2017). Potentially, group counseling can serve to provide comfort for Black male students who avoid counseling services based on their lack of familiarity with help services or discomfort with disclosing private information in strict formal counseling sessions. This class will act to dispel misconceptions about health services.

***Class 15/week 15 - Assessment***

In the last section of class students will complete a final written reflection. Additionally, student participants will complete a second ISCI. Students will also be asked to provide written feedback about the course, each module, discussion topics and the instructor.

## **Chapter 11: Results**

The following section outlines the predicted ISCI scores for Black male student participants who successfully complete the intervention program and Black male student participants who did not participate in the program.

### **Hypothesis Restated**

I hypothesize that Black male students who participate in the intervention program will report ISCI scores that significantly higher than the scores they reported prior to their involvement in the intervention. Additionally, Black males who participate in the intervention will report higher ISCI scores compared to Black males within the same college population that did not participate in the intervention program (See Figure 4). As previously discussed, the intervention aims to increase ISCI scores as higher ISCI scores indicates a greater likelihood that an individual will seek out professional counseling for potential issues during their academic career. Prior to the implementation of the intervention program the experimental and control groups are expected to report low ISCI scores. This is due to observed low help-seeking behavior in Black male student populations in institutions. Predictive scores on the ISCI pre and post-intervention for the intervention and control groups are summarized in Figure 4.

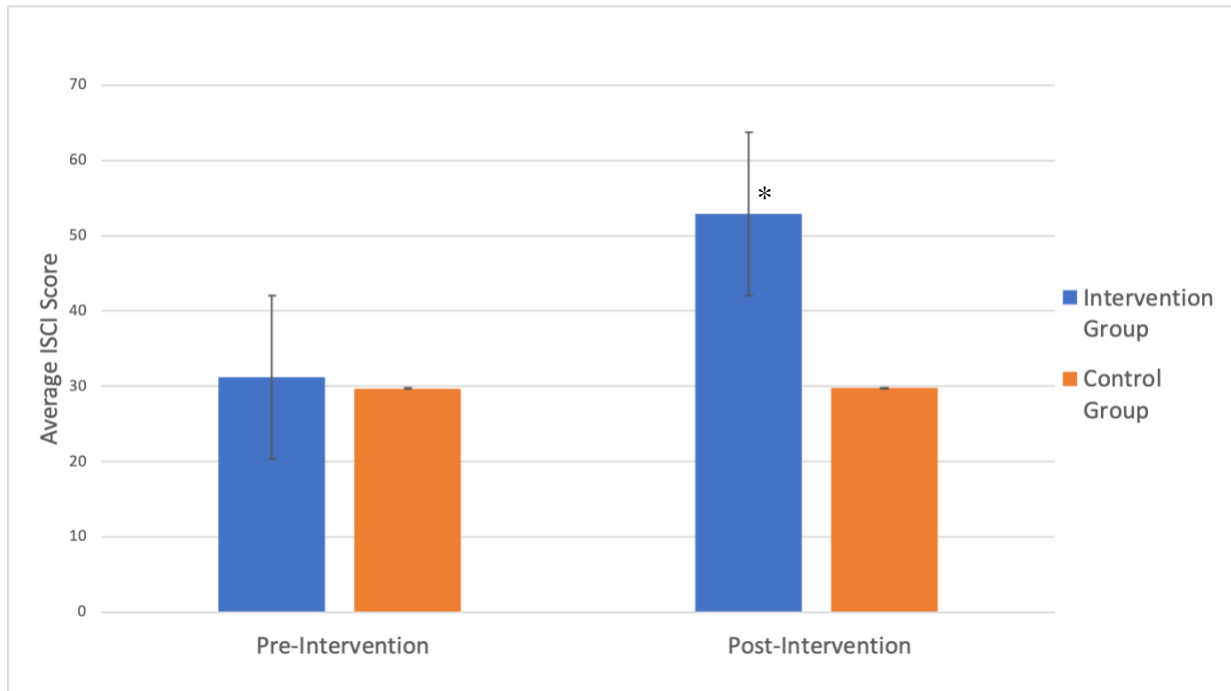


Figure 4. Average reported pre and post-assessment scores on the Intentions to Seek Counseling Inventory for the intervention (n=25) and control group (n=25). \* Represents a significant increase in ISCI scores ( $p < .01$ ). Standard Error is represented.

To test the hypothesis, a two-way ANOVA of 2 (Group: Intervention or Control) x 2 (Time: Pre-assessment or Post-assessment) with repeated measures on time will be conducted. Prior to the intervention it is expected that the intervention and control group will not significantly differ in reported ISCI score, no significant difference will be reported in the two-way ANOVA analysis. After the implementation of the intervention I predict that there will be two main effects. First, reported scores within the intervention group will significantly increase between pre and post assessment scores ( $p < 0.1$ ). Secondly, in the post-assessment of both groups the intervention group will report significantly higher ISCI scores in comparison to the control group ( $p < 0.1$ ). As an added, measure, an ANOVA will be conducted to examine any potentially significant ISCI score increase or decrease in the control group after the intervention is completed at the end of the

semester. This study predicts that there will not be a significant change in reported ISCI scores in the control group between the beginning and end of the semester. As shown in Figure 4, the reported ISCI scores for the control group are expected to remain in the range between 17-42.

## **Chapter 12: Discussion**

The proposed intervention will increase scores on the ISCI in the intervention group, but scores will remain unchanged for the control group. An increase in ISCI score after the implementation of the intervention indicates that student participants have improved in their intentions to reach out to professional help services for assistance in managing stressful situation. The TPB states that intentions to perform a behavior and perceived behavioral control are the two factors that are most closely associated with an individual's ability to complete an anticipated behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Thus, by measuring reported intentions in this study, we are able to predict that student participants will also be able to perform help-seeking behavior more successfully that prior to the completion of the intervention. Moreover, these results would indicate that using the TPB and an emphasis on attitudes, subjective norms and control beliefs as a framework for the intervention is a successful strategy for improving help-seeking intentions in black college male populations.

Predicted results indicate that during the semester long course in which students learn to effectively dispel negative attitudes towards help-seeking behavior, reinterpret the value of subjective masculine and race norms and practice exhibited greater control in their cognitive thought and behavior students will improve their ability to use help-seeking as an adaptive problem-solving tool. The primary factor contributing to the success of the program is the use of an engaged group-setting in which student participants practice giving and receiving feedback on

how to think about stressors and coping. The control group will not receive this this level of practice in reflecting on stressors and additionally will not have received education on stress and coping and gained greater insight into mechanisms that affect their coping behavior. Thus, the control group will not report significant higher ISCI scores between the pre and post assessment time blocks.

If total scores are not increased in the experimental group after the completion of the intervention, investigation of any potential score differences in the three subscales (interpersonal, academic and drug/alcohol use) may be of interest. Although, the present study did not aim to target specific stressor subscales in the ISCI nor propose a hypothesis for differences in scores between the subscales it can be expected that the intervention would improve intentions to reach out to professional aid for interpersonal and academic stressors. This is due to class sections within both the ‘Attitudes’ and ‘Subjective Norm’ Modules that assist students in learning about stress in relation to their academic and social pressures. In contrast, alcohol and substance abuse is not specifically targeted in the intervention and will only be discussed in the class setting if student participants identify alcohol and substance abuse as a reoccurring stressor. Research indicates that it is likely for black male students to experience substance abuse related stressors at PWIs as this is a common response to environments that often contain racial tensions, however, discussion of these stressors is still highly dependent on the student participant group (Barry et al., 2017; D’Amico et al., 2006).

The intervention aims to maintain a degree of freedom for student participants by not structuring the class topics around specific stressors and allowing students to use their own desired language to define their unique stressors. Issues for Black men can fall within the categories of interpersonal, academic and drug/alcohol use, but have the potential to be confined if the

intervention were to use these strict categories as a strict definition of stressor types. Essentially, Black males could express stressors that do not accurately fit within the language of the categories used in the ISCI. For example, the ISCI asks individuals to report intentions to seek professional help regarding ‘inferior feelings’ which is included within the subscale as an interpersonal problem. A black male student could relate inferior feelings to stress they experience in academic settings or stress associated they experience on campus in regards to their minority of low-SES status at a PWI. Thus, the specific categorization of stressors in the ISCI is not of particular importance in regards to this study. Based on proposed intervention strategies compiled by Harrell (2000) interventions that aim to improve the well-being of Black individuals can benefit more from practices that allow for Black individuals to explore their own personal understanding of the environmental influences that affect problematic coping styles. Thus, interventions should aim to validate these processes before working with the individual to explore improved methods of managing race related stressors.

### *Limitations*

#### *Origins of the ISCI*

Although, the ISCI has been used to explore an individual’s intentions to seek counseling, the original implication of the inventory was to assess how confident an individual was that a counselor is an effective solution to their problem (Altiere, 2009). Furthermore, the original purpose of ISCI as a tool developed by Cash and colleagues (1975) was to investigate how confident an individual was in a counselor’s effectiveness based on the counselor’s physical attractiveness. Over time, the use of the ISCI has changed to explore intentionality. Arguably, the use of the ISCI to test behavioral intentions is not inappropriate as the items in the inventory do not relate sistinctively to counselor attractiveness. Researchers who use the measure to explore



intentions have changed the prompt to ask participants to rate their “likelihood” of seeking counseling for a particular problem. The inventory does not ask participants to rate how “confident” they are that a professional counselor would effectively assist them with a problem. However, there still lies the question of whether or not there are more suitable measures for assessing intentions to seek counseling and if the inventory is missing any common problems faced by college students today and black male student populations in particular. Alternative to the ISCI

Altieri (2009) suggests that a more valid measure for exploring intentions to seek therapy is the index created by Deane and Todd in 1995. In Deane and Todd’s devised measure, they ask more detailed questions that participants can respond to using a 7-point Likert scale (where 1 - not at all and 7 = most likely). An example of a question in Deane and Todd’s measure is, “If you did or do have a personal or psychological problem, how likely is it that you would seek professional psychological help from a psychologist or counselor?” However, this measure is not frequently used in the literature

### ***Inventory Limitations of the ISCI***

Although, the 17 inventories in the ISCI appears to have a clear summation of common college problems as devised by (Cash et al., 1975) there are no studies that reinvestigated how relevant the items are to stressors in current student populations. Moreover, there are relevant stressors Black men face in college that are missing from the inventory entirely. Most apparent is the absence of an item that assesses how likely an individual would be in seeking out counseling for problems regarding financial problems. This would be especially critical for Black men as research has shown that financial issues are a primary concern. Black men face in college (Table 1). Financial issues can be heavily related to 'academic' issues, but the connection may be unclear.

Moreover, it would assume that financial issues cause social tensions when it could to a higher degree impact how often a Black men student can eat, take public transportation, return home during vacation time and spend time doing meaningful activities in their pastime. The inventory fails to address SES as a defining stressor that can have a substantial impact on a college student's life. Another potential item missing from the inventory is masculinity or perceived social norms about masculinity as a stressor. Gender stressors can be included in the items 4, 12 and 16 of the ISCI, or 'concerns about sexuality,' 'inferiority feeling' and 'self-understanding.' However, this phrasing may not be direct enough for student participants. As subjective norms regarding masculinity is a topic that is well integrated into the intervention an item that assesses gender would be an essential addition in any future studies.

### ***Formal vs. Informal Help***

The ISCI assess help-seeking in regards to professional help in the context of therapy or counseling. Black men' willingness and ability to utilize professional help-seeking services is especially crucial on college campuses where formal help services are most abundant. However, the proposed intervention does not only aim to increase Black male participants comfort with professional help services but also broaden their range of what resources by also promoting the active use of informal help settings. In this way, the intervention also aims to familiarize and support students use of informal services such as peers, church leaders, and less formal group counseling. Research has shown that Black men groups use informal connections such as mentors and friends to a high degree when they are faced with stressors that they cannot cope with alone (Goodwill et al., 2018; Walters, 2017). Thus, the ISCI should also measure whether or not Black males have increased intentions to reach out for help in all settings as a result of the intervention.

Undoubtedly, professional help services are of great interest to this study as there is an underuse of these services in Black male populations. However, the study does not aim to take the use of informal help services away from Black men. Essentially, the use of informal help services can be just as beneficial to active problem solving depending on the situation and context.

### ***Age group & ISCI Improvement in the Control Group***

Potentially, navigating college life and becoming a more integral part of their campus community could improve Black males view of help-seeking as a more valuable and accessible tool to problem-solving. Furthermore, as time progresses students generally become more familiar with help services and spaces on their college campus.

Thus, based on added experiences Black men in the control group could potentially improve ISCI scores without having undergone the intervention. Moreover, older Black men may have reported an increased understanding of how to properly navigate their colleges to help resources and manage their everyday stressors and thus have higher ISCI scores at the start of the intervention. Research observed that older Black college men of low were more likely to have positive attitudes towards help-seeking behavior (Duncan, 2003). It was also speculated that older, low SES Black college men do not have as high of a degree of mistrust towards professional help as their younger, high SES peers. This would be an interesting exploration in the case that improvement in total ISCI scores is observed in the control group. This outcome would have to be considered a possibility, especially in the case where other campus initiatives to enhance Black men student attendance to counseling services may occur in the same semester as the study takes place.

### ***Generalization***

The results of this proposed study would not be able to be generalized to Black males outside of college. Although, some stressors may overlap between Black men outside of college and those within college, the proposed intervention specifically targets stressors Black men have reported to most commonly face while in college. Moreover, Black males in college have resources that are not as accessible to Black males outside of college and especially those of low SES. Unlike, Black males outside of college, College and university students are required to have personal insurance or insurance provided by the academic institution in order to attend. Bard, in particular, follows this rule. Thus, the proposed intervention cannot assume Black men outside of college have the same stressors and the same accessibility to numerous help services in their immediate environment and community.

### ***The Halo Effect***

The halo effect, or the tendency for study participants to answer surveys in a manner that would support socially desirable answers (Mosley, 2014). Since survey data is the main quantitative measure in the study, there is a chance for the halo effect to impact the results. If Black male students initially respond to the ISCI based upon what they believe would be most socially desirable for them to report, the initial ISCI scores may be too high to show a significant difference in the experimental group post-intervention. The structure of the intervention as a class and transparency about seeking to improve student participants well-being on campus through teaching effective help-seeking strategies will potentially reduce student participants desire to produce desired responses rather than their intentions to seek counseling.

## *Conclusion*

Black men navigate their academic career through a unique lens. Specifically, black men view particular coping styles as more appropriate for them to use over others based on learned gender and racial beliefs. However, a crucial problem this population faces is that cultural and racial beliefs promote the use of maladaptive coping strategies, such as avoidance behavior. Maladaptive coping enhances stress experienced by Black men and can be harmful to their college career. Many past interventions do not view academic life of Black men experience to be complex in this manner. Instead, gaps in academic success between Black and White populations have been thought to result from a deficit in financial resources alone. However, even with additional financial resources Black men still, exhibit low use of help-seeking behavior and high stress in academic environments. This observation requires considerable effort to initiate more personalized methods for improving the well-being of Black men during college and university careers. A more holistic view of struggles faced by Black male student populations is well defined by the Opportunity Gap, which outlines how Black men fail to succeed in college not merely due to lack of resources and financial gains, but also from an inability to effectively use the resources provided to them. In other words, Black men are at a deficient in their motivation, self-reliance, comfort, and ability to envision themselves reaching a better future through the efforts they expend in their academic career.

As supported by the work presented here, the ability to ask for help or enact particular behaviors that better assist with managing stress is a privilege. Furthermore, this privilege is not awarded to everyone, and Black men, in particular, present themselves as underprivileged because cultural and social barriers strongly affect their behavior. men' success and thus this proposed intervention aims to support this perspective fully.

Few interventions before the proposed program outlined here have sought to offer Black men assistance in behavioral change and market help-seeking behavior as a tool to improve academic success. Furthermore, few interventions have aimed to promote behavioral change through metacognitive feedback learning in a group setting. Therefore, the proposed intervention makes new strides in supporting the academic success of Black men in college through behavioral change..

Significant improvement in the help-seeking intentions expressed by Black men would indicate their capability in meeting favorable problem-solving outcomes in the future. Research into the effectiveness of the intervention program can include a longitudinal study that explores how the robustness of improvements on the ISCI I and whether or not Black men who participated in the intervention fair better in terms of well-being and academic success. Thus, the study outlined here is just the beginning of the potential benefits simple, yet powerful, behavioral changes can have on the success of Black men in college. With studies that look at the Black men in a holistic sense, we can work towards permanently closing the Black-White Achievement Gap.

## Appendixes

### Appendix A: Consent Form

#### Informed Consent

#### Lean on Me: Increasing Help-Seeking Behavior in Black College Men

The objective of this form is to inform participants about this study's goals and procedures. We aim to provide complete transparency and welcome your questions. With your participation, this research aims to provide greater insight into how to construct effective intervention strategies for enhancing help-seeking behavior in Black men during crucial academic years.

**Study:** The present study is formatted as a semester long course with classes meeting once a week. Each class is structured around three modules, which target racial and gender barriers that potentially act to deter successful use of help-seeking behavior in Black men. Each class will aim to tackle help-seeking barriers through interactive course work, lectures and group discussion. Thus, this research will rely heavily on student/participant engagement and willingness to explore one's cognitive and behavioral patterns in regards to stress and stress management. Please keep in mind that the strategies and exercises used in the study solely aim to improve your future use of adaptive coping strategies and potentially assist you in better navigating stressors you experience in college. Additionally, you will be financially compensated for the completion of this course.

**Participation:** You have been accepted into this study and course because you are a Black man attending Bard College and this study is interested in exploring how to improve your quality of life and comfortability on college campuses. Participation in this study and the course is strictly voluntary. Active and engaged participation is required and greatly appreciated even in cases where topics that arise from group discussion or student input may be challenging. The class will be led by a trained facilitator to support meaningful and challenging conversation if they arise. However, you may discontinue your participation at any point during the semester if you no longer wish to participate in the study for any reason. If you decide to withdraw from the course during the semester you will not receive compensation and any personal information you provided will be immediately destroyed and exempt from further analysis.

There are no posited risks involved in this study. While we do require you to complete a pre and post-assessment survey, you may choose to answer personal questions in class to the extent you are willing to share. Furthermore, while this course does aim to improve your use of adaptive coping behavior by no means is this course a replacement for professional counseling services and should not be considered such. Thus, individuals with diagnosed anxiety or depressive disorders will not be able to participate in this course.

**Confidentiality:** To maintain confidentiality all self-report surveys and participant/student writing assignments and facilitator notes will be kept in a locked file drawer. All participants will receive personal identification numbers that will be used to distinguish self-report measures and maintain student anonymity during analysis of the self-report surveys.

The data collected will be analyzed for a Senior Project and data will be available to the public via print publication and online storage in the Stevenson Library and Bard College. If you would like to access the results of this experiment after completion, please contact Zien Hodge (zh3260@bard.edu) or my project advisor, Frank Scalzo (scalzo@bard.edu). In addition, if you have any questions after reading this form, please inquire now. You are also free to contact us at any point in the future if you have further questions about the study.

Please print and sign your name to indicate that you have completely read this form and will continue your participation in the study.

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Print Name

---

Sign Name

---

Date

Thank you for your time!

Zien C. Hodge

Questions and concerns can be addressed by contacting:

Frank Scalzo  
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Bard College  
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[scalzo@bard.edu](mailto:scalzo@bard.edu)

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Undergraduate Student  
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504-275-8871



## Appendix B: Demographics Questionnaire

### Demographics Questionnaire

Participant Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Race / Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_

Sexuality:  Heterosexual  Bisexual  Gay  Questioning  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual family household income:

- less than \$25,000
- between \$25,000-\$40,000
- between \$40,000-\$60,000
- between \$60,000-\$80,000  between \$80,000-\$100,000  more than \$100,000

Undergraduate Classification in College:

- First Year  Second Year  Third Year  Fourth Year  Fifth Year
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a first-generation college student?  Yes  No

Have you been diagnosed to have anxiety or a depressive disorder by a psychiatrist?  Yes  No

Have you ever received counseling services or other psychological services before? (This may include: psychotherapy, counseling, receiving medication for a mental or emotional problem, family therapy, in and outpatient psychological services, and any other services provided by a licensed mental health worker)?

- Yes, I have and it was helpful
- Yes, I have, but it was not helpful
- No, I have never attended professional psychological counseling

If you attended counseling, how did you hear about it? (check all that apply):

- I was referred by my school, health care provider, job, etc.
- Self-referral
- Friends
- Boyfriend/girlfriend/relationship partner counseling
- Advertisements for (web, TV, radio, magazine, etc.)
- Co-worker
- Family members
- Other – please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever considered receiving professional counseling services at your college counseling center?

- Yes, currently
- In the past, but not now
- No, I have never considered professional counseling services at my college counseling center
- No, I did not realize my college/university had a college counseling center
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### *Intentions to Seek Counseling Inventory*

**Below is a list of issues people commonly bring to counseling. How likely would you be to seek counseling if you were experiencing these problems? Please circle the corresponding answer.**

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very likely
1. Weight control	1	2	3	4
2. Excessive alcohol use	1	2	3	4
3. Relationship differences	1	2	3	4
4. Concerns about sexuality	1	2	3	4
5. Depression	1	2	3	4
6. Conflict with parents	1	2	3	4
7. Speech anxiety	1	2	3	4
8. Difficulties dating	1	2	3	4
9. Choosing a major	1	2	3	4
10. Difficulty in sleeping	1	2	3	4
11. Drug problems	1	2	3	4
12. Inferiority feelings	1	2	3	4
13. Test anxiety	1	2	3	4
14. Difficulty with friends	1	2	3	4
15. Academic work procrastination	1	2	3	4
16. Self-understanding	1	2	3	4
17. Loneliness	1	2	3	4

## Appendix D

### *Attitudes toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale*

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements below:

	Disagree	Partly Disagree	Partly Agree	Agree
1. If I believed I was having a mental breakdown, my first inclination would be to get professional attention.	1	2	3	4
2. The idea of talking about problems with a psychologist strikes me as a poor way to get rid of emotional conflicts.	1	2	3	4
3. If I were experiencing a serious emotional crisis at this point in my life. I would be confident that I could find relief in psychotherapy.	1	2	3	4
4. There is something admirable in the attitude of a person who is willing to cope with his or her conflicts and fears <i>without</i> resorting to professional help.	1	2	3	4
5. I would want to get psychological help if I were worried or upset for a long period of time.	1	2	3	4
6. I might want to have psychological counseling in the future.	1	2	3	4
7. A person with an emotional problem is not likely to solve it alone; he or she <i>is</i> likely to solve it with professional help.	1	2	3	4
8. Considering the time and expense involved in psychotherapy, it would have doubtful value for a person like me.	1	2	3	4
9. A person should work out his or her own problems; getting psychological counseling would be a last resort.	1	2	3	4
10. Personal and emotional troubles, like many things, tend to work out by themselves.	1	2	3	4

## Appendix E

### *Social Stigma for Receiving Psychological Help Scale*

Please answer the following from (1) Strongly Disagree to (4) Strongly Agree

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Seeing a psychologist for emotional or interpersonal problems carries social stigma.	1	2	3	4
2. It is a sign of personal weakness or inadequacy to see a psychologist for emotional or interpersonal problems.	1	2	3	4
3. People will see a person in a less favorable way if they come to know that he/she has seen a psychologist.	1	2	3	4
4. It is advisable for a person to hide from people that he/she has seen a psychologist.	1	2	3	4
5. People tend to like less those who are receiving professional psychological help.	1	2	3	4

## Appendix F

### *Self Stigma of Seeking Psychological Help Scale*

**People at times find that they face problems for which they consider seeking help. This can bring up reactions about what seeking help would mean. Please use the 5-point scale to rate the degree to which each item describes how you might react in this situation.**

1 = Strongly Disagree    2 = Disagree    3 = Agree & Disagree Equally    4 = Agree    5 = Strongly Agree

**Circle the number that corresponds to how you might react to each statement**

- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. I would feel inadequate if I went to a therapist for psychological help.                                | 1   2   3   4   5 |
| 2. My self-confidence would NOT be threatened if I sought professional help.                               | 1   2   3   4   5 |
| 3. Seeking psychological help would make me feel less intelligent.   | 1   2   3   4   5 |
| 4. My self-esteem would increase if I talked to a therapist.   | 1   2   3   4   5 |
| 5. My view of myself would not change just because I made the choice to see a therapist.                   | 1   2   3   4   5 |
| 6. It would make me feel inferior to ask a therapist for help.   | 1   2   3   4   5 |
| 7. I would feel okay about myself if I made the choice to seek professional help.                          | 1   2   3   4   5 |
| 8. If I went to a therapist, I would be less satisfied with myself.  | 1   2   3   4   5 |
| 9. My self-confidence would remain the same if I sought professional help for a problem I could not solve. | 1   2   3   4   5 |
| 10. I would feel worse about myself if I could not solve my own problems.                                  | 1   2   3   4   5 |

## Appendix G

### *The New General Self-Efficacy Scale*

**Please select the response that most closely indicates the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Please use the 5-point scale to indicate your opinion.**

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree & Disagree Equally 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I will be able to achieve most of the goals I have set for myself.     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. In general, I think I can obtain outcomes that are important to me.    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I believe I can success at most any endeavor to which I set my mind.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges.               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well.               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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