Indonesian Journal of Education and Psychological Science (IJEPS)
Vol. 2, No. 5 2024: 277-296

Self-Reported Perspectives from Participants in a Middle/High School Virtual Mentoring Program for Students of Color

Haley Hintz[1]*, Maggie Freeman[2], Myra Beth Bundy[3], Theresa Botts[4], Rhoman James[5]
Psychology Department, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, United States
Corresponding Author: Haley Hintz haley_hintz@mymail.eku.edu

ARTIC L E I N F O

Keywords: Mentorship, Youth of Color, Personal Finance, Online Programs

Received : 22, July
Revised : 21, August
Accepted: 30, September

ABS T RAC T

Community mentorship demonstrates benefits for adolescents of color at risk for increased life challenges. This research investigated participant-reported gains from an online mentoring program for male secondary school students initiated by Black male public school staff members. Researchers hypothesized (1) group members' perceived confidence regarding life skills would increase, (2) qualitative responses would demonstrate increased self-efficacy regarding topics discussed in session, and (3) participants would be able to identify solutions to challenges faced by boys and men of color. Qualitative data provided some support for these hypotheses. Students detailed learned lessons and identified solutions to problems faced by members of their communities.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.59890/ijeps.v2i5.2402
ISSN-E: 3030-8410
https://journal.multitechpublisher.com/index.php/ijeps

INTRODUCTION

Students of colour have been shown to be at risk for increased challenges in succeeding in their classrooms, lives, and eventually in their academic careers (Lynch & Oakford, 2014). Formal mentoring relationships have demonstrated positive benefits with regard to Black adolescents' mental health, academic success, social-emotional well-being, interpersonal relationships, racial identity, and future business endeavours and serve as an important initial starting point to overcoming systemic challenges faced by boys of color (Jennings, 2014; Sanchez et al., 2017). The current paper reviews theoretical and research literature related to this problem and explores a small intervention aimed at mentoring youth of colour in several key topic areas in order to support life skill development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Experience of American Males of Colour. Beginning in youth and adolescent years, young boys of colour may begin to notice the negative effects of racial discrimination as they develop cognitive processing, abstract thinking, and social perspective taking skills (Cooper et al., 2015). The process of becoming aware of racial marginalization has harmful impacts such as increased levels of depression and problem behaviours (Neblett et al., 2009; Copeland-Linder et al., 2011). In general, seeking social support from people with related experiences can serve as a way for people of colour to cope with race-related stress (Cooper et al., 2012). The impact of natural mentors of a shared racial identity tend to assist in racial socialization for youth and help aid the coping process when youth experience future discrimination (Hurd et al., 2013; Wittrup et al., 2016). The current mentorship program held a space to discuss the perception and experiences of American boys of colour.

Mass Incarceration Impact. Over half of incarcerated people in the United States have a child under the age of 18; on any given day, about 2.6 million American children have an incarcerated parent (Glaze & Marushack, 2010; Pettit et al., 2012. Mass incarceration refers to a rate of imprisonment that is well above the historical and comparative norms for the United States and which disproportionately impacts people of colour who have committed a nonviolent offense (Wakefield & Wildeman, 2014). Having an incarcerated parent is related to externalizing and internalizing problems in children such as depression, trauma, antisocial behaviour, and learning disabilities (Arditti & Savla, 2015; Dallaire et al., 2015, Turney, 2014; Will et al., 2014). For these children, having social support from a supportive adult in their life or identifying a community mentor can act as a protective factor and help increase resilience (Cohen & Wills, 1985). One study of a mentorship program for foster children with incarcerated parents found that children who met with mentors frequently and developed a close relationship were less likely to experience internalizing and externalizing symptoms (Schlafer et al., 2009). The current research assessed how participants understood mass incarceration, the criminal justice system, how it impacts their community, the trauma that can arise from incarceration, and how they can support someone who has been incarcerated.

Health and Wellness. Youth of colour tend to have poorer health outcomes in the United States such as being diagnosed with high blood pressure and obesity (Chen et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2015). Contributing factors for these differences may include inequitable distribution of healthcare resources, distrust of the healthcare system, and a shortage of healthcare professionals of colour (Garney et al., 2021; Feagin & Bennefield, 2014). Additionally, geographic segregation of neighbourhoods creates food stamps or food deserts which are grocery stores lacking produce and a high concentration of fast-food restaurants (Aaron & Stanford, 2021). According to a review of literature focused on obesity interventions for Black Americans, attending to social and cultural factors of eating and physical activity during the implementation of obesity interventions is advised to maximize success. In other words, when talking to at-risk communities about health and wellness, it is helpful to adopt a strength-based approach and leverage the cultural assets of Black communities rather than take a barriers-based approach (Kumanyika et al., 2014). Our research assessed what participants learned about managing their health and wellness, ways to improve health, benefits of exercise, and ways to improve community wellness for people of colour.

Personal Finance and Entrepreneurship. There is a well-established, race-based wealth gap in the United States which makes it difficult for men of colour to build and pass down generational wealth (Shapiro et al., 2014). There are a multitude of intersectional explanations for this disparity. First, institutional racism and the emotional and cognitive load it places on individuals can inhibit upward fiscal mobility, can lower home equity, and can increase interest rates on loans (Shapiro et al., 2014). Second, Black individuals tend to have lower scores on measures of financial literacy, placing them at risk to make poor financial decisions (Al-Bahrani et al., 2018). Specifically, within the southeastern region of the United States, Black men scored significantly lower than the population as a whole on the Big Five assessment of financial literacy than White men (Al-Bahrani, 2020). However, there is evidence that providing education regarding personal finances can increase financial literacy for Black individuals. One study found that after taking a personal finance education course, Black individuals increased their financial literacy scores by 4.1% (Al-Bahrani et al., 2018). Extant literature suggests that entrepreneurship mentoring groups have a positive impact on future business endeavours and psychosocial outcomes of inner-city, Black, male men (Jennings, 2014). The current mentorship program assessed participants' gains from a mentor presentation focused on steps to creating an effective budget, the importance of saving money, and means to financial freedom.

Bullying and Resolving Conflict. Black teenagers from low-income, urban areas similar to the participants from this mentorship group, were more than three times more likely to be bullied (Fitzpatrick et al., 2007). While there are multiple accepted definitions of bullying in the literature, it can be broadly defined as the repeated intent to harm another person which can be exacerbated by an imbalance of power (Younan, 2019). Experiencing bullying leads to poorer mental health outcomes such as higher rates of depression (Seals &

Young, 2002). Additionally, Black teenagers were also more likely to perpetrate perceived bullying behaviours than adolescents from other ethnic groups (Fitzpatrick et al., 2007). Perpetrating bullying is also correlated with negative impacts on the bully; for example, they are more likely to smoke cigarettes, use alcohol, and use drugs (Peleg-Oren et al., 2010). It is possible to ameliorate risk factors related to youth aggression and bullying. In general, self-control skills are malleable in childhood and directly teaching these skills can "increase self-control and decrease delinquency" (Piquero et al., 2016). Yet, traditional conflict resolution strategies are typically cantered around the culture of middle-class white families and may not account for the cultural variation in how individuals approach interpersonal conflict. For example, Black individuals are more likely to attempt to solve problems through high-keyed, animated, interpersonal speech whereas White individuals are more likely to engage in a dispassionate, impersonal manner (Davidson, 2001; Kochman, 1983). The literature has explored a tendency for Black individuals to value of authentic emotional expression and a cultural acceptance of argument as debate as well as or instead of a mode for ventilating anger (Davidson, 2001; Kochman, 1983, Reisman, 1983). One style of conflict resolution is not inherently superior as they are shaped by cultural values but White individuals may perceive it as bullying. When teaching skills for conflict resolution, mentors should consider contextual factors in order to teach resolution techniques that are more likely to be applied by their community which was the strategy employed by this group. The current study investigated how participants understand experiences of conflict, including the currently popular term and concept of "bullying", how you can help someone who is being bullied, their experiences with bullying, ways to decrease bullying and respond to conflict in the community, and safe people to reach out to if they become aware of bullying or conflict that they need support to manage.

Growing a Healthy Family. Black women are more likely than any other ethnic group to be raising children alone and Black fathers are more likely to be considered non-residential than fathers from other ethnic groups (Thistle, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 1998). There is strong support for the negative impact of life stressors on non-resident Black fathers including increased depressive symptoms (Davis et al., 2009). Black men are more likely to engage in home-based involvement in their children's lives such as reading their children a book or listening to them talk about their school day when they have a high school diploma than fathers who did not graduate high school (Abel, 2012). Some Black fathers are disproportionately affected by predictors of life stressors; they face economic disadvantages, racism and discrimination, living in socially disadvantaged environments, reduced employment opportunities and as pointed out in this paper- higher arrest and incarceration rates (Coles, 2009; Miller & Bennett, 2011). While educating families on how to engage in self-care as a preventative measure is needed, it is necessary to advocate for systemic change. This lends support to the goal of teaching young boys the ways in which they can foster a healthy family in the future so that they can have increased confidence in their familial roles, values, and duties. The

mentoring group investigated by the current study included mentoring material related to why it is important to raise a healthy family, steps to take to raise a healthy family, how to be a good husband or partner, and how to be a good father.

College Readiness. Black teenagers face various structural and institutional barriers to college readiness (Carey, 2019; Means et al., 2016). Prospective first-generation college students are likely to have lower self-esteem when it comes to college attendance (Reid and Moore, 2008). While academic support people such as guidance counsellors function as a resource to encourage college readiness, research has shown that Black students tend to have little faith in school counsellors and believe they provide minimal support when it comes to college guidance (Moore et al., 2008). This distrust may be warranted given that it is often the case that the counsellors hold negative perceptions towards their ability to pursue postsecondary education (Noguera et al., 2011). Therefore, opportunities to be considered for special honours societies, advanced courses, or school leadership positions may be withheld from Black teens due to racial biases, thus, limiting the experiences they can list on their college applications (Huerta et al., 2018; McNulty & Roseboro 2009). One way to facilitate the pursuit of college education for at-risk populations is through constellation mentoring programs based on the model that mentors should include a mixture of family, faculty, coaches, and community leaders (Kelly & Dixon, 2014). The current mentorship program followed this model by combining school staff and coaches (volunteering outside their school roles) and community leaders to present this information to their young mentee groups. Researchers assessed the participants' understanding of steps to prepare for college, considerations for choosing a career, a prospective future college major, and steps they can take during high school to prepare for their future.

The current research explored participant-reported gains from an online mentoring program initiated by Black male staff members in a large public school district and aimed at male middle and high school students of colour. In particular, we were interested in assessing how this kind of mentorship program and its content might be perceived by and benefit participants if delivered through a synchronous online format in order inform similar groups in the future led by Onwards and Upwards. The current mentorship group involved 10 sessions with the following topical focuses: Experience of American Males of Colour, Effects of Mass Incarceration, Bullying, Resolving Conflict, Personal Finance, Health and Wellness, College Readiness, Entrepreneurship, Growing a Healthy Family. These were considered to be potentially life-valuable topics that are not often discussed in schools and especially not by male role models of colour. The following information will briefly treat foundational research in core focus areas of the mentorship program.

METHODOLOGY

1. Informed Consent

Parent consent and child assent were obtained before beginning the group or collecting any data.

2. Participants

The sample consisted of nine middle and high school aged boys across in 6th - 12th grade (M = 8.88; SD = 2.23) who participated in a mentored social and life skills group in an urban area in Kentucky. Group leaders sent a notice of the group to employees in a school district in a mid-sized city. Participants were identified for participation in the group in Spring 2021 based on teacher or staff referrals. The only requirement for participation in the group was based on their status as young males of colour and anyone in the program was eligible to opt-in to the research portion of the project. Fifteen boys were referred to and completed initial interest paperwork for the group and nine boys regularly participated in the group sessions. Out of ten sessions, only two sessions had less than perfect attendance. All groups were hosted via Zoom Healthcare. Five participants identified as Black, two as Latin X, one as Asian-American, and one as Middle Eastern-American. Information about other demographics were not obtained to protect participant confidentiality.

3. Measures

To assess group members perceived self-efficacy across various social and life skills, the group co-facilitators created and administered a 9-item questionnaire at two time points approximately ten weeks apart. The participants completed the pre-survey during the first meeting of the group (Time 1) and then completed the post-survey during the final session of the group (Time 2). Participants were first asked to rate their confidence levels regarding seven items on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not confident at all) - 7 (extremely confident). These items asked about the participants' confidence levels related to solving conflicts, managing their health and wellness, managing their personal finances, completing college, and understanding bullying. On the pre-survey, they were then asked two open-ended questions (See Appendix A for scale items).

In addition to the whole program pre-post testing about core group competencies, the participants also took a post-survey at the end of each session, including making qualitative responses to five questions about the specific content of that week's mentoring session (See Appendices B-K).

4. Procedure

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained from the authors' university review board for this study. Participants were administered the pretest at Time 1; the survey took participants about 15 minutes to complete. The participants then attended eight weeks of a social and life skills group one time per week for approximately 90 minutes each time. Then, the participants completed the post-test at Time 2. The group members were compensated after each session or at the end of the set of sessions with a gift card(s) amounting to $10 per session attended. Data was de-identified and analysed on statistical analysis software.

5. Description of the Support Group Intervention

Onward and upward was a 10-week virtual mentoring program designed to encourage positive interactions and increase information exchange between community leaders of colour and students of colour in vulnerable communities. Each week, a community leader guided a lesson and discussion based on their expertise, which included mental health, personal finance, entrepreneurship, growing a healthy family and other valuable topics that are not often discussed in schools. This mentoring social and life skills closed group met weekly for a total of ten weeks and lasted for approximately 90 minutes per session. This group was co-facilitated by a team of one community mentor (different mentor each week) and the facilitating school staff and community members. A clinical psychologist and a master's student in psychology observed some of the groups. The purpose of the group was to mentor male youth of colour to help build their confidence and knowledge in social, cultural, and life skills such as resolving conflicts, taking care of their health and wellness, managing their personal finances, graduating college, and understanding bullying. In each meeting a session schedule was used covering the following topics the following order: 1) Experiences of American Males of Colour, 2) Effects of Mass Incarceration, 3) Health and Wellness, 4) Personal Finances, 5) Creating a Healthy Family 6) Bullying and Conflict Resolution 7) Entrepreneurship 8) College Readiness. Each meeting began with an introduction, followed by a presentation about the weekly skill, an open discussion in which the participants shared their experiences using the skill, and ending with participants responding to five qualitative questions about the week's theme.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Hypothesis 1

We first hypothesized that the group members' perceived confidence regarding life and social skills would significantly increase from the pretest to post-test. To test this, we conducted paired samples t-tests to evaluate the change from Time 1 to Time 2. Means and standard deviations for these t-tests are presented in Table 1. A significant increase in ratings for pretest vs. post-test was not found, thus, Hypothesis 1 was not supported. In fact, participants rated their perceived understanding of bullying to be significantly lower at Time 2 (M = 5.7, SD = 1.99), than at Time 1 (M = 6.44, SD = .88), t (8) = 2.277, p = .026.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations for Pretest and Post-test Questionnaire

	Pre-Test		**Post-Test**			
	M	***SD***	***M***	***SD***	***p***	***t***
Resolve Conflict	5.55	1.5	5.22	2.04	.263	1.859

Health & Wellness	5.66	.86	6.11	1.05	.081	1.859
Personal Finance	5.44	1.33	5.66	1.22	.315	1.859
College	5.44	1.33	5.11	1.61	.237	1.859
Bullying	6.44	.88	5.77	1.99	*.026	1.859
Note: Scales range from 1-7						
*** = statistically significant**						

2. Hypothesis 2

Secondly, researchers hypothesized that qualitative responses would demonstrate an increase in self-efficacy with regard to the topics discussed in session. Responses from the pretests and posttests lend support to this hypothesis. The qualitative method of grounded theory was used to analyze and categorize participant responses (Webster-Stratton, & Spitzer, 1996). This analysis method guides researchers through creating a conceptual framework by organizing qualitative responses into categories. All responses were read by the primary investigator. On the basis of content of the response, conceptual categories were formed. "Conceptual saturation" was reached when no new categories or subcategories emerged. As one approach to addressing the possibility of subjectivity and bias on the part of the analyst (Stewart, & Shamdasni, 1990), expert checking was conducted by asking a doctoral level professional in the area of cultural and clinical psychology to review and comment upon study findings.

Each participant indicated that they learned a lesson during the course of the group or became more knowledgeable in general. On the pretest, one major theme of hoping to gain knowledge emerged. Participants indicated their hope to learn about various topics such as resolving conflicts, learning more about finances, or learning new skills in general (see Table 2 for a full list of participants' responses). On the post-test, participants' responses with regard to the most valuable lesson that they learned can be grouped into the following three themes: 1) money/business management, 2) learning "life lessons," and 3) gaining skills for educational success (see Table 2 for a full list of participants' responses). These themes suggest that the young men believed that the weekly topic of learning about money management and starting a business was particularly useful as 4 out of 9 participants reported that it was amongst the most valuable lessons that they learned.

When comparing what each respective student reported that they hoped to learn at the onset versus what they reported learning at the outset, it appeared that participants' reported outcomes correlated with their initial goals. For example, one participant hoped to "learn more about colour and finances," and reported that he learned "life lessons, business lessons, anything

that helps me in life." This supports the hypothesis that group participants would self-report more confidence overall with regard to the topics discussed in the group.

Table 2. Qualitative Responses to Pre- and Post- Test Surveys

What do you hope to gain from attending these mentoring sessions?	**What is the most valuable lesson that you've learned?**
"Knowledge."	"Getting smarter"
"I hope to receive information that I can apply to my life later on."	"Well, I learned about things like money management, Prison systems, the impact of things on black communities. I enjoyed the few meetings I attended, and I appreciate the opportunity."
"Im might get smarter and get some more skills"	"The most valuable lesson ive learned is to start working towards college as soon as possible."
"I hope to gain knowledge and information that will help me later on in the future."	"Business working and family care"
"Learn something new, something impactful, something that can help me to get on in life."	"The valuable lesson that ive learned is that no matter what people tell you and what they say you cant accomplish you know deep down that you'll be able to pull through and prove them wrong in the end."
"I hope to gain knowledge on how to resolve conflicts"	"I learned what some right choices to make if I want to live a good life."
"I hope to gain knowledge about how to maintain myself when I get older."	"Money Management and Raising a Family"
"Learning more about color and finances"	"Life lessons, business lessons, anything that help me in life"
"Learning new information and possible make a friend."	"Preparing for life"

3. Hypothesis 3

Thirdly, researchers hypothesized that by attending weekly group sessions with mentors, participants would be able to identify solutions to specific challenges faced by men of colour since the group was designed to address challenges and solutions for young men of colour (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2019). Participants' responses from the Weekly Knowledge Questionnaires support this hypothesis. As seen in Table 3, each week, participants were asked

to identify a solution to the topic that was discussed in the group that week, respectively. Overall, participants were able to identify positive, productive ideas to ameliorate issues that aligned with the specific information presented during the group meeting. This suggests that group members were attentive, retained information, and were able to identify a way to apply the skills they learned to better their lives and communities. For example, when the participants were asked how they can become financially free, they reported solutions such as "paying off debt," "saving more and spending less," and "getting free of debt."

Table 3. Qualitative Responses to the Weekly Knowledge Questionnaire (Participant Spelling Maintained)

How can we change the narrative of Black American Males?	**How can you support someone who has been incarcerated or has a family member incarcerated?**	**How can African-American and Hispanic families improve wellness in the community?**	**How can you become financially free?**	**What are some steps you should take when trying to raise a healthy family?**	**How can we decrease bullying in our community?**	**What can you do in the next 4 years to help prepare you to succeed after high school?**
More contribution to society instead of going with the narratives that society pours on us	You can support them by including them in fun activities	More	Getting free of debt, thinking about certain purchases before making theme.	You could make sure you're financially ready and make you can provide	Talk to schools or to people about it and try to include rules against it in our communities.	Stay in school, keep your grades up, keep studying, keep working towards our goals.
We can protest and change how the stereotypes are seen and turn it around.	We can be their friends and help and encourage them to do good things in life.	yes	Pay off your debt and don't get into debt.	Learn how to raise a family, get a job, and have knowledge on what you're doing.	Have people come together and be friends also get to know each other.	I can save up money and talk to people who are experts in what I'm trying to do.

We can change the way we act around people	Try to be kind to them and not bring up things like them having a family member imprisoned.	Be active and better diet	no careless spending, planning, and creating budgets	Be up to the task, be wise show love and responsibility to the family	Well, there is no real way to decrease bullying. Humans are cruel creatures, the most we can do is stop it when we see it happening.	Shadow some teachers and be a good student throughput my high school career.
We can protest and use the statistics that are provided for us	Help them gain skills so they can have a successful life outside of prison.	By going outside and do normal exercise	By making your own decisions away from your parents	Knowing your role as a father, husband, and provider are good ways to ensure that you raise a healthy family.	by protecting people	To prepare for success after high school you should start reaching out to programs or businesses that are geared towards your skills and interests.
By showing the world what they can do not just the bad stuff	I could help this person by listening to them and letting them vent to me.	Encourage each other to exercise and get out with the family to the park more often.	You can find a good job so that you don't live off of weekly pay and not being in debt.	Having a strong relationship.	We can start a group based on stopping bullying.	Study hard

stand up to then	You can help them with anything or invite them to your house anything that would keep them happy.	We can always exercise	By saving money	You can be there for your family to support or help them.	Make it so that there are no bullying signs. And if someone bullies another they will be threatened to be suspended.	
Well, a large issue is the black people that form into the stereotype, but perhaps there is some way that we can change it.		They can try and do a get together	Saving more and spending less live within your means	Don't cheat on your wife and don't abuse you. Kids be there for them.	We can talk to the people that bully and ask why and try to help them.	
By showing that we are not what they think we are		They can have classes about wellness in certain categories.	You can become financially free by getting rid of debt, using budgets, and not impulse buying	Spend time together be good parent and communicate minimize arguing	We can decrease bullying in our community by teaching kids what to do when they are being bullied or when they witness someone being bullied.	
We can show people how hard			By spending less money		Have more preventative programs	

we work.					so those know not nice to be a bully	
			by effectively budgeting and not falling into debt.			

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study sought to investigate quantitative and qualitative self-reported benefits of a life and social skills mentoring program for male youth of colour. We hypothesized that group members' perceived confidence regarding life and social skills would significantly increase from the pretest to post-test (H1), that qualitative responses would demonstrate an increase in perspective and self-efficacy with regard to the topics discussed in session (H2), and that participants would be able to identify solutions to specific challenges faced by Black men (H3). The results of this study did not find support for Hypothesis 1, but qualitative responses suggest potential support for Hypotheses 2 and 3. It is also important to note that our ethnocracies backgrounds may have influenced our interpretations of the data. To attempt to ensure that diverse viewpoints were represented in this research, the study facilitators included some authors who had similar ethnocracies identities as the targeted participant group.

Results from quantitative analyses revealed that there was not a statistically significant increase in self-reported quantitative understanding of the topics discussed in the mentorship groups. This finding can likely be explained by the power deficit implied by a small group sample size of nine participants completing both the pre- and post- test. Interestingly, participants rated their perceived understanding of bullying to be significantly lower at the end of the group than at the onset. One possible explanation for this result could be that participants were overconfident in their understanding of bullying at the onset of the study when compared to other variables. Age-appropriate anti-bullying curricula are typically introduced as soon as pre-kindergarten and continue throughout a child's education, whereas other topics, such as personal finance, are typically discussed in schools less frequently (Saracho, 2016). Kentucky, the state in which the current study took place, is not 1 of 15 states that mandate at least one semester of personal finance as a high school graduation requirement (Ranzetta, 2020). Therefore comparatively, the current participants may have been more familiar with the concept of bullying than other topics at the onset of the group. Previous research has demonstrated that beginning as young as four years old, students are able to accurately discriminate between bullying and non-bullying behaviours and have also begun to personally experience bullying

(Monks & Smith, 2006; Monks et al., 2005). Therefore, it is likely that group members were perceived themselves to be very familiar with the concept of bullying at the onset of the group as it is a concept they have likely learned about or possibly had experienced previously. Yet, there is not one accepted definition of or solution to the problem of bullying in literature which may have complicated their understanding of the issue throughout the mentorship program if the definition and concepts discussed in the mentorship group differed from the definition employed in their school (Monks & Smith, 2006). When quantitative analyses are compared with self-reported qualitative analyses of participants' understanding of bullying, it is clear that they were able to accurately explain bullying after Session Six of the group. Younan (2019) describes an encompassing definition of bullying as "intent to harm, repetition, and imbalance of power" to which the participants provided similar definitions. All nine participants were able to offer a similar definition of bullying on the Week 6 Knowledge Questionnaire; thus, researchers are not concerned that their self-reported understanding of bullying decreased as they still demonstrated a sufficient understanding of the concept as a whole and could even provide productive solutions to reduce bullying when asked (See Table 3). Rather, an increased understanding of the complexity of the problem of bullying may have been reflected by lower reported confidence in their ability to approach the problem.

Results supported the hypothesis that participants' qualitative responses would demonstrate an increase in self-efficacy with regard to the topics discussed in session. As seen in Table 2, participants each detailed a "valuable lesson" they learned over the course of the mentorship group which fell into the three main categories of money/business management skills, learning "life lessons," or gaining skills for educational success. Specifically, 4 out of 9 group members articulated that money and business management skills were the most valuable lesson that they learned. This result is aligned with previous research which shows that Black men tend to report significant perceived gains from entrepreneurship mentorships programs (Needham, 2009). Previous research has suggested that when education on personal finances is not tailored to race-related factors, it is not as effective at increasing self-efficacy of money management amongst people of colour which contributes to the discrepancy in returns of financial education between white individuals and individuals of colour (George Washington Today, 2019). Therefore, it is possible that the participants found this lesson to be particularly useful given that the information presented in the session was tailored specifically towards people of colour which may not have been the case during previous lessons on money management potentially presented in high school courses. Financial self-efficacy has been shown to develop through the vicarious experiences of financial management; as families of colour tend to be disproportionately impacted by the systemic effects of the wealth gap, it may be that these students have had fewer past financial management experiences, making this skill set particularly salient and memorable (Hamilton & Darity, 2017).

Finally, researchers hypothesized that attending mentorship meetings would enable participants to identify solutions to specific challenges discussed during the group and was supported by qualitative responses from the Weekly Knowledge Questionnaires. Formal mentoring is defined by the goal of "targeting gaps and resolving problems" which organically leads to critical thinking, empowerment, and future problem solving (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2019). This hypothesis was partially supported by qualitative responses as demonstrated in Table 3; each week, participants were asked to detail a possible solution to the problem discussed in that week's meeting. Overall, the participants were successful at this task and demonstrated learning after each session. Aligned with past research demonstrating that in general, a mentor's creativity in the form of coaching, assigning challenging assignments, and role modelling can support growth in their mentees, the participants demonstrated unique responses (Wang & Shibayama, 2022). For instance, when asked about how they can support someone who has been incarcerated or the family of someone who is currently incarcerated, participants offered unique suggestions such as "listening to them and letting them vent" and "including them in fun activities." These answers, specifically, demonstrate an awareness of prosocial social cognitive skills that they can employ to help others in their community. Additionally, exploring responses from Table 3, participants' responses suggest that they found this mentorship group very valuable, as they propose future groups as solutions to other problems. For example, one participant proposed that he can improve wellness in his community by "hav [ing] classes about wellness in certain categories."

The present study's findings should be considered in the context of the study limitations. Of note, 15 boys were referred for initial participation in the group and 9 boys regularly attended session meetings, producing a very small ending sample size. Although this study was studying male adolescents from varying POC groups, there was not equal representation of diverse POC groups in the study. In this small sample, the largest representation of participants was Black male youth. Additionally, the majority of the reported prior research findings on topics like incarcerations, parenting, etc., mostly highlighted findings pertained to Black/African American populations. While some past research provided support for the utility of online group mentoring programs, the virtual format of the group could have been responsible for the high dropout rate (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2019). At the time this study was conducted, many students were likely still adjusting to virtual learning and may have been experiencing virtual learning fatigue (Toney et al., 2021). Also, it is possible that since participants in this group were from at-risk populations, they did not have consistent access to the technological devices or internet that was required for group attendance.

Additionally, data on the frequency of attending mentorship sessions was not considered as a mediating factor between pre-and post- test self-efficacy gains. Thus, it is possible that statistically significant gains were not achieved because group members who did not participate in a given session

still completed their post-test rating understanding of the subject. This may have lowered the overall post-test mean.

FURTHER STUDY

The combination of quantitative and qualitative results from this group mentoring program for young male adolescents of colour suggest that it was successful in providing a foundational set of life and social skills for the participants that may lead to improved outcomes in the areas of life measured by this study. Participants in this study will likely positively benefit from this preliminary intervention to combat systemic racial and ethnic barriers to success. Due to perceived gains, this group has continued to implement mentoring programs for at-risk youth in this urban area. Thus, the program may be able to expand and benefit more youth in the future.

In future research and intervention efforts in this area, researchers may wish to consider gathering longitudinal data on group members' life outcomes after the conclusion of the group. For instance, it would be valuable to track long term financial wellness of the group members which would address the longstanding research question of whether education in personal finance leads to decreased wealth disparity (Al-Bahrani et al., 2018). Additionally, because previous research has demonstrated that similar mentorship groups typically only focus-in on one life skill per group, it would be beneficial to compare the long-term effects of a mentorship group with a wide variety of goals to determine if information presented broadly has the same lasting impact as information presented in more detail.

Research assessing the impact of mentorship programs in larger samples and in more diverse ways should continue, so that a wider range of adolescents can be effectively supported in pursuing productive and satisfying life goals and dreams.

REFERENCES

Aaron, D., & Stanford, F. (2021). Is obesity a manifestation of systemic racism? A ten-point strategy for study and intervention. Journal of Internal Medicine, 290(2), 416-420. https://doi.org/10.1111/joim.13270

Abel, Y. (2012). African American fathers' involvement in their children's school-based lives. The Journal of Negro Education, 81(2), 162. https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.81.2.0162

Al-Bahrani, A. A., Buser, W., & Patel, D. (2020). Early causes of financial disquiet and the gender gap in financial literacy: Evidence from college students in the southeastern United States. SSRN Electronic Journal. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3535870

Al-Bahrani, A., Weathers, J., & Patel, D. (2018). Racial differences in the returns to financial literacy education. Journal of Consumer Affairs, 53(2), 572-599. https://doi.org/10.1111/joca.12205

Arditti, J. A., & Savla, J. (2015). Parental incarceration and child trauma symptoms in single caregiver homes. Journal of Child and Family Studies, 24(3), 551-561. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-013-9867-2

Carey, R. L. (2019). Am I smart enough? Will I make friends? And can I even afford it? Exploring the college-going dilemmas of Black and Latino adolescent boys. American Journal of Education, 125(3), 381-415. https://doi.org/10.1086/702740

Chen, E., Miller, G. E., Brody, G. H., & Lei, M. (2014). Neighbourhood poverty, college attendance, and diverging profiles of substance use and Allostatic load in rural African American youth. Clinical Psychological Science, 3(5), 675-685. https://doi.org/10.1177/2167702614546639

Cohen, S., & Wills, T. A. (1985). Stress, social support, and the buffering hypothesis. Psychological Bulletin, 98(2), 310-357. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.98.2.310

Coles, R. L. (2009). Just doing what they got do. Journal of Family Issues, 30(10), 1311-1338. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513x09339290

Cooper, S. M., Brown, C., Metzger, I., Clinton, Y., & Guthrie, B. (2012). Racial discrimination and African American adolescents' adjustment: Gender variation in family and community social support, promotive and protective factors. Journal of Child and Family Studies, 22(1), 15-29. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-012-9608-y

Cooper, S. M., Smalls-Glover, C., Metzger, I., & Griffin, C. (2015). African American fathers' racial socialization patterns: Associations with racial identity beliefs and discrimination experiences. Family Relations, 64(2), 278-290. https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12115

Copeland-Linder, N., Lambert, S. F., Chen, Y., & Ialongo, N. S. (2011). Contextual stress and health risk behaviours among African American adolescents. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 40(2), 158-173. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-010-9520-y

Dallaire, D. H., Zeman, J. L., & Thrash, T. M. (2014). Children's experiences of maternal incarceration-specific risks: Predictions to psychological maladaptation. Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology, 44(1), 109-122. https://doi.org/10.1080/15374416.2014.913248

Davidson, M. N. (2001). Know Thine Adversary: The Impact of Race on Styles of Dealing with Conflict. Sex Roles, 45.

Davis, R. N., Caldwell, C. H., Clark, S. J., & Davis, M. M. (2009). Depressive symptoms in Non-resident African American fathers and involvement with their sons. Paediatrics, 124(6), 1611-1618. https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2009-0718

Feagin, J., & Bennefield, Z. (2014). Systemic racism and U.S. health care. Social Science & Medicine, 103, 7-14. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2013.09.006

Fitzpatrick, K. M., Dulin, A. J., & Piko, B. F. (2007). Not just pushing and shoving: School bullying among African American adolescents. Journal of School Health, 77(1), 16-22. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1746-1561.2007.00157.x

Garney, W., Wilson, K., Ajayi, K. V., Panjwani, S., Love, S. M., Flores, S., Garcia, K., & Esquivel, C. (2021). Social-ecological barriers to access to healthcare for adolescents: A scoping review. International Journal of Environmental

Research and Public Health, 18(8), 4138. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18084138

Glaze, L. E., & Marushack, L. M. (2008). Parents in prison and their minor children. Psyc EXTRA Dataset. https://doi.org/10.1037/e513862010-001

GW Today. (2019). New study highlights disparity in Black financial literacy. GW Today. https://gwtoday.gwu.edu/new-study-highlights-disparity-black-financial-literacy

Hamilton, D., & Darity, W. A. (2017). The political economy of education, financial literacy, and the racial wealth gap. Review, 99(1), 59-76. https://doi.org/10.20955/r.2017.59-76

Huerta, A. H., McDonough, P. M., & Allen, W. R. (2018). "You can go to college": Employing a developmental perspective to examine how young men of colour construct a college-going identity. The Urban Review, 50(5), 713-734. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-018-0466-9

Hurd, N. M., Sellers, R. M., Cogburn, C. D., Butler-Barnes, S. T., & Zimmerman, M. A. (2013). Racial identity and depressive symptoms among Black emerging adults: The moderating effects of neighbourhood racial composition. Developmental Psychology, 49(5), 938-950. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028826

Inzer, L. D., & Crawford, C. B. (2005). A review of formal and informal mentoring. Journal of Leadership Education, 4(1), 31-50. https://doi.org/10.12806/v4/i1/tf2

Jennings, L. (2014). Do men need empowering too? A systematic review of entrepreneurial education and Microenterprise development on health disparities among inner-city Black male youth. Journal of Urban Health, 91(5), 836-850. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-014-9898-z

Kelly, D. D., & Dixon, M. A. (2014). Successfully navigating life transitions among African American male student-athletes: A review and examination of constellation mentoring as a promising strategy. Journal of Sport Management, 28(5), 498-514. https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2012-0320

Kochman, T. (1983). Black and white styles in conflict. University of Chicago Press.

Kumanyika, S. K., Whitt-Glover, M. C., & Haire-Joshu, D. (2014). What works for obesity prevention and treatment in Black Americans? Research directions. Obesity Reviews, 15, 204-212. https://doi.org/10.1111/obr.12213

Lynch, R. G., & Oakford, P. (2014). The economic benefits of closing educational achievement gaps: Promoting growth and strengthening the nation by improving the educational outcomes of children of colour. Centre for American Progress. https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-economic-benefits-of-closing-educational-achievement-gaps/

McNulty, C. P., & Roseboro, D. L. (2009). "I'm not really that bad": Alternative school students, stigma, and identity politics. Equity & Excellence in Education, 42(4), 412-427. https://doi.org/10.1080/10665680903266520

Means, D. R., Clayton, A. B., Conzelmann, J. G., Baynes, P., & Umbach, P. D. (2016). Bounded aspirations: Rural, African American high school

students and college access. The Review of Higher Education, 39(4), 543-569. https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2016.0035

Miller, D. B., & Bennett, M. D. (2011). Special issue: Challenges, disparities and experiences of African American males. Research on Social Work Practice, 21(3), 265-268. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731510393985

Miller, G. E., Yu, T., Chen, E., & Brody, G. H. (2015). Self-control forecasts better psychosocial outcomes but faster epigenetic aging in low-SES youth. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 112(33), 10325-10330. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1505063112

Monks, C. P., Smith, P. K., & Swettenham, J. (2005). Psychological correlates of peer victimisation in preschool: Social cognitive skills, executive function and attachment profiles. Aggressive Behaviour, 31(6), 571-588. https://doi.org/10.1002/ab.20099

Monks, C. P., & Smith, P. K. (2006). Definitions of bullying: Age differences in understanding of the term, and the role of experience. British Journal of Developmental Psychology, 24(4), 801-821. https://doi.org/10.1348/026151005x82352

Moore, J. L., Henfield, M. S., & Owens, D. (2008). African American males in special education: Their attitudes and perceptions toward high school counsellors and school counselling services. American Behavioural Scientist, 51(7), 907-927. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764207311997

Mullen, C. A., & Klimaitis, C. C. (2019). Defining mentoring: A literature review of issues, types, and applications. Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 1483(1), 19-35. https://doi.org/10.1111/nyas.14176

Neblett, E. W., Smalls, C. P., Ford, K. R., Nguyên, H. X., & Sellers, R. M. (2009). Racial socialization and racial identity: African American parents' messages about race as precursors to identity. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 38(2), 189-203. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-008-9359-7

Needham, C. R. (2009). A phenomenological study of Detroit inner city youth entrepreneurship programs. University of Phoenix ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Noguera, P., Hurtado, A., & Fergus, E. (2013). Invisible no more: Understanding the disenfranchisement of Latino men and boys. Routledge.

Peleg-Oren, N., Cardenas, G. A., Comerford, M., & Galea, S. (2010). An association between bullying behaviours and alcohol use among middle school students. The Journal of Early Adolescence, 32(6), 761-775. https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431610387144

Pettit, B. (2012). Invisible men: Mass incarceration and the myth of Black progress. Russell Sage Foundation.

Piquero, A. R., Jennings, W. G., Farrington, D. P., Diamond, B., & Gonzalez, J. M. (2016). A meta-analysis update on the effectiveness of early self-control improvement programs to improve self-control and reduce delinquency. Journal of Experimental Criminology, 12(2), 249-264. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-016-9257-z

Ranzetta, T. (2020). How many states require students to take a personal finance course before graduating from high school? Next Gen Personal Finance.

Reid, M. J., & Moore, J. L. (2008). College readiness and academic preparation for postsecondary education. Urban Education, 43(2), 240-261.

Reisman, K. (1983) Thomas Kochman, Black and white styles in conflict. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981. Pp. vi + 177. Language in Society, 12(4), 521–527. doi:10.1017/S0047404500010265

Saracho, O. N. (2016). Bullying prevention strategies in early childhood education. Early Childhood Education Journal, 45(4), 453-460. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-016-0793-y

Shlafer, R. J., Poehlmann, J., Coffino, B., & Hanneman, A. (2009). Mentoring children with incarcerated parents: Implications for research, practice, and policy. Family Relations, 58(5), 507-519.

Seals, D., & Young, J. (2003). Bullying and victimization: prevalence and relationship to gender, grade level, ethnicity, self-esteem, and depression.

Shapiro, T., Meschede, T., & Osoro, S. (2014). The widening racial wealth gap: Why wealth is not colour blind. The Assets Perspective, 99-122.

Sánchez, B., Mroczkowski, A. L., Liao, L. C., Cooper, A. C., Rivera, C., & DuBois, D. L. (2017). Mentoring as a mediator or moderator of the association between racial discrimination and coping efficacy in urban, low-income Latina/o youth. American Journal of Community Psychology, 59(1-2), 15-24. https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12114

Thistle, S. (2006). From marriage to the market: The transformation of women's lives and work. University of California Press.

Toney, S., Light, J., & Urbaczewski, A. (2021). Fighting Zoom fatigue: Keeping the Zombies at Bay. Communications of the Association for Information Systems, 48, 40-46. https://doi.org/10.17705/1cais.04806

U.S. Department of Education, National Centre for Education Statistics. (1998). Involvement of non-resident fathers. U.S. Government Printing Office.

Wakefield, S., & Wildeman, C. (2011). Mass imprisonment and racial disparities in childhood behavioural problems. Criminology & Public Policy, 10(3), 791-792. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9133.2011.00741.x

Wang, J., & Shibayama, S. (2022). Mentorship and creativity: Effects of mentor creativity and mentoring style. Research Policy, 51(3), 104451.

Will, J. L., Whalen, M. L., & Loper, A. B. (2014). From one generation to the next: Childhood experiences of antisocial behaviour and parental incarceration among adult inmates. Journal of Offender Rehabilitation, 53(3), 190-210.

Wittrup, A. R., Hussain, S. B., Albright, J. N., Hurd, N. M., Varner, F. A., & Mattis, J. S. (2016). Natural mentors, racial pride, and academic engagement among Black adolescents. Youth & Society, 51(4), 463-483.

Younan, B. (2019). A systematic review of bullying definitions: How definition and format affect study outcome. Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research, 11(2), 109-115. https://doi.org/10.1108/jacpr-02-2018-0347