MY SISTER’S KEEPER: USING VISION BOARDS TO EXAMINE CROSS-RACIAL
MENTORSHIP AND SUPERVISION EXPERIENCES OF BLACK WOMEN COUNSELOR
EDUCATORS WHO ATTENDED CACREP CES PROGRAMS AT PREDOMINATELY
WHITE INSTITUTIONS

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Liberty University March, 2022
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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
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2022

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ABSTRACT

This transcendental phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of Black women recent graduates from Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accredited counselor education and supervision (CES) doctoral programs regarding having a non-Black supervision mentor while attending their predominately White institution. The participants were eight CES doctoral students from PWIs across the United States, including the southeastern, western, and Midwestern regions. Data were obtained using semi structured interviews and vision boards identifying participants’ cross-racial mentorship and supervision experiences during their doctoral programs using critical race theory and Black feminist thought as the theoretical framework. Thematic analysis of the data revealed three themes and nine subthemes: ability to have access (communication, feelings of loneliness and isolation), support (institutional support, faculty mentor/supervisor support, and community support), and cultural responsiveness (cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, racism and implicit bias, and inclusivity and representation). The study revealed that cultural responsiveness should be used as a lens when providing effective cross-racial mentorship and supervision. Implications and recommendations for research are discussed.

Keywords: counselor education and supervision, Black women faculty, Black feminist thought, vision board, mentorship
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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my best girl in heaven, Abigail Patience Ojo Williams Charley.

Thank you for your endless love, support, and encouragement. I hope that as your first grandchild, I made you proud. Thank you to my Heavenly Father for allowing me to make it this far and making sure her strength flows through me.
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First, I would like to acknowledge and give honor to God, because without Him, this accomplishment could not be possible. The Lord gave me strength and allowed the words to flow from my mind to the hands He gave me.

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To my study participants, thank you for your time and allowing me to share your stories. You are each amazing women with powerful voices. Thank you for inspiring me to continue to advocate for myself and my future students.

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List of Abbreviations

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)

Counselor Education and Supervision (CES)

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs)

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Predominately White Institution (PWI)
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Scholarship has tried to strategize ways to promote diversity and encourage the persistence of ethnic minority counseling students in higher education (Banks & Dohy, 2019; Rigali-Oiler & Kurpius, 2013). Black/African American students have reported adverse climates on their campus regarding feelings of marginalization, underrepresentation (Baggerly et al., 2017; Zeligman et al., 2015), isolation (Edwards & Ross, 2018), and the lack of a racial peer group during their graduate education (Comer et al., 2017; Haskins et al., 2013; Henfield et al., 2011). Black women have especially reported feelings of isolation and marginalization as they attended their degree-granting institutions (Haskins et al., 2015). African American students often get subtle messages of not belonging there through the campus culture, causing distress during their programs (Hannon et al., 2016; Watt, 2006). Many of these students find it difficult to build relationships with their peers and faculty due to these feelings.

In the past, predominately White institutions (PWIs) struggled to identify the needs of their minority attendees, including their Black students (Grant & Ghee, 2015), whereas historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) were established to provide supportive environments for Black people as they pursue their education (Bracey, 2017; Stith & Blumenthal, 2019). Unlike White students, Black students at PWIs encounter the added pressure of being a minority in predominately White learning environments (Henfield et al., 2011), which has affected the way these Black students matriculate through their various programs. Black students have reported deficits in their training and inequitable experiences due to having limited integration of culturally responsive teaching in their training (Peters et al., 2020; Seward, 2009). This can affect students’ ability to be culturally competent with diverse populations, which requires gaining knowledge and awareness (American Counseling Association, 2014).
Mentorship has been a tool to mitigate some of these issues that Black students have encountered during their time at PWIs. Mentorship has also improved retention and feelings of isolation in fields with minority underrepresentation (Girves et al., 2005; Tran, 2014; Yun et al., 2016). Having similar interests in a mentoring relationship can enhance the learning process for the mentee (Dahlvig, 2010; Gardner, 2013). Though there is no clear agreement on what makes mentorship successful, it is agreed that it is needed, especially among women of color in academia (Tran, 2014). It would help to understand what Black students view as good mentorship as they matriculate through their programs.

The focus of this study was the lived cross-racial mentorship and supervision experiences of Black women counselor education and supervision (CES) doctoral students at Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP)-accredited programs at PWIs. According to the CACREP, the primary focus of CES is to provide training and preparation of professional and competent counselors (CACREP 2015). However, I found no studies examining these experiences of Black women doctoral students, especially at PWIs.

**Background of the Problem**

**Historical Context of HBCUs Versus PWIs**

Historically, Black scholars attended HBCUs to earn their education because they were not welcome to pursue it at PWIs. The primary mission of HBCUs was to provide equitable educational opportunities for Black Americans; however, they constantly faced challenges in getting necessary support (Bracey, 2017). The history of HBCUs mirrors the struggle of Jim Crow and the fight for racial justice (Cantey et al., 2013). Even though there were millions of dollars in funding the development of HBCUs (Bracey, 2017), there were issues in ensuring they were equipped with the necessary tools to provide a social and cultural environment to match the
academic experience (Cantey et al., 2013). But the college experiences of these Black students were described as “essential to their social functioning and mental health” (Bracey, 2017, p. 678). HBCUs served as cultural centers where Black students could define their Black culture and have spaces to be themselves in the midst of negative political climates (Cantey et al., 2013). Overall, HBCUs provide a more welcoming racial climate for Black students and Black students at HBCUs experience a lower level of racial tension on campus (Harper, 2019).

As time progresses, more Black students are obtaining advanced degrees in their chosen fields. Additionally, there has been an increase in the number of Black women enrolling in doctoral programs (McGee & Bentley, 2017). According to the National Science Foundation (2019), the number of African American women with doctoral degrees has increased from 1,408 to over 1,800 since 2010. Black women navigating racism is one of the most significant barriers they face as they pursue doctoral degrees (Rasheem et al., 2018). Obtaining their education in a space that was not created for Black scholars can be intimidating and stressful. Even though HBCUs have made essential contributions to the success of Black students, this should not negate that Black women experience gender inequality and discrimination in these spaces as well (Walkington, 2017). Further, Black emerging counselor educators cannot experience gaining their CES professional development at HBCUs due to the lack of CACREP-accredited doctoral programs at those institutions.

**CACREP’s Role**

CACREP is the accreditation agency that provides counseling degree-related masters and doctoral programs (Lu et al., 2018). The goal of CACREP is to provide a standard of practice regarding the development, education, and training of those who are entry-level counselors and counselor educators (Lu et al., 2018). CACREP accredits various master’s level programs such
as addiction counseling, clinical mental health counseling, career counseling, community counseling, school counseling, clinical rehabilitation counseling, marriage and family counseling, college counseling, and student affairs (CACREP, 2015).

According to CACREP (2015), there are 84 accredited CES programs in the United States, but only one is located at an HBCU, and it has a focus on rehabilitation counselor education. This limits Black counselor education students regarding their advanced training in CES, which forces them to take the remaining option of attending PWIs. Many students of color in CACREP-accredited programs experience adversities in higher education (Baggerly et al., 2017). The pursuit of a doctoral degree is challenging in itself, but the negative effects of isolation, exclusion, and marginalization causes these students to become dissatisfied on PWI campuses (Marjorie et al., 2014). It helps to have faculty and instructors that look like them as they matriculate through their graduate training. However, the number of Black faculty in CES programs vary at each PWI. According to 2017 CACREP statistics (2018), only 10.4% of Black women are full-time faculty in CACREP-accredited programs (see Table 1).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Alternative Identity</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>4.11%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Native Alaskan</td>
<td>0.45%</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>1.15%</td>
<td>2.88%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian/White</td>
<td>28.33%</td>
<td>43.01%</td>
<td>0.04%</td>
<td>71.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino/Spanish American</td>
<td>1.85%</td>
<td>2.84%</td>
<td>0.08%</td>
<td>4.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</td>
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<td>0.04%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1.07%</td>
<td>0.04%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-resident Alien</td>
<td>0.16%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/Undisclosed</td>
<td>1.11%</td>
<td>1.15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2.26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mentorship

It is important Black women find mentorship as they pursue higher education (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). Even though mentorship is a reciprocal relationship, it is also created to nurture and inspire those who are mentees (Casto et al., 2005; Williams et al., 2018). Black women in doctoral programs with mentoring relationships with faculty can receive support for the emotional and identity needs of a Black woman who wishes to excel in academia (Cook & Williams, 2015). Mentors play multiple roles in their mentorship relationships with Black women, from personal to professional coaching (Rasheem et al., 2018). In CES, doctoral students must act as emerging educators, which may lead to the faculty member pipeline (Elliott et al., 2016). Genuine mentorships are essential for the success of Black students and other students of color attending PWIs (Rasheem et al., 2018).

Types of Mentoring Relationships

There are mentoring relationships that have specific characteristics such as race and gender. Research has shown that there are differences between same-gender and cross-gender mentoring relationships and same-race and cross-racial mentoring relationships among graduate students and faculty (Li et al., 2018; Reddick, 2012). The differences between gender and racial mentor relationships are compared in the following sections.

Same-Gender Versus Cross-Gender

Female graduate students are more likely to have an opposite-sex mentor than male graduate students (Clark et al., 2000). Since there is a limited number of senior women faculty in academia, some male students do not have the opportunity to have prospective female mentors (Harden et al., 2009). Female students also have obstacles regarding cross-gender mentorships due to possible discomfort and higher standards for performance (Harden et al., 2009), requiring
practical guidance to overcome oppressive challenges (Nickerson, 2020). A shared understanding needs to be developed to minimize misconceptions of cross-gender mentorships (Ghosh, 2014). Overall, men and women have different communication styles that contribute to the diverse ways they provide and receive mentorship. Women have a better sense of community and connection, whereas men communicate in the sense of status and independence (Freeman & Kochan, 2018; Tanner, 1990). Further, there are higher levels of resilience in cross-gender mentoring relationships compared to same-gendered (Kao et al., 2014).

**Same-Race Versus Cross-Racial**

Having White mentors or mentors of another race is a high probability for Black students attending PWIs, as there is a high percentage of Black students in graduate studies but a low percentage of Black individuals working in academia in the United States (Thomspson et al., 2016). This can negatively impact Black students, as they have had difficulty trusting White mentors who accept their cultural differences and scholarship (Freeman & Kochan, 2018) due to unequal positions and social scripts (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004; McCoy et al., 2015). Colorblindness is also a factor in mistrust, since mentors tend to treat all mentees the same instead of using students’ backgrounds to make them feel accepted and included (McCoy et al., 2015).

**Statement of the Problem**

Unlike White women, Black women do not have an existing history, or their own spaces separate from Black men in academia or in higher education (Perkins, 1993). Literature has some findings on Black women in higher education; however, there is limited research on the experiences of Black women counselor educators at PWIs in these academic spaces. However, literature has shown that in contrast to White students, Black students at PWIs encounter added
pressure of being a minority in predominately White learning environments (Henfield et al., 2011). Mentorship has assisted with mitigating feelings of marginalization and isolation and a lack of a racial peer group for Black students in graduate programs (Henfield et al., 2011; Seward, 2009, 2019; Storlie et al., 2015). But there is no agreement for cross-racial mentorship in any discipline, especially in CES, where counselor educators are cultivated in order to train the next generation of counselors.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological qualitative study was to describe the lived experiences of recent Black women CES graduates who had non-Black supervision mentors at CACREP-accredited PWIs (non-HBCUs). Mentorship and supervision experiences are necessary for the advancement of Black women doctoral students working toward a career in academia (Grant, 2012). The unique needs of Black women in higher education, Black students at PWIs, and Black counseling/counselor education students is crucial to understanding their experiences in supervision and mentorship. The intention of the research was to understand the past mentorship and supervision experiences of Black women CES at PWIs because this is where most emerging counselor educators will be getting their training, which can help mitigate issues that contribute to the underrepresentation of Black women CES faculty. The implementation of a cross-racial mentoring framework that includes psychological/emotional support, goal setting, academic knowledge, and role modeling (Nora & Crisp, 2007; Trepal et al., 2014) can increase student self-worth and encouragement (Sinanan, 2016). Understanding these experiences can also contribute to future research to increase Black counseling student recruitment, retention, and program completion (Zeligman et al., 2015) in CACREP-accredited programs. Overall, this study provides current data on the mentorship and supervision experiences of recent CES
graduates to assist with developing new mentorship and training protocols for CACREP programs.

**Research Questions**

The focus of this study was centered on the following research questions:

1. What were your experiences with cross-racial mentorship and supervision in a CACREP doctoral counselor education program as a Black woman CES student while attending a PWI?

2. How did your cross-racial supervision and mentoring experiences as a Black woman in a CES program at a PWI influence your current and future supervision and mentoring?

**Definition of Terms**

*Academia:* An academic career that involves teaching and research productivity at a higher education institution (Sutherland, 2017).

*Black:* An individual who is a part of the African diaspora, regardless if they are a United States or international citizen (Allen & Joseph, 2018).

*Black feminist thought/theory (BFT):* A theory that addresses the unique experiences and issues of Black women using the intersections of race, gender, and social class (Allen & Joseph, 2018).

*Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP):* Grants accreditation to counseling programs that meet program standards through self-assessment (CACREP, 2021).

*Critical race theory (CRT):* A theory that states race is socially constructed and invented, manipulated, or retired when convenient to society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Historically Black college and university (HBCU): Higher education institutions created initially for the education of former enslaved persons and Black Americans (Blacksheer & Hollis, 2021; Bracey, 2017).

Mentor: A “coach, confidante, role model, and resource” and possessing a “history of professional excellence whereby the individual has freely given of himself or herself to help others within our profession” (American Counseling Association, 2015, p. 15).

Mentorship: A mentoring relationship where the mentee is trained or nurtured by the mentor (Casto et al., 2005).

Microaggression: Subtle negative verbal, behavioral, or environmental messages that are shown to a targeted person or group (Lewis et al., 2013).

Internalized oppression: Harmful thoughts and feelings about someone’s social identity (Nadal et al., 2021).

Intersectionality: Individuals with multiple oppressed identities experiencing oppression based on those identities (Crenshaw, 1989).

Photovoice: A participatory qualitative methodology tool to capture people’s experiences through the selection of photographs (Valishnay et al., 2021).

Predominately White institution (PWI): Institutions with the majority students enrolled identifying as White rather than members of underrepresented racial groups (Bourke, 2016).

Tokenism: The feeling or act of being chosen to represent an entire racial or ethnic group (Baker et al., 2015).

Theoretical Foundation

The supervision and mentorship experiences of Black women counselor education
students were explored using qualitative research and interpreted through the lenses of CRT and Black feminist thought or womanist theory because these theories address race and gender.

**Critical Race Theory (CRT)**

CRT was selected as one of the theoretical frameworks due to it being an analytical tool to deconstruct and confront the nuanced experiences of marginalized individuals (Leon & Thomas, 2016). CRT engages in overt dialogue that focuses on the persistence and complexity of systemic and institutional racism, which allows those same patterns to continue existing. CRT offers a framework to acknowledge the negative experiences that can cause Black women to prioritize their attention to race while trying to balance life in academia (Allen & Joseph, 2018). The tenets of CRT can help counselor educators develop practices that address equity and social justice within the classroom and faculty–student relationships (Closson, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1999). There are five major tenets of CRT that could be applied to transform pedagogy, especially in counselor education: (a) the notion that race and racism are permanent (Bell, 1994; Crenshaw, 1991), (b) interest convergence of White people (Bell, 1980), (c) the social construction of race, (d) storytelling/counter-storytelling, and (e) White people being the benefactors and recipients of civil rights legislation (Harlap, 2009).

**Black Feminist Thought/Womanist Theory**

The foundation of Black feminist thought stems from the everyday oppressive challenges of Black women and their capability to articulate their perceptivities and interpretations (Collins, 1989). The economic and political standpoints of Black women provide them with a different view of their reality compared to other groups (Collins, 1989). The significance of Black feminist thought is understanding that there is a difference between Black women having the knowledge to their standpoints and the ability to create a self-definition to validate those
standpoints (Collins, 1989). Further, the lens validates Black women as agents of knowledge (Collins, 2015). Black feminist thought understands the unique experiences of Black women and notices their ability to serve as activists to center their own needs and success (Allen & Joseph, 2018).

There is also a construct of intersecting oppressions or intersectionality within the idea of Black feminism (Collins, 2015). Black women have been identifying the complexities of the intersecting systems of power that made their lives complicated, from relationships to career goals (Collins, 2015). The Black feminist thought attests that oppression, social justice, and intersecting power relationships represent a discourse for Black feminism (Collins, 2015). Black feminist thought conceptualizes domination and resistance using an intersectional framework by bringing awareness between structural, systemic oppression (Alinia, 2015).

**Intersectionality**

The concept of intersectionality comes from tenets of CRT and Black feminist theory (Cole, 2009; Collins, 1990). Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) created the term *intersectionality* while working as a critical race scholar and brought awareness to the racial and gender discrimination of Black women in antidiscrimination law. Intersectionality is “an analysis claiming that systems of race, economic class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and age form mutually constructing features of social organization” (Collins, 1998, p. 278). Black women’s experiences can be understood if intersectionality is used as an analytic tool to help Black women persist as faculty and graduate students (Walkington, 2017).

There are ways to use intersectionality as an approach to counselor education pedagogy and practice. There are some non-minority counselor educators who are unaware of differing world views and knowledge regarding the impact of minority culture on the counseling process
Intersectional oppression can be confronted with awareness, but it is important to examine it within and outside of the classroom (Cannon et al., 2012; Speciale et al., 2015). Counselor educators can integrate multiculturalism with intersectionality since it involves the collaboration of addressing a person’s social and cultural identities (Chan et al., 2018). It is important to prompt counseling students and counselors in training to develop their critical thinking skills and strengthen self-awareness using the intersectionality framework. Though counselors’ cultural identity can be difficult to conceptualize, students who recognize oppression and marginalization from other social identities can understand and have an awareness of their own oppressed identities (Chan et al., 2018) and self-reflect to limit their contributions to systemic oppression. Using creativity can help students with their own exploration of their cultural identity, which will help them with their own clients and supervisees (Ali & Lee, 2019). Thus, intersectionality should be discussed through the curriculum (Haskins et al., 2016). It is the counselor educator’s job to make sure that they are protecting the welfare of the students by being responsible for their own level of competence and awareness (Chan et al., 2018).

Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are essential components of qualitative research to facilitate the analysis (Simon & Goes, 2013). This study has a few assumptions. One assumption was that the participants of this study were able to reflect and articulate their lived experiences. The second assumption was that the participants would answer the interview questions accurately, honestly, and precisely. The third assumption was that participants would share their experiences from the perspective of Black feminist thought and their social intersections.
**Limitations**

Limitations in qualitative research are linked to validity and reliability that may be out of the researcher’s control (Simon & Goes, 2013). This study has two limitations. One limitation is that the data are based on the participants’ memory and honesty, and some details of their memory may not be accurate. Another limitation is that qualitative research is based on gathering truth and not generalizations (Denzil & Lincoln, 2000). The interviews were semi structured to gather the responses of Black women in CES, so the results can be generalized to the participants of the study and will be difficult to replicate in other situations or environments.

**Organization of the Remaining Chapters**

Chapter 1 was an introduction to Black women counselor educators at PWIs and the theoretical frameworks of Black feminist thought/womanist theory and CRT. Chapter 2 will provide a review of the literature related to Black women experiences at PWIs, including but not limited to Black women in higher education, Black students at PWIs and Black counseling/counselor education at PWIs, and supervision and mentorship experiences and their role in this study. Chapter 3 will discuss the methodological approach and the research design along with my role as a researcher and ethical considerations.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Though Black women counselor educators are mentioned in the literature, their experiences and their advancement in academia are overlooked. It is essential to document these experiences of challenges or successes Black women face as they navigate academia. Black women have had their race and gender negatively affect their careers (Davis, 2016). It is also necessary to limit umbrella terms like “faculty of color” or “women of color” so that the voices of Black women do not become invisible (Davis & Brown, 2017). Most of the literature using the lens of Black feminist thought will illuminate the experiences of Black women through their own interpretations and voices (Crenshaw, 1989; Shavers & Moore, 2014a).

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of the related literature on the experiences of Black women CES doctoral students at PWIs. The literature will describe similar experiences of Black students at PWIs and Black women graduate students including any mentorship and supervision experiences that will relate in the context of counseling and counselor education programs. This chapter is organized into three sections. The first section introduces the experiences of Black individuals at their PWI institutions, whether as faculty or as students. The second section focuses on mentoring and supervision literature, provides a discussion about mentoring in counselor education, and focuses on supervision literature as well as a discussion about the distinctions between teaching, clinical, and research supervision in the counseling profession. The chapter concludes by focusing on the method concept of photovoice and how it integrates the Black feminist thought framework.

For this literature review, the search of the literature was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles. These articles were gathered, and abstracts were thoroughly read to ensure relatability to the topic. The strategy used to conduct the literature review included searching the Liberty

**Black Women in Higher Education**

Historically, Black women have experienced unique educational and social injustices in society, which they continue to face as they pursue careers in higher education. Even though Black women have been seen to be transformative and collaborative (Herrera, 2012), they still struggle to receive recognition for their contributions to their perspective fields. Black women in junior academic positions have trouble navigating through their university spaces due to experiencing prejudices in their day-to-day interactions (Maseti, 2018). Exclusion and discrimination within their universities are related to their gender and race (Mokhele, 2013); as both social identities intertwine, Black women in higher education attempt to persist but find it difficult due to the lack of community. In addition to the gendered racism microaggressions, Black women tend to have experiences of cultural taxation/tokenization, isolation, and internalized oppression.

**Gendered Racism**

Due to the social identities of Black women, they experience gendered racism, which is the experience of both sexism and racism (Essed, 1991). Black women have been experiencing gendered and forms of racism from societal stereotypes and images that were created to
marginalize Black women into oppressive forms of womanhood (Collins, 1990; Essed, 1991; Lewis et al., 2017). Gendered racism can be associated with stress, especially among Black women (Lewis et al., 2017). In various settings, Black women struggle with these microaggressions due to them all having hidden messages of projections and invalidations that reduce them only to their race and gender instead of their merit.

In PWIs, Black women have experienced projected stereotypes, which are used to objectify Black women and reduce them to sexualized perceptions of race and gender; silenced and marginalized struggles such as not having their contributions recognized; and assumptions about style and beauty like communication styles, physical appearance, and body type (Lewis et al., 2017). Even in the classroom, Black women faculty report some challenges from their White male students (Pittman, 2010). White male students of Black women faculty have challenged their authority, questioned their teaching competency, and disrespected their scholarly expertise in addition to intimidating them (Harlow, 2013; McGowan, 2000). These White male students devalue their scholarly achievements while justifying their oppressive behaviors were seen as dangerous to faculty members (Pittman, 2010). All of these experiences are seen as overt threats directed at Black women faculty personally or professionally. The subtle and indirect actions of students and faculty that undermine personal and professional development are considered both visible and invisible barriers that contribute to the feelings of isolation, marginalization, and alienation of Black faculty (Edwards & Ross, 2018).

**Cultural Taxation/Tokenism**

Black women also experience aspects of tokenism such as completing extra work while also being invisible (Davis & Brown, 2017; Hilton, 2009), which can lead to fatigue as they manage social acceptance while having these experiences with tokenism and isolation (Hilton,
Their contributions to their department and universities go unacknowledged, but they also struggle with trying to “keep up the appearance of diversity and inclusion” (Davis & Brown, 2017, p. 4). Further, some institutions sell the vision of social justice work to attract new faculty, but values appear inconsistent upon their orientation, which undermines the success of Black women faculty who wish to be tenured (Leon & Thomas, 2016). Black women faculty bring cultural diversity in addition to a rich heritage that centers on family, community, and others (Lewis, 2020). However, Black women face difficulties regarding their race and gender in terms of cultural and identity taxation (Padilla, 1994). Identity taxation is when marginalized identities take on non-academic service for other faculty members in order to represent diversity (Hirshfield & Joseph, 2012).

**Internalized Oppression**

In addition to identity and cultural taxation, Black women have to work to disprove stereotypes and automatic assumptions made about them. While trying to persist in academia, Black women have to acknowledge the damage of assumptions that become internalized (Davis & Brown, 2017). Internalized oppression can be both subtle and apparent. Black women faculty can experience imposter phenomenon and stereotype threat (Nadal et al., 2021). Black women faculty experience the imposter phenomenon when they are unable to attribute their success to their own abilities regardless of their achievements (Parkman, 2016). The stereotype threat is when negative messages about someone’s identity affects their performance (Nguyen & Ryan, 2008). When Black women are faced with constant tokenization and invisibility, it can contribute to feelings of fraudulence if it occurs over an extended period.

**Isolation**

Black women faculty are often isolated because they are different from their White and
Black male counterparts due to their gender and White women due to their race (Pittman, 2010). This creates feelings of “otherness” in the academic environment (Pittman, 2010). The experience of having to find themselves decoding the information from their colleagues also adds to the isolation and the lack of collegiality (Edwards & Ross, 2018). The lack of community contributes to feeling isolated and invisible (Haskins et al., 2013). Black women feeling isolated and working in less than warm environments affect their retention and confidence in these academic spaces (Allen & Joseph, 2018). Many of these negative experiences lead Black women to leave higher education or even decide not to pursue these opportunities (Washington et al., 2021). The distinct loneliness of feeling like the only one may lead to greater isolation or cause Black women faculty to leave in order to receive a culturally fulfilling experience (Leon & Thomas, 2016). But isolation and other exclusionary experiences are also reasons why Black women fight to prove they belong in academia (Allen & Joseph, 2018). Regardless, Black women who feel isolated at PWIs could benefit from social organizations for connections with other Black women to develop a sense of community (Lewis et al., 2017).

**Black Student Experiences at PWIs**

Black students are introduced to the challenges of higher education culture as they begin their collegiate careers. Comparing the doctoral completion rates between races makes the various disparities even clearer, especially since the doctoral completion between underrepresented minorities has increased. According to the National Science Foundation (2015), doctoral completion of Black and African Americans increased by 31% over the last 10 years. The absence of diversity in graduate programs has heightened the awareness of Black students, making them feel like an outsider because they are shown that diversity is not valued (Shavers & Moore, 2019).
In addition to dealing with systemic racism, Black academics have to learn through trial and error, which can hinder their professional socialization (Edwards & Ross, 2018). Those who identify has as being first-generation doctoral students experience more challenges, especially if they lack mentors to assist with navigating their studies (Gardner, 2013). Many PWIs advertise that they want diversity in their programs, yet there are Black graduate students and Black junior faculty without a mentor to cultivate this type of environment. Additionally, Black women have experienced isolation, invisibility, racial hostility, insensitivity, and bias in grading (Johnson-Bailey et al., 2009, p. 190). Black women further expressed feelings of turmoil and psychological effects when they felt completely isolated and disconnected from their university (Johnson-Bailey et al., 2009). African American students attending a PWI have similarly reported lack of belonging and trouble with coping in addition to several barriers and stressors during their college experiences that impacted their adjustment, engagement, and completion (Hannon et al., 2016). However, a Black studies course may lead to psychological empowerment, self-determination, counter spaces, and community perpetuity as well as increased agency, autonomy, motivation, and competence among the students as they explored their history and culture in their course (Chapman-Hillard & Beasley, 2018). Black students may use this course to redefine their identities on their own terms that are more consistent with their cultural and historical roots (Chapman-Hillard & Beasley, 2018).

Black Women Graduate Students

Black women commonly graduate at a high rate (Greer & White, 2009), but they also experience a higher degree of isolation and dissatisfaction than their White and male counterparts (Ellis, 2001; Rasheem et al., 2018). Even though Black women students at PWIs exhibit relentless determination to combat stereotypes, they also report that it was challenging
and exhausting to do so (Shavers & Moore, 2014b). Negative campus experiences of the participants left them feeling isolated, lonely, disconnected, frustrated, and unsupported while attending their doctoral programs (Shavers & Moore, 2019). The lack of knowledge of the Black women graduate student experience is another example of them being ignored and excluded (Shavers & Moore, 2014b). This suggests the importance of examining the overall well-being of Black women doctoral students during their doctoral programs including symptoms, strategies, and how these experiences influence their overall well-being (Shavers & Moore, 2019). This can provide more information on how to enhance academic persistence without jeopardizing their overall well-being (Shavers & Moore, 2019).

**Black Counseling Graduate Students**

Black master’s counseling students have had similar experiences as other Black graduate students regarding their education at PWIs; however, the lens of becoming a holistic counselor often comes to play on how their experiences are interpreted (Woo et al., 2016). Black counseling students are taught the importance of being culturally competent counselors but still enter spaces that may be discriminatory (Naz et al., 2019). Black counseling students experience feelings of isolation, tokenization, lack of inclusion within coursework, differences in support received between faculty of color and White faculty, and access to support from people of color and White classmates/peers (Haskins et al., 2013). Master’s counseling students have also had experiences of cultural marginalization, biculturalism, and safe and counter-hegemonic relationships (Varney et al., 2019). Overall, Black master’s counseling students reported having to PWIs and the balancing the struggle of managing themselves between two cultures (Varney et al., 2019). These students experienced a lack of attention to race and multicultural-related discussions in their programs (Varney et al., 2019).
In order to mitigate issues with racism, counselor education should modify the training experience of counseling students. CRT should be implemented in pedagogical and curricular strategies so that all students have an equitable training experience attitudes and beliefs, knowledge, and skills (Haskins & Singh, 2015). But counselor educators might lack or have limited CRT training, which may lead to negligence of the implementing the strategies adequately. Altering program curriculums may be required for the applications of CRT to be implemented in counselor education pedagogy (Haskins & Singh, 2015). Other researchers have suggested using aspects of intersectionality to assist with the tenets of CRT while revising counselor education curriculum (Chan et al., 2018). It will be beneficial for counselor educators to conduct self-evaluations and informal evaluations with students on how the topics of intersectionality and racism over the course content are addressed (Haskins & Singh, 2015).

**Black Counselor Education Students**

There are few studies that have examined the experiences of Black counselor education students at PWIs. Most studies identified the counselor education students as being of color or identify doctoral students of another specialty. However, studies have shown that Black women counselor educator mothers experienced susceptibility to racialized marginalization, precipitation of professional strain and neglect, isolation, marginalization, and feeling unsupported (Haskins et al., 2015, p. 65). Similarly, students of color in PWIs have reported feeling left out of information, being perceived differently because of their race, or not feeling represented in class discussions or among peers (Baker et al., 2015). However, there are varying degrees of student cultural awareness, finding the strength to advocate equality and awareness, resisting being situated as a token representative of their race, and finding support in peers and advisors on campus (Baker et al., 2015). Overall, race and ethnicity factors into counselor education doctoral
students’ experiences in their program, as they have to put on an appearance, which leads them to feel like they do not have a voice or support in their program (Baker & Moore, 2015). Counselor education programs could benefit from self-examination into the local experiences of students of color as related to community, advising, environment, and access to information (Baker & Moore, 2015).

**Mentoring in CES**

The mentorship of counselor education doctoral students addresses a unique need in the field of counselor education. Even though academia is one of the career paths doctoral students can pursue, mentors should be guiding their students to enhance their teaching/pedagogy, research, and clinical skills (Boswell et al., 2015). The dual role of supervision and mentorship can lead to high career-related functions with graduate students (Boswell et al., 2017). Successful mentorship experiences include the facilitation of persistence, encouragements and nurturing of skills (Lewis, 2020) under the supervision of an experienced faculty member. Mentees are then able to sharpen their skills to maximize their potential, especially when partnered with faculty that offer correction, guidance and support (Lewis, 2020).

The importance of mentorship is apparent in graduate programs especially among Black graduate students attending non-HBCUs. Black faculty at PWIs should not be solely responsible for mentoring Black students (Dahlvig, 2010). Non-Black faculty members should implement effective cross-racial mentorship strategies to develop Black student success at PWIs (Dahlvig, 2010). Black doctoral students have various factors that influence their relationships with their White mentors such as past experiences, trusting by proxy, personal attributes, and the necessity of White people (Brown & Grothaus, 2019). The key elements of trust, comfort, honesty, and respect are valued in a culturally sensitive mentor while creating mentorship relationships,
especially among racial minorities (Chung et al., 2007). Black doctoral students need their relationships to involve trust and courtesy while being in their program (Brown & Grothaus, 2019). Mistrust with their mentors can be caused by receiving family messages, experiencing overt racism, experiencing tokenism, and experiencing dissonance (Brown & Grothaus, 2019). Overall, doctoral students have reported internalized racism, feeling isolated, questioning self-perception, and having a hard time considering White trust (Brown & Grothaus, 2019). Students have also reported experiencing some form of racial socialization to navigate and maintain boundaries to exhibit professional relationships (Barker, 2016). Further, Black student have experienced feeling undervalued and unsupported in their doctoral programs because they witnessed the White students being ushered through the process (Barker, 2016).

For Black women doctoral students, mentorship that focuses on enhancing the leadership development of women may cultivate successful outcomes in their counselor education programs. A women’s inclusive mentoring framework may improve mentorship and leadership development for women in counselor education (Maccombs & Bhat, 2020). However, it may be difficult to implement this framework in universities that have limited women faculty counselor education departments.

Other studies have examined various mentorship styles and/or mentorship needs within the field of counselor education to develop their own framework for improving counselor education. Baltrinic et al. (2018) suggested that counselor education programs consider ways to match CES doctoral students with faculty members who will be a good fit for the students’ preferred learning style. Doctoral students’ and CES faculty members’ critical incidents should be examined during teaching mentorships to increase understanding of respective mentor and mentee perspectives (Baltrinic et al., 2018). Mentors should also be approachable, have a
personal style of mentoring, be encouraging, and provide clear and direct feedback to the mentee (Boswell et al., 2015). Mentors should also initiate conversations surrounding topics like work–life balance, tenure, and professional development (Boswell et al., 2015). Mentors must also identify and address mentees’ developmental needs, navigate their skill deficits, and establish appropriate boundaries and expectations for the mentoring relationship (Purguson et al., 2018).

Supervision and Mentorship

In the 2016 CACREP standards, doctoral students have five core areas that must be a part of their doctoral professional identity: leadership and advocacy, counseling, teaching, supervision, and research and scholarship (CACREP, 2015). Out of these core areas, there are three main supervision mentorship opportunities that help shape their identity as counselor educators: teaching supervision, clinical supervision, and research supervision (CACREP, 2015). Teaching supervision is involved with pairing the doctoral students with faculty to enhance their teaching skills (Baltrinic et al., 2018). Coteaching experiences are built on relationships, operational structure, and students’ development (Baltrinic et al., 2018). Teaching supervision that is career based and focuses on the student gathering skill and field related content is beneficial (Baltrinic et al., 2018), but the psychosocial based teaching mentorship is what is needed to persist through their doctoral program. The psychosocial mentorship style involves providing emotional support and other interpersonal traits that Black doctoral students need while facing challenges in their program (Baltrinic et al., 2018). Mentorship should incorporate teaching, evaluating, and supervision perspectives to assist with counselor education doctoral student development (Baltrinic et al., 2018).

Some counselor education programs are relying on the research coursework to give doctoral students research skill and development (Lamar & Helm, 2017). Mentors should give
doctoral students a more holistic understanding in regard to research education so that they can avoid having low research interests (Lamar & Helm, 2017). Usually, these students have strong clinical or practitioner abilities and have difficulty viewing themselves as researchers (Gelso, 2006). Research mentors assist CES doctoral students with developing a researcher voice, juggling the research identity with other identities, developing their confidence, and providing support and learning opportunities (Lamar & Helm, 2017). It is important for counselor educators to facilitate discussions with Black doctoral students to develop their research identity, as mentorship is a key component in the CES field.

**Photovoice**

The use of photovoice as an intervention is beneficial when it comes to identifying lived experiences of a specific population. It has been used to give a voice to underrepresented and vulnerable populations for their own empowerment (Chonody et al., 2013). Photovoice has revealed that Black women at PWIs had feelings of discouragement in regard to some of their interactions with their peers, classroom experience, and dating while attending a PWI (Dahlvig, 2010). Photovoice can be used as a research and pedagogical tool as it can be conceptualized within a Black feminist framework (Perez et al., 2016). Black feminist photovoice can be a transformative tool to encourage critical reflection of power dynamics of lived experiences of those from marginalized communities, providing an opportunity for creative expression of the oppressions the students felt in their own intersectional identities (Perez et al., 2016). Black feminists photovoice can be used to theorize power and oppression as a transformative pedagogical tool for educators to actualize social justice within their education (Perez et al, 2016).

The use of photovoice varies with each study. Bowers et al. (2020) examined the
experiences of graduate students of color at PWI using photovoice by including 12 photos to build a conceptual map that represented their experience as a graduate student of color, which revealed feelings of isolation and discrimination as well as overcoming obstacles through self-care and building nurturing relationships. Sackett and Dogan (2019) explored the experiences of Black teens’ racial identity using photovoice by facilitating two photovoice sessions over a 2-week period together. The researchers encouraged the students to brainstorm on what it was like to be a Black teen. Using photovoice, the Black teens identified that there were places they did not belong, while having locations that were considered comfort places for reflection and strength (Sackett & Dogan, 2019). Additionally, photovoice has assisted master’s counseling students with processing information regarding the anti-racist growth lesson the students learned in a multicultural course in addition to providing reflection of feelings (Paone et al., 2018).

Vision Boards

Visualization is a good way to communicate problem-solving concepts from a person’s mind into real-life application. Visualization is a communication tool in which all participants can relate (King et al., 1989). A modern and creative way to enhance visualization is through vision boards. Vision boards eliminate the struggle of having to brainstorm relevant stories or facts to share and present as a visual aid (Benedict, 2021).

There is limited research on the use of vision boards with Black students, women, or even graduate education, especially in counseling and CES. However, there is research that uses vision boards as a therapeutic intervention and for goal setting in other disciplines and fields. Vision boards were originally used for strategic goal setting and reflection using collages of images and texts (Burton & Lent, 2016). But vision boards can be used to inspire and assist clients with their goals, empowering clients to focus on their desired outcomes by visualizing
improved life circumstances or identify improvement (Burton & Lent, 2016). For example, vision boards have been used with adolescents to enhance self-efficacy and promote identity exploration for their career aspirations (Conderman & Young, 2021; Waalkes et al., 2019). Vision boards can especially assist those who have been limited within their marginalized identities (Waalkes et al., 2019).

**Summary**

This review of the literature focused on the various experiences of Black students and faculty while attending or working at PWIs. It addressed the barriers that Black women faculty and Black students face in higher education at their universities such as microaggressions, cultural taxation/tokenization, isolation, and internalized oppression as they occupy spaces at PWIs. These experiences shed light on the underrepresentation of Black women faculty in academia and how underrepresentation could be addressed for Black women faculty in counselor education. The importance of mentoring in counselor education was provided as well as an overview of supervision and the distinctions of clinical research and teaching supervision mentorship. The cross-racial mentorship experiences at PWIs may have an impact on the studies of Black doctoral CES students. This study addressed the supervision mentorship experience of Black women counselor educators and if it influenced their career in CES. Chapter 3 will focus on the methodology used to examine the cross-racial mentorship and supervision of recent Black women counselor education students.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological qualitative study was to describe the lived experiences of recent Black women counselor education graduates who had non-Black supervision mentors at PWIs (non-HBCUs). The research questions were created to define the purpose of research, identify the gap in literature, and guide the study:

1. What were your experiences with cross-racial mentorship and supervision in a CACREP doctoral counselor education program as a Black woman CES student while attending a PWI?

2. How do your cross-racial supervision and mentoring experiences as a Black woman in CES program at a PWI influence your current and future supervision and mentoring?

This study revealed cross-racial supervision and mentorship experiences of Black women in CES as they matriculated through their counselor education doctoral programs. This chapter will focus on the research design, the participants, data collection, data analysis, my role as a researcher, and ethical considerations.

Research Design

As mentioned, this study explored the lived experiences of Black women CES graduates who received cross-racial supervision and mentorship while attending PWIs. The appropriate design was a transcendental phenomenological qualitative approach. A qualitative design was chosen because the qualitative approach is a systemic inquiry that understands how people experience aspects of their lives, how they behave and how these interactions form relationships (Teherani et al., 2015). This approach was needed for this study to understand the challenges and joys Black women counselor educators faced during their supervised mentorships and how these interactions formed their career aspirations.
Phenomenology

The phenomenological approach is used to examine how a group of individuals in a certain place or context have certain experiences (Van Manen, 2017b). Phenomenology is not just the study of experiences, but it is the study of lived, pre-reflective, and pre-predicative meanings of an experience (Van Manen, 2017a). Phenomenological research is based on the constructivist approach indicating that there is no single reality, and the participants’ views of their experiences are the reality (Teherani et al., 2015). The studied phenomena were the lived experiences and constructed reality of the Black women counselor educators and their supervision and mentorship experiences at PWIs. This study followed a phenomenological approach because it focused on the context of becoming a Black woman counselor educator while attending a PWI, along with understanding the challenges and joys associated with their experiences (Blackshear et al., 2021). This study adhered to the six components of Van Manen’s (1997) phenomenological research process: looking to the nature of the lived experience, exploring the experience as it is lived rather than as it is conceptualized by the researcher, reflecting on specific themes that characterize the phenomenon, describing the phenomenon by writing/rewriting, maintaining a strong relation to the phenomenon, and balancing the research context by considering parts and wholes. This approach helped describe the essence of what all participants have in common when experiencing the same phenomenon (Creswell et al., 2007; Moustakas, 1994), in addition to sharing their own different experiences.

Transcendental Versus Hermeneutical Approaches

There are two different types of phenomenological approaches—transcendental and hermeneutical (Van Manen, 1990)—, which both are different in regard to philosophy and methodology. In the hermeneutical approach, the researcher is considered a participant in the
study and interprets the meanings of the lived experiences of the other participants (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). But it may be difficult to extract the proper meaning of the participants’ experiences using this approach. In contrast, the transcendental approach allows the researcher to perceive the reality through the lens of the participants by using the participants’ reported thoughts while withholding their own judgment or ideas (Moustakas, 1994). This can be done through bracketing or when the researcher puts assigned their own judgments, understandings, and biases regarding the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). A key concept of transcendental phenomenology is using intuition and being aware of things that present itself on its own accord (Moustakas, 1994).

**Research Procedures**

Approval for the study was required to ensure participants’ safety and confidentiality throughout the research process. Once approval from the human subjects committee of the Institutional Review Board at Liberty University was obtained, information for a call for participants was sent out through various recruiting sites such as CESNET and social media platforms. This study utilized emails for scheduling the interviews of the participants. It is more likely for participants to speak more in depth with a peer versus a faculty member or someone with authority (Purgason et al., 2018). This study uses pseudonyms and removed any identifying information (Creswell, 2014).

I used individual interviews and member checking with the participants to ensure my interpretations were accurate (Bloomberg, 2019). Though data collection was originally designed to be in multiple forms—semi structured interviews and focus groups—all the participants chose to do individual interviews. The interviews were conducted virtually via Zoom.
Interviews

The main data collection tool for this study was a semi-structured, in-depth interviews with each participant regarding their experiences. Qualitative interviews involve unstructured, open-ended questions that elicit views and opinions from the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The interviews were completed via telephone or video conferencing (Zoom) for approximately 60 minutes. For the triangulation of data, the interviews were audiotaped and recorded for accurate transcription (Vogt & Johnson, 2016), which the participants consented to. Each interview was guided by the questions developed by me.

In addition to interviews, photovoice prompts and instructions on completing a basic vision board were given to the participants after signing the consent form so they could prepare for the interview. During the interview, the participants were invited to share about their vision boards as they responded to the vision board prompts in the interview. The vision boards were submitted electronically to me post interview. Each participant’s vision board contained at least three photographs that are a representation of their mentorship and supervision experiences. Participants along with the photos explained one large narrative representing their past supervised experience and their current or future aspirations of providing supervision or mentorship. If participants would have chosen to be in both the focus group and individual interview, they would have submitted their completed vision board soon after the interview.

Photovoice

To add to the richness of the semi-structured interviewing, I used photovoice, which is a qualitative method that gathers the point of view of participants through photography. Photovoice was developed by Wang and Burris (1997) using three theoretical tenets: critical consciousness, feminism, and participatory photography (Latz et al., 2016). The participants are
given a space to voice and highlight their experiences and perspectives using their photographs (Latz & Mulvihill, 2017). Photovoice is a method fortified by feminism (Latz & Mulvihill, 2017) that uses photographs to highlight research themes (Wang & Burris, 1997). Even though photovoice is the lens where the participants are able to use and conceptualize their own experiences, Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) and CRT (Haskins & Singh, 2015) were used in this study to identify the challenges and joy of the Black women counselor educators of this study.

The main goals of photovoice are to allow participants (a) to record and reflect on their strength and concerns, (b) promote dialogue and knowledge in either large or small group discussions regarding the community issues at hand, and (c) to capture the attention of policy makers (Latz et al., 2016; Wang & Burris, 1997). For this study, the first goal was the immediate focus, and the other two goals were used for future research and implications. There may be ethical concerns regarding using voice in photovoice research issues that are common and can be addressed in the consent forms including but not limited to “privacy, safety, presentation, publication of videos, photo ownership and advocacy” (Evans-Agnew & Rosemburg, 2016, p. 1021).

**Vision Board**

Vision boards were also used in combination with photovoice. Photovoice gives a voice to individuals through their photos but using the vision board method, participants gathered all the photos and created a narrative of those lived experience on a board. The use of vision boards enables individuals to reflect of their personal, academic and profession experiences while used as a visual aid to facilitate communication (Benedict, 2020). The participants are also considered coresearchers and are able to control the narrative of their story (Lewis, 2020).
Vision boards were originally created for goal setting and reflection. These vision boards were a separate collection tool as a part of the study. The traditional process of creating a vision board can be easily adapted whether if it is used as an intervention or research purposes (Waalkes et al., 2019). For the digital version of a vision board, participants can use websites like canva or PowerPoint to create a board. This can easily be converted into a photo or pdf form when complete. The following materials should be available for participants to create a traditional vision board from any art supply or craft section of a store:

- A blank canvas or poster board
- A variety of sources of images or words (i.e., magazine, newspaper, printing images from internet, stickers)
- Glue
- Markers
- Scissors

**Process**

Participants were asked specific prompts to answer for their reflection as a part of their vision boards and their narratives to submit. As participants answered the prompts, they were able to find photographs that best represent their supervised mentoring experience and glue them to a board of their choosing. Participants could also add key words or other creative images to help prompt their reflection paragraphs they had to submit. In the interviews, the participants were asked how their past experiences are reflected in how they currently provide supervision and mentorship in addition to how they plan to proceed in the future.

**Sampling Procedures**

The participants were selected based on their recent graduation status from CACREP-
accredited doctoral programs at PWIs within the last 5 years. The method of sampling for this study was purposive criterion sampling (Robinson-Wood et al., 2015). Qualitative research studies uses small and purposeful sampling when selecting participants (Campbell et al., 2020), which helps the researcher to understand the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This study focused on the lived experiences of recent Black women counselor education graduates who completed their training at CACREP-accredited doctoral programs at PWIs throughout the United States. Thus, I recruited approximately eight individuals who met the following criteria:

1. 18 years or older,
2. Self-identify as Black or African American,
3. Self-identify as women,
4. Recently graduated from a CACREP-accredited counselor education doctoral program at a non-HBCU within the last 5 years,
5. Supervised or mentored by a non-Black CES faculty member during their CES doctoral program.
6. Currently or aspire to provide supervision or mentorship

The criteria sample of participants may be homogeneous because they had similar characteristics for selection.

The sample size for phenomenological research ranges from three to 10 participants (Creswell, 2013); however, the ideal number for qualitative research is between seven and 15 participants (Patton, 2015). I continued to collect participants until saturation was reached. Researchers stop collecting data when gathering fresh data no longer reveals new information (Charmeze, 2006).
**Researcher’s Role**

Since this study involved a transcendental approach, bracketing was used to limit the influence of my personal context. I identify as a Black woman in a CES doctoral program, and my own experiences could have influenced the interpretations of the participants’ experiences. However, these experiences allowed me to ask relevant interview questions to guide the study. It was important to be careful with the designing of the questions so that bias did not influence the study findings (see Creswell, 2013). Additionally, the transcendental method is seen as a descriptive approach of the lived experiences where the researcher stays objective (Neubauer et al., 2019). Using the transcendental approach, I noted my own perceptions, judgements, and biases in a journal so that I could gain awareness of the phenomenon through the experiences of the participants (Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 2017b).

**Data Analysis**

The interviews recordings were transcribed using Otter transcribing software. I used thematic analysis to examine the transcriptions of the interviews, reviewing the data thoroughly to code and recode. It is important that the researcher goes through the text and assign codes (Creswell & Creswell, 2017), searching the data for themes to define based on the participants to produce themes. In qualitative research, the data lead to about five to seven themes (Creswell, 2013). I gathered data and pictures from the study and labeled those categories in the language of the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). A qualitative auditor with qualitative research training also reviewed the codes and themes of the study, which further contributed to the study’s trustworthiness.

**Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is used in qualitative research to determine the study’s authenticity.
through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Creswell, 2013).

Credibility was established in the form of member checking, interviewing, and the use of photographs. Triangulation was implemented using photographs, memos, and transcripts for credibility. Dependability and confirmability were established through coding, recoding, and journaling. Additionally, memoing was used as a bracketing tool. Finally, transferability was determined based on the use of consistent data collection procedures and how inclusive the findings are.

**Ethical Considerations**

One ethical consideration that was considered for this study was to minimize the power differential in order to create a safer environment to share experience. This was accomplished because the semi structured interviews were conducted by me as someone who is not affiliated with their program or a member of faculty in their program. Another consideration was to remove bias by bracketing positions on this topic. Bracketing is when the researchers discuss any preconceptions, knowledge, and experience related to the topic before collecting or analyzing the data so that it does not interfere with the participants’ experience (Hays & Singh, 2012). Bracketing helped remove any personal thoughts from creating bias into the study.

**Summary**

The supervised mentorship experiences of recent Black women counselor education doctoral students who attended PWIs were investigated in this study. A transcendental phenomenological approach was used with semi structured interviews and photovoice as data collection tools. Photovoice vision boards were used as a method of triangulation by using photographs to describe the experience of the participants. Data analysis involved the lens of Black feminist thought/womanist theory to determine the role of gender and race in the
participants’ experiences.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological qualitative study was to describe the lived experiences of recent Black women CES graduates who had non-Black supervision mentors at CACREP-accredited PWIs (non-HBCU). The research questions for this study were “What were your experiences with cross-racial mentorship and supervision in a CACREP doctoral counselor education program as a Black woman CES student while attending a PWI?” and “How did your cross-racial supervision and mentoring experiences as a Black woman in a CES program at a PWI influence your current and future supervision and mentoring?” The goal of this research was to describe and identify the lived experiences of Black women CES graduates while using vision boards.

This chapter presents the findings that were obtained from qualitative, semi structured interviews with eight Black women CES professionals. In addition to the interviews, participants provided vision board photovoice submissions (Appendix F) expressing their cross-racial mentorship and supervision experience in their respective programs. The following themes emerged from the data analysis: ability to have access (communication and feelings of loneliness and isolation), support (institutional support, faculty mentor/supervisor support, and community support), and cultural responsiveness (cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, racism and implicit bias, inclusivity and representation). Some of the themes offered insight to many of the barriers noted in the literature review in Chapter 2. The participant profiles are next, followed by the themes that emerged from this study.

Participant Profiles

For this study, all the interviews were conducted using Zoom between November 2021 and December 2021. I sent out a call for participants within the counselor education network in
addition to utilizing social media. All participants were a result of those invitations. Participants completed the screening for study criteria eligibility, then all participants were sent the consent forms, vision board prompts, and meeting invitations. Once the consent forms were signed and submitted, the interviews began. The interviews were recorded with participant approval and then transcribed after interview completion to allow for thematic analysis. Interviews and identifying information were stored on a password-protected computer. Data were collected until saturation was reached. Due to some inaccurate wording in the transcriptions, I had to listen to each interview, correcting the transcripts. The themes and supporting quotes collected during the interview were sent to the participants for member checking. The interviews of the eight participants were analyzed and coded, along with vision boards submitted in response to their two prompts.

All participants were Black women who graduated from their CES doctoral programs within the last 5 years. Two of the eight participants received their doctoral degree from the same university, and the rest attended various PWIs throughout the United States. All participants were between the ages of 21–49. Out of the eight participants, six were current faculty in counseling programs. Pseudonyms and a 10-year age range were implemented to protect the participants’ identities. The pseudonyms given were Janet, Gina, Vivian, Vanessa, Maxine, Claire, Whitley, and Monique. A detailed description of each participant follows in Table 2).
### Table 2

**Participant Profiles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Program region</th>
<th>Faculty (FT/PT/N/A)</th>
<th>Supervisor (Y/N)</th>
<th>Program completion</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Janet</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>Southeastern</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Past year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gina</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>21-29</td>
<td>Southeastern</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Last semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivian</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Southeastern</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanessa</td>
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<td>PT</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maxine</td>
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<td>30-39</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Last year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitley</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>Southeastern</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monique</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>Midwestern</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Janet is single and completed her CES program within the last year. She is in the 30-39 age range. She attended her doctoral program at a Southeastern CACREP accredited predominately white institution. She currently does not provide supervision nor is a faculty member.

Gina is married and completed her CES program last semester. She is in the 21-29 age range. She attended her doctoral program at a Southeastern CACREP accredited predominately white institution. She currently does not provide supervision but is eligible. She also is not a faculty member.

Vivian is married and completed her CES program in 2018 and has been a supervisor for 10 years. She is in the 40-49 age range. She attended her doctoral program at a Southeastern CACREP accredited predominately white institution. She currently is a full-time professor at a PWI in the southeast.

Vanessa is single and completed her CES program in 2020. She is in the 21-29 age range.
She attended her doctoral program at a Midwestern CACREP accredited predominately white institution. She currently does not provide supervision but adjuncts part time at a faith-based institution.

Maxine is single and completed her CES program within the last year. She is in the 30-39 age range. She attended her doctoral program at a Western CACREP accredited predominately white institution. She currently does not provide supervision, but she is a full-time professor at a midwestern PWI.

Claire is married and completed her CES program within the last five years and has been a supervisor for 10 years. She is in the 30-39 age range. She attended her doctoral program at a Southeastern CACREP accredited predominately white institution. She is currently a full-time professor at a faith-based institution in the southeast.

Whitley is married and completed her CES program in 2018 and has been a supervisor for 3 years. She is in the 30-39 age range. She attended her doctoral program at a Southeastern CACREP predominately white institution. She is currently a fulltime professor at a HBCU.

Monique is married and completed her CES program in 2020 and has been a supervisor for 4 years. She is in the 30-39 age range. She attended her doctoral program at a Midwestern CACREP accredited predominately white institution. She is currently a full-time professor at an HBCU.

**Results**

Participants were asked a series of questions related to their cross-racial mentorship and supervision experiences. All were encouraged to answer openly and as thoroughly as they desired, without fear or hesitation. The following research questions helped focus each interview question as well as the themes from participant responses: “What were your experiences with
cross-racial mentorship and supervision in a CACREP doctoral counselor education program as a Black woman CES student while attending a PWI?” and “How did your cross-racial supervision and mentoring experiences as a Black woman in a CES program at a PWI influence your current and future supervision and mentoring?” Each research question helped determine themes that recognized participants’ lived experiences with mentorship and supervision. There were 64 codes consolidated into three themes. The themes and subthemes are displayed in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Themes and Subthemes*
There were a few themes that the majority, if not all, the participants reported as their experience. In the following sections, I define the themes and report how many of the participants reported related experiences. This includes verbatim samples and synthesized reflections that connect to the themes. The themes are ability to have access (communication and feelings of loneliness and isolation), support (institutional support, faculty mentor/supervisor support, and community support), and cultural responsiveness (cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, racism and implicit bias, inclusivity and representation).

**Theme 1: Ability to Have Access**

A theme articulated by the participants as an overarching term was accessibility. Accessibility or having access is defined by the literature as the ease or difficulty to reach or interact (Miller, 2018). All eight participants reported that the ability to have access to their mentor or supervisor was important during their program. The participants stated that being able to interact with or contact their supervisor was either a challenge or a successful experience while going through their doctoral program. For instance, several participants reported having access to their mentor or supervisor who was available to answer questions or provide feedback as needed. But others explained that they had a mentor who did not show up for them in the way they needed, or they did not have access to them to ask for assistance. The theme was broken down into two subthemes by the participants’ responses: communication and feeling of loneliness and isolation.

Black women who have access and communication with their supervisor have less distress during their programs (Hannon et al., 2016). The participants who felt like they had limited access to their mentor or supervisor had difficult learning experiences. Janet, Gina, Claire, Whitley, and Monique specifically reported having issues with accessibility. Janet
recounted that she did not have anyone to help her when she transferred to a new program: “I feel like at [School 2] whoever I emailed to help me get into the program, that’s who I kept emailing. So I don’t know if I had an advisor.” Janet was contacting different faculty members for help because she did not know how to get acclimated with her new learning environment. Eventually Janet was able to get in contact with them, but it was brief, and she still did not know them:

Well I know now that I had an advisor because I ended up having to get my stuff signed off. But I didn’t know who they were. I didn’t contact them like I was contacting the faculty members who helped me in the beginning like throughout the year and a half, two years that I was at [School 2].

Monique had the same issues as Janet because she also transitioned from another school, and it was difficult to have access to the faculty who was supervising her dissertation:

When I went to transition to the other school, and tried to get in contact with her, because they wanted the other professors that were already on our committee to come over to the school, so they could, you know, be a part of our committee and, she wouldn’t return any calls or emails, and I didn’t hear back from her, I ended up going to the other professor. Monique also had to find others who would make time to answer and assist her with difficulties during what was left of her doctoral studies.

Similarly, Gina shared that her chair did not provide her with the help she needed to finish her dissertation:

Even though I had writer’s block, I spoke about it. I said “Hey, I have writer’s block, I need help.” Like, I want to push through this. And then to tell me just go read some articles. Because you didn’t have time, because you were focused on someone else or
something else. It’s not fair to me.

Gina felt like she was being pushed to the side by her chair because the other students she was helping had a better chance of graduating on time.

Claire witnessed similar things happen to her peers but made sure that she made it a priority to inform all her faculty her name and who she was in case she needed help in the future:

When I started my program, I made it my business to be intentional about connecting with every faculty member, so that every faculty member knew who I was, every faculty member would know my name. So when it came, I think it was a little easier to have more difficult conversations.

Claire shared that she thought it would be easier to get in contact faculty if she tried this approach.

Whitley reported that her program had difficulty with keeping faculty in the department, which made it difficult to connect and have different opportunities for mentorship: “The last three years I was there, we had a lot of turnovers, in terms of faculty, the person that I would say, was my mentor there, and she became my chair.” Due to having so much turnover in the department, she did not have any option when it came down to picking a chair for her dissertation even though she wanted other opportunities.

**Communication**

Under being able to have access, the participants overall agreed that having good communication was important in their mentorship and supervisory experiences. Janet revealed that to have good communication, rapport must be established. Based on the literature, Black women have been suffering with not being heard by their faculty supervisors in their program (Edwards & Ross, 2018). But personal characteristics and values can play a part in how rapport
is built with mentees and supervisees. Janet mentioned,

I already know that compassion is one of my values anyway. But now my personal and my professional values are perfectly in sync. So I think it’s going to help build a better rapport, which will allow me to show up in the way that’s best for each mentee individually.

Gina shared that she values her supervision experiences to be collaborative and the only way to do that is to have important conversations with supervisees. Gina stated,

to me a part of effective supervision is collaborative mentorship. And so, my experiences in the program, they just reaffirmed for me that whether you’re a counselor, whether you’re a professor, there are still conversations that need to be held.

Similar to Gina, Vivian had expectations about communication: “What I typically do with my other mentees is, I meet with them once a month. They basically outline their goals, expectations of a mentoring relationship, and then also point out what it is they need.” However, Vivian has had both positive and negative experiences with communication with mentees as a Black woman. She noted,

I get the over identification; I get the blurred lines and here’s the thing … I’m like, very clear. I don’t hang out with my students out of class. So like, I’ve had issues with students trying to address me on my first name. I don’t know where you got that from. I don’t call your phone. We don’t go for that.

Vivian pointed out that with good communication, there needs to be boundaries in the mentorship and supervisory relationship.

Claire had similar views on boundaries when it came to the mentor and supervisory relationship. Claire shared that it was important to treat doctoral students as colleagues, but there
needs to be a line of familiarity:

There is an understanding that with doc students, the boundaries are a little different. They’re not the same as the boundaries with a master student who isn’t an emerging professional. The boundaries with doc students, they are professional, they’re learning to be colleagues in academia. So I’m understanding that while there’s still a line, there needs to be a closer connection, especially if there’s research and things like that involved. And recognizing what that looks like, understanding what conversations that need to happen on multiple occasions, and being aware of those important.

Maxine revealed how holding space for mentees and supervisees to share is a big part of communication and giving them access to needed knowledge:

So being able to hold space, and, you know, hopefully help them turn on the lights of what their clinical voice will be, or their interests and things. And provide like a calmer space, to help with the chaos of trying to figure it out. And normalizing that. When you try to find your clinical voice, sometimes it can be so distant.

Maxine also shared that it is important to be able to be transparent in what mentees and supervisees need to know, and she hoped that they are also comfortable to share what they need from her.

Whitley and Monique revealed a similar ideal about normalizing the mentee’s experience and being transparent. Whitley stated,

In terms of just to normalize and feel heard and validated I would tell her about my experiences and things like that, and what I had talked to other Black women about and unfortunately, it happens all too commonly. My relationships with my supervisees now, I wouldn’t say informal, but it’s more like a seminar, because it’s very much about, what’s
going on at your site? What are your clinical issues? You know, they do a case study, we talk about cultural considerations, and sometimes it’s very surface for students in terms of cultural. I’m like, okay, and how does that influence you?

Monique’s approach to communication was straightforward: “I try to just be very honest and open. … Not everyone is going to value I’m very … straight to the point but I don’t want you to get into the field and be surprised about anything.”

Finally, Vanessa pointed out that effective communication can be facilitated in group settings as well as one-on-one: “I believe better facilitation could happen in the classroom. Through large and small group discussions, it can happen through projects, it can happen through attending conferences.”

*Feelings of Loneliness and Isolation*

Overall, the participants described subtle and indirect actions of invisibility that contributed to the feelings of isolation (Edwards & Ross, 2018). The literature supports that feeling loneliness can lead to greater isolation (Leon & Thomas, 2016). Seven out of eight participants shared their feelings of being isolated or lonely while in their doctoral programs. Gina reported that her doctoral program overall felt isolating and that the access to help varied by individual:

I would say, I felt it was very isolated. It was obvious that there were different rules, different strokes for different folks, basically. Before I found out about the plethora of Black faculty members that existed. And it’s like, you mean to tell me in these five years that I’ve been in this university, nobody ever mentioned, a Black professor or tried to connect Black students with Black professors. But Black students would always complain about feeling isolated, and you even see Black students dropping out of the program, and
nobody ever said anything. If I felt isolated in the program, you just confirm that for me, because you knew about these people that can remedy these feelings. But you held them from me and other students.

Like Gina, Monique felt isolated and invisible and was forced to be an advocate for herself because she did not have access to what she needed during her program: “It’s just the lack of support and not being visible, not being seen. It’s almost like you have to just advocate for you and pretty much teach yourself.”

Vivian reported feeling isolated and left out in her doctoral program and with her peers, especially during supervision:

Y’all didn’t even think about including me, so I was often excluded for different things. And even in doc supervision, when we would have like triads or even the doc supervision group. So I would notice that sometimes folks wouldn’t necessarily make eye contact or engage in dialogue with me.

Vanessa felt like she was alone and isolated because she did not have anyone in her doctoral program who looked like her and it was difficult to connect:

Okay, I don’t see myself here. Who am I here? I feel like a counselor educator before my time. And so when I was there at my doctoral program, I felt like I was suffering a lot. Like I could not really get a good flow of myself.

Maxine had similar feelings to Vivian in regard to feeling left out, but Maxine reported feeling isolated internally because she was not having her own needs met:

And just feeling so left out. Because it was almost as if, everyone was so excited to talk about the things that I was doing, but my humanity wasn’t acknowledged. And so I felt, you know, I felt alone … isolated, I’ll say.
Maxine’s experience of isolation came from those not wanting to work with her on various collaborations of interests:

Especially considering backgrounds and things of that nature and like noticing how professionally, people weren’t really trying to work with me. And I had been there for a couple of weeks and I kind of picked that up, like people didn’t want to collaborate and things like that. And I watched them collaborate with each other and I just kind of leaned back into myself and said, “No, I need my own [community]. I need my own space.”

Contrarily, Claire expressed that she had a mentor who attempted to mitigate feelings of loneliness by giving her access:

“And so having a faculty, you know, pull you to the side and being willing to talk, kind of pour into you, during that time was necessary, especially in an online program, where it’s very isolating during the dissertation process, and being able to open doors. You go into their offices and kind of talk with them, or pick up a phone and call, or every time they see you, they’re like, “Well, how’s it going?” just kind of checking in, on the journey, so that you knew you weren’t alone?

Whitley also reported that she just did what she needed to do to push through her program, even if she had to do things by herself: “So, I think I was always a student that just kind of kept my head down, do what I was supposed to do.”

**Theme 2: Support**

Another theme that emerged from the study was support. Support systems are important for the success of Black women, especially those who are in doctoral programs (Davidson et al., 2004). The participants shared that there were various areas of support that were needed during their program. Some participants reported that they experienced a lack of support, though others
admitted that they were able to receive support in some areas. The relationships that are established cultivate mental, emotional, and spiritual support among Black women and their support systems (Martin, 2018). All eight participants for this study shared experience with getting support among the three subthemes of institutional support, faculty mentor/supervisor support, and/or community support. Under faculty mentor/supervisor support subtheme, participants also highlighted the importance of having advocacy and personal and professional development.

**Institutional Support**

Three out eight participants reported having an issue with having institutional support. Vivian shared that she had trouble choosing between having to pay her bills or giving up professional opportunities like presenting at conference because she did not have the financial support from her institution:

So, there were like different programs, different conferences, you know, that would encourage me to participate in or even writing fellowships, and I had to let them go. Even if, I would probably be able to get the fee waived it was all the other expenses. So, like, not having some of those supports. And for me at the time, it was more or less, can I choose to pay my light bill, or choose to attend this event.

Similar to Vivian, Monique reported having issues with getting support from her department when she tried to get a signature to apply for a fellowship program:

I wanted to apply to the NBCC scholarship, and it gave like $20,000 and I really didn’t have any guidance to support with that when I tried to contact the chair of our department because you have to get the chair to sign off showing that you’re in good standing, they would not email back or anything like that.
Vanessa reported that she and the other students of color were experiencing hardships in aspects of support from their department due to the lack of representation and experience they had with dealing with Black students:

And so at the end of my supervision experience, in my doctoral program, I actually did have to go to the dean’s office because of the experience that I had politics wise. And it was my turning point in my program, where they realized that our Black students are experiencing this because our program has not had any Black students before and because we’re supposed to be multicultural, right? How do I then work with my students, who is not a client? That has usually been their dynamic of working with Black women. This is a client that I’m working with. I’m not a client, I’m your student.

Overall, the participants had a need for financial support from their institution. The literature supports that being able to connect to valuable institutional resources, especially for financing, maximizes their scholarship potential (Krammer, 2015).

**Faculty Mentor/Supervisor Support**

All eight participants shared experiences regarding support from their faculty mentor or supervisor. Maxine had a various amount of support from her mentors during her program:

“They asserted and lifted me up to speak and things because I was the only Black woman in my cohort and had been the only Black woman that the program has seen for a good amount of years.” The other participants shared experiences of support that may have fallen under advocacy or gaining the personal and professional development they desired.

**Advocacy.** Janet reported a positive experience of getting support from her faculty supervisor:

And so I feel like she played a huge role and she would send me jobs and everything like,
“Hey, I saw this I thought of you,” which I found out to be normal later, but to me, it felt like extra step like girl you didn’t have to do that. Like she didn’t have to think of me when she saw that she could have been like, I don’t need that and kept going. So, I think that extra like bit of effort and support, I’m really stands out stood out to me.

Vanessa also shared that her mentor was cheerleading her all the way to the end of her program and became her dissertation chair:

And my dissertation chair, became the person who was actually my cheerleader. I remember my first day stepping foot on campus, and the dean of the program, gave me an interview, a tour of the campus, and then the woman who became my dissertation chair, she was sitting in a classroom, and she smiled at me.

Similar to Maxine and Vanessa, Whitley’s mentor ended up being her dissertation chair and provided her with both positive experiences with support professionally, but there was a struggle with support personally:

She supported me, she validated me, because another professor might not have. They might have been like, you’re getting upset or whatever. But she validated me. And that was helpful in that situation. So there were things I think that she did that was helpful, but in terms of I think, helping to support me as a Black woman, as an educator, she didn’t help me with that at all. But she also wasn’t Black.

In contrast to these experiences, Gina reported having a lack of support professionally and personally from her faculty supervisors and even advisors:

So you’re being told your faculty advisors aren’t here to mentor you. So what are they here for? There was no mentorship. I even had a point in my doctoral journey where I had postpartum depression. And it was turned around on me, like, “you want to blame me
because you’re not finished. But you’re the one that has postpartum and you’re the one that had writer’s block. So it’s your fault.”

Similarly, Claire did not have as much support as she needed during her program. She was in the process of being a new mom and felt like she had to play catch up. Claire shared that if she had gotten that reassurance and support, her feelings would have been different:

It relates to this sense of not being seen, not being heard. Not being understood. Um, especially when, you know, each of them … each of my mentors in that process, all had children. So they’re aware of, you know, what that looks like. But I think there was this mentality that I did it, you can do it too.

The literature supported the participants views on how there is a distinct difference of advocacy between a faculty of color and White faculty (Haskins et al., 2013).

**Personal and Professional Development.** Monique reported that she struggled with receiving support from faculty throughout her whole program:

Um, you know, but with her, it was pretty disappointing because you kind of felt like you were out there just in the open, you know, with a lack of support. And, you know, you’re a student you don’t know, really what to do. Unfortunately, at the time, and you really do need the help of your professors and I understand that they’re going through stuff too, but I’m just trying to finish school.

Unlike the other participants, Monique did not receive the same support from her dissertation chair: “There were several questions that I had about formatting and different things within the actual dissertation that she just was not able to answer. Um, so I didn’t feel like it was a lot of support that I received.”

Additionally, Whitley reported that her mentor seemed to have an issue with continuing
that support after she graduated and completed her program

Um, after I graduated, I wanted to publish my dissertation, which my dissertation was a bit of a hot mess. And I was able to get some guidance from another counselor, educator, and Black woman. And so I was able to get a published, but what we’re going on five years almost since then. When we first got the information back, my chair. She basically just gave up and was just like this too much work. I don’t want to do it. And so I was new. I didn’t know. I was just like, yeah, she’s probably right, now it’s probably just a waste of time.

In contrast, Vivian reported that her mentors were able to provide her with access to areas that she may not have known about if she were to inquire herself:

So the door opening, having those gatekeepers, so they were gate openers and gatekeepers, and what I mean by that, with them being gate openers. Me being from a historically minoritized population, I had help with being able to access some areas that may seem foreign or out of my grasp.

Her mentors also helped her with her personal growth as a counselor educator: “Some successes I had included personal growth. So like being able to have that space, not only for processing but for the evaluation part. It was also extremely informative.” Similarly, Maxine’s dissertation chair provided the most support personally:

I could count on my dissertation chair to just really hold space for everything that was happening. And not even just hold space but be active and trying to find ways to support and being very verbal as well, and not being okay with any discrimination or things like that … and also in professional spaces. We presented together on my dissertation topic, and she was like, “yeah, for me, as the dissertation committee chair and as a white
individual. I know that I don’t want to put my white face on this topic, because this topic is needed. I don’t need to put my white thoughts on this.”

Some of the participants acknowledged that their faculty mentor was able initiate conversations around work–life balance, academia, and professional development (Boswell et al., 2015). The literature supports that having an inclusive mentoring framework helps with the development of women in counselor education (Maccombs & Bhat, 2020).

**Community Support**

Only one participant had an experience with the impact of getting community support during their doctoral program. Maxine reported that she had to seek out support from outside her university in the community near where she was completing her program:

> You know, being in a space where, I had to build an outside community and things of that nature. And then [in reflecting] I had given up everything to move from one coast to the other. I had [and found] outside community in the town.

The literature supports that in order for women to excel, they need to have a sense of community and connection (Freeman & Kochan, 2018). When Maxine did not have that in her program, she sought out community support.

**Theme 3: Cultural Responsiveness**

The last theme that emerged from the study was cultural responsiveness. The participants shared their experiences with mentors or supervisors that would fall under being culturally aware and sensitive. Participants would also have instances where faculty and peers would project racism and implicit bias toward them. Counselor educators need that internal awareness to understand the worldviews of clients but also their students in order to mitigate the power, privilege, and oppression that affects the promotion of social justice and advocacy of others.
(Ratts et al., 2016). Monique stated her view on being culturally responsive as a counselor educator involves “diversity stuff in all classes, not just one. It doesn’t make sense to just have it in one class. Because it’s so significant in all areas and all facets of our life.” All eight participants reported experiences that fall under cultural responsiveness and how it affected their overall doctoral experiences. The themes were broken down into four subthemes: cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, inclusivity and representation, and racism and implicit bias.

**Cultural Awareness**

Seven out of eight participants reported having experiences with cultural sensitivity during their doctoral program. Janet reported that she had two different experiences with her mentors being culturally aware. She could speak freely with her first mentor, but she had a different experience with her second mentor:

> I did not have that same experience with my second mentor. I just know that when I talked about dissertation, it was very surface level. I felt like my second mentor, I felt like she was like, nice, sweet, and genuine. But I felt like she was a little bit uncomfortable in those spaces. So maybe that’s probably why I didn’t feel safe. Because then what is the discomfort? Because now I’m being a counselor, where’s that discomfort coming from? Is it because you have some blind spots? You have some preconceived bias; you have some biases that you haven’t explored?

Gina felt that her supervisors were not culturally aware of their actions due to her experience of how various students and faculty were being treated:

> Yeah, especially when you’re at a faith-based institution, you expect everyone to love each other, like Christ loved the church. And so it’s like, I’m sitting right beside you. And you’re going to treat this person one way and treat me differently, but we’re sitting beside
each other, and I can see it like you labeling, and you see nothing wrong with it.

Maxine also shared how her supervisors had a lack of cultural awareness because the oppression of her culture was not acknowledged when needed:

Um, so one of the challenges was recognizing the privilege, and then being able to detach from circumstances that involved Black lives. So it was super frustrating to me, like, they could reach out when they needed something to be done, because I was a graduate TA. But when Ahmaud Arbery was killed, and George Floyd was killed, and things like that, it was pretty much silence. And with that silence, it was somewhat damaging.

Whitley reported that her mentor thought she was more culturally aware than she was: “I think she thought she was a little bit more cultured or a little bit more aware of how to navigate things with students of color than she was.” However, Whitley was able to acknowledge her mentor’s privilege in getting her access into various opportunities, but other individuals’ lack of awareness would shine through in those spaces:

Well, I think that her white privilege was probably able to help you know, me step into spaces. I think also, my privilege of being a lighter skin woman probably did as well. I remember one of the meetings this white man touched my hair. And I almost lost my fucking mind. And I was the only person of color.

Vivian also shared her experiences in peer supervision where she had to be aware of how she was perceived even though others around her were not as aware of the cultural climate:

I remember that in supervision, this girl said why is she wasted time? This is not something that is important. And that was the one time I got to call myself getting out of character, and I did not do it in a professional manner. Like I lost my composure. And I fit into that stereotype of being that angry Black woman, and I had fight so hard to not be
perceived as a sapphire, or, you know, like just a Jezebel, or being a mammy.

Vanessa’s cultural awareness stemmed from the lack of experience that related to her identity:

I want to say honestly, how do I be a Black woman? And where’s my voice? I had to define myself a lot in the experience. Um, I think I had an unwanted pressure of becoming the first African American. Um, so those my challenges surfaced around that identity.

Additionally, Vanessa had to put herself in various spaces in order to increase her own awareness and identify her own privilege:

Rather than I’m gonna go to this event, and just kind of learn what they do in about two hours, it was my lived experience. And I also learned where my privilege resided, which was through language, I provided a way.

For Claire, she shared how her overlapping intersecting identities were creating feelings of being behind in her studies:

However, I ended up doubling up on all my classes, and taking more classes than the average person would, because I felt like I was behind and what I know now versus what I knew then, is that that is that’s a common response for Black women to feel like you’re behind because you’re trying to measure up to what or the pace of someone else, which is not necessarily the case. And I really wasn’t behind. So, I wish in that sense, it didn’t feel like there was a cultural awareness or, there was an understanding.

Claire reported how there is a feeling of wanting to have it all together to fit the strong Black woman narrative, but having faculty be aware of how this narrative affected her during her program would have been helpful to her development:

There was awareness of the strong Black woman phenomenon. And yet there was there
was not an awareness of that. And because in that sense, at that time, high achieving perfectionist, type A personality, it all has to be together. I think … had the cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity been in place; those are the conversations we would have had to kind of center around that, which didn’t happen.

The literature addressed student cultural awareness through these experiences but failed to mention how the cultural awareness of their mentor impacted them. Black students’ cultural awareness allows them to advocate for themselves, but it is important to have that same awareness and support from their peers and faculty in their program (Baker et al., 2015).

**Cultural Sensitivity**

The experiences of the participants aligned with the literature on Black students having difficulty trusting their White mentors who do not accept their cultural differences with and during their scholarship (Freeman & Kochan, 2018). Janet reported that she was shocked that she was attending courses that had faculty who were not culturally sensitive, especially since she was in a counseling-based program:

The lack of multicultural sensitivity in a counseling program was very shocking to me. … I meant the lack of multicultural sensitivity on behalf of some of the instructors. So like the language that they would use. It was one class that we were in that I can remember specifically, actually it was two classes, the same instructor … Not to put it on the whole school, it was really one person. And just like the language was very insensitive. And at first, I thought I was being overly sensitive, because it was about me, but then there were things that applied for groups that I don’t even belong to, and it’s still like … that’s inappropriate.

Gina shared that she felt like the assessment tools that were used to teach students to use
with Black clients and clients of color were culturally insensitive:

And it’s like, there’s a lot of cultural insensitivity, including the assessment tools that we use, or the grading rubrics, because a lot of stuff with academia is geared based off of standardized testing. It wasn’t good. It wasn’t created based on the aptitude of a Black person.

Vivian reported that there were several times during supervision and interactions with her peers when they would discuss her appearance: “I remember when my peers, you know, were asking those questions like, ‘when are you going to get your hair done?’ and those things.”

Similar to Vivian, Vanessa was also judged and misunderstood by her appearance and felt that she could not bring her whole self into a room:

What I didn’t get was the opportunity to bring my whole being into the room. Um, because there were times where I often felt like I was misunderstood by language. I was often misunderstood by the way that I dressed, being a Southerner going to the Midwest, I was often misinterpreted in my way of counseling, and that was the pushback I received.

Claire also shared that she wished her mentors were more sensitive during her struggle of balancing being a mom and trying to finish her doctoral program:

It relates to this sense of not being seen, not being heard. Not being understood. Um, especially when, you know, each of them … each of my mentors in that process, all had children. So they’re aware of, you know, of what that looks like. But I think there was this mentality that I did it, you can do it too.

Though participants experienced cultural insensitivity, Maxine reported experiences where she had a faculty mentor support her by showing signs and holding space of being
culturally sensitive by providing action:

Because early in the program, he really held space for me. And he really liked what I told him about the racist events that had happened. They had the Confederate flag on their [clothing]. And like, awkwardly, like, gave me this face of like, “Get out of here” on campus. And the [faculty] was like, “I’m going to talk to people about that. Yeah, that can’t be happening. And I thought it was like the coolest thing. Like, okay, somebody is not just saying like, Oh my gosh, that’s a shame … but action. Action. And even when we talked about diversifying the space, like the department floor. He had gotten some pictures from the [historical era related to civil rights] and stuff. And he was like, ‘Would you be okay with us putting these up?’ And I was like, This is amazing, like, action, and even once we talked about the slain of like Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, he even put a Black Lives Matter [sign] on the department website.

However, Maxine also reported a negative experience where another faculty member showed no cultural awareness at all:

He leaves the room and then he comes back and he’s like, crying himself. And he’s like, “I actually listened to them say the N word before, so I want to apologize to you all” and it was just like, “what? Earlier in the week, you heard them say it and you didn’t do anything about it?”

**Inclusivity and Representation**

Literature supports the need for inclusivity and representation for Black doctoral students to have fulfilling learning experiences (Leon & Thomas, 2016), which all eight participants mentioned based on their experiences during their doctoral program. However, the literature has not addressed the possible over identification that can happen among Black students and faculty
Counselor educators have to be aware of how to provide inclusion and representation to doctoral students and counselors-in-training in order for them to feel comfortable and progress. Janet stated that “when students have peers or instructors that look like them. They are more comfortable; it feels like home. They feel nurtured. They feel understood. And they have an overall better experience.” Janet was adamant on doing her part to enforce inclusivity as she emerges into a counselor educator:

The next generation of counselors in training may have instructors who are of color or Black and so that way more people can have these optimal experiences, then the whole field starts to change, I just feel like I’m doing my little bitty part, to hopefully make somebody else’s experience better, and to ultimately impact the entire field.

Gina shared how she felt like she needed a place that was inclusive in order to thrive in her program: “And I just felt if I had a place where I could go where I felt a place of inclusion, I would no longer feel like the raisin in the milk.” Gina also stated that she would dedicate her own career to be that representation that students will need:

I will dedicate the rest of my career to be that person where I’m that beacon of light that will talk about it and continue to empower other people not only using my experiences but showing them how to use their experiences to have a voice and to share that voice to empower other women to have a voice because it has to start somewhere.

Similar to Gina, Vanessa shed light on how she can use her platform as a Black woman to provide representation and be a voice to the community:

Whereas now I’m taking what has allowed me to be an educator in the community and bringing Black ness in the community. I’m championing what womanism looks like, helping. And I’m not talking about all women of color, I’m talking about Black women.
Vivian reported how using the Black feminist thought framework helped her realize that she always has to think about being inclusive and providing that representation for her current and future mentees:

And so what I think what Black feminists thought has stood out for me, was remembering that there’s other people that’s behind, and, I have to think about representation. So as a counselor educator, as a supervisor, making sure that I am being inclusive. And then making sure that my voice and other voices are being heard.

Claire’s view focused on using the uniqueness of a Black woman to liberate others in their social identities:

The sense of liberation in the sense of uniqueness in the sense of intersections and intersectionality. Because it breaks the status quo, and works, we’re comfortable as a society in the status quo, because that’s what we know. So whenever my mentees want to pay go against the grain, I’m the person that will go against the grain, we’ll get into some good trouble; let’s do it. And I think that is freeing and providing inclusion while encouraging students to be their authentic self. When I envision supervision of doc students, mentoring doc students, I’m breaking the mold, not being afraid to go against the grain, unapologetic, you know, telling the whole truth. Being authentic, being your whole self, without having to hide or, or change or cold switch.

Maxine identified that there may be some people of color who may be still promoting White supremacy in the counselor education field, but she is dedicated to using her voice as a lens and a representative to mitigate those issues:

I think seeing someone that looks like them. From there, it’s kind of tough because there are some of us that will continue to, to convey and, and promote the insidiousness of
white supremacy. So maybe seeing more than one of us is seeing a different, a different lens among us even. And allowing that to be a help in their informing their counselor counseling identities.

Like Maxine, Whitley’s awareness of the White supremacy of teachings in the CES field does not hinder her attempts to teach her supervisees and mentees how to use their voice has Black counselors to work with their clients:

So it’s a very heavy burden, I think a good one that I take very serious to say to them.

And it’s almost like two different ways you’re teaching. I’m teaching this whitewashed way. But showing them this is also how we really work probably with our Black clients and you as a Black clinician, and that may or may not be reflected in the curriculum that we have.

Monique reported that providing inclusivity and representation is a selfless act, and it is important to remain authentic and supportive of others while doing so:

At the same time, you can have a supervisor that looks like you, but they’re shitty.

Because you know, you have some supervisors that are going to give you bits and pieces, so you can just keep coming back to them and keep paying for stuff. I don’t feel like everything has to be a nickel and dime … and a pay me, pay me situation. You don’t get blessed like that. But you have some people that will give you just enough so you’re not doing better than them. Or so that they can say, “Oh, I helped her or helped him.” Um, so even though you have representation, I would say having authentic representation, the authenticity and not the whole crabs in a barrel mindset, genuineness and kindness is really, really important.
**Racism and Implicit Bias**

Black women are marginalized by various forms of racism and implicit bias, including projected stereotypes and sexualization (Lewis et al., 2017). Six out of eight participants reported having experiences with racism and implicit bias in their programs. These feelings of racism and implicit bias are in line with the reported literature in Chapter 2 of experiencing micro/macroaggressions, tokenism, and projected stereotypes. Gina reported that she did not get the help that she needed from her supervisor because they prioritized her White counterparts over her:

> The roles they apply to everyone. The same amount of help, support, networking opportunities, didn’t exist; for a lot of the people that look like me, it was just disheartening. I was even told by my chair; I owe it to these other two to get them finished. Because they can walk. And I’m like, but I’ve been working with you a year and a half before you got anybody else. So why do you not owe it to me? Is it because I’m Black?

Similar to Gina, Vanessa reported not getting the hours she needed in her program and her White counterparts were prioritized over her:

> My supervisor, questioned my hours. Because my school was not CACREP, however, I had, over the amount of hours that I needed. I was held back from my experiences of receiving clients, and three of my other cohort members who were white women, one in one Black International, they were receiving clients. And let me say this, two of the white women who were going into the program, they were receiving clients and getting their hours for practicum. And I question the critical moment, as a Black feminist would. Hmm, something’s not right here. Where’s my voice here? … meaning where’s my
power to use myself as a way to get through the loops, as a way to bring awareness to the issue, because this cause is really impacting my counselor development, my human development, because it was oppression.

Vivian shared her experiences with microaggressions during her doctoral program:

The macro and micro aggressions that was made throughout the supervision experience. Basically, this young lady really said that my smile reminded her of the lady on the pancake box. Girl, it took everything in me. And then she went further to talk about her experiences with, you know, having a homemaker growing up.

Vivian also reported being tokenized by her peers: “Now, in some of my classes, with some of my peers, I was tokenized, at times, like, I was the only one for a while.”

Maxine shared three different instances where she felt that there was a level of racism or implicit bias. The first experience was when a faculty member tried to sexualize her because she provided help to a Black student

It was awkward, because that same faculty had tried to sexualize me, and she assumed that I was sleeping with [another] Black [student]. And it was like what? Because I have someone to talk to and I’ve been the only Black woman in this department.

Maxine’s second experience was in regard to witnessing racial slurs being used:

And then there was another faculty who made the racial tension awkward. Like, they admitted that they allow students to use the N word around them. And they admitted this after, I had to assert myself and say, like, hey, it’s never okay for someone to use the N word.

Lastly, Maxine had a faculty member randomly share that they attended a Black church:

And then we end up on this, this [project] together and the microaggressions just
continue, like, [the faculty is] so awkward around me. He tells me that, oh, he actually goes to a Black church. Why did I need to know that? Why? Like, go to church, yeah, but why did you have to immediately say you go to a Black church [in private]?

Claire shared that she felt that there was some implicit bias toward her from her supervisor because she would be intentional of how she spoke and provided feedback to students:

She also called out that I take these pauses, these long pauses when I’m talking. And I realized that all that comes from, you know, just student feedback and in teaching experiences of being misunderstood, being considered abrasive or harsh or condescending, and not wanting to be offensive to someone else, or being perceived as offensive.

Whitley reported how she was targeted because she was a Black woman, and her mentor was not helpful with helping her navigate what to do:

I think the only thing that I didn’t know, was just that experience of being a Black woman in academia. That was my first teaching. I was being targeted because I was a Black woman. And I didn’t know how to navigate that. And she wasn’t helpful in helping me to navigate that situation either.

Vision Boards

All eight participants submitted photovoice photographs in the form of a vision board to describe their cross-racial mentorship and supervision experiences at their PWIs. The vision boards also included representation on how their experiences influenced how they would provide supervision and mentorship. There were two prompts to create the vision boards: “Please provide between one and three photographs that reflect your cross-racial supervision/mentorship
experiences while you attended your CES program at a PWI” and “Please provide between one and three photographs that describe how you currently, or hope to in the future, provide your supervision and mentorship to CES doctoral students.” Participants were given these prompts to help them reflect on past experiences and imagine their future goals of supervision and mentorship. The vision board submissions are shown in Figures 2–9.

Janet

Figure 2

Janet’s Vision Board Photovoice Submission

Janet noted,

For past experiences, I have extra effort, support, confidence, not understood and there was a disconnect there. Also, in the past, I’m going to put something like surface level. I
will put comfortable. For the future, I put above and beyond, competence, caring, stay in line, connected, rapport, compassion. Because this is like how I want to be as a future mentor in the future. And so I also want to add intentionality. And I put time. Because all this take time, and I’m gonna make time for all of that.

**Gina**

**Figure 3**

*Gina’s Vision Board Photovoice Submission*

Gina stated,

For the first question, I felt a lot of frustration, a lot of screaming, crying, throwing things, questioning things. Just fell in like, this wasn’t fair. Then I had the picture of the *Raisin in the milk*. Because I felt isolated. I felt that my reality was also reinforced by my work and my topic. And so I felt like, a lot of times, I felt like things were a Black versus white situation. Because I had a white mentor/supervisor.

For your second question, it’s because a lot of people in my community have said,
you know, I’m proud of you because you did what I couldn’t do. You did what I wouldn’t do. It was like you know I would go back and get five doctoral degrees if I didn’t have to do a dissertation. So that’s when everyone stopped. It took a lot more than being resilient for me to get through this. Because a lot of times when you say it takes a village, the people that form my village, are not the people that I would have thought would have suited up and showed out from the beginning. And so it’s like this process, the further along I went, the more I saw my abilities change. And it changed for my greater good, because it strengthened me and it gave me the courage to continue on.

**Vivian**

**Figure 4**

*Vivian’s Vision Board Photovoice Submission*

Vivian expressed,

I think this kind of represents like all the different colors, and also this person’s stoic
presence, what I have felt as a supervisor, then I also put this because it kind of represents for me when I think about, inclusivity, when also think about social justice, or even what we’ve gone through, and then also being able to think about how things could be grainy at times, but also as a people how we have been so strong. In here, I have another tree, and I had like the colors. And then I call this “Breaking through Barriers.” And so this is the other piece that represents when I think about what the supervision and I have the rope. And then I have these other folks, it’s kind of representative of some of the supervisees that I work with.

Vanessa

Figure 5

Vanessa’s Vision Board Photovoice Submission

Vanessa said,

Here we have a Black face. We face a lot of experiences. Our Black faces are needed regardless of what we face. The white background is white because she often has to
experience her intersectionality’s in a white paradigm. The paradigm of white at a PWI. And we have the color purple here, because that is the woman is color. Purple is to Black as lavender’s to purple. And I’m choosing the word womanist because the focus is on the Black woman. And particularly I’m choosing the word supervision because she will become a supervisor, she is that supervisor. She is the one who shepherds, those who might be lost and those who are non-Black. And so I’m using woman in supervision because I believe a woman in supervision has a place at a PWI.

_Maxine_

_Figure 6_

_Maxine’s Vision Board Photovoice Submission_

Maxine responded,

When I thought about like cross cultural supervision and cross racial supervision. I have like the hands. And it’s interesting because it’s about five hands. And I think those are the
amount of people that I felt impacted by. I just remember throughout not wanting to be hardened by the process. So that’s why I have the elements of the peonies, and like still wearing my heels and the glasses and things like that. Just elements of protecting my feminine, like, the Black feminine. A Black woman with African print on just symbolizes like the intersectionality of Black ness. And not every Black person is African American, per se and vice versa and can have multiple ethnicities to include African American. And then prioritizing quality over quantity with intentionality.”

I do prioritize quality. So for me, I make sure that before I show up in a space, I give myself a moment to center. But knowing that deep within my heart like I’m doing my best and I’m trying to bridge those gaps of social change and humanizing the narrative of the Black woman when I’m interacting with them.

Claire

Figure 7

Claire’s Vision Board Photovoice Submission

Claire stated,

The invalidation the conflict, you know, not being seen, not being heard. But, there was
the conflict was areas of support. Also that that cultural piece was missing the sensitivity. If you need more than awareness, you need the sensitivity. Right? And so that was that was missing. So that’s where being misunderstood and disconnected. feeling disconnected. My hooding ceremony and these were most of my mentors and supervisors. What you see is this, this professor telling me, you look good. And this person here is fixing my hair.

This kind of captures what I believe mentorship is, right? It’s inspirational, it’s helping, and it’s about success. It’s also about the failures, but it’s its motivation, its training, its leadership, its modeling, it’s, all encompassing, you know, across the board, but the sense of belonging. And it’s a covering it kind of their sense of safety, right? For protection, especially for my mentees that identifies as Black or African American female.

*Whitley*

**Figure 8**

*Whitley’s Vision Board Photovoice Submission*

Whitley explained,

My regalia represents while I attended because that was kind of like the ultimate goal.
What is to graduate and that was kind of the hustle of getting through the program the whole time.

For the second part. Because I am a counselor educator. A lot of what I do is preparing students for to work with their future clients and impacting kind of the field across my students. So, it would definitely be a classroom, a lot of things happen in the class, at least in my classrooms, where we’re talking about different perspectives. I encourage students to debate or to tell me a little bit more about that perspective. There are just a lot of things that I want to take from my experiences in order to help make a better experience for future doctoral students.

Monique

Figure 9

Monique’s Vision Board Photovoice Submission

Monique explained,

These are the three pictures that represent what I didn’t get. I told you, I felt invisible.

Because I didn’t really have that much support.”
So these are the two pictures of what I would like to be able to implement, which is the empathy, genuineness and respect with students or even team members, but making sure there’s an equal exchange on both sides of all of these things. Let’s tackle discussions about things; Gain a greater understanding, you know, whether you need clarity. And you know, having them be accountable, “What do we need to do? And being able to challenge them.”

Summary

This chapter showed the findings of the interviews and photovoice vision boards shared by the participants, shedding light on their cross-racial mentorship and supervision experiences as well as how they would provide mentorship and supervision. The following three themes and subthemes emerged from the analysis: ability to have access (communication and feelings of loneliness and isolation), support (institutional support, faculty mentor/supervisor support, and community support), cultural responsiveness (cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, racism and implicit bias, and inclusivity and representation). Chapter 5 will offer a discussion of the findings presented in Chapter 4, along with the implications for counselor education and supervision and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study I examined the cross-racial mentorship and supervision experiences of eight Black women CES professionals who attended PWIs (pseudonyms: Janet, Gina, Vivian, Vanessa, Maxine, Claire, Whitley, and Monique) to identify the underrepresentation of Black women faculty in CES at these institutions. It was important to examine what may have influenced this underrepresentation, especially since there are limited CACREP-accredited doctoral programs at HBCUs. This study involved qualitative phenomenology as its methodology, with semi structured interviews and vision boards to collect data. The findings that emerged from thematic analysis of the data included (a) ability to have access, (b) support, and (c) cultural responsiveness. The secondary themes of communication and feelings of loneliness and isolation; institutional support, faculty mentor/supervisor support, and community support; and cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, racism and implicit bias, and inclusivity and representation were discovered within the main themes.

This chapter presents an interpretation and discussion of the findings as they relate to the literature and theoretical frameworks. This chapter will also address implications for change, limitations, and recommendations for further study. The chapter ends with describing my experience with the research process and a conclusion.

Interpretation of Findings

The following themes emerged from this study: ability to have access, with the subthemes of communication and feelings of loneliness and isolation; support with the subthemes of institutional support, faculty mentor/supervisor support, and community support, and cultural responsiveness with the subthemes of cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, racism and implicit bias, and inclusivity and representation. In the interpretation of these findings, the
themes and subthemes are explored in relation to the literature and framework.

**Ability to Have Access**

This theme was discussed by all eight interview participants and reflected some of the literature describing the concept of interacting or being able to reach (Miller, 2018), specifically in terms of their mentor or supervisor. The subthemes of communication and feelings of loneliness and isolation also aligned with the findings that Black women suffer from not being seen or heard by the faculty members in their programs (Edwards & Ross, 2018). As Gina stated, “I pictured myself as the raisin in the milk because I felt isolated.” It is important to note that many Black women in higher education have expressed a variation of feeling like they are alone and are unable to have access to what they need to progress in their program, a finding that is consistent with wanting inclusion.

Additionally, mentorship is a relationship used to train, nurture, and inspire a mentee (Casto et al., 2005; Williams et al., 2018). However, a few of the participants shared that they had limited access to their mentors and supervisors. Monique stated, “when I transitioned to the new school and was working on my dissertation … She wouldn’t return any calls or emails and I didn’t hear back from her.” The behavior of Monique’s supervisor and chair conveyed that she was unavailable to assist Monique and also showed a lack of communication.

**Communication**

The review of the literature provided information about the preferred communication style of Black women during their mentoring relationships. Based on the literature, Black women excel better when they have a better sense of community and connection that includes encouragement and clear feedback (Boswell et al., 2015; Freeman & Kochan, 2018; Tanner, 1990). The participants of this study noted that effective communication is needed in their
mentorship and supervision relationships. All the participants were supervisors or aspired to provide mentorship in the future. Gina stated that “effective supervision is collaborative mentorship.” From Gina’s point of view, it was important for supervisees and supervisors to be collaborative on their goals in order to point out what is needed to succeed. Maxine similarly reported that it was necessary for supervisors for their supervisee by “being able to hold space and full help them turn on the lights of what their clinical voice will be.” Mentors and supervisors contribute to showing their mentees and supervisees how to communicate their needs and cultivate the achievement of their own goals (Parkman, 2016) without feeling like something is missing.

**Feelings of Loneliness and Isolation**

Black women have reported having feelings of isolation as they attended their degree-granting institutions (Haskins et al., 2015). The Black women in this study also stated they had feelings of being alone or they felt isolated during their CES program. One participant said that their program “felt very isolated; nobody ever tried to connect or mention a Black professor” when she found out there were professors and students who looked like her. Another participant stated, “My humanity wasn’t acknowledged. I felt alone … Isolated” because her engagement with faculty was on their terms, but there were no effort to understand her as an individual. Both participants shared how much easier their program would have been if they had a professor or mentor who could identify with them so that they would not feel alone or isolated from the rest of their environment. Those who have access to their mentor and supervisor rarely feel like they are isolated and alone because that open line of communication is there. Having access and communication with their supervisor may attribute to Black women having less distress during their programs (Hannon et al., 2016).
Support

Black students have experienced differences in access to support from their faculty members of color and their White faculty (Haskins et al., 2013). The participants in this study all had White faculty mentors or supervisors. Even though most of the participants reported they had a lack of support in their program, there were a couple who shared the benefits of having support. Mentees are able to sharpen their skills to maximize their potential when they are partnered with faculty who offer guidance and support (Lewis, 2020). The support subthemes varied from institutional, faculty, and community support.

Institutional Support

Institutional goals may differ from a CES department, which can ultimately affect their students. Faculty members can connect CES students with valuable institutional resources that can support them, especially financially (Kammer, 2015). The participants in this study shared that institutional support affected their scholarship as they matriculated through their doctoral programs. One participant shared she had to let go of opportunities because she had thoughts of “do I choose to pay my light bill or choose to attend this event?” The financial disparities doctoral students experience become overwhelming especially when they feel behind and they are not able to take advantage of opportunities that are beneficial to their professional development.

Faculty Mentor/Supervisor Support

The participants stated they were most affected by support from their supervisors. The faculty’s support was determined in two categories: advocacy and personal and professional development. Advocacy support was described as speaking up, validation, and reassurance. Support through personal and professional development was described as providing guidance of
tasks, encouragement with goals, and a navigation of life post-graduation. The participants had both struggles and successes with their supervisor providing them the necessary support during their programs. One participant described their supervisor as being helpful and feeling like she was doing extra steps to put forth effort and support. But another participant felt like she had no mentorship and was faulted for not being as productive as she wanted by her supervisor. Many of the other participants shared examples of what they described as playing the game (Baker & Moore, 2015) and doing what was needed to progress, which led to them feeling unsupported in their programs.

**Community Support**

According to the literature, women excel when they have a sense of community and connection (Freeman & Kochan, 2018). One participant shared that it was imperative to seek out support from the community in the town where her CES program was placed due to needing support outside of her scholarship. All the participants explained how they would like to provide community support for future students even if they are not their mentee. It is important to understand how exclusion contributes to the isolation of Black women CES students and how it is easier to persist through their program if they have community support (Mokhele, 2013).

**Cultural Responsiveness**

The literature stated that using culturally responsive mentorship mitigates negative feelings of isolation, marginalization, and a lack of support that Black students experience (Henfield et al., 2011; Seward, 2009, 2019; Storlie et al., 2015). Consistent with the literature, the participants appreciated supervisors who are culturally aware and display aspects of cultural sensitivity. Supervisors who have that internal awareness to understand the worldviews of their supervisees helps mitigate any oppressive feelings being had (Ratts et al., 2016). Participants
shared that being culturally responsive as a counselor educator means being aware of diversity and privilege at all times.

**Cultural Awareness**

Cultural awareness was another big challenge the participants referenced in their interviews. One participant noted her concern with the lack of cultural awareness she witnessed during her program because the oppression of her culture was not acknowledged. The participants also had to assess their own cultural awareness because their identity was challenged. As noted in the literature, students have to find the strength to advocate equality and awareness among their peers and faculty (Baker et al., 2015). One participant shared that she ended up getting out of character advocating for herself but was worried with the perception of being labeled under Black women stereotypes.

**Cultural Sensitivity**

The other side of expecting cultural awareness is having cultural sensitivity. A culturally sensitive mentor is key in having a mentorship with trust, honesty, and respect (Chung et al., 2007; Maccombs & Bhat, 2020). One participant reported that her faculty mentor provided action and accommodations to her to show their cultural sensitivity. There is appreciation with faculty providing space and support for their students of color, especially when adverse events occur. Another participant shared the lack of cultural sensitivity she experienced when her faculty in her department was not sensitive to her overlapping social identities. Black women especially have these experiences of being oppressed with their intersecting identities (Chan et al., 2018; Haskins et al., 2016).

**Racism and Implicit Bias**

Nearly all the participants reported experiencing some type of racism or implicit bias
toward them in their program. Racism against Black women is often shown as societal stereotypes that were created to marginalize them (Collins, 1990; Lewis et al., 2017). One participant experienced her White colleague saying her smile reminded them of the Black lady on the pancake box. There is also the projected stereotype that is used to objectify Black women by sexualizing them (Lewis et al., 2017). One participant shared how a faculty member assumed she was sleeping with another Black student because she was the only Black woman in their department. As supported by the literature, in these academic environments, Black women are reduced to their physical appearance, body, and how they communicate with others.

Inclusivity and Representation

For Black students at PWIs, it is important for them to experience inclusion and representation in their academic spaces. The pursuit of a doctoral education is challenging in itself, but the negative effects of exclusion and underrepresentation makes it difficult to be resilient (Marjorie et al., 2014). The participants reported that there was a lack of inclusion and representation in their program and in their studies. One participant wished they had a place of inclusion. It was also mentioned that the theories learned are “whitewashed” and “promote the insidiousness of White supremacy,” meaning that not only are the students are not learning from faculty that look like them, but they are not getting knowledge from Black theorists either. Black students can gain from having culturally responsive teachings (Peters et al., 2020) in order to have a fulfilling learning experience (Leon & Thomas, 2016) even though representation is limited at PWIs.

Implications

This study allowed the participants to have a space to use their voice and share their experiences with cross-racial mentorship and supervision with a non-Black supervisor at a PWI.
The stories of these eight Black women counselor educators highlighted the connection between their experiences and the literature. The findings yielded the following themes: ability to have access (communication and feelings of loneliness and isolation), support (institutional support, faculty mentor/supervisor support, and community support), and cultural responsiveness (cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, racism and implicit bias, and inclusivity and representation). The stories of the participants can be extended to the higher education community and other institutions. Their stories provide insight that can lead to changes in CES doctoral programs and the way they implement mentorship. Counselor educators, counselors, and supervisors can benefit from the findings of this study by learning from participants’ insight to provide optimal mentorship and supervision experiences to their students. The most significant finding is how cultural responsiveness influences how a supervisor can provide mentorship to Black women in CES. Throughout the study, the level of cultural responsiveness acted as a lens for mentors and supervisors on their communication and support to their students.

Further, the underrepresentation of Black women in faculty mentors is just not an issue in CES but across various disciplines. The presence of marginalized individuals in these academic spaces provides hope to those who aspire to continue the legacy. If diversity is absent in these programs, the awareness of Black students is heightened because of the lack of representation (Shavers & Moore, 2019). But faculty mentors and supervisors have the choice to cultivate positive experiences for their doctoral students. Successful mentorship experiences involve encouragement, nurturing, guidance, and support from experienced faculty (Lewis, 2020). Even though having representation makes it easier for Black doctoral students to adjust, non-Black faculty can use cultural responsiveness to provide effective cross-racial mentorship.
Limitations

There were a few limitations of this study. Even though the participants were Black women who graduated from a CES program in the last 5 years, there was still the limitation of time. The data of the study were based on the memory and honesty of these participants. It could have been possible that the participants left out some important information. However, limitations in qualitative research that may be linked to validity and reliability may be out of the researcher’s control (Simon & Goes, 2013). The other limitation was that as a Black woman in a CES program at a PWI, I had the potential for bias even though I used bracketing for my study. To address this potential bias, I consulted with my chair and was able to stick to the information presented by the participants. Another limitation was that there may be differences of mentorship and supervision experiences between online and residential CES doctoral programs. The level of access and opportunities would vary depending on the type of program participants attended. The last limitation was the completion of the vision board. Some of the participants did not collect their photos before the interviews as they were instructed but gathered them after the interview concluded.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Action

The recommendations for action discussed in this section can be applied to the five CES competency areas of teaching, research, leadership and advocacy, supervision, and counseling. The recommendation for immediate action is for more CES programs to hire more Black women as core faculty. It is a CACREP standard for institutions to retain a diverse group of students and faculty to support an inclusive learning community (CACREP, 2015). The literature emphasizes that Black women faculty bring cultural diversity that centers on community (Lewis, 2020),
which was a need shared by participants of this study. The diversity of faculty is important for the representation of the program as well as the exposure of doctoral students to diverse backgrounds and perspectives, which is integral for students’ growth as counselor educators.

Another recommendation for action includes making an intentional attempt in understanding the whole self of the CES doctoral student. It is important to have faculty mentors maintain communication by valuing and inviting their mentees in the classroom to share their life experiences (Baltrinic et al., 2016). As mentioned in the literature and this study, Black students have experiences of feeling undervalued and unsupported in their doctoral programs. The quality of mentorship and supervision changes when there is consideration to the students cultural and social identities in their training. In addition, trainings regarding implicit bias and discriminatory practices should be included for the cultural competency of counselor educators. There were actions supported by the literature and the participants that were seen as culturally insensitive and racially charged. The awareness from these trainings could challenge these actions and practices.

Lastly, it is recommended for counselor educators to review the findings and assess what can be done to advocate for their students. Counselor educators model leadership and advocacy for their CES doctoral students, and the best exposure is by advocating for them. Faculty can be intentional by facilitating and providing opportunities for exploration of their students’ CES identities. Supervisors should consistently assess the needs of their supervisees to enhance their development as future counselor educators.

**Recommendations for Research**

Based on the findings, there are also recommendations for future research. First, further research could include recruiting participants from both residential and online CES programs.
Most of the participants in this study were graduates from hybrid or online CES doctoral programs, which could have contributed to feelings of isolation and support from faculty. This would provide differences of mentorship and supervision experiences between online and residential CES doctoral programs for Black women.

Another recommendation would be for CES programs to specify what type of supervision that participants received. In CES, doctoral students are provided supervision (mentoring) for clinical, supervision, research, and teaching experiences (CACREP, 2015). The level attention and mentorship may vary for each experience. Research mentorships and internships are less hands on than the other experiences because the student is encouraged to find their own research agenda or some students have difficulty viewing themselves as researchers (Gelso, 2006; Lamar & Helm, 2017), whereas clinical and supervision mentorships usually require a faculty supervisor to provide weekly guidance.

Lastly, the qualitative research design and method were appropriate for the research questions. However, use of vision boards in research is still new and could be continued using another qualitative study design. Future studies can examine its use as a part of narrative inquiry instead as part of phenomenology since narrative inquiry is when the stories themselves become the raw data (Butina, 2015), and vision boards are a method for participants to share their stories.

**Researcher Positionality/Bias**

The research and the proposal of this research study helped me reflect on my own experiences with cross-racial mentorship and supervision. Luckily, I had no engagement between my own experiences and the experiences of my participants. Even though I identify as a Black CES doctoral student who attended a PWI, my experiences were slightly different in regard of support and access. I believe I was able to maintain the validity and reliability aspects of this
study intact because I used qualitative auditing, member checking, triangulation, and memoing.

My memoing and journaling allowed me to explore my emotions that I had as participants were sharing their stories. I know that I displayed empathy but continued to hold space for these eight ladies because I knew the amount of people who wanted to hear their authentic voices regarding this experience was limited. I had a varied amount of emotions as I listened to the audio, read the transcripts of the interviews, and viewed the vision boards. I did wonder what my own vision board would reveal if I were to create one based on my own cross-racial mentorship and supervision experience.

I believe it was easy for the participants to share their story with me because I am a Black woman who is also pursuing an education in CES. The participants understood the importance of participating in studies since research of Black people has not been favorable. Even prior to this study, I believed that Black women had difficulty in academic spaces due to a variety of negative characteristics. The Black women in this study expressed that there will always be barriers to achievement and change, but they would like to provide optimal experiences for emerging counselor educators and counselors in training, which is also my goal. This study gave me encouragement and appreciation for my own experiences, self-efficacy, persistence, and intentionality.

**Summary**

Chapter 5 presented the interpretation of the findings compared to the literature and significant research in Chapter 4. The results of this study had three themes as well as their subthemes: ability to have access (communication and feelings of loneliness and isolation), support (institutional support, faculty mentor/supervisor support, and community support), cultural responsiveness (cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, racism and implicit bias, and
inclusivity and representation) that emerged from the analysis and vision boards. Implications were offered for cross-racial mentorship and supervision. Limitations and recommendations for future research was also included.

**Conclusion**

I investigated the cross-racial mentorship and supervision experiences of eight Black women CES students who recently graduated from a PWI across the United States. Historically, Black scholars have struggled obtaining their education at PWIs because they reported negative experiences, such as marginalization, underrepresentation, isolation, and other forms of oppression. But the rate of Black scholars obtaining advanced degrees is increasing, especially for Black women. In addition to having negative racial experiences, Black women report having issues regarding gender inequality and discrimination in these spaces. Research has shown that effective mentorship is a way to mitigate these negative experiences for Black students.

Since the attendance of Black students are PWIs are increasing, faculty members should find a way to provide effective cross-racial mentorship. However, there was limited literature on cross-racial mentorship and supervision of Black women, especially in CES. The goal of this study was to gather participants’ experiences on how they received mentorship and supervision by their non-Black faculty members. These Black women were able to tell their story using their words and also a vision board that symbolized their experiences for past, current and future supervised mentorship. The participants of this study were able to share the climate of their university/program and their relationship with their mentor/supervisor along with the challenges and successes of their experiences. It was revealed that most of the participants did not feel supported, included, or celebrated, which led to some dissatisfaction of their doctoral experience. But the participants shared how their experience influenced their current or future supervision
practices. It is important that counselor educators who provide supervision either doctoral or master’s level students to take note of listening to their voices can make a difference in their experiences while attending these CACREP-accredited programs at PWIs.
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APPENDIX A: Screening Survey Questions

1. What is your age range?
   a. Under 18
   b. 18-20
   c. 21-29
   d. 30-39
   e. 40-49
   f. 50-59
   g. 60 or older

2. What is your gender?
   a. Female
   b. Male
   c. Other

3. Do you identify as Black/African American?
   a. Yes
   b. No

4. Are you a recent graduate from a CACREP accredited Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) doctoral program? (Graduated in the last 5 years)
   a. Yes
   b. No

5. Did you obtain your CACREP accredited Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) doctoral degree from a Predominately White Institution (PWI)?
   a. Yes
   b. No

6. Did you receive doctoral supervision and/or mentorship from a CES faculty member that was Non-Black during your CES doctoral program?
   a. Yes
   b. No

7. Do you currently offer supervision/mentorship?
a. Yes
b. No

8. If you responded NO to question #7 above, do you aspire to offer supervision/mentorship in the future?
   a. Yes
   b. No

9. Please provide your full name and email address.
APPENDIX B: Informed Consent Form

Title of the Project: My Sister’s Keeper: Using Vision Boards to Examine Cross-Racial Mentorship and Supervision Experiences of Black Women Counselor Educators who attended CACREP CES Programs at Predominately White Institutions
Principal Investigator: Donnette Deigh, MA, LCPC, NCC, Liberty University

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be 18 years of age or older, self-identify as Black/African American and a woman, be a recent graduate (within 5 years) from a CACREP accredited doctoral counselor education and supervision (CES) doctoral program at a Predominately White Institution (PWI), have been supervised or mentored by a non-Black CES faculty member during your CES doctoral program, and be an aspiring or current supervisor or mentor. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?
The purpose of this research study is to explore the experiences of cross-racially supervised or mentored Black, women, counselor education doctoral students. This study will give recent graduates the opportunity to speak candidly and have their voices heard about their past mentorship and supervision experiences during their doctoral training.

What will happen if you take part in this study?
If you agree to participate in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. You will be asked to participate in some type of interview (you will be assigned to complete either a video-recorded, semi structured, individual interview or to be a part of one, video-recorded focus group). The interview will be conducted remotely, and recorded, via Zoom. You will be asked to answer Photovoice vision board prompts during the interview. The individual interview will be video-recorded for approximately 60 minutes and the focus groups will be video-recorded for approximately 90 minutes. The Photovoice vision boards will be used as a part of the research study and will require you to take photographs in response to the prompts offered by the researcher, which will be given to you before the interview/focus group questions. Before the interview/focus group, you will take the photographs in response to the Photovoice vision board prompts. The photographs must be taken by you, specifically in response to the prompts, and will be discussed during the interview. You will be asked to send a clear copy of your vision board to the researcher, as a photograph or PDF, via email. The photographs must not show identifying features of people or places in the community. The photographs may appear in the researcher’s published dissertation and/or dissertation defense.

2. You will be asked to review your interview transcript via email, which allows the
researcher to confirm the information they gathered from your interview/focus group and Photovoice vision board responses. It is an opportunity for you to ask any questions or make corrections to the information shared by the researcher. This will last approximately 10 minutes.

<table>
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<th>What risks might you experience from being in this study?</th>
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The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

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<th>How could you or others benefit from this study?</th>
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Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from this study.

Benefits to society include providing data that stakeholders might be able to use to better understand the cross-racial supervisory experiences of Black, women, CES doctoral students.

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<th>How will personal information be protected?</th>
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The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation. Interviews/focus groups will be recorded and transcribed.
- The interview and focus group will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then erased.
- Data collected from you will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with people outside of the group.

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<th>What are the costs to you to be part of the study?</th>
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To participate in the research, you will need to pay for any costs of completing a physical vision board if you choose to make a physical vision board. The expected costs of making a physical vision board are approximately $20. A digital vision board can be done using MS PowerPoint, MS Word, or Canva, at no cost to you.

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<th>Is study participation voluntary?</th>
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Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

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<th>What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?</th>
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If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address
included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?
The researcher conducting this study is Donnette Deigh, a Counselor Education and Supervision doctoral student at Liberty University. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at [deigh@liberty.edu]. You may also contact the researcher’s faculty sponsor, Dr. Joy Mwendwa, at [jmwendwa@liberty.edu].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?
If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, [1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515], or email at [irb@liberty.edu].

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects’ research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent
By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

____________________________________
Printed Subject Name

____________________________________
Signature & Date
Dear [Recipient]:

My name is Donnette Deigh and I am a Ph.D. student in the Counselor Education and Supervision program at Liberty University. I am conducting research as part of the requirements for my doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to explore the lived experiences of cross-racially supervised or mentored Black, women, counselor educators or counseling supervisors who attended CACREP doctoral programs at Predominantly White Institutions (PWI). I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

To be eligible, participants must be 18 years of age or older, self-identify as a woman and Black/African American, be a recent graduate (within 5 years) from a CACREP accredited counselor education and supervision (CES) doctoral program at a PWI, have been supervised or mentored by a non-Black CES faculty member during their CES doctoral program, and be an aspiring or current supervisor or mentor. Participants will be asked to participate in a video-recorded, semi-structured interview. Participants will be assigned to either a video-recorded individual interview of approximately 60 minutes OR one video-recorded focus group interview of approximately 90 minutes and will review the interview transcript via email (approximately 10 minutes). The interview will be conducted on Zoom. Participants’ names and identifying information will be collected as part of their participation and will be kept confidential. A pseudonym will be used to report the data results.

The interview time (interview or focus group) will also include developing a Photovoice vision board. Photovoice, in the form of a vision board, will be used as a method to facilitate a deeper understanding of the participants’ experiences through photographs. Upon agreeing to participate in this study, participants will identify photographs in response to a prompt from the researcher and bring these to the interview for the vision board creation where they will place the photographs on a board, in the way of their choosing – either a traditional board (physical board) or a digital board (Canva, Word, or PowerPoint). A brief narrative about their vision boards will be shared during the interview.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please complete the screening survey via the following link: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/G23398H](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/G23398H). A consent document will be emailed to you if you are found to be eligible. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you still choose to participate after the screening, you will need to sign the consent document and email it to me prior to completing any procedures.

Sincerely,
Donnette Deigh
Counselor Education and Supervision, Ph.D. Student
APPENDIX D: Interview Questions

Research Questions:
1. What were your experiences with cross-racial mentorship and supervision in a CACREP doctoral counselor education program as a Black women CES student while attending a predominately white institution (PWI)?
2. How did your cross-racial supervision and mentoring experiences as a Black woman in a CES program at a PWI influence your current and future supervision and mentoring?

Interview Questions
1. How and why did you choose your specific university to pursue your doctoral education?
2. Thinking of your time as a counseling education and supervision (CES) student, how would you describe the climate of your university?
3. Please tell me about your mentorship relationships during your doctoral program.
4. What were some challenges you experienced during those mentor/student relationships?
5. What were some successes you experienced during those mentor/student relationships?
6. What, if anything, did you get from your non-black supervisor as a CES student at a PWI and what, if anything, did you NOT get from your non-black supervisor as a CES student at a PWI?
7. How did having a non-Black supervisor(s) influence your experience during your doctoral program?
8. There is a concept of “Black feminist thought” (Collins, 1989), which describes a theory that focuses on the intersecting identities of Black women, their unique experiences, and how those experiences are cultivated into empowerment and liberation. How has your unique experience as a Black woman influenced your decision to become a counselor educator or a counseling supervisor?
9. How have your mentorship and supervision experiences influenced your decision to be a counselor educator or a counseling supervisor?
10. Please tell me more about your current supervisory relationship with your supervisees and mentees.
11. How has being a black woman influenced your current and/or future relationships with your supervisees and mentees?
12. What, if any, are the unique needs of black women in a CES program?
13. What, if any, are the unique needs of black women supervisees/mentees?
14. As a counselor educator or counseling supervisor, how can better supervision and mentoring experiences be facilitated for future Black women in CES programs?
15. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding this topic?
APPENDIX E: Photovoice—Vision Board Instructions & Prompts

Instructions
Vision boards are created for goal setting and reflection. Vision boards can be created physically (traditional) or digitally. You are encouraged (not mandatory) to use words and phrases in addition to photographs on your vision board. Please feel free to be as creative as you want.

Traditional
In order to make a physical vision board, the following materials will be needed and can be gathered from any art supply or craft section of a store:

- A blank canvas or poster board
- A variety of sources of images or words (i.e., magazine, newspaper, printing images from the internet, and stickers)
- Glue
- Markers
- Scissors

Digital
For the digital version of a vision board, participants can use websites like Canva, Word, and PowerPoint to create a board. You can take photos with your phone or from the internet and add it to a blank page. This can easily be converted into a PDF when completed.

Prompts
1. Please provide between one and three photographs that reflect your cross-racial supervision/mentorship experiences while you attended your CES program at a PWI.

2. Please provide between one and three photographs that describe how you currently, or hope to in the future, provide your supervision and mentorship to CES doctoral students.

Vision boards will be completed during the interview/focus group. At the end of the interview/focus group, completed vision boards will be sent to the researcher. Please send a clear photo (physical) or PDF (digital) of your vision board to Donnette Deigh at ddeigh@liberty.edu with the title ‘Vision Board Study_Initials’.
APPENDIX F: Photovoice Submissions

Figure 2

Janet’s Vision Board Photovoice Submission

Note: “For past experiences, I have extra effort, support, confidence, not understood and there was a disconnect there. Also, in the past, I’m going to put something like surface level. I will put comfortable. For the future, I put above and beyond, competence, caring, stay in line, connected, rapport, compassion. Because this is like how I want to be as a future mentor in the future. And so, I also want to add intentionality. And I put time. Because all this take time, and I’m gonna make time for all of that.”

Figure 3

Gina’s Vision Board Photovoice Submission
Note: “For the first question, I felt a lot of frustration, a lot of screaming, crying, throwing things, questioning things. Just fell in like, this wasn’t fair. Then I had the picture of the Raisin in the milk. Because I felt isolated. I felt that my reality was also reinforced by my work and my topic. And so, I felt like, a lot of times, I felt like things were a Black versus white situation. Because I had a white mentor/supervisor.”
‘For your second question, it’s because a lot of people in my community have said, you know, I’m proud of you because you did what I couldn’t do. You did what I wouldn’t do. It was like you know I would go back and get five doctoral degrees if I didn’t have to do a dissertation. So that’s when everyone stopped. It took a lot more than being resilient for me to get through this. Because a lot of times when you say it takes a village, the people that form my village, are not the people that I would have thought would have suited up and showed out from the beginning. And so, it’s like this process, the further along I went, the more I saw my abilities change. And it changed for my greater good, because it strengthened me, and it gave me the courage to continue on.”

Figure 4

Vivian’s Vision Board Photovoice Submission
Note: “I think this kind of represents like all the different colors, and also this person’s stoic presence, what I have felt as a supervisor, then I also put this because it kind of represents for me when I think about, inclusivity, when also think about social justice, or even what we’ve gone through, and then also being able to think about how things could be grainy at times, but also as a people how we have been so strong. In here, I have another tree, and I had like the colors. And then I call this ‘Breaking through Barriers’. And so, this is the other piece that represents when I think about what the supervision and I have the rope. And then I have these other folks, it’s kind of representative of some of the supervisees that I work with.”

Figure 5

Vanessa’s Vision Board Photovoice Submission
Note: “Here we have a Black face. We face a lot of experiences. Our Black faces are needed regardless of what we face. The white background is white because she often must experience her intersectionality’s in a white paradigm. The paradigm of white at a PWI. And we have purple here because that is the woman is color. Purple is to Black as lavenders to purple. And I’m choosing the word womanist because the focus is on the Black woman. And particularly I’m choosing the word supervision because she will become a supervisor, she is that supervisor. She is the one who shepherds, those who might be lost and those who are non-Black. And so, I’m using woman in supervision because I believe a woman in supervision has a place at a PWI.”

**Figure 6**

*Maxine’s Vision Board Photovoice Submission*
Note: “When I thought about like cross cultural supervision and cross racial supervision. I have like the hands. And it’s interesting because it’s about five hands. And I think those are the amount of people that I felt impacted by. I just remember throughout not wanting to be hardened by the process. So that’s why I have the elements of the peonies, and like still wearing my heels and the glasses and things like that. Just elements of protecting my feminine, like, the Black feminine. A Black woman with African print on just symbolizes like the intersectionality of Black ness. And not every Black person is African American, per se and vice versa and can have multiple ethnicities to include African American. And then prioritizing quality over quantity with intentionality.”

“I do prioritize quality. So, for me, I make sure that before I show up in a space, I give myself a moment to center. But knowing that deep within my heart like I’m doing my best and I’m trying to bridge those gaps of social change and humanizing the narrative of the Black woman when I’m interacting with them.”

**Figure 7**

*Claire’s Vision Board Photovoice Submission*
Reflection of Experiences

Cross-Racial Supervision/Mentorship
• Support
• Conflict
• Invalidated
• Misunderstood
• Disconnected

Current Supervision/Mentorship
• Intentional
• Authenticity
• Covering, Safe
• Village

Note: “The invalidation the conflict, you know, not being seen, not being heard. But there was the conflict was areas of support. Also, that that cultural piece was missing the sensitivity. If you need more than awareness, you need the sensitivity. Right? And so that that was that was missing. So that’s where being misunderstood and disconnected. Feeling disconnected. My hooding ceremony and these were most of my mentors and supervisors. What you see is this, this professor telling me, you look good. And this person here is fixing my hair.”

“This kind of captures what I what I believe mentorship is, right? It’s inspirational, it’s helping, and it’s about success. It’s also about the failures, but it’s its motivation, its training, its leadership, its modeling, it’s, all encompassing, you know, across the board, but the sense of belonging. And it’s a covering it kind of their sense of safety, right? For protection, especially for my mentees that identifies as Black or African American female.”

Figure 8

Whitley’s Vision Board Photovoice Submission

Note: “My regalia represents while I attended because that was kind of like the goal. What is to
graduate and that was kind of the hustle of getting through the program the whole time.”
“For the second part. Because I am a counselor educator. A lot of what I do is preparing students for to work with their future clients and impacting kind of the field across my students. So, it would be a classroom, a lot of things happen in the class, at least in my classrooms, where we’re talking about different perspectives. I encourage students to debate or to tell me a little bit more about that perspective. There are just a lot of things that I want to take from my experiences to help make a better experience for future doctoral students.”

**Figure 9**

*Monique’s Vision Board Photovoice Submission*

Note: “These are the three pictures that represent what I didn’t get. I told you, I felt invisible. Because I didn’t really have that much support.”
“So, these are the two pictures of what I would like to be able to implement, which is the empathy, genuineness and respect with students or even team members but making sure there’s an equal exchange on both sides of all of these things. Let’s tackle discussions about things; Gain a greater understanding, you know, whether you need clarity. Hey, and you know, having them be accountable, what do we need to do? And being able to challenge them.”
## APPENDIX G: Audit Trail Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Procedures</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/2021</td>
<td>Identification of research question</td>
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<td>03/2021-08/2021</td>
<td>Literature Review and preparation of proposal</td>
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<td>09/27/2021</td>
<td>Research proposal defense</td>
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