AN EXISTENTIAL-PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING A WHITE UNDERGRADUATE PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT IN A MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING COURSE

by

Mona Lynnette Swallow

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Liberty University

December, 2023

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Name and degree, Committee Member

ABSTRACT

This existential-phenomenological study sought to explore the experiences of White undergraduate psychology students enrolled in a multicultural counseling course to gain an understanding of how White students described their lived experiences while enrolled in the course. This was accomplished by conducting virtual interviews with nine participants recruited through an online university announcement. Three key experiential constituents emerged from the data supporting previous research of the conflicts White students experience as they process understanding their racialized identities as members of the dominant ethnic-racial group in U.S. society in context to the topics discussed in the course. This lack of understanding was demonstrated through reliance on colorblind ideology, including the use of racially coded language and the "Other" to understand their White identities, the minimization of racism demonstrated through reliance on racial ignorance/innocence, and difficulty reconciling one's own personal beliefs that conflicted with some aspects of the course. This study adds to the literature on multicultural training highlighting the continued importance and usefulness of multicultural counseling in assisting budding White counseling professionals with understanding the cultural and ethnic-racial differences that may present between themselves and potential clientele and the effects such differences may have on the therapeutic relationship. This study's findings also revealed the continued need for support in interrupting students' reliance on reinforcing Whiteness and the racial status quo as one goes through the process of developing a multicultural orientation. Recommendations for future research are also discussed.

Keywords: multicultural counseling, White identity, Whiteness, multicultural competency

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my Granny, Ola Mae Masters, and my Papa Don, Dr. Donald Rae Evans, Sr. To my Granny, your presence has been with me throughout this journey as I continue to hone my skills as a writer. It was the words from your book of poems of "prayer, praise, and pleadings," *A Covert from the Tempest*, that got me through the summer of 2022 when I was writing the literature review. Particularly your poem "Undaunted," which to this day fills me with inspiration and joy for the gift of writing that you passed down to me. I am eternally grateful to embody your essence as I continue to write. To my Papa Don, you will forever be our family's Social Justice Warrior! You laid the blueprint for us with your many organizations focused on healing within the Black community through your service, teachings, and writings. It is your gift of writing and your spirit of justice that I also embody as I attempt to do the same. Thank you both for the lives you lived and the legacies you have blessed us with. Here is a snippet of your poem, Granny, "The Breath of Life," which has gotten me through the rest of my doctoral journey

Spirit of the living God, breathe on me

Spirit of the living the God, set me free,

I will walk with thee every day

Hold my hand and lead the way.

Spirit of the living God,

Breathe on me.

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To Dr. Winn and Dr. Piferi, thank you both for seeing the potential in me and believing in this study and its importance. Dr. Winn, without your unwavering support, this study would have been nearly impossible for me to complete. To my husband, Isaiah, thank you for your hard work and dedication to supporting my dream of obtaining a Ph.D. since being a McNair Scholar over 20 years ago. Without your commitment, my dream would have been difficult to realize. To my children Lolene, Darien, and Serena, this is for you. As I strive to model persistence, dedication, and striving to reach your goals, no matter what life throws at you, know that all is possible. Sunny, thank you for setting me on my path to spiritual healing. Tara Spencer, my BFF of nearly 30 years. Your random texts of encouragement always at the right time got me through some difficult moments while authoring this dissertation, thank you! Tabitha Brown, you don't know me, but your willingness to share your presence with the world has taught me what joy looks like, thank you! Thank you to the participants of this study. Given the current climate in the U.S. surrounding topics of ethnicity-race, this study would not have been possible without your willingness to share your experiences. Through analyzing the data, my understanding of the experience of being White in a multicultural counseling course was enlightened due to the candidness and sincerity that was demonstrated throughout the interviews. Lastly, thank you to me, Mona Lynnette Swallow. My persistence, dedication, and discipline made this dream realized. This has probably been one of the most difficult and rewarding journeys I have been on. Congratulations, I did it!

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

In 2020, following the national and global protests against racial violence toward Black Americans, 150 to 180 counties, cities, states, and organizations across the United States (U.S.) declared racism a public health crisis (Krisberg, 2021; Paine et al., 2021). Racial violence towards Asian Americans, specifically Chinese Americans, stemming from xenophobia and COVID-19 also increased during that time. It is believed that COVID-19 racism led to the scapegoating of Asian Americans (Dhanai & Franz, 2020; Cheng et al., 2021) as the cause of the disease, increasing anti-Asian incidents by 1900% in New York City alone (Lang, 2021). Between 2019 to 2020 anti-Asian motivated incidents reported across the U.S. increased by 77% (Kapadia, 2022). Well into the 21st century ethnic–racial bias persists (Fiske & Russell, 2010) in which bias motivated by the victim's ethnicity, race, or ancestry accounted for 61.8% of hate crimes reported in 2020, a 32% increase from the previous year (FBI, 2021). According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (2021), bias motivated by the victim's ethnicity-race continued to be the largest category of bias-motivated crime in the United States (U.S.).

Despite the rise in racial violence and acknowledgment of the consequences of systemic racism to Communities of Color opposition to the teaching of race and racism in K-12 public education and higher education involved 36 states that have introduced or adopted laws or policies restricting such teaching while 17 states have expanded on such teachings (Stout & Wilburn, 2022; Young & Friedman, 2022). However, calls at the macro-level for equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) training amongst employers demonstrate the growing demand for workers with the skills needed to work well with

others across various social differences (Asare, 2021; Sappleton & Adams, 2022). Therefore, the education system plays a prominent role in supporting diversity, inclusion, and cultural competency as it prepares students for cross-cultural intergroup interactions and the minimization of ethnic-racial conflict, which provided the motivation for the current study (Grapin et al., 2019; Gushue & Hinman, 2018; Hopkins & Domingue, 2015; Sappleton & Adams, 2022; Singh et al., 2020; Stathi et al., 2014).

Race-based trauma has adverse effects on the psychological, political, physical, and emotional well-being of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC; Allwood et al., 2022; Hemmings & Evans, 2018; Saw et al., 2021; Spann, 2022) enhancing the need for psychotherapy as an intervention. As White psychologists continue to make up much of the workforce in psychology (APA, 2022; Day-Vine et al., 2018) and the ethnic-racial background of psychologists is relevant to rapport, alliance, and the counseling relationship particularly when the therapist is White and the client is a member of the BIPOC community, research indicates barriers exist in cross-racial/cultural dyads. Such barriers include racial microaggressions and unconscious bias (Hook et al., 2016; Spann, 2022), unwillingness to broach topics surrounding ethnicity-race and culture (King, 2021a), and a lack of training in identifying and treating race-based trauma (Hemmings & Evans, 2018).

Though multicultural competency is an accreditation standard in counseling (Chao et al., 2011; Dameron et al., 2020; Gonzalez-Voller et al., 2020) therapists' lack of knowledge or denial of their own bias or clients' experiences with racism can lead to biased assessments and or the compromising of therapeutic goals and tasks for Clients of Color (Lee et al., 2019; Spann, 2022). Previous empirical studies assessing the

effectiveness of multicultural training have provided mixed results (Gonzalez-Voller et al., 2020; Lowery et al., 2020), particularly related to multicultural awareness and knowledge (Barden et al., 2017; Gonzalez-Voller et al., 2020; Lowery et al., 2020). However, lacking from the current literature is a comprehensive understanding of the perceived importance of multicultural counseling education and training among therapists.

Therefore, the aim of this study was twofold to glean insight into 1) how White undergraduate students process their racialized identities as members of the dominant ethnic-racial group in context to the topics learned throughout the course and 2) how White undergraduate students describe their lived experiences with a multicultural counseling course. Multicultural counseling aims to support students in analyzing the roles oppression and culture play in the psychological functioning and development of marginalized groups (Goodman et al., 2004), skill development for proper interventions, and an awareness of one's own assumptions, biases, and values (Chao et al., 2011). As college campuses are often the most ethnic-racial diversity White students experience (de Novais & Spencer, 2019; Roberts & Rizzo, 2021; Whitehead, 2021) and these topics may be new to them an exploration of White students' perspectives at this early level of professional development may better inform how to address gaps in perception related to the adverse effects of racism on BIPOC communities.

Background

The push for EDI continues in response to demographic changes in which it is projected that by the year 2044, the U.S. will be a majority-minority nation, with White

Americans making up less than 50% of the total population (Craig et al., 2018; Kubota et al., 2017). This shift indicates the increasing need for tools to prepare all students with the skills necessary to function in an ethnically and racially diverse society (Belet, 2018; Maxwell & Chesler, 2021; Niemonen, 2007; Sappleton & Adams, 2022; Warde et al., 2022). In particular, White students as historically and within contemporary society, their ethnic-racial group continue to maintain most positions of power allowing them to control societal resources and establish social norms (Hazelbaker et al., 2022; Roberts & Rizzo, 2021). Research indicates that most White people have limited contact with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) who are quickly becoming the majority. Such limited contact with BIPOC perpetuated through residential segregation contributes to most White people's lack of knowledge and awareness of systemic racism and Whiteness and its consequences in contemporary society (Hazelbaker et al., 2022; Pahlke et al., 2021; Roberts & Rizzo, 2021).

In 2021, in alignment with the growing public acknowledgment of systemic racism as a public health threat negatively affecting the mental and physical health of Communities of Color (Krisberg, 2021), the American Psychological Association (APA) issued a formal apology to BIPOC communities acknowledging its complicity in the perpetuation of systemic inequities (APA, 2021; DiAngelis & Andoh, 2022). Further in acknowledging the harm systemic racism has caused BIPOC communities and assuming responsibility for the role racism has played in the discipline APA has committed to dismantling systemic racism through science-based recommendations remedying the effects of racism in the present as well as in the future (APA, 2021; DiAngelis & Andoh, 2022).

A specific area of resolution APA along with the discipline of psychology vowed to remedy was harms “in practice, education, criminal justice, training, and other domains” (APA, 2021, p. 1) to promote the principles reflecting equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) becoming an “actively antiracist discipline” (APA, 2021, p. 1). In becoming an actively antiracist discipline, APA further resolved to reject research focused on reinforcing human value based on assumed hierarchies (APA, 2021). Such hierarchies were acknowledged by APA as informed by a “White-default” (APA, 2021, p. 3). APA’s striving towards becoming antiracist will be accomplished through culturally responsive training along with encouraging practitioners to consider the limitations of “White Western-oriented clinical practice” and gaining awareness of other healing traditions centered in Indigenous, cultural, and other non-Western traditions (APA, 2021, pp. 3-4).

Though the workforce of psychologists from ethnic-racial marginalized communities increased from 9% to 16% between 2007-2016 (Lin et al., 2018) as of 2020 White psychologists continue to make up much of the workforce at 84.47%, which is disproportionate to the representation of diversity in the overall U.S. population (APA, 2022). While multicultural competencies within the discipline of psychology have become prevalent over the past 40 years (Clauss-Ehlers et al., 2019; Goodman et al., 2004; Pérez-Rojas et al., 2019; Vandiver et al., 2021) there continues to be a lack of understanding of how White undergraduate psychology students understand race and racism in their lived experiences as members of the dominant ethnic-racial group in U.S. society, within the broader society, as well as in the lived experiences of the Communities of Color who will serve as their potential future clientele.

To overcome the country's legacy of bigotry and systemic racism moving towards equity for all and reconciling race relations within the U.S. involves engaging White Americans in understanding the role they play in perpetuating systemic racism (Hazelbaker et al., 2022; Jewett, 2018; Roberts & Rizzo, 2021). However, there is a lack of research related to White students' 1) lived experiences as the dominant ethnic-racial group in U.S. society, 2) the experiences most salient to White students' understanding of race and racism in U.S. society, and 3) White students' understanding of how multicultural guidelines inform them of the structural inequities experienced by Clients of Color and how to act against systemic oppression. In line with APA's call for EDI and actively engaging in antiracism, to understand the persistence of systemic racism in U.S. society, it is first important to understand the phenomena of group differences, ethnic-racial bias in childhood and adolescence, White American perspectives of systemic racism in contemporary society, and the continued need for diversity and multicultural curriculum as it relates to solutions to race relations in contemporary U.S. society.

Ingroups, Outgroups, and Group Differences

The history of social psychologists interested in understanding bias and stereotyping through the examination of race and social distance has been prevalent since the 1920s (Fiske & Russell, 2010). During the 1950s Gordon Allport expanded research in this area as he went against the mainstream view that bias is deviant and instead suggested that bias is a normal and natural part of cognition as a byproduct of categorization (Fiske & Russell, 2010). The process of social categorization is an automatic function in which people are classified into distinct groups based on shared physical similarity, shared fate, or proximity (Dovidio et al., 2010). The social

categorizing of people leads to the formation of ingroups and outgroups creating “us” versus “them” dynamics (Fiske & Russell, 2010). Forming the basis for perception, functioning, and cognition categorization is a crucial way in which humans derive meaning from complex social environments (Dovidio et al., 2010). Through this process differences within groups are perceptually minimized while differences between groups become exaggerated leading to stereotyping and bias (Dovidio et al., 2010; Fiske & Russell, 2010).

As social categorization shapes cognition, affect, and behavior in contrast to the outgroup people tend to have more positive affect toward their ingroup, are more trusting, cooperative, and helpful toward their ingroup, and are more likely to discount negative behaviors of ingroup members than they are toward outgroup members (Dovidio et al., 2010). Our understanding of social categorization focused on cognition and bias enhances our understanding of how individuals use cognitive shortcuts (heuristics) based on limited mental resources (Fiske & Russell, 2010). This can lead to error and bias increasing perceptions of group homogeneity, biased memory based on stereotype-consistency, and misinterpreted correlation between outgroup categories and negative behaviors leading to false confirmation of expectancies (Fiske & Russell, 2010; Fiske & Russell, 2017). Such errors and biases further lead to the perception of social categories as natural in which members of one’s ingroup are perceived to possess a common essence (Dovidio et al., 2010). Differences between ingroups and outgroups allow individuals to derive a sense of self and social identity through their group membership (Dovidio et al., 2010).

An important aspect of contemporary bias research includes dual-mode processes in which understanding bias as automatic or controlled cognitive processes has dominated the racial bias research as well as understanding the cognition and activation of explicit and implicit racial bias. To better understand the various contemporary forms of subtle bias which include automatic, ambiguous, and ambivalent stereotypes researchers have developed various explicit and implicit measures to understand contemporary racial bias (Fiske & Taylor, 2017). Crucial to our understanding of the development of ethnic-racial bias is an understanding of implicit biases believed to be rooted in cultural representations, repeated individual experiences, and widespread media exposure of diverse groups in society (Dovidio et al., 2010). Specifically, over the past 50 years, researchers have been interested in understanding the development of explicit and implicit ethnic-racial bias in children which is discussed next.

Racial Bias in Childhood and Adolescence

Learning begins in childhood; by the time children reach elementary school, they have a basic understanding of the ethnic-racial groups in the society they live in and an understanding of that society's ethnic-racial hierarchy, with some children displaying bias (Baron & Banaji, 2006; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). Developmental psychologists and researchers have made the case that children and youth acquire intergroup attitudes and behaviors that, through their individual environments and society at large, will continue throughout their lifetime (Baron & Banaji, 2006; Kubota, 2017; Lundberg et al., 2018; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). Beginning in early childhood, the process of social categorization begins as children interact with the social world noticing both the similarities and differences between groups and categorizing themselves and others into

social groups (Hazelbaker et al., 2022). As the types of categories expand along with the meanings associated with them children begin demonstrating more positive attitudes and preferences toward their ingroups (Hazelbaker et al., 2022).

Research shows that ethnic-racial majority group children as young as three years old exhibit negative explicit attitudes towards ethnic-racial outgroup members, by age five acquiring an adultlike concept of race as a social category (Baron & Banaji, 2006; Newheiser & Olson, 2012). It also reveals implicit bias acquired at a young age remains stable across development suggesting that implicit bias emerges at adult-like levels during early childhood (Newheiser & Olson, 2012). Though it has been shown that explicit racial attitudes can disappear or peak by age 12, negative intergroup attitudes on an implicit level continue to unfold (Baron & Banaji, 2006; Gonzalez et al., 2017; Newheiser & Olson, 2012; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). One explanation for the decline in explicit negative racial attitudes toward BIPOC is that as White children age, they learn it is socially unacceptable to display such negative attitudes (Zucker & Patterson, 2018). On the other hand, race is a significant predictor of implicit intergroup bias. White children will exhibit stronger ingroup bias favoring White Americans than Black children (Newheiser & Olson, 2012).

Important aspects of a child's socialization process are the messages, beliefs, and attitudes they receive about those of different ethnicities and races from their own (Hagerman, 2017; Pahlke et al., 2021; Perry et al., 2019; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). Historically research on ethnic-racial socialization was seen as solely important for Families of Color as it involved teaching their groups history and traditions, preparing their children for discrimination, and fostering a sense of racial pride (Bartoli et al., 2016;

Hamm, 2001; Martinez-Fuentes et al., 2021; Pahlke et al., 2021; Strain, 2017). Due to their privileged position in society being of the dominant ethnic-racial group shielding them from racism, White parents were viewed as not carrying this same burden (Bartoli et al., 2016; Hamm, 2001; Martinez-Fuentes et al., 2021; Pahlke et al., 2021; Strain, 2017).

However, contemporary research has shifted, indicating the importance of understanding White racial identity development and the ethnic-racial socialization practices of White parents. Both are viewed as important to understanding how familial Whiteness socialization perpetuates U.S. racism in which White parents transmit this ideology to their children (Hagerman, 2017; Ferguson et al., 2022; Pahlke et al., 2021; Perry et al., 2019; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). As parents play a crucial role in the socialization of their children, parents' racial attitudes influence those of their children (Martinez-Fuentes et al., 2021; Pahlke et al., 2021; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). This relationship is believed to be strongest during late adolescence and early adulthood (Pahlke et al., 2021).

Though White students are increasingly more likely to function in ethnically and racially diverse settings, few studies have provided a comprehensive examination of the ethnic-racial socialization process among White families (Hagerman, 2017; Pahlke et al., 2021; Strain, 2017; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). The few studies that do highlight colorblind or color-mute ideologies in which White parents are reluctant to discuss issues of race and racism with their children often silencing and discouraging overt discussions about such topics (Bartoli et al., 2016; Hagerman, 2017; Odenweller & Harris, 2018; Pahlke et al., 2021; Perry, 2019; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). It is suggested that this

approach contributes to a lack of understanding about White privilege, systemic racism, and its impact on BIPOC as well as its impact on the lives of White people (Cazenave & Maddern, 1999; Morgan, 2021; Pahlke et al., 2021).

White Perspectives on Racism in Contemporary Society

Though the consequences of racism are prevalent throughout contemporary society as indicated by ethnic-racial disparities in incarceration rates, hiring practices, education attainment, wage disparities, health care, and interactions with law enforcement (Garneau et al., 2017; Hazelbaker et al., 2022; Lesick & Zell, 2021; Roberts & Rizzo, 2021; Shimomura, 2015; Walton, 2017), White Americans continue to be less likely to perceive racism as a problem than are ethnically and racially marginalized groups (de Novais & Spencer, 2019; Garibay et al., 2020; Foste, 2020; Lesick & Zell, 2021; Whitehead, 2021). Researchers have attempted to provide explanations as to why such perceptions persist among White Americans. Some researchers have come to believe that White Americans develop a defensive denial of systemic racism as an acknowledgment of racism may be viewed as threatening suggesting that they receive unearned advantages by virtue of the color of their skin (Cazenave & Maddern, 1999; Lesick & Zell, 2021).

Another explanation is the cognitive dissonance caused by the knowledge that their ethnic-racial ingroup has historically and is presently engaging in oppressive behaviors and practices towards ethnic-racial outgroup members (Badea & Sherman, 2019; Lesick & Zell, 2021). This dissonance can lead to the phenomenon of White Americans defensively blaming BIPOC for the systemic inequities they face (Badea & Sherman, 2019; Lesick & Zell, 2021; Spanierman et al., 2008). For instance, Spanierman

et al. (2008) found that some White college students expressed "*White anger*" (p. 855) towards BIPOC holding the belief that they used their race to gain societal benefits. Further respondents believed that BIPOC should resolve issues involving racism themselves rather than holding White people responsible (Spanierman et al., 2008). Spanierman et al. (2008) also found that even when White students understood White privilege and structural racism, they also conveyed concern that affirmative action type policies were not fair to White people. This finding is in line with other research which suggests that while White Americans support the ideals of equality, many are opposed to interventions designed to improve the social and economic conditions of BIPOC (Dixon et al., 2017).

Dissonance and the downplaying or denial of systemic racism have also been found to result from White people's perspectives of racism being the problematic behavior of individuals, belief in colorblind racial ideology, preservation of self-integrity, and a lack of knowledge regarding the historical legacy of racism (Badea & Sherman, 2019; Foste & Jones, 2020; Lesick & Zell 2021; Todd & Abrams, 2011). Willingness to recognize systemic racism as well as one's own biases and knowledge about the historical legacy of racism are the strongest predictors of increased empathy, reduced prejudice, and decreased denial of racism (Lesick & Zell, 2021; Perry et al., 2019).

Diversity Curriculum

Diversity curriculum for diverse student groups which includes White students has examined attitudes towards those of different ethnic-racial groups, students' knowledge, and some have reviewed the academic impact of such courses (Belet, 2018; Sleeter & Zavala, 2020; Stathi et al., 2014; Valdez, 2020). The impact of diversity

coursework in higher education focused on examining democracy outcomes consistently reports the positive impact such courses have on White students especially when such courses infuse intergroup interaction as interaction with others across varied perspectives forces students to think critically (Boatright-Horowitz et al., 2012; Ford, 2012; Maxwell & Chesler, 2021; Sleeter& Zavala, 2020). At the university level research has noted the positive impact of diversity courses, intercultural communication courses, and multicultural training focused on cultural awareness. Such courses contribute to significant gains in empathy, student's development of democracy outcomes, and increased international and cultural awareness (Boatright-Horowitz et al., 2012; de Novais & Spencer, 2019; Ford, 2012; Shih et al., 2013; Sleeter, 2011; Bowman, 2010; Lantz, et al., 2020; Van Laar et al., 2008).

Previous studies have demonstrated that the positive impact of ethnic studies, intergroup dialogue, and diversity courses was greatest when they included cross–group interactions in which students were engaged in active discourse of racial issues and interacting with classmates whose perspectives were different from their own (Sleeter, 2011; Hurtado, et al., 2002; Maxwell & Chesler, 2021; Tropp & Barlow, 2018; Selvanathan et al., 2018). Hurtado et al. (2002) found that there was a greater positive impact on White students in these areas than on Students of Color to which the researchers associate as possibly being due to White students' lack of cross-ethnic interactions in comparison to their Peers of Color and systemic analysis of power being new to them. White college students who have completed diversity courses in which those who have interracial interactions and relationships with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) were more aware of the realities of BIPOC which assisted in

them gaining an awareness of their own racial backgrounds and a willingness to take action against racism (Cabrera, 2012; Maxwell & Chesler, 2021). The effects of taking more than one diversity course have also been examined. Bowman (2010) found that White students who take more than one diversity course can move beyond the emotional challenges initially felt such as feelings of guilt and shame experienced from being introduced to issues, they have never been exposed to. Gains to well-being were also found in which White male students from financially privileged backgrounds had the most significant gains (Bowman, 2010). However, longitudinal understanding of the effectiveness of such programs continues to be lacking from the literature (Lai et al., 2016; Lai & Wilson, 2020; Paluck et al., 2021).

Multicultural Counseling Training

Sue et al. (1982, 1990, 2008) theoretical framework for multicultural counseling competencies (MCC) has informed multicultural training within the discipline of psychology for the past 40 years (Chao et al., 2011; Vandiver et al., 2021). The theoretical framework includes three areas of competency: a) attitudes and beliefs in which the psychologist has an awareness of their own biases, assumptions, and values; b) knowledge about the worldview of culturally diverse clientele, and c) skill development in which the psychologists can develop appropriate interventions for their clientele (Chao et al., 2011). New guidelines have expanded on expectations to include the development of social justice advocacy, action, and community intervention as being important to counselor MCC (Allwood et al., 2022; Gonzalez-Voller et al., 2020; Hemmings & Evans, 2018; Shannonhouse et al., 2020). Multicultural competency has since been woven into the American Psychological Association, the American Counseling Association, and

related fields as an accreditation standard in counseling (Chao et al., 2011; Dameron et al., 2020; Gonzalez-Voller et al., 2020; Lowery et al., 2020). Cultural and social diversity have been identified by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs as a crucial core area for counseling programs to incorporate within their curriculum (Gonzalez-Voller et al., 2020).

Though MCC is an important aspect of the training of psychologists and counselor's empirical studies regarding the effectiveness of multicultural training have provided mixed results (Gonzalez-Voller et al., 2020; Lowery et al., 2020). Some studies have shown a positive association between multicultural training and MCC, however, outcomes varied based on the characteristics of participants (Gonzalez-Voller et al., 2020). For instance, Chao et al. (2011) found that multicultural awareness was significantly higher for Trainees of Color than for their White counterparts. However, no significant difference was found between White trainees and their Peers of Color on multicultural knowledge indicating similar levels of knowledge. While Barden et al. (2017) found that non-White professional counselors in their sample reported higher multicultural knowledge than their White counterparts. The self-report nature of previous empirical studies is noted as a limitation related to discrepancies in self-perceived MCC versus the counselor's actual competency and skill level (Barden et al., 2017; Chao et al., 2011; Hill et al., 2013).

Given the current and projected shifts in the ethnic-racial demographics within U.S. society calls for research specific to investigating the counselor's cultural background and how the ethnicity-race of the counselor may impact the therapeutic relationship is viewed as a key area of critique lacking from MCC research (Hill et al.,

2013). It is believed that not considering the ethnicity-race of the counselor may risk harming the client particularly when problems arise within the therapeutic relationship from the counselor's inability to understand how their own worldview and experiences impact the relationship creating “an inability to understand and be viewed as an ally and advocate for those they serve” (Hill et al., 2013, p. 263).

Problem Statement

Human beings’ natural tendency towards homophily indicates that we are attracted to one another based on similarities (Ramos et al., 2018; Tropp, 2019). The culture of the society in which we are socialized plays a role in conditioning us to pay particular attention to each other’s differences, distancing us from those who are different (LaLonde, et al., 2015). Though it is apparent that the ethnic-racial demographics within the United States are and will continue to shift, the ethnic-racial homogeneity of our social networks indicates that they continue to be dominated by those who are of the same ethnic-racial background as we are (Cox, et al., 2016). In a national survey, Cox et al. (2016) noted that 91% of White Americans have solely White social networks without the presence of BIPOC, 83% of Black Americans have solely Black social networks, and 64% of Hispanic/Latinx Americans have exclusively Hispanic/Latinx social networks. Though ingroup social networks appear to be the norm across groups, research suggests that in relation to their White counterparts, BIPOC have more interracial contact than their White peers (Tropp, 2007; Roberts & Rizzo, 2021; Whitehead, 2021).

Attending schools and living in segregated environments limits opportunities for interracial interactions and relationships which have been demonstrated to promote

positive intergroup contact leading to increased racial understanding and cultural awareness (Garibay et al., 2020; Kubota, et al., 2017; Ramos, et al., 2019; Roberts & Rizzo, 2021; Selvanathan et al., 2018; Tropp & Barlow, 2018; Tropp, 2019). While the resurgence of residential segregation has impacted all students, college campuses are often the most racial diversity White students have experienced (de Novais & Spencer, 2019; Roberts & Rizzo, 2021; Whitehead, 2021). As previously discussed, though systemic racism has been deemed an important social problem in immediate need of remedy, research indicates that White Americans continue to be less likely to perceive racism as a problem than BIPOC (Garibay et al., 2020; Lesick & Zell, 2021). According to Cazenave and Maddern (1999) such denial of the existence of racism and its consequences stems from a lack of awareness of racial inequalities and a refusal of White Americans in acknowledging their privilege within society. Such denial leads to the maintenance of psychological, social, economic, and political advantages fueling the persistence of White racism and the maintenance of the racial status quo (Cazenave & Maddern, 1999; Foste, 2020; Roberts & Rizzo, 2021).

While colleges and universities have been proactive in implementing diversity coursework within their curriculum (de Novais & Spencer, 2019; Doucet et al., 2013; Russell-Brown, 2018; Sappleton & Adams, 2022; Shearman et al., 2022), college campuses often reflect the ethnic-racial strife seen in the broader society. Research indicates that racial incidents such as racial microaggressions, blackface, racial slurs, swastikas, and hate crimes are commonplace on college campuses (Garibay et al., 2020; Shearman et al., 2022). From 2010 to 2019, intimidation hate crimes increased from 28% to 45%, 43% of which were motivated by the victim's race (National Center for

Education Statistics, 2022). Lacking from the current literature is a clear understanding of White students' direct experiences in a multicultural counseling course when faced with learning about race and systemic racism, their understanding of themselves as racialized, and their understanding of the importance of multicultural training.

As ethnic-racial differences between counselors and their clients have been found to contribute to attrition rates, particularly when the counselor is White and a client is a member of the BIPOC community this has a direct impact on treatment outcomes for Clients of Color (Kim & Kang, 2018; Lantz et al., 2020; Steinfeldt et al., 2020). Given these findings the continued presence of dissension between White Americans and BIPOC related to the effects of racism drives the need to understand 1) why such gaps persist; and 2) how to effectively address this ongoing issue (de Novais & Spencer, 2019; Garibay et al., 2020; Foste, 2020; Lesick & Zell, 2021; Whitehead, 2021). As White Americans make up 84.47% of the psychology workforce (APA, 2022), understanding White psychology students' direct experiences being in a multicultural counseling course and what effects this may have on their perspectives may inform how to better engage White students in multicultural training and address gaps in perception.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative existential-phenomenological analysis explored the experiences of White undergraduate students enrolled in a multicultural counseling course. The aim of the proposed study was to glean insight into 1) how White undergraduate students process their racialized identities as members of the dominant ethnic-racial group in context to the topics learned throughout the course, and 2) how White undergraduate

students describe their lived experiences with a multicultural counseling course. Because the ethnic-racial background of therapists is relevant to their rapport and interactions with clientele (Chao et al., 2011), the study sought to contribute to the extant literature on how White undergraduate students perceive multicultural counseling. As phenomenology is concerned with capturing the essence of the lived experiences of those being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018) we believe this approach served as an appropriate way to hear directly from White undergraduate psychology students in their own words regarding their experiences in such courses.

Research Question(s) and Hypotheses

The research question for this study was informed by the current literature, which calls for examining how White students understand their racial identities and their understandings of racism, race, oppression, and privilege related to student learning and change (Maxwell & Chesler, 2021). Leading to a better understanding of how White students being of the dominant ethnic-racial group in U.S. society utilize their cultural lens to assist with making sense of their experiences and the experiences of BIPOC (Maxwell & Chesler, 2021).

Research Questions

RQ1: How do White undergraduate psychology students describe their lived experiences with an undergraduate multicultural counseling course?

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

It was assumed that all participants would have limited knowledge and understanding of themselves as racialized beings in a racialized society. In addition, it

was assumed that they would have a limited understanding of how systemic racism is perpetuated and lack the ability to reconcile contradictions to their identities based on the information learned in the course. It was further assumed that participants would experience some discomfort with discussing issues surrounding race and multiculturalism, such as racism, discrimination, and White privilege (Maxwell & Chesler, 2021; Warde et al., 2022; Yeung et al., 2013), as such discussions in ethnically and racially mixed settings may initially be difficult for both Students of Color and White students (Maxwell & Chesler, 2021; Warde et al., 2022). Therefore, a limitation of the current study included the race-of-interviewer effect, which may have affected the level of comfort, trustworthiness, honesty, and openness participants experienced when discussing issues surrounding race and racism (Cabrera, 2012; Foste & Jones, 2020; Hagerman, 2017; Maxwell & Chesler, 2021; Yeung et al., 2013) with a Black woman researcher.

Other limitations included social desirability bias, which may have influenced participants' responses (Warde et al., 2022) and moderation bias, as the researcher may have unintentionally reacted to participants' statements (Warde, 2022). The study's qualitative nature was another limitation, as the findings are not generalizable. Lastly, no longitudinal data can be gleaned from the study’s findings.

Theoretical Foundations of the Study

Intergroup Contact Theory

Intergroup contact theory is identified as the most often used theoretical framework for prejudice reduction interventions aiming to change group boundaries and

interactions (Grapin et al., 2019; Hodson et al., 2018; Paluck et al., 2021). Intergroup contact refers to the belief that, given certain conditions, contact between those of differing ethnic-racial groups can reduce prejudice between marginalized and majority group members and reduce intergroup conflict (Grapin et al., 2019; Paluck et al., 2021). Intergroup contact theory suggests that given optimal conditions, direct exposure to outgroup members can lead to reduced prejudice while increasing positive interactions based on four criteria: group members having common goals, group members having equal status, intergroup cooperation, and institutional support (Grapin et al., 2019; Hewstone & Swart, 2011; Paluck et al., 2021).

Studies on intergroup contact which have been longitudinal, meta-analytic, and experimental in nature have concluded that contact between, particularly positive contact between those of different ethnic-racial groups is correlated with improved cross-ethnic attitudes and reduces ethnic-racial prejudice, with the most effective form of contact being interracial friendships (Hewstone & Swart, 2011; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Tropp & Barlow, 2018). However, findings indicate that there are differences in outcomes related to majority group status versus marginalized group status in that effects of contact for those from the majority ethnic-racial group are stronger than for marginalized ethnic-racial group members (Hewstone & Swart, 2011). According to Hewstone and Swart (2011) these findings suggest that members from both groups may perceive intergroup interactions differently.

Antiracism

Antiracist pedagogy utilizes Critical Race Theory (CRT) to critique racism in the U.S. which includes an understanding that racism is inherent and functions as a normal

fixture within U.S. society contributing to the production and maintenance of social inequalities (Davis, 2018; Vasquez & Altshuler, 2017). CRT posits that racism is a hegemonic force within society as it is deeply embedded in the culture of society's institutions which includes educational, political, legal, and economic systems to name a few (Davis, 2018). Antiracist pedagogy seeks to deconstruct Whiteness using a critical Whiteness framework composed of three tenets: 1) at the foundation of racism is Whiteness and this must be understood to understand and disrupt it, 2) Whiteness must be understood to understand how Students of Color are marginalized, and 3) scholars must attend to those who normalize and perpetuate racism (Foste, 2020). Along with attending to the experiences of those who are dehumanized as a consequence of racism serving to undercut the hegemonic nature of Whiteness (Foste, 2020). Therefore, antiracism is the active process of acknowledging and eliminating racism by changing social systems and structures, as well as changing practices, policies, and attitudes to redistribute power and share it equitably (Hazelbaker et al., 2022; Kishimoto, 2016; Mallot et al., 2019; Roberts & Rizzo, 2021).

Lastly, antiracism acknowledges the importance of race as socially constructed, while also acknowledging it as a causal construct that impacts all institutional structures, identities, and discourses within society (Niemonen, 2007; Yeung et al, 2013). Therefore, systemic racism and racist beliefs permeate all aspects of life in the U.S. from inequities in educational attainment, employment, health care, and housing and action must be taken to dismantle these structures (Torres, 2020) which negatively impact the lives of BIPOC (Tropp & Barlow, 2018). Therefore, antiracist pedagogy aims to promote ethnic-racial equity through praxis to dismantle institutional/ systemic racism through practices,

teaching philosophies, thought, reflection, and action (Boatwright-Horowitz, et al., 2012; López, 2008).

Biblical Foundation for Ethnic-Racial Unity

In Genesis chapter 1, we are introduced to God's good creations as demonstrated through God's creation of the heavens and the earth and all living beings therein, including humankind (Genesis 1:1-26, New International Version, 2001). As Genesis 1:27-31 informs us God created humankind in His own image seeing all that He made as "very good" we come to understand that humans were initially created without sin and in relationship with God (New International Version, 2001). However, through Adam and Eve's disobedience to God humanity's fall from grace into sin ensured that all of God's earthly creations both human and nonhuman are corrupted with sin including our social structures and cultural pursuits (Wolters, 2005). Therefore, society and social institutions are replete with humanity's distorted and corrupted view of God's good creation (Wolters, 2005). The social construction of race based on a presumption of race as a biological fact and its counterpart racism (Golash-Boza, 2021; Kendall, 2021; Sussman, 2014) are examples of how humanity's fall into sin has led to a perversion of God's created goodness.

Though genetic scientists have enhanced our knowledge that humans share 99.9% of the same genome (NIH, 2018), indicating we are of the same species in line with Genesis 1:26, which proclaims, "…let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness… (New International Version, 2001). However, the belief in the biological basis of race and hence racial categories as natural based on a hierarchy of skin color persists well into the 21st century (Jablonski, 2020; Machery & Faucher, 2005). Humankind's fall into sin

supports this way of thinking in which we do not view one another as made in the image of God, but rather through the distorted perception of the idea of race prevalent since the 15th century (Charles & Rah, 2019; Chirco & Buchanan, 2021; Greenberg, 2016; Rah, 2021). The social construction of race served as justification for European colonization of the Americas, enslavement, and theft of Africans from their native land, and the genocide and theft of land from Indigenous/ Native Americans persist within our culture and psyche (Golash-Boza, 2021; Rah, 2021).

The perversion that gave rise to race and racism was supported through the race-religion constellation (Topolski, 2018) in which the above-mentioned atrocities steeped in sin were justified using biblical Scripture and religious doctrine perpetuated by the church (Greenberg, 2016; Kwon, 2017; Rah, 2021). Therefore, the colonization and exploitation of non-European and non-Christian land and peoples by European colonial powers (Greenberg, 2016; Rah, 2021) continues to be seen as a natural progression within human history based on the belief in European superiority and non-European inferiority. This perception may be situated within the context of humanity's fall into sin for which racism and hatred of human beings based on the distorted belief in racial categories and racial hierarchy positions us as alienated from one another and from our relationship with God.

1 John 2:11 states, "But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them" (New International Version, 2001). As such the fall demonstrates how humankind falls short of understanding God's good creation as we are blind in understanding as informed in Acts 17:26-28:

> From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should be. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. For in him we live and move and have our being. As some of your own poets have said, "We are his offspring" (New International Version, 2001).

As this Scripture informs us *all* humans are the offspring of God made from one man no matter our location on God's created earth. In Acts 17:26-28, God has made no distinction based on geographical location, skin color, or supposed racial hierarchy. Gingrich and Smith (2014) analyze culture and ethnicity, in which they propose central themes of both found throughout Scripture. Specifically, God's "table of nations" (Genesis 10, New International Version, 2001) referring to the "gift" (Gingrich & Smith, 2014, p. 140) of humanity's ethnic diversity as planned by God through creation as noted in Acts 17:26 (p. 140). As all people are made in the image of God, we posit that *all* human beings no matter their location on earth are therefore a reflection of God which includes our ethnic diversity.

Scripture further assists this understanding and acceptance of the ethnic-racial diversity amongst humans as presented in Revelations 7:9, which states "After this, I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb" (New International Version, 2001). We further adopt Gingrich and Smith's (2014) stance that a crucial aspect of God's plan for humanity involves culture and ethnicity in which ethnic diversity is viewed as "the gift and plan of God in creation" (p. 140). However, for

this to be fulfilled and for humans to evolve past the blindness as imposed by sin demonstrated through ethnic-racial stereotypes, bias, and strife racial reconciliation leading to racial peace and unity is viewed as a necessary path forward (Foster, 2020).

In his love for us despite our fall into sin, God sent his only begotten son Jesus Christ who lived and died to redeem humanity from our fall into sin and hence our alienation from God (2 Corinthians 5:14-15; John 3:16, New International Version, 2001). The Christian concept of reconciliation informs us that our relationship with God is reconciled through the love and death of Jesus Christ (Foster, 2020) upon which a new creation will be formed (2 Corinthians 5:17, New International Version, 2001). In God's message of reconciliation as described in 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, we are provided with a demonstration of how our fall into sin was not held against us by God rather we are reconciled to him through Jesus imploring us as ambassadors of Christ to be reconciled to God (New International Version, 2001). We are redeemed through the blood of Jesus and forgiven of our sins through God's grace (Ephesians 1:7, New International Version, 2001).

Though it is debated as to whether racial reconciliation is possible given that conciliation between the "races" has never been a reality in the United States given our colonial history and contemporary strife surrounding ethnicity-race (Foster, 2020; Kwon, 2017), reconciliation, as defined by Salter McNeil (2015), is referred to as "an ongoing spiritual process involving forgiveness, repentance, and justice that restores broken relationships and systems to reflect God's original intention for all creation to flourish" (Foster, 2020, p. 67). Our continued lack of understanding of the sociohistorical implications of race and systemic racism in contemporary times demonstrates our

continued reliance on sin to absolve us of the history, society, and culture we have inherited from our forebears. Our unwillingness to acknowledge, teach, and understand the documented historical truths of the United States ensures that the sin of racism as a hegemonic force within society will continue to be deeply embedded in our culture and social institutions (Davis, 2018) positioning us further away from a reconciled relationship with one another and with God.

Racial reconciliation within the church implores us to face these truths head-on, bringing them out of darkness and removing our blindness as truth-telling, reparations, and justice are needed to mend these sins (Foster, 2020). While Scripture provides us with examples of racial sin demonstrated through ethnic strife and conflict between the Gentiles and Jewish people (Ephesians 2:15-17, New International Version, 2001; Kwon, 2017) and between the Samaritans and Jewish people (John 4:9, Luke 10:30, New International Version, 2001; Palmer, 2020) we are also provided with examples of racial reconciliation as role modeled through the actions of Jesus Christ a Jewish man towards people of different ethnicities (Gench, 2022).

It is through the lived actions and death of Jesus Christ we are provided with a foundation of multicultural/ ethnic inclusivity, love, and unity as reflected throughout His ministry (Luke 13:29, New International Version, 2001; DeYoung, 1999) beginning with his birth as discussed in Matthew chapter 2 (DeYoung, 1999). Matthew 28:19, states "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." (New International Version, 2001). Building bridges across what divides us ethnically, racially, and culturally requires our steadfast

commitment to rejecting sin and making the ministry of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ a reality.

Definition of Terms

There are several terms that are found throughout the literature related to racism, race-relations, racial identity, Whiteness, multicultural counseling, and antiracism. Defining these terms is no easy task as the concepts of racism, systemic racism, institutional racism, and structural racism overlap and are therefore synonymous with one another (Kendi, 2019). In attempting to simplify and define terms such as racism and systemic racism as these two words are used across the broader society (Bonilla-Silva, 2022), we acknowledge that we use these two terms interchangeably throughout this body of work. This is done for two reasons: 1) in acknowledgement that the terms are redundant as racism is inherently structural, systemic, and institutional (Kendi, 2019) and 2) to be in alignment with the language used by the American Psychological Association (APA) commitment to dismantling systemic racism (DeAngelis & Andoh, 2022).

In alignment with APA 7th edition guidelines when referring to ethnic-racial groups capitalization will be used as such groups are proper nouns (APA, 2020). However, veering away from APA guidelines yet in alignment with antiracist and ethnic studies pedagogy of acknowledging the histories and amplifying the voices of Communities of Color (Sleeter, 2011; Vasquez & Altshuler, 2017) when referring to such peoples and groups capitalization will be used. This is in recognition that language is political not neutral, and connotes power (DiAngelo, 2021; Kendall, 2021) therefore we

deem this as dignifying the humanity and lived experiences of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).

The following is a list of terms used in this study.

Antiracism – a system of equity based on race created and maintained through an interplay between psychological factors which includes equitable actions, thoughts, and feelings and sociopolitical factors including equitable policies, laws, and institutions distinguishing between identifying ways to reduce racism along with ways to promote antiracism leading to the eradication of racism (Hazelbaker et al., 2022; Mallot et al., 2015; Roberts & Rizzo, 2021).

Colorblind racial ideology – refers to "a set of beliefs that deny, minimize, and distort the existence of racism in its many forms (e.g., individual, interpersonal, cultural, and institutions) and the role of race in people's lives" (Neville et al., 2014, p. 180) harboring the belief in racial sameness and that everyone has the same opportunities encompassing both color and power-evasion (Neville et al., 2013).

Color-consciousness – the acknowledgment of race and racism which leads to improved attitudes towards ethnic-racial outgroup members (Perry et al., 2019).

Consciousness raising – refers to "helping clients understand the extent to which individual and private difficulties are rooted in larger historical, social, and political forces" (Goodman et al., 2004, p. 804).

Cultural humility – is defined as "the ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the client (Hook et al., 2016, p. 271).

Discrimination – action based on prejudicial beliefs and exaggeration of ethnic-racial differences which motivates people to avoid interracial contact, threats, violence, exclusion, sharing fewer resources with outgroup members, and support for boundary-enhancing policies (DiAngelo, 2018; Roberts & Rizzo, 2021).

Ethnic-racial socialization – is defined as "the mechanisms through which parents transmit information, values, and perspectives about ethnicity and race to their children" (Hagerman, 2017, p. 63).

Ethnicity – refers to group identities based on shared language, history, kinship, customs, traditions, and culture (Golash-Boza, 2021; Moffitt et al., 2022).

Hegemonic Whiteness – the collective social force that shapes the lives of White people and the lives of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color set forth as the "ideal" or what is considered "normal" in society which serves to reproduce white supremacy (Hagerman, 2017, p. 63).

Idea of race – the implication that people across the world can be divided into biologically distinct and exclusive categories based on notions of cultural and physical traits, linked to White/ European ideals of superiority developed during the colonization of the Americas (Golash-Boza, 2021).

Intersectionality – is defined as "the mutually reinforcing vectors of race, gender, class, sexualities, and other identities, which overlap in ways that allow for a multidimensional perspective of a person's lived experience" (Bharat et al., 2021, p. 364).

Marginalized groups – refers to context-dependent**,** multidimensional, and dynamic processes of group and individual experiences outside the centers of power rooted in power imbalance (Causadias & Umaña-Taylor, 2018).

Multiculturalism – refers to "the awareness of intersecting and mutually influencing self-identified subcultures that affect self-perception and worldview" (Lenes et al., 2020, p147).

Multicultural orientation – is defined as "a counselor's way of being with a client, guided by the counselor's philosophy or values that involves the ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the client" (Hook et al., 2016, p. 271).

Multicultural orientation vacillation – defined as a naturally occurring process of vacillating back and forth as a counselor (or trainee) reconciles challenges to their identity, values, and beliefs shifting to an openness toward developing a multicultural orientation.

Prejudice – encompasses affective, behavioral, and cognitive processes based on negative attitudes towards particular social groups consisting of stereotypes and generalizations projected onto everyone from that group (Correll et al., 2010; DiAngelo, 2018).

Race – a group of people who share common ancestry, physical, and cultural traits (Golash-Boza, 2021).

Racism – defined as "a system of advantage based on race that is created and maintained by an interplay between psychological factors and sociopolitical factors" (Roberts & Rizzo, 2021, p. 476).

Racial identity – a sense of collective group identity based on one's perception that they share a common racial heritage with a particular racial group (Tatum, 1992).

Racial ideology – refers to a worldview the includes collective beliefs and ideas about race used to publicly justify political attitudes that shape and are shaped by society providing a cognitive filter of what one sees and responds to in the social world (Neville et al., 2013).

Racial microaggressions – subtle commonplace invalidations, offensive behaviors, insults, and slights experienced by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in everyday interactions with well-intentioned White people (Sue et al., 2019).

Racialized social system – is defined as "a network of social relations at the social, political, economic, and ideological levels that shapes the life changes of the various races" (Bonilla-Silva, 2022, p. 21).

Racial trauma – defined as "the psychological and emotional harm caused by racism and includes symptoms of depression, anxiety, anger, avoidance, hypervigilance, intrusive thoughts, and physical symptoms" (Saw et al., 2021, 2).

Systemic racism – defined as "when a racial group's collective prejudice is backed by the power of legal authority and institutional control" (DiAngelo, 2018, p. 20).

White antiracism – refers to "an understanding of racism, White privilege, and Whiteness paired with a commitment to behaviors which challenges racism" (Hazelbaker et al., 2022, p. 1).

White dialectics – defined as "the tensions that White people inherently experience as dominant group members in the United States" (Todd & Abrams, 2011, p. 358).

Whiteness – defined as "the overt and subliminal socialization processes and practices, power structures, laws, privileges, and life experiences that favor the White racial group over all others" (Helms, 2017, p. 718).

White privilege – defined as "a sociological concept referring to advantages that are taken for granted by whites and that cannot be similarly enjoyed by people of color in the same context (government, community, workplace, schools, etc.)" (DiAngelo, 2018, p. 24).

White supremacy – refers to "a system of structural power privileges which centralizes and elevates white people as a group describing the sociological economic system of domination based on racial categories that benefits those defined and perceived as white" (DiAngelo, 2018, p. 30).

Significance of the Study

As discussed, previous research indicates there is a gap in the perceptions of White Americans related to the impact and consequences of systemic racism throughout contemporary U.S. society (Garibay et al., 2020; Lesick & Zell, 2021). The empirical significance of this study was to fill the gap in the literature by hearing directly from White undergraduate psychology students in their own words related to their experiences and perspectives while enrolled in a multicultural counseling course. We believe the voices of White students are an important contribution to attempts to identify effective ways of engaging this student population and understanding ways in which gaps in perceptions regarding race and racism may be addressed (Garibay et al., 2020; Lesick & Zell, 2021).

Further, this research contributed to the literature related to multicultural counseling training to understand its effectiveness in engaging White undergraduate psychology students in learning about systemic racism and themselves as racialized

beings in a racialized society, challenges to their identities, and whether such courses lead to White students becoming proactive in the fight towards social and racial justice. Lastly, the findings of the study contributed to the understanding of whether such courses are effective in educating White counseling students about the importance of being ethnically, racially, and culturally different from their clients and how this may have a direct impact on the treatment outcomes and client experiences when the therapist is White, and a client is a member of the BIPOC community.

Summary

This study is in alignment with the American Psychological Association's (2022) commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and its commitment to dismantling systemic racism within the discipline of psychology as well as the remediation of the harms stemming from racism (Deangelis & Andoh, 2022). In this chapter, we discussed racial bias in childhood and adolescence, the continued discrepancy between the perceptions of White Americans and BIPOC related to systemic racism and its effects, the benefits of diversity curriculum, the principles of multicultural training courses, and the theoretical frameworks that guided this study. Lacking from the literature is a clear understanding of how White undergraduate psychology students understand themselves racially, what experiences White undergraduate psychology students describe as being most salient to them regarding race and racism, and their understanding of antiracism and racial justice, which the results of this study sought to fill.

White students must understand their privileged position within an unjust system of white supremacy to function ethically and effectively (Cazenave & Maddern, 1999;

Maxwell & Chesler, 2021; Yeung et al., 2013; APA 2022) as multiculturally competent clinicians. Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive literature review of the sociohistorical legacy of race and racism in contemporary society explored through reviewing the literature on ethnic-racial socialization strategies used by White parents, White racial identity development, the education system as a socializing agent engaged in the perpetuation of the racial status quo, race-based trauma, and the education system, multicultural orientation, and multicultural humility. It is believed that understanding the above-mentioned dynamics may contribute to understanding new ways of reconciling race relations within the U.S., which must involve actively engaging White Americans in understanding their responsibility in ensuring equity for all to overcome the country's legacy of bigotry and to dismantle systemic racism (Jewett, 2018; Sleeter, 2011).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

In the following literature review, we begin with an overview of how the idea of race originated as well as how it has evolved over time into contemporary U.S. society. Understanding how racism is inherently woven into the foundation of U.S. society is a required starting point to better understand Whiteness at both the macro and micro levels (Grzanka et al, 2019; Roberts & Rizzo, 2021). Gaining knowledge about racism through a historical context is correlated with reducing White Americans' denial of racism (Lesick & Zell, 2021), as such, we believe this is necessary for demonstrating the role education plays in reducing gaps in perception related to racism in contemporary society (Lesick & Zell, 2021).

As we are interested in White undergraduate psychology student's racialized experiences in line with Helms (2017) "acknowledging that White people are the ultimate authorities on Whiteness" (p. 717), we believe that an understanding of the ethnic-racial socialization practices of White parents is important to understanding White undergraduate students' racial attitudes. Along these lines is an understanding of White racial identity development (WRID) taken together, the goal is to understand how Whiteness becomes a collective identity fused together by racial ideology and the maintenance of the racial status quo in contemporary society. As we shift from this micro-level analysis of racial understanding, we move towards a macro-level analysis of the role the education system plays in both maintaining the racial status quo and equipping students with the skills needed to function in an ethnic-racial and culturally diverse society.

Universities have played an active role in diversity and multicultural education since the 1960s as student-led social movements inspired by the Civil Rights Movement and researchers called for the inclusion of the voices and experiences of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) into the curriculum focusing on dynamics of power, race, identity, culture, and gender (Rivas, 2020; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2015; Vasquez & Altshuler, 2017). Shifts in the ethnic-racial and cultural demographics within U.S. society led to psychologists and counselors being required to have the training and skills needed to work effectively with and meet the needs of clients from diverse backgrounds (APA, 2018a; Hill et al., 2013; Pérez-Rojas et al., 2019). Further calls for multicultural competency related to those within the field of psychology and counseling include working towards advocacy and social justice through understanding experiences with oppression, power, and privilege to address systemic inequities and barriers promoting justice and human rights (APA, 2018).

An understanding of Whiteness includes understanding the threat or fear of the collective power of BIPOC which we believe is the basis of contemporary race relations (Craig et al., 2018; Grzanka et al, 2019) including the limiting of education. Limiting knowledge which seeks to eradicate racism through teaching antiracism thus disrupting the racial status quo (Sappleton & Adams, 2022), requires a review of the literature on the role of the education system in ethnic-racial socialization, its role in equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), multicultural counseling within the discipline of psychology, racial trauma, and multicultural orientation. The literature review concludes with the Biblical foundations for the study providing a Biblical understanding of the constructs being explored.

Description of Search Strategy

The following databases were used: PsycINFO, ProQuest, EBSCOhost, APA PsycNET, JSTOR, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses @ Liberty University, and ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. The search terms were related to Whiteness (i.e., White racial identity development, White racial consciousness, critical Whiteness studies), ethnic-racial socialization (i.e., White racial socialization, racial socialization), racism (i.e., racial violence, race or ethnicity bias, race-based trauma), intergroup relations (i.e., intergroup attitudes, intergroup dialogue courses, intergroup contact), diversity training (i.e., diversity courses, ethnic studies, multicultural counseling courses), college student racial attitudes (White college students, racial attitudes, campus racist incidents), and antiracism (White allies, antiracist pedagogy, antiracist development, the psychology of antiracism). The biblical research conducted for the study included search terms related to Jesus and antiracism (i.e., social justice, racial justice), political theology (i.e., decolonial theology, liberation theology), and Christianity and culture (i.e., racial reconciliation, theological imagination). The inclusion criteria were peer-reviewed articles published over the last 20 years (from 2002 to August 31, 2023).

The criteria date range was extended due to the limited research on the study of White American experiences as racialized. Books by prominent authors on antiracism and race relations were also referenced due to limited research on the topic under study. Editorials, paper conferences, and letters were not included in the search criteria. Literature reviews and reference lists from previous studies were used in the search.

Review of Literature

A Brief History of Race and Racism

"We are born into a racist society" (Sussman, 2014, p. 2). The myth of race as an assumed biological fact permeates all facets of our lives in the U.S. both historically and in contemporary times though since the 1950s scientists have established that all human beings are of the same species (Sussman, 2014). Racial categorization in a global context is noted as arising during the 15th century when the Portuguese began enslaving Africans (Charles & Rah, 2019; Chirco & Buchanan, 2021; Greenberg, 2016; Rah, 2021). The idea of race is assumed to have been set in motion by Pope Nicholas V when he released the papal bull, *Dum Diversas* instructing the Portuguese monarchy to "invade, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens, pagans, and other enemies of Christ, to put them into perpetual slavery, and to take away all their possessions and property (Greenberg, 2016, p. 236). This began what Topolski (2018) terms the race-religion constellation, referring to the connection between the categories of religion and race leading to the "discovery," exploitation, and colonization of non-Christian and non-European land and peoples by European colonial powers (Greenberg, 2016; Rah, 2021). Long before Manifest Destiny, the Doctrine of Discovery which arose from the ideology of *Dum Diversas,* ensured the justified political, spiritual, and legal oppression (Haokip et al., 2022) of non-Christians and non-Europeans who were deemed "savages," "heathens," "barbarians," and "uncivilized" (Greenberg, 2016; Haokip et al., 2022; Topolski, 2018; Rah, 2021), becoming the racialized "Other" (Rah, 2021; Topolski, 2018).

It is within the historical context of the Doctrine of Discovery that racial categorization in the United States (U.S.) arose as justification for the theft of land and

genocide of Native Americans along with the transatlantic slave trafficking, genocide, and enslavement of African peoples during colonial times (Golash-Boza, 2021; Rah, 2021). According to Rah (2021), the Doctrine of Discovery served a dual function, in providing a dysfunctional theological justification from the church for European conquest and atrocities alongside a political and military justification for such actions. Thus unfolds the social construction of racial hierarchy and categorization alongside white supremacy (Coleman et al., 2021; Golash-Boza, 2021; Sussman, 2014), White/[Western]European/Anglo-Saxon superiority elevated to the human standard fit to dominate all other ethnic-racial groups which therefore fall below the White/European/Anglo-Saxon norm of humanity (Coleman et al., 2021; Rah, 2021; Roberts & Rizzo, 2021).

Racism is the natural manifestation of the social construction of race and is dependent on the belief in the racial superiority of one race over others (Chirco & Buchanan, 2021). Granting systemic access, power, and control over economic, political, and social structures to the dominant ethnic-racial group of White Europeans over non-White Europeans creating a racialized social system (Battalora, 2010; Bonilla-Silva, 2022; Coleman et al., 2021). Racism, therefore, refers to a "system of advantage based on race that is created and maintained by an interplay between psychological factors (i.e., biased thoughts, feelings, and actions) and sociopolitical factors (i.e., biased laws, policies, and institutions" (Roberts & Rizzo, 2021, p. 476). Racism infuses systemic racism the product of the dominant "racial group's collective prejudice backed by the power of legal authority and institutional control" (DiAngelo, 2018, p. 20) which regulates patterns of ethnic-racial inequality resulting in the oppression of ethnically-

racially marginalized groups (Taylor & Wilcox, 2021). Becoming a social reality, race, and therefore systemic racism, became engrained within the foundation of U.S. society and culture along with the social consequences, it produces (Bonilla-Silva, 2022; DiAngelo, 2018, Kendi, 2019; Roberts & Rizzo, 2021).

The laws and policies of previous generations within the U.S. ensured the social reality of race from exploited labor through the enslavement of Africans, slave codes, anti-Miscegenation laws, Jim Crow, and immigration laws (Battalora, 2010; Bonilla-Silva, 2022; Golash-Boza, 2021; Smalling, 2022) to current laws and policies. Though the concept of race as a social construct has dominated within the social sciences since the 1970s (Machery & Faucher, 2005) the biological racism that arose during colonial times continues to permeate the collective psyche of those in contemporary U.S. society (Cazenave & Maddern, 1999, Golash-Boza, 2021) to which colorblind racial ideology (CBRI) serves to blame BIPOC for their systemic disadvantages while absolving White people from their lack of understanding of systemic racism and the role they play in its perpetuation (Bonilla-Silva, 2022; Lesick & Zell, 2021; Roberts & Rizzo, 2021).

Race and Racism 2.0

Ideas of a post-racial United States quickly fall away given the political and racial climate over the past five years. For if we did indeed live in a post-racial society, there would be no need for antiracism or equity, diversity, and inclusion training (EDI). The FBI statistics highlighted earlier noting the steady increase in ethnically and racially bias-motivated hate crimes, the 10 Black lives lost during the Buffalo supermarket shooting in 2022, the COVID-19 racism towards Asian Americans, and countless other ethnically and racially motivated incidents would have never happened. The unfortunate reality in

the year 2022 is we do not live in a post-racial society. The concepts of race and racism evolve over time encompassing the cultural and social shifts that occur within society (Dovidio et al., 2010; McDonald et al., 2019; Smalling, 2022).

Though blatant forms of ethnic-racial bias are not as accepted and prevalent in contemporary society as they were before the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s (Bonilla-Silva, 2022; DiAngelo, 2021; Hunt, 2019; Fiske & Taylor, 2017), it is noted that ethnic-racial bias is very much a part of contemporary life in the United States of America (Fiske & Russell, 2010; Neville et al., 2013). Blatant forms of ethnic-racial bias have shifted to subtle forms of bias in which daily experiences of subtle bias can be both physically and mentally taxing on BIPOC (Bonilla-Silva, 2022; Fiske & Taylor, 2017; Walton, 2017; Whitehead, 2021) and can eventually lead to death being as harmful as blatant acts of bias (Fiske & Taylor, 2017; Phan et al., 2022).

"New racism" (Hunt, 2019, p. 88) which preserves the racial status quo presents itself in subtle ways via the daily microaggressions that BIPOC experience at school, work, in the media, or in any social environment they may experience intergroup contact with a White person (Bonilla-Silva, 2022; Golash-Boza, 2021; Liu et al., 2019; Perez Gomez, 2021; Sue et al., 2019). Research indicates that such interactions contribute to poor physical and mental health profoundly impacting stress levels among BIPOC (Sue et al., 2019). New racism also includes colorblind racial ideology the belief that racism and discrimination are figments of the past and are no longer relevant, that racists are bad people in hoods, neo-Nazis, or carrying tiki torches, have a conservative political ideology, and the belief that White people experience reverse racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2022; DiAngelo, 2021; Kendi, 2019).

New racism further encompasses what Dovidio et al. (2010) describe as aversive racism which functions in both indirect and subtle ways by well-meaning individuals who regard themselves as possessing egalitarian views, see themselves as nonprejudiced, support racial equality, and have a liberal political leaning while simultaneously holding conflicting negative feelings and beliefs towards BIPOC that are rooted in psychological processes that promote racial bias. Because aversive racism often involves the rationalization of unconscious negative feelings toward BIPOC aversive racists often justify their ethnic-racial discriminatory behavior by highlighting other social characteristics such as social economic status viewed as a nonracial negative variable, avoiding interracial contact, or avoidance of racial topics (Neville et al., 2013; Noon, 2018; Phan et al., 2022). While such negative feelings may not involve explicit hatred or hostility, they may include fear, discomfort, or anxiety explaining why some White Americans who hold egalitarian views may feel uncomfortable in interracial environments and display discriminatory behaviors (Dovidio et al., 2010; Phan et al., 2022).

Previous findings on workplace hiring practices, college admissions recommendations, White Americans' feelings towards affirmative action, and the disparities in sentencing between Black and White defendants indicate aversive racism as an explanation for understanding contemporary bias (Dovidio et al., 2010; Murrell, 2021; Phan et al., 2022). The perpetuation of harm toward BIPOC by White Americans who view themselves as progressive (liberal) encompasses various aspects of aversive racism while also demonstrating what DiAngelo (2021) calls "nice racism." Specifically referring to White progressives who view themselves as nice people, beyond racism not

seeing themselves as part of the problem, may also hold a marginalized identity, and "claim to support racial justice efforts but want to suppress the tensions that accompany achieving that goal" (DiAngelo, 2021, p. 3). The assumption is niceness, being racially progressive, or someone professing not to be a racist absolves them of any racist intent regarding the outcome of one's behavior (DiAngelo, 2021).

While there are other forms of racism prevalent in contemporary society (Bonilla-Silva, 2022; Dovidio et al., 2010), we focus primarily on contemporary racism through the lens of aversive racism as colorblind racial ideology, egalitarianism, and viewing oneself as not racist are themes found in the ethnic-racial socialization practices of White parents. To understand how patterns of ethnic-racial discrimination and harm continue to manifest, understanding White parents' socialization practices in teaching their children about ethnicity-race is important to understanding how ethnic-racial bias persists as well as how best to combat such biases moving forward.

Ethnic Racial Socialization

Referring to the transmission of values, information, and perspectives about ethnicity and race from adults to children (Hughes et al., 2006), historically studies focused on ethnic-racial socialization have primarily centered on Families of Color and the preparation of Children of Color in dealing with ethnic-racial prejudice and discrimination (Hughes et al., 2009; Hagerman, 2017; Martinez-Fuentes et al., 2021; Pahlke et al., 2021). Specifically, studies primarily focused on common practices found amongst Black families related to racial socialization and more recently encompassing the strategies practiced by Latinx Americans, Asian Americans, and families that have

immigrated to the U.S. from Africa and the Caribbean regarding ethnic socialization (Hughes et al., 2006).

Our choice of the term "ethnic-racial" stems from the literature in which there is an acknowledgment of overlap between these two constructs, as it is understood that parents' choice of socialization practices rarely focuses on "just ethnic or just racial issues" (Gillen-O'Neel et al., 2022, p. 946). The idea put forth by Hughes et al. (2006) notes that both terms may be applied across all ethnic-racial groups as "all people are members of racial categories that are legally recognized by the U.S. government, and all people are members of an ethnic group, defined as a group of people who share a common culture, religion, language, or nationality" (p. 748). Therefore, we proceed with an understanding that White parents may implicitly or explicitly engage in ethnic-racial socialization based on their European heritage and their dominant racial position in U.S. society (Gillen-O'Neel et al., 2022).

Though understudied, included in contemporary understandings of ethnic-racial socialization are the practices of the dominant ethnic-racial group in U.S. society, those of White Americans (Ferguson et al., 2022; Pahlke et al., 2021; Perry et al., 2019; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). As discussed, where in the past the ethnic-racial socialization practices of White parents were viewed as non-existent or unimportant (Gillen-O'Neel et al., 2022; Hamm, 2001; Hughes et al., 2009). Contemporary scholars call for an enhanced understanding of how Whiteness and white supremacy permeate throughout U.S. society and culture which has led to calls for an understanding of the ethnic-racial socialization strategies and practices put forth by White parents to understand how White children learn about ethnicity-race (Ferguson et al., 2022; Gillen-O'Neel et al., 2022; Pahlke et al.,

2021; Perry et al., 2019; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). Further, whereas in the past such research has focused solely on Groups of Color as having "race," such notions contribute to the perpetuation of the belief that White people have no "race" contributing to the hegemonic nature of Whiteness (Hagerman, 2017, p. 63). It is believed that for children to thrive in contemporary U.S. society with its increasing ethnic-racial diversity, they must be prepared to deal with race-related issues (Gillen-O'Neel et al., 2022) therefore, it is imperative that we understand how White children and youth come to understand issues involving race and racism.

White Ethnic-Racial Socialization

The process of ethnic-racial socialization for those from advantaged groups versus those who are marginalized, is deemed as theoretically different requiring different strategies from children as they learn to navigate society via a position of structural advantage or disadvantage (Hagerman, 2017; Pahlke et al., 2021). White parents play a crucial role in their children's ethnic-racial socialization as they are responsible for shaping and choosing the ethnic-racial context their children are exposed to (Ferguson et al., 2022; Hagerman, 2017; Pahlke et al., 2021). As such White parents have influence over the neighborhoods, schools, media consumption, recreational activities, and peer groups of their children (Ferguson et al., 2022; Hagerman, 2017). These social environments influence how White children produce ideas about ethnicity-race therefore influencing their racial attitudes (Hagerman, 2017; Pahlke et al., 2021; Zucker & Patterson, 2018).

Previous research on White ethnic-racial socialization indicates that White parents consciously or unconsciously communicate to their children that race is a topic that is not

openly discussed or is indifferent to such socialization (Hagerman, 2017; Pahlke et al., 2021; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). Research suggests that the majority of White Americans demonstrate implicit negative attitudes towards Black Americans, with such attitudes being associated with subtle forms of prejudice, negative intergroup outcomes, and racial disparities (Perry et al., 2019). Individual difference factors believed to influence whether White parents openly discuss race with their children have been found to include concerns and perceptions about interactions with BIPOC, the quality and quantity of contact the White individual has with BIPOC, one's motivations to be nonprejudiced, and the individual's attitudes towards BIPOC (Perry et al., 2019).

Though the avoidance of race and racism (race-mute) is a strategy practiced by White parents found throughout the literature (Pahlke et al., 2021; Perry et al., 2019; Zucker & Patterson, 2018), there are other common ethnic-racial socialization strategies practiced by White parents also found which includes colorblind racial ideology (CBRI), egalitarian strategies, and color-consciousness (Hagerman, 2017; Pahlke et al., 2021; Perry et al., 2019; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). The strategy chosen is noted as crucial to the transmission and development of antiracist and racist beliefs among children (Ferguson et al., 2022).

Colorblind Racial Ideology

Colorblind racial ideology (CBRI) emphasizes a commonsense belief that race does not matter which encompasses the denial, minimization, complacency, and distortion of the existence of racism in its various forms and the role that race plays in people's lives contributing to and justifying the perpetuation of ethnic-racial inequalities (Ferguson et al., 2022; Hagerman, 2017; Neville et al., 2014; Perry et al., 2019). Race-

mute socialization strategies in which discussions of race and racism are avoided or discouraged by White parents are believed to fit within the theoretical framework of CBRI (Pahlke et al., 2021). In that the belief that race and racial differences should not be noticed and ethnic-racial differences in outcomes result from individuals' choices rather than systemic practices along with the belief that overt discussions of race and racism lead to racial discord is found to be the most prevalent form of ethnic-racial socialization practiced among White parents (Ferguson et al., 2022; Gillen-O'Neel et al., 2022; Pahlke et al., 2021; Perry et al., 2019; Zucker & Patterson, 2018).

In a mixed methods study examining the ethnic-racial socialization practices of White parents with children between the ages of 8-to-12-years old Zucker and Patterson (2018) found that even in situations where racial bias is salient, White parents are unlikely to discuss race or racism openly and explicitly with their children taking a reactive stance rather than a proactive one. In response to whether parents would encourage discussions of race with their children, most parents (67.3%) reported they would utilize CBRI strategies which included attempts to avoid such discussions altogether, emphasizing race as unimportant, or downplaying the existence of racial bias (Zucker & Patterson, 2018). It was also found that White parents' choice of ethnic-racial socialization strategy was related to their racial attitudes and racial identity development in which those who held more biased racial attitudes were more likely to engage in socialization practices that emphasized ethnic-racial group differences and the value of primarily associating with one's ethnic-racial group and being less likely to engage in egalitarian and color-conscious messaging (Zucker & Patterson, 2018).

In a similar study examining the relationship between parental ethnic-racial socialization messages focusing on race mute, preparation for bias, and egalitarian messaging and racial attitudes among White young adults (M_{age} = 20.72), Pahlke et al. (2021) found that parental socialization messages predicted respondents' attitudes toward ethnic-racial outgroup members in which egalitarian and race mute messages were the most frequently reported strategies. Race mute racial socialization was mediated by a fairness and reciprocity moral orientation and internal motivation to respond without prejudice suggesting an effect related to racial attitudes (Pahlke et al., 2021). However, it was found that among families who emphasized race mute messages explicitly avoiding the acknowledgment of racial prejudice appeared to promote external motivations to control prejudice (Pahlke et al., 2021). These findings suggest that youth may learn to avoid biased behaviors in which the modification of such behaviors stems from a concern for the judgment of others rather than from internal motivations (Pahlke et al., 2021).

The findings of the above studies are consistent with previous studies in which silence or a lack of response towards racial incidences by White parents, may lead White children to construct their own meaning of issues surrounding race and racism (Zucker & Patterson, 2018). Though CBRI and race mute messages are believed to perpetuate ethnic-racial bias as they make individuals less able to attribute ethnic-racial inequalities to discrimination (Ferguson et al., 2022; Perry et al., 2019; Zucker & Patterson, 2018), previous research provides evidence that White parents who minimize the role of White privilege and racism in discussions with their children often favor egalitarian approaches to ethnic-racial socialization (Ferguson et al., 2022). Egalitarianism can support either a

colorblind racial ideology or color-consciousness (Perry et al., 2019; Zucker & Patterson, 2018).

Egalitarianism

Egalitarianism in which it is believed that treating everyone equally and emphasizing individuality over ethnic-racial group membership is a strategy noted as being common among all families regardless of ethnicity-race (Gillen-O'Neel et al., 2022). According to Gillen-O'Neel et al. (2022) White parents may engage in this form of racial socialization to assist their children in learning and developing skills on how to navigate diverse environments or may stem from the belief that racism is no longer an issue with the hope that their children will ignore ethnic-racial differences dismissing the existence of systemic racism and White privilege.

Regarding preparing children for diverse settings, the egalitarian approach is viewed as positive as it emphasizes ethnic-racial similarities and the importance of positive intergroup relations (Pahlke et al., 2021). Though seen as a form of race-mute or color-consciousness depending on the framing of the message (Zucker & Patterson, 2018) a major distinction between egalitarianism and race muteness is while race muteness ignores or denies the reality and impact of racism the egalitarian approach promotes the idea that race is an important aspect of one's identity and the belief that diversity should be valued though it should not influence outcomes nor how one is treated (Pahlke et al., 2021; Zucker & Patterson, 2018).

Pahlke et al. (2021) found that parental ethnic-racial socialization practices emphasizing egalitarianism were positively associated with one's internal motivation to respond without prejudice and a moral orientation encompassing fairness and reciprocity,

which was related to having less biased racial attitudes (Pahlke et al., 2021). According to Pahlke et al. (2021) egalitarian messages emphasizing the value of diversity appears to support the development of more internal motivation to respond without prejudice and warmth towards outgroup members which is linked to more positive interactions with and attitudes towards ethnic-racial outgroup members.

On the other hand, White parents' choice of the egalitarian approach may stem from the belief that racism is no longer an issue with the hope that their children will ignore ethnic-racial differences dismissing the existence of systemic racism and White privilege (Gillen-O'Neel et al., 2022; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). Gillen-O'Neel et al. (2022) found amongst White parents that emphasized egalitarianism CBRI was often rooted in their approach in which "seeing people as people" rather than skin color was present (p. 956). Previous research has found that children socialized with this form of egalitarianism were more likely to internalize ethnic-racial stereotypes and biases (Perry et al., 2019). Like race muteness and CBRI, research indicates that aspects of egalitarianism that highlight avoidance though well-intentioned may promote racial bias along with ignoring systemic racism and how ethnic-racial differences lead to different lived experiences (Perry et al., 2019; Zucker & Patterson, 2018).

Ethnic-racial socialization strategies identified as playing a role in reducing racial-ethnic bias are referred to as "color-consciousness strategies" (Perry et al., 2019). In a study of the individual factors that are associated with White parent's ethnic-racial socialization practices Perry et al. (2019) found that White parents who demonstrated racial bias awareness were associated with increased color consciousness, a greater willingness to discuss race and racial issues with their children, decreased CBRI,

increased motivations to respond without prejudice, and them or their children having more interracial contact with Black individuals, than those with lower levels of racial bias awareness.

Color-consciousness

Thirty to thirty percent of White parents openly discuss race and racism with their children, explicitly acknowledging the existence of ethnic-racial discrimination and promoting awareness of systemic racism (Perry et al., 2019; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). Identified as a color-conscious approach to ethnic-racial socialization, this strategy was found to reduce ethnic-racial bias (Perry et al., 2019; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). White parents who engage in this ethnic-racial socialization practice are believed to have a particular antiracist agenda utilizing various strategies, including the encouragement of interracial friendships, awareness of ethnic-racial privilege, and strategies for confronting the racist actions of others (Zucker & Patterson, 2018).

Previous research indicates that bias awareness is linked to White individuals' willingness to internalize feedback about their ethnic-racial biases along with acknowledging that blatant and subtle ethnically-racially biased behaviors are a form of racism (Perry et al., 2019). Therefore, White parents with higher awareness of their ethnic-racial biases were more likely to discuss race and racism and employ more color-conscious socialization practices with their children (Perry et al. 2019). Zucker and Patterson (2018) also found that White parents who held less biased ethnic-racial attitudes were more likely to openly discuss race with their children. Suggesting that openly and explicitly discussing race and racism leads to a decrease in ethnic-racial bias

rather than such discussions leading to racial disharmony as is frequently believed (Zucker & Patterson, 2018).

From the studies discussed in this section, it is apparent that there continues to be a need for research related to the ethnic-racial socialization of White youth particularly as it relates to antiracism strategies and practices as they serve to counter CBRI and color-muteness (Gillen-O'Neel et al., 2022; Hagerman, 2017; Pahlke et al., 2021). In a qualitative study of progressive White father's actively raising antiracist children, though the fathers were intentional, it was apparent from the findings that being a member of the dominant ethnic-racial group coupled with financial affluence allowed for privilege of choice in how much or how little to expose one's children to the realities of race and racism (Hagerman, 2017).

Critiques of White parents who subscribe to diversity ideology suggest that while these parents choose to expose their children to diverse settings, they themselves continue to lack an understanding and analysis of systemic racial inequalities, therefore, fail to transmit this knowledge to their children reproducing CBRI (Underhill, 2019). As we have come to understand aspects that encompass the ethnic-racial messages White children and youth receive during the parental socialization process we move now to a discussion of White racial identity development (WRID) as it has been linked to the ethnic-racial socialization of White children (Ferguson et al., 2022; Tatum, 1992).

Racial Identity and Racial Identity Development

Lacking from the previous discussion of the ethnic-racial socialization practices of White parents, is an understanding of the psychological processes related to racial identity development. Though we outlined several of the common themes found in the

current literature on ethnic-racial socialization practices of White parents, Helm's (1990; 2017) model of White racial identity development (WRID) is the most often cited as it involves six stages of development which include, contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo-independence, immersion/emersion, and autonomy as the features of various identities one may go grow through as they become more racially aware or remain stagnant lacking a racial consciousness (Tatum, 1992). The following is a brief description of each stage along with current research applying WRID as a framework to understanding White racial identity.

White Racial Identity Development

Helms' (1990) model of White racial identity development (WRID) relates to the stages White people go through in understanding themselves as racialized beings of dominant status as well as their attitudes and behaviors toward members of their ethnic-racial ingroup and toward ethnic-racial outgroup members (Carter et al., 2019). According to Helms, the continued perpetuation of racism by both White individuals and institutions leads White individuals to defensively distance themselves from Whiteness preventing them from developing a positive nonracist White identity (Zucker & Petterson, 2018). As theorized by Helms (1990, 2017) WRID provides a framework to analyze Whiteness and racism through the evolution of a positive White racial identity involving the abandonment of racism at the micro and macro level to encompassing a nonracist White racial identity acquired through six stages (Tatum, 1992; Helms, 2017; Zucker & Patterson, 2018).

Research critiquing the liner development stage model led to Helms' revision of the six stage WRID model shifting to a contemporary model focusing primarily on two

multidimensional phases or schemas of WRID and the ways that one may internalize race as well as racialized experiences (Helms, 2017; Moffitt et al., 2022). Characterized as Phase 1, the internalization of racism occurs through socialization via the covert and overt messages received from family, friends, and media portrayals of BIPOC and includes racial silence, racial evasiveness, and CBRI (Ferguson et al., 2022). Phase 1 may indicate an individual's shift from confusion and a lack of understanding of race and the meaning of Whiteness to consciously embracing the racial status quo and Whiteness (Moffitt et al., 2022). This shift indicates movement from the three schemas found in Phase 1, contact (denial of racism or lack of awareness of the significance of race), disintegration (ambivalence about the significance of race), and reintegration (recommitment to white supremacy; Carter, 2019; Moffitt et al., 2022; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). Internalization through the socialization process which includes the internalization of racism through various behaviors, perspectives, or strategies that support the racial status quo and the norm of racial inequity represent Phase 1 (Helms, 2017; Moffitt et al., 2022).

To shift from Phase 1 to Phase 2, the abandonment of racism according to Helms (2017) a catalyst must occur by either an interpersonal or societal event prompting the individual to progress to this next stage of racial identity development. In Phase 2, an individual may shift from recognizing racism and believing they must save BIPOC demonstrating an assimilationist view to actively exploring the role of systemic racism to becoming racially conscious and challenging systems of oppression moving towards an antiracist/ White allyship identity development (Ferguson et al., 2022; Moffitt et al., 2022). Phase 2 encompasses the schemas pseudo-independent (intellectual awareness of

the significance of race), immersion/emersion (reflection and discomfort with the significance of race and what it means to be White), and autonomy (positive racial identity actively rejecting white supremacy actively committing to an antiracist identity Carter et al., 2019; Moffit et al., 2021; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). The strategies, perspectives, and behaviors working through Phase 2 schemas lead toward the abandonment of racism and the racial status quo (Helms, 2017; Moffitt et al., 2022).

As WRID is non-linear one can support the beliefs related to multiple schemas at any point in time making evident how interpersonal and social experiences can influence shifts in a White individual's racial identity development either progressing towards autonomy or regressing through the other stages (Moffitt et al., 2022; Tatum, 1992; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). The final schema in Phase 2, autonomy is an ongoing process of development in which the individual actively engages in acquiring new information and ways of thinking about racial and cultural variables within society focused on an identity that is not based on oppression and superiority (Carter et al., 2019; Tatum, 1992). The autonomy stage has been associated with the development of a White antiracist racial identity (Ferguson et al., 2022; Moffitt et al., 2022; Zucker & Patterson, 2018).

Contemporary WRID Research

In a mixed-methods study examining the White ethnic-racial socialization practices by White mothers from Minneapolis, Minnesota a month following the highly publicized killing of George Floyd in 2020 Ferguson et al. (2022) utilized Helms' WRID model to analyze White mother's level of racial identity development related to how they would respond to highly publicized racial incidents and what White ethnic-racial socialization strategies they would utilize when discussing such events with their

children. In line with WRID, 53% of mothers demonstrated Phase 1 racial identity development by choosing to be racially silent about racial events as they were found to have lower psychological distress and multiculturalism scores along with more protectiveness toward their ethnic-racial ingroup compared to 17% of mothers who demonstrated Phase 2 racially responsive WRID (Ferguson et al., 2022).

According to Ferguson et al. (2022) research findings indicate that mothers in Phase 1 favored egalitarian messages that encompassed color and power-evasiveness as an ethnic-racial socialization strategy either excluding or minimizing the role of White privilege and racism in discussions with their children. While mothers in Phase 2, utilized color-consciousness messages encompassing power-consciousness highlighting the role of Whiteness in U.S. culture and teaching their children how to cultivate change (Ferguson et al., 2022). These findings support previous research on the ways various aspects of CBRI are transmitted leading to the denial or exclusion of discussions of race and racism in the socialization of White children and youth (Ferguson et al., 2022; Moffit et al., 2021). As such White youth become less willing to discuss race as they move from childhood to adolescence stemming from adults' unwillingness and avoidance of such conversations compared to youth who receive color-conscious socialization (Moffitt et al., 2022).

Utilizing longitudinal data from interviews with White youth between the ages of 8-14 years old Moffitt et al. (2022) used WRID to analyze how the youth engaged with their racial identities and the pattern of change to their racial identities over time. Consistent with previous research, 82% of youth in the study did not view their racial identity as important in which youth used statements minimizing the importance of race

lacking an awareness of racialization. For example, in response to the being asked what being White means one youth responded “I think being white means that it’s just the way you were made. If you weren’t made like this nothing would change… you’d still have the same personality… it’s just the color of your skin” (Moffitt et al. 2022, p. 9). This response according to the authors highlights both the hegemony of Whiteness and CBRI prevalent in contemporary society minimizing the role of race while focusing on the individual (Moffitt et al., 2022). According to Moffit et al. (2022) if left unchallenged the child will develop into an adult who holds the same “system accommodating racial logic” (p. 9). Youth across the study were found to utilize CBRI strategies indicating their knowledge of the significance of race in social-historical context (Moffitt et al., 2022).

Moffitt et al. (2022) found that the youth shifted from Phase 1 to Phase 2 WRID during the second phase of the study indicating development in which 23% demonstrated statements representing the pseudo-independent schema found to be the most common schema amongst participants. These findings indicate that the youth had a higher resistance to the racial status quo and displayed more ability to meaningfully reflect on Whiteness (Moffitt et al., 2022). When examined by age group the authors found youth in early adolescence made more Phase 2 statements while those in middle childhood displayed the least amount of change over time (Moffitt et al., 2022). In terms of socio-cognitive development because variability across the sample was high demonstrating movement through the various WRID schemas Helms theorizing that WRID is not based on an age-related trajectory was supported as White peoples shifting back and forth through schemas may be based on societal factors and interpersonal experiences as theorized (Moffitt et al., 2022).

While the shift from Phase 1 to Phase 2 demonstrated the White youth's development across time much of their Phase 2 statements were found to hold assimilationist views toward BIPOC and superficial engagement with their own Whiteness (Moffitt et al., 2022). In alignment with Helms' theorizing, the pseudo-independent schema indicates the last step in WRID for most White adults given the study's findings this may suggest that the racial identity development of most White people potentially stagnates during early adolescence (Moffitt et al., 2022). As one of the difficulties in understanding WRID is due to the lack of longitudinal data the time spent reviewing this study offers insight into the complexity and nonlinear pattern of WRID.

Taken collectively the research reviewed on ethnic-racial socialization strategies common among White families in conjunction with the model of White racial identity development it becomes evident how Whiteness develops as "normal" as White people attempt to make sense of race and racism in their lives and the world around them. Through the transmission of CBRI Whiteness continues as hegemonic and uninterrupted as racism is positioned as a characteristic of "bad" White people, evasiveness and silence about racial incidences leading to complicity and the denial of systemic racism, external motivation to modify biased behavior leaving such behavior unexamined and unchallenged, and the blaming of BIPOC for the effects they suffer due to systemic racism continues the perpetuation of systemic racism (Ferguson et al., 2022; Moffitt et al 2022; Pahlke et al., 2021).

Specifically, White youth learn that "race" and racism are external factors impacting others leaving most incapable of examining systemic issues (Moffitt et al., 2022). While racialized encounters are noted as facilitating racial identity development

and a catalyst is needed to prompt White individuals into Phase 2 of WRID, supporting White people with shifting to an antiracist identity entail engaging both White adults and White youth (Helms, 2017; Moffitt et al., 2022). As we have gained an understanding of the key factors related to ethnic-racial socialization and racial identity development of White children and youth which influences how they perceive race and racism at the micro-level another crucial factor in the development of attitudes toward race and racism involves the role of the education system in the socialization process (Kendall, 2021).

An analysis of the education system's role, particularly its role in ethnic-racial socialization is important as White parents often refer to school settings for instructing their children about cross-cultural relations. For instance, a qualitative study conducted by Hamm (2001), found that amongst White parents who supported positive cross-ethnic contact and exposure for their children depended on the education system to instruct their children on how to overcome the barriers related to functioning in ethnically homogenous social contexts. In the next section, we explore the role of the education system as an agent of socialization, its influence on attitudes toward race and racism, and the role of education in equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI).

The Education System and Socialization

When students enter the classroom setting, they enter shaped by their experiences and the experiences of their families regarding their ethnic-racial privilege or marginalization which is further influenced by other societal factors such as the media, their community of residence, their peers, and the school setting (Epstein, 2000; Ferguson et al., 2022; Hagerman, 2017; Pahlke et al., 2021). Viewed as an agent of socialization the education system contributes to children’s beliefs, self-image, and values as such

students have different experiences depending upon their social class standing and the neighborhood they live in, their ethnic-racial group membership, and their gender among other social categories (Holt-Lunstad, 2017; Kendall, 2021). Based on the socio-cultural context of society, the education system and schools teach students to participate in cultures, traditions, and social systems assisting students with acquiring the skills society views as important (Biesta, 2015; Schuelka & Engsig, 2022).

Biesta (2015) suggests that the purpose of the education system encompasses three domains: 1) providing students with the qualifications that society wants them to acquire, such as skills, knowledge, and dispositions; 2) socialization which includes the curriculum as well as the hidden curriculum which serves to reproduce social inequalities in society; and 3) subjectification or how students learn to exist as subjects with their own thoughts, actions, and choices (Schuelka & Engsig, 2022). Within the domain of socialization, the predetermined curriculum includes explicit messaging, while the hidden curriculum reflects the implicit perspectives and values students are taught at both the K-12 educational level and higher education (Byrd, 2019).

The traditional mainstream curriculum across educational levels has been criticized for being a Euro-American narrative reflecting the worldviews and experiences of White people while omitting or superficially adding the voices, experiences, and contributions of BIPOC (Foste, 2020; Sleeter, 2011; Sappleton & Adams, 2022). Therefore, students across ethnicity-race learn mainstream values, traditions, and norms that support U.S. cultural values of Western exceptionalism, individualism, and competition (Byrd, 2019; Kendall, 2021). Those who call for more inclusive and antiracist education note that the U.S. education system serves to facilitate and reinforce

systemic inequalities (Sappleton & Adams, 2022). While African Americans are the second most represented ethnic-racial group found in K-12 textbooks they are presented primarily in relation to enslavement (Sleeter, 2011). Latinx/ Hispanic Americans and Asian Americans are presented as having no history or shown through their current ethnic experience, while Native Americans/Indigenous Peoples are mostly discussed in the past tense with minimal contemporary representation (Sleeter, 2011).

Overall, though pushes for multicultural and diversity education have become popular since the 1960s textbooks lack or sanitize discourse on racial issues, racism, or contemporary race relations (Sleeter, 2011). Efforts have been to push K-12 and higher education beyond performative diversity initiatives discussing African American history during Black History Month and Hispanic Heritage beyond Cinco de Mayo towards antiracism and decolonizing education (Epstein, 2000; Sleeter, 2011; Sappleton & Adams, 2022). Curricula and pedagogy predominantly centered around Western ethnocentric hegemony has been critiqued as failing to connect the legacy of racism to contemporary racism, perpetuates CBRI, depicts racism as acts by individuals, lacks critical analysis of systemic oppression, and presents challenges to racism through the lens of heroic individuals without challenging privilege and oppression between groups therefore contributing to the maintenance of the racial status quo and systemic oppression of marginalized groups (Byrd, 2019; Foste, 2020; Sleeter, 2011).

Challenges to Teaching Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

While contemporary racial unrest has led to continued calls for antiracism and decolonizing the curriculum to allow for the inclusivity of diverse experiences, and universities have committed to challenging systemic oppression (Sappleton & Adams,

2022) backlash against such teaching also persists (Sappleton & Adams, 2022). Resistance to pedagogy and curriculum in support of enhancing the experiences and voices of BIPOC is not new. For instance, in 1998 an Ethnic Studies course developed by Mexican American educators petitioned for by Mexican American parents as part of a high school social studies curriculum in Mexican American studies was banned (Dee & Penner, 2017; Sleeter, 2010). The course was taught from a Mexican American perspective about economic and racial inequalities through a critical pedagogical lens and social justice framework countering racism (Sleeter, 2010).

Gaining national attention and heavily politized the program was successfully eliminated for fear of the district losing state funding as the course was found in violation of state law *Arizona HB 2281, 2010*, which prevented the teaching of courses that promoted the advocacy of ethnic solidarity over the treatment of students as individuals, promoted overthrowing the U.S. government, and promoted resent toward a class or race of people (Dee & Penner, 2017). The ban was successfully overturned in 2017 as it was found to be discriminatory and unconstitutional (Jewett, 2018). However, fast forward to 2022, and again the teaching of EDI type courses across K-12 and higher education have become heavily politized as politicians have passed or proposed initiatives restricting the teaching of topics involving gender, race, gender identities, and American history imposing penalties for teaching discourses related to Critical Race Theory (CRT; Sappleton & Adams, 2022). An example of such restrictions is the passing of *House Bill 787*, by Virginia House delegates banning the teaching of "divisive concepts" (Estulin, 2022).

Virgina's *House Bill 787* makes it unlawful to teach or promote "certain concepts in public elementary and secondary education" deemed unlawful and discriminatory to teach any student to believe in or promote as valid the belief that:

> "(i) one race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex; (ii) an individual, by virtue of the individual's race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously, (iii) an individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly because of the individual's race or sex, (iv) an individual's moral character is necessarily determined by the individual's race or sex; or (v) an individual, by virtue of the individual's race or sex, bear responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex, permits... content that includes the past or present belief, by any individual or group, in any such concept" (Virginia's Legislative Information System, 2022).

Virginia is one of 36 states to introduce restrictions on the teaching of American history, gender, race, and LGBTQIA+ identities according to Young and Friedman (2022) restrictions of such teaching has increased 250% compared to the previous year with higher education targeted more heavily. In contrast, states such as California and Oregon have required or encouraged that Ethnic Studies courses are offered in high school with Oregon requiring one semester to graduate (Jewett, 2018). Restrictions such as those proposed by Virginia and other states go against institutions and organization's such the American Psychological Association (2021) which has vowed to dismantle systemic racism and actively engage in antiracism.

Restricting knowledge of the complexity and entirety of American history and contemporary race relations limit the preparation of an educated student body who is actively prepared to function in an ethnically-racially diverse U.S. society and diverse global workforce in which students need to be prepared to communicate and interact with others cross-culturally. Corporations such as Citi Group, General Motors, and GeneTech to name a few require employees to attend EDI training (Flucker, 2021) while not a cure all to race relations as such training should not be a one and done commitment it highlights a discrepancy between what employers want their employees knowledgeable in and politicized restrictions on such knowledge. Referring to Biesta's (2015) first domain of the purpose of the education system is to provide students with the qualifications that society wants them to acquire such as skills, knowledge, and disposition highlights the contradictions between what employers want versus politicians.

The K-12 public education system has already experienced the "majority-minority" shift in which it was projected that by the year 2022, Students of Color would represent 55% of the student population with their White counterparts making up 45.6% (Stauss, 2014; Vasquez & Altshuler, 2017). Though projections of the majority-minority shift in ethnic-racial demographics across the U.S. are pending, White Americans, particularly White men continue to disproportionately hold positions of power across U.S. society (Hazelbaker et al., 2022). For example, 88% of Congress members are White though White American's make up approximately 62% of the total U.S. population, 75% and 77% of the Senate and House respectively consist of men though women represent 50.5% of the total U.S. population (DiAngelo, 2021; United States Census Bureau, 2020).

As we are faced with the fact that we live in a global society in the 21st century (Kendall, 2021), because they continue to hold positions of power supporting White Americans with acquiring the skills necessary to co-exist and effectively function in an ever-expanding diverse society nationally and internationally will serve to enhance race-relations as well as prepare them to be responsible participants in a diverse democracy (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Further as the majority of those in the psychology workforce are White Americans (APA, 2018), due to the ethnic-racial demographic shifts within U.S. society enhances the likelihood that differences in the ethnicity-race of the counselor and their clients will occur (Day-Vines et al., 2018). As such the importance of diversity and multicultural education continues to be a pressing issue.

Diversity and Multicultural Curriculum

Inspired by the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, grassroots social movements and student-led movements such as the Third World Liberation Front in 1968 led by Students of Color in California demanded institutions of higher education include the histories and voices of Communities of Color incorporating curriculum-focused on power, race, identity, culture, and gender challenging hegemonic Whiteness in their curriculum (Rivas, 2020; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2015; Vasquez & Altshuler, 2017). This movement birthed the discipline of Ethnic Studies, followed by demand from researchers and others for the implementation of diversity and multicultural curricula across education (Rivas, 2020; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2015). According to Jesme et al. (2017), multicultural education is essential to preparing all youth for participation in a democratic and pluralistic society and for support in improving the academic success of Students of Color.

The ideals of multiculturalism encompass accepting human differences across socially constructed categories such as sexual orientation, race, gender, class, and culture (Smith et al., 2019). Multicultural competencies (MCC) are a necessary requirement for all psychologists and counselors working toward meeting ethical guidelines (Hemmings & Evans, 2018; Spann, 2022). An important aspect of multicultural competency is one's ability to understand the role worldview plays in the relationship between counselor and client (Smith et al., 2019). Culture and one's attitudes and beliefs play an influential role in one's interactions and perceptions of others informing empirical and clinical conceptualizations (APA, 2018).

Informing the therapeutic relationship multicultural competency (MCC) also includes awareness of the complexity of identity which consists of intersecting identities influenced by external and internal forces which impact the construction and evolution of one's identity as well as their interpersonal relationships (APA, 2018a; Killian & Floren, 2020). Researchers have found relevant to MCC is "the awareness of race, racism, and discrimination and how these may contribute to, or be the source of problems..." (Hemmings & Evans, 2018, p. 30) experienced by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). Further, an awareness of the cultural differences between ethnic-racial groups is noted as also requiring an appreciation of the differences found among those of different ethnic-racial groups (Steinfeldt et al., 2020). Therefore, counselors must have the education and training required for working with Communities of Color who have experienced racism and the adverse effects of racial trauma as well as the differences between ethnic-racial group experiences (Allwood et al. 2022; Hemmings & Evans, 2018).

Racial Trauma

While the U.S. continues to move toward becoming a majority-minority nation we continue to experience conflict toward the acceptance, inclusion, and respect for one another across our various ethnic-racial identities (Hemmings & Evans, 2018). Direct and vicarious experiences with racial violence, discrimination, and the fear of such treatment have been found to adversely affect the physical and mental health of BIPOC (Hemmings & Evans, 2018; Kapadia, 2022; Sue et al., 2019; Walton, 2017). Biased-based bullying, which includes explicit and implicit forms of verbal, physical, cyber-based, and social threats towards perceived group membership based on ethnicity-race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, etc. is associated with anxiety, decreased quality of life, depressive symptoms, low self-esteem, and conduct disorders in adults and adolescents from marginalized communities (Allwood et al., 2022; Keum & Ahn, 2021; Walton, 2017). For instance, though Asian American communities have historically had low instances of reported mental health problems, more than 53% reported mental health symptoms given the stress of anti-Asian racism due to COVID-19 (Saw et al., 2021).

Racial trauma or race-based trauma refers to the psychological, political, physical, and emotional reactions such as anger, avoidance, and intrusive thoughts an individual may experience or experienced vicariously due to racism and discrimination (Allwood et al., 2022; Hemmings & Evans, 2018; Saw et al., 2021; Spann, 2022). Maladaptive coping strategies such as substance abuse, domestic violence, and suicide have been found as extreme reactions to acts of racism and discrimination among BIPOC (Hemmings & Evans, 2018). A key component of MCC is one’s ability to work with clients who have experienced racial trauma and therefore must have the ability to provide effective

treatment (Hemmings & Evans, 2018; Spann, 2022). To do so counselors must have the education and training necessary to recognize and acknowledge racial trauma (Hemmings & Evans, 2018).

In an exploratory study examining counselors' (N = 106) professional experiences identifying and addressing racial trauma Hemmings and Evans (2018) found that close to 67% of counselors in their study reported not having received training to identify racial trauma, 81% reported receiving no training in treating racial trauma however approximately 71% reported working with clients who had experienced racial trauma. These findings are in alignment with previous research indicating the prevalence of racism and its adverse effects on BIPOC in contemporary society (Allwood et al., 2022; Hemmings & Evans, 2018). Professional policies focused on racial trauma with recommendations for treatment were negatively correlated with reported MCC (Hemmings & Evans, 2018). This finding highlights the discrepancy in professional recommendations for counselors to increase their MCC and to effectively provide treatment for race-based trauma (Hemmings & Evans, 2018).

Racial Trauma in the Education System

As previously discussed, the education system plays a role in the socialization process for which one's experiences, positive or negative, are influenced by one's gender, ethnicity-race, social economic status, sexual orientation, etc. (Holt-Lunstad, 2017; Kendall, 2021). According to Henderson et al. (2019) racial trauma in the public education system demonstrates an interplay between both micro and macro-level forces of racism (institutional racial and racial discrimination) within society. Ethnic-racial discrimination and mistreatment of Adolescents of Color by school personnel contribute

to disparities in harsher disciplinary actions for minor behavioral infractions compared to White students, poor academic achievement and attendance, and low expectations from teachers (Douglass et al., 2016; Yeager et al., 2017).

Evidence also indicates that Adolescents of Color who experience more frequent instances of discrimination at school reported more risk-taking behaviors and greater psychological distress as well as less favorable academic adjustment (Del Toro et al., 2021; Henderson et al., 2019). Such findings of institutional injustices lead to feelings of alienation and mistrust of authority figures depriving Students of Color (SOC) the benefits of fostering positive relationships within the institution, access to resources as well as opportunities for advancement, low levels of motivation, and the avoidance of punishment (Henderson et al., 2019; Yeager et al., 2017). Negative interactions with peers such as ethnic-racial victimization, teasing, and discrimination also contribute to lower school engagement and psychological maladjustment for SOC (Del Toro et al., 2021; Douglass et al., 2016; Wang, 2021). Negative interactions with peers and school personnel are also reported by SOC in higher education.

Negative psychosocial, psychological, and academic outcomes due to implicit and explicit racism and prejudicial treatment have been found among SOC on college campuses (Garibay et al., 2020; Hernández & Harris, 2022). While ethnic-racial diversity among student populations on campuses of higher education has increased (Gildersleeve et al., 2022;) Hernández and Harris (2022) note that such diversity has not contributed to more inclusive environments for SOC. The rise in overt hate-crimes and other ethnic-racial incidents' resulting in public humiliation result in intensified feelings of frustration

and detachment from campus, the development of doubts about one's academic performance, and challenges to one's identity among SOC (Hernández & Harris, 2022).

Student-faculty relationships have also been found to influence SOC persistence in undergraduate and graduate programs (Askew, 2022; Gildersleeve et al., 2011; Rogers, 2018). Research indicates that such relationships are critical as faculty influence how students experience the educational socialization process, influence one's ability to connect with other faculty and students with similar interests, and engage in service and research opportunities (Gildersleeve et al., 2011). For SOC, these relationships are particularly crucial as they relate to academic persistence and degree attainment (Askew, 2022; Gildersleeve et al., 2011; Rogers, 2018). For instance, though the proportion of Students of Color who have earned doctoral degrees has increased, degrees awarded to Latinx Americans, and Black Americans continue to lag compared to other groups (Gildersleeve et al., 2011; Rogers, 2018). Consideration and understanding of the experiences of SOC in higher education are believed to assist with understanding the obstacles and successes to the persistence or decline in SOC engagement in higher education (Gildersleeve et al., 2011).

An ethnographic study conducted by Gildersleeve and colleagues (2011) investigating the everyday experiences of Latinx and Black American students and the culture within doctoral education found common themes among student participants as they negotiated racialized spaces within doctorial education. Common themes found were self-censorship regarding whether or not to react to racialized experiences, questions of their self-efficacy or belonging as their experiences and worldviews are questioned or dismissed, feeling constrained related to their scholarly pursuits as hostility was

communicated related to their research interests, the refutation or adoption of the norms of their academic program, therefore, adjusting their natural modes of expression and behavior, and reliance on peer support networks to assists with making sense of experiences with racial aggression (Gildersleeve et al., 2011). These research findings suggest that for Latinx and Black American doctoral students in particular the experiences described were normative characteristics of the racialized spaces they persisted through demonstrating the pervasive racialization of doctoral education (Gildersleeve et al., 2011).

Lastly, pedagogy and curriculum have been found to play a role in the opportunity gap between Students of Color and their White peers indicative of the lack of education highlighting the experiences and realities of SOC (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2015). Research indicates that diversity curriculum such as ethnic studies increases SOC attendance rate, academic achievement, and engagement (Dee & Penner, 2017; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2015; Vasquez & Altshuler, 2017). While diversity education assists all students, for White students such curriculum and the inclusion of diverse perspectives contribute to enhanced critical thinking, increased levels of thinking and cognitive complexity, increased empathy, problem-solving, and perspective taking (Jewett, 2018; Sleeter, 2011; Wells et al., 2016). Race-conscious curricula has been identified as an action-based strategy for attaining the knowledge needed to identify racism and racial trauma leading to the ability of identifying effective interventions at both the micro and macro levels of society (Allwood et al., 2022; Hemmings & Evans, 2018).

As racism and therefore racial trauma are an everyday reality for BIPOC (Henderson et al., 2019; Hernández & Harris, 2022; Keum & Ahn, 2021) counselors who are ill-prepared for addressing the adverse effects of racism or who are uneasy broaching such topics in the counseling relationship with their Clients of Color risk not properly treating their clients with the alleviation of the effects from exposure to racism and race-based trauma (Allwood et al., 2022; Hemmings & Evans, 2018; Spann, 2022). An education system that lacks providing such knowledge to its students perpetuates not only the racial status quo in society but also the perpetuation of racial harm (Rondini & Kowalsky, 2021). Researchers have found that counselors who demonstrate high levels of MCC have awareness of their own biases and enculturation, have knowledge of the values and worldviews of ethnic-racial marginalized groups, and have the skills needed for implementing appropriate interventions (Shannonhouse et al., 2020).

Within the ethical principles set forth by the American Psychological Association (APA) for which psychologists are to uphold professional standards of conduct with an awareness of their responsibility to society and the communities they serve Spann (2022) notes that multicultural competencies (MCC) should be upheld within the ethical principles provided by APA. Vital to increasing counseling outcomes, therapeutic alliance, and the selection of assessments and interventions is the psychologists understanding of their client's cultural background and experiences that may influence the clinical process (Day-Vines, 2018; Spann, 2022). Spann (2022) emphasizes that within all aspects of APA’s standards of ethics racial trauma is relevant to psychologist's competency and professional behavior.

Therapeutic Alliance

A critical aspect of any counseling relationship is the therapeutic alliance for which researchers have found that the stronger the therapeutic alliance between counselor and client the greater the therapeutic change (Kazdin & McWhinney, 2018). Therapeutic alliance refers to the quality of involvement between counselor and client reflected in their personal rapport, task teamwork, and the counselor's contribution to the relationship and working alliance (Vasquez, 2007). Research indicates that various factors including therapist empathy, patient-therapist congruence, unconditional positive regard, and therapist interpersonal skills among others influence alliance and bring about therapeutic change in the client (Kazdin & McWhinney, 2018; Velasquez & Montiel, 2018).

Emphasizing a client-centered therapeutic approach as therapist and client are engaged in a relationship creating a form of psychological contact, it is perceived that no other therapeutic conditions are possible without such relational interaction (Velasquez & Montiel, 2018). According to Rogers (1959) the relationship between client and therapist is more crucial than any therapeutic technique as it relates to therapeutic change (Velasquez & Montiel, 2018). Therefore, researchers suggest that the building of and maintaining a strong therapeutic relationship should be a primary focus of attention (Vasquez, 2007).

Cultural variables such as ethnic-racial differences between counselors and clients have also been found to impact the strength and quality of the counseling relationship and therapeutic alliance (Branco & Bayne, 2019; Chang et al., 2021; Hook et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2022). Differences in the counseling relationship related to identity, culture, privilege, and power can increase distance between therapist and client leading to a breakdown in

the therapeutic relationship (Chang et al., 2021). According to Vasquez (2007) it can be assumed that the interpersonal dynamics [involving ethnicity-race] that occur outside the therapist's office in everyday life may also occur in the office of the therapist between therapist and client. Therefore, issues surrounding race, ethnicity, and culture (REC) extend to the therapeutic relationship. Previous research has identified several themes and barriers to cross-racial/cross-cultural counseling dyad relationships which we will review next.

Barriers to Cross-Racial/ Cultural Counseling Relationships

Racial Microaggressions and Bias

Perceived negative judgments of therapists toward a Client of Color is an area of concern related to barriers to cross-racial/ cross-cultural counseling relationships (Vasquez, 2007). Research findings suggest that unintentional bias and racial microaggressions can occur in counseling negatively affecting the therapeutic relationship and posing barriers to effective practice and treatment (Hook et al., 2016; Spann, 2022; Torres et al., 2022; Vasquez, 2007). For instance, in a study exploring racial microaggressions in counseling and client perceptions of counselor cultural humility Hook et al. (2016) found that though experiences of racial microaggressions in counseling were infrequent 81.7% of People of Color (N = 2,212) in their sample reported experiencing at least one racial microaggression in counseling. This finding supports previous studies noting racial microaggressions in counseling as reported by Clients of Color as an issue (Hook et al., 2016; Davis et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2018) which leads to low counseling satisfaction, decreased therapeutic alliance with White therapists, perceptions of the therapists as less culturally humble, and lower levels

of perceived multicultural competency and overall competency of the therapists (Constantine, 2007; Davis et al., 2016; Hook et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2018).

An important finding in Hook et al. (2016) study is that the two most prevalent forms of racial microaggressions reported were the counselor's lack of awareness or denial of bias or stereotypes about cultural issues and the avoidance of discussions surrounding cultural issues. According to Hook et al. (2016) these findings indicate that rather than validating the experiences of their clients some therapists engage in minimizing or denying their bias and cultural issues. Both forms of racial microaggressions highlight colorblind racial ideology (CBRI) and the denial of the presence of individual racism (Hook et al., 2016) in alignment with 12 categories of racial microaggressions found in counseling as identified by Constantine's (2007) study of African Americans perceptions of their White therapists.

White therapists who hold colorblind racial attitudes have been found to have lower levels of empathy than White therapists who were lower in colorblind racial attitudes (Burkard & Knox, 2004). It is suggested that CBRI impedes therapists' ability to empathize with their Clients of Color which can lead to the therapist's "decreased sensitivity to cultural issues in case conceptualization and client treatment" (Burkard & Knox, 2004, p. 394). Burkard and Knox (2004) also found that therapists high in CBRI were more likely to assign responsibility to African American clients for overcoming their problems than for White American clients indicating how therapists' bias influences attributions made in counseling (Burkard & Knox, 2004). According to Constantine

(2007) therapists who hold CBRI may fail to consider external factors such as racial discrimination as contributing to clients' issues.

Broaching

Therapists' willingness or efforts to broach topics surrounding REC with their clients is another area researchers have identified as posing barriers to cross-cultural dyad relationships in counseling leading to alliance ruptures (Day-Vines et al. 2022; Lee et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2021). Broaching refers to therapists' efforts to directly discuss and address REC factors within the therapeutic relationship which may impact client's presenting concerns (Day-Vines, 2022; Lee et al., 2021). According to King (2021a) a fundamental skill reflected in culturally responsive therapy is the therapist's ability to broach factors of REC alongside issues related to power with their clients. King (2021a) identifies the goals of broaching as including 1) the building of a genuine relationship between therapist and client, 2) core principles of humanistic approaches, and 3) better informing a completer and more accurate conceptualization of client experiences.

Researchers have found that broaching behavior among therapists enhances clients' perceptions of therapists' credibility and multicultural competence, client self-disclosure, working alliance, and clients' likelihood of continuing therapy (Day-Vines et al., 2022; King, 2021a). Research involving broaching related to the racial trauma and stress experienced by Students of Color, whether in the school setting or in the community at large, must include current studies of broaching behavior among school counselors. As previously discussed, Students of Color experience various forms of discrimination and racial trauma in the school setting which adversely effects their academics and mental health therefore school counselors serve as interventions for

Students of Color. However, studies indicate that school counselors lack the skills needed to address or broach the complex issues related to REC that Students of Color face (Day-Vines et al., 2022).

Lack of competence in treating racial trauma adversely affects the therapeutic relationship and therapeutic alliance (Spann, 2022). In a study examining the relationship between broaching behavior and racial identity attitudes among school counselor trainees (N = 198) in the U.S. Day-Vines et al. (2022) found a significant positive relationship between trainees with avoidant broaching behaviors (refusal to broach discussions of ethnicity-race and culture with clients) and assimilationist racial identity (support for majority culture viewpoints and values). Findings indicate that those high in avoidant broaching behaviors demonstrated lower levels of racial identity functioning (Day-Vines et al., 2022). The authors suggest that trainees who demonstrate avoidance behaviors and attitudes may be unable to recognize ethnic-racial stressors involving racism and microaggressions to name a few that Students of Color encounter (Day-Vines et al., 2022). As such ignoring or minimizing such experiences is believed to subject Students of Color to have to struggle with racial trauma with little to no help (Day-Vines et al., 2022).

Ethnic-Racial Mismatch

Lastly, ethnic-racial mismatching is a contentious yet noted barrier to Clients of Colors' ability to form a relationship with their therapist, particularly when the therapist is White (Kim & Kang, 2018; King, 2021a; Lee et al., 2021). Research on the value of ethnic-racial matching has delivered mixed results in which some studies have found limited support for ethnic-racial matching among therapists and clients while others have

found positive effects such as stronger therapeutic alliance and overall positive outcomes of therapeutic services (Lee et al., 2022). In one such study, Kim and Kang (2018) conducted a multilevel mediation analysis of archival data from a sample of 644 clients from a counseling center at a large Midwestern university in the U.S. to examine the effects of ethnic-racial matching on therapeutic outcomes. Findings indicate that ethnic-racial matching led to clients attending a higher number of counseling sessions than those who were not ethnically-racially matched and matching directly contributed to higher improvement in clients' global assessment of function (Kim & Kang, 2018).

Findings suggest that ethnic-racial matching in cross-cultural dyads is predictive of the number of counseling sessions attended supporting previous analysis of a positive association between the number of counseling sessions attended, therapeutic alliance, and rapport (Kim & Kang, 2018; Lee et al., 2018; King, 2021a). It is believed that ethnic-racial matching bridges misunderstandings that may occur in cross-cultural dyads as Clients of Color may feel more trust, connection, and a sense of safety with therapists of the same ethnicity-race (Kim & Kang, 2018; King, 2021a). Further previous research indicates that some Clients of Color engage in compartmentalization in which they do not discuss issues surrounding REC when engaging with White therapist based on perceptions of the White therapists' inability to relate to Clients of Color experiences (King, 2021a).

Contributing to some of the debate regarding whether ethnic-racial matching is important to therapeutic alliance and outcomes is the assumption that interpersonal similarity is believed to influence individuals' preferences and perceptions of social interactions in which individuals assume that those who are like them, in this case, those

of the same ethnicity-race will hold the same judgments, opinions, and worldviews is viewed as important in therapeutic dyads (Cabral & Smith, 2011). Specifically, people tend to associate with others whom they perceive to be like themselves, increasing trust, reducing negative stereotypes, and being more likely to project their own traits onto others (Cabral & Smith, 2011). In therapeutic dyads, it is assumed that matching clients with therapists of the same ethnicity-race will have increased therapeutic alliance and better outcomes than dissimilarity ethnically and racially between clients and therapists (Cabral & Smith, 2011).

The issue of assuming interpersonal similarity within ethnic-racial groups ignores the dissimilarity found within such groups (Cabral & Smith, 2011) potentially ignoring areas of similarity between clients and therapists in cross-racial dyads (King, 2021a). While research indicates that clients prefer therapists of their own ethnicity-race perceiving same ethnicity-race therapists more positively (Cabral & Smith, 2011) some studies have found that ethnic-racial matching has little to no effect on treatment outcomes (Cabral & Smith, 2011; Lee et al., 2021). For instance, Kim et al. (2009) found cultural variables such as perceived worldview sharing among Asian American clients (N = 61) and their White therapists regarding the source of client's problems was related to client’s successful outcomes. Such findings suggest that in cross-racial dyads in which Asian American clients perceived understanding between them and their therapists along with shared worldview regarding the etiology of clients' problem increased clients positive view of the therapeutic process and working alliance (Kim et al., 2009). These findings support the assumption that in therapeutic relationships having similar worldview can foster interpersonal attraction and likeness (Ertl et al., 2019).

Research regarding the benefits of ethnic-racial matching continues to have several limitations, leading to mixed findings regarding its benefits. Limitations related to the lack of longitudinal evidence of its effectiveness (Cabral & Smith, 2011), reliance on meta-analysis of previous studies due to a lack of longitudinal data (Cabral & Smith, 2011), issues surrounding defining and measuring match related to intersectional variables such as gender, age, and sexual orientation as potential mediators (Cabral & Smith, 2011; Ertl et al., 2019), and differences within and between ethnic-racial groups related to the perceived importance of being ethnically and racially matched (Cabral & Smith, 2011; Ertl et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2021; Kim & Kang, 2018). Other variables such as language matching (Lee et al., 2021), level of education and acculturation between client and therapist (Cabral & Smith, 2011; Kim & Kang, 2018) are other factors considered important to consider especially as it relates to worldview matching.

Taken together research on the adverse effects of unconscious bias, racial microaggressions, broaching, and ethnic-racial mismatching in cross-racial/ cross-cultural therapeutic dyads cannot be ignored especially as it relates to the helping profession of psychology charged with improving the human condition. Ruptures to the therapeutic relationship in cross-racial dyads due to a therapist's lack of cultural humility can lead to the client's continued cycle of behaviors (Davis et al., 2018), stereotype threat in which the client may be hypersensitive to experiences of negative judgments, and rejection by a White therapist (Vasquez, 2007). Therapists' lack of knowledge or denial of their own bias or clients' experiences with racism can lead to biased assessments and or the compromising of therapeutic goals and tasks for Clients of Color (Lee et al., 2019; Spann, 2022). Before we consider how therapeutic ruptures in cross-racial dyads may be

avoided or repaired through exploring the characteristics of therapists who demonstrate a multicultural orientation, we discuss multicultural counseling competency and professional ethics.

Multicultural Counseling Competency and Professional Ethics

Though ethical standards assert that psychologists are to only provide services to "populations and areas within the boundaries of their competence" (Spann, 2022, p. 102), it is evident from the previous discussion of Hemmings and Evans (2018) findings in which 67% of counselors in their study reported not having received training to identify racial trauma, 81% reported receiving no training in treating racial trauma however approximately 71% reported working with clients who had experienced racial trauma psychologists are indeed working outside of the boundaries of their competence as it relates to race-based trauma. These findings are consistent with previous research in which nearly half of all psychologists reported feeling uncomfortable working with diverse clients (Spann, 2022). Therefore, as noted by Spann (2022) vital to the growth of the field of psychology are training and education programs as they serve to provide psychologists with the knowledge and skills needed to be effective psychologists.

Addressing ethnic-racial and cultural (REC) differences with counseling clients is an important aspect of MCC (Day-Vines et al., 2018), however, the research reviewed indicates discussions of or broaching topics surrounding ethnicity-race, similarities or differences in culture, and racism continue to be areas that are not being addressed in therapeutic relationships. Another area where broaching of REC is not being fully addressed, particularly for Trainees of Color is within the counseling supervisor and trainee relationship (Day-Vines et al., 2018; Dewey et al., 2021; Spann, 2022). For

instance, a qualitative study assessing former genetic counselor trainees' perceptions of how their supervisors broached ethnic-racial differences in the supervisor trainee relationship found four common themes three of which are important to the proposed study 1) limited recognition of ethnic-racial differences within the supervision relationship, 2) variation in comfort level in discussing ethnicity-race, and 3) a desire for more training among trainees in how to broach discussions of ethnicity-race. Such findings suggest that students lack this MCC as well as the supervisors and faculty in training programs (Spann, 2022; Day-Vines et al., 2018). Considering this, the need for MCC for those who design training programs is further implicated.

We emphasize the importance of the APA Ethics Code of avoiding harm as a core value for psychologists to uphold (Spann, 2022). Through the interpersonal, systemic, and vicarious way in which racism described as trauma (Henderson et al., 2019) is perpetuated throughout contemporary society, psychologists who do not recognize the importance of MCC as it relates to understanding how their worldviews, identities, and biases influence their perceptions and interactions with Clients of Color, having a lack of knowledge as to how the worldviews and identities of Clients of Color influence the clients outlook on life and the therapeutic relationship, and educational programs which lack faculty and supervisors without an understanding of MCC perpetuate harm as future psychologists are ill-prepared to meet a variety of needs of their future Clients of Color (Spann, 2022; Henderson et al., 2019; Killian & Floren, 2020; Lenes et al., 2020).

As discussed by Burkard and Knox (2004) “psychotherapy is influenced by Western/European values, which emphasize an individual’s personal responsibility for the change process” (p. 394) therefore therapeutic approaches emphasizing personal

responsibility and individualism may be particularly harmful to Clients of Color who have experienced systemic racism and discrimination. Addressing the role that culture plays in the counseling relationship and providing therapeutic recommendations addressing such increases therapeutic effectiveness (Vasquez, 2007). Incorporating the client's culture into the therapeutic process leads to credibility, trust, and cultural empathy (Vasquez, 2007). Important to this is the therapists' level of cultural humility deemed by Hook et al. (2016) as a crucial aspect of cultural competency.

Characteristics of the Culturally Humble Therapist

Psychotherapy is a sociocultural and interpersonal interaction between individuals in which cultural context involving meaning, shared social learning, implicit assumptions, and symbols are important considerations (Lee et al., 2021). As all therapeutic relationships may be viewed as "meetings between cultures" (as quoted by Lee et al., 2021, p. 513) involving aspects of cross-cultural communication all psychotherapy therefore should be "culture-centered and the cross-cultural perspective is generic to *all* psychotherapy" (Lee et al., 2021, p. 513). While some researchers believe that omniculturalism in which we highlight important similarities between humans rather than focusing on differences via multiculturalism (Moghaddam, 2020) we contend that such an ideal view is not possible in a society in which one's ethnic-racial differences continue to adversely affect one's physical and mental health, access to societal resources, and interactions with law enforcement. Therefore, in line with Burkard and Knox (2004) multicultural competency should not be seen as supplementary, it should be "viewed as central to the development of sensitive and caring practitioners" (p. 394).

The counseling profession is rooted in humanistic traditions (Chan et al., 2018; King, 2021; Velasquez & Montiel, 2018) of which Carl Rogers was a prominent figure and advanced the notion of client-centered therapy (Velasquez & Montiel, 2018; Winn, 2016). Primary to client-centered therapy are three core conditions empathy, unconditional positive regard, and congruence believed to produce change (Velasquez & Montiel, 2018; Winn, 2016). Empathy entails the therapist's ability to sense the client's world as if it were the therapist's own (Velasquez & Montiel, 2018; Winn, 2016), unconditional positive regard involves the therapist's warm acceptance of all aspects of the client's experience having no conditions in their acceptance of the client (Velasquez & Montiel, 2018; Winn, 2016), and congruence is therapists' ability to be aware of their own feelings in which the therapist is "...[being] freely and deeply himself, with his actual experience being represented by his awareness of himself" (as quoted by Winn, 2016, p. 5).

Extending these core conditions is the idea of unconditional acceptance in the therapeutic relationship which research suggests provides ideal conditions for triggering clients' capacity for growth (Winn, 2016). According to Comas-Diaz (2012) multicultural psychotherapy is rooted in humanistic psychology as both encompass fostering an individual's capacity for freedom, choice, and transformation. It is within the traditions of humanistic and multicultural psychotherapy that we explore the characteristics of the culturally humble therapist as found in the current literature highlighting various aspects previously discussed as barriers to the therapeutic relationship and emphasizing humanistic and multicultural conditions leading to cultural humility.

Multicultural Orientation

Multicultural orientation is defined as “a counselor’s way of being with a client, guided by the counselor’s philosophy or values that involves the ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the client” (Hook et al., 2016, p. 271). Cultural humility is an integral aspect of a therapist's multicultural orientation in which one can maintain their multicultural orientation and humility even when faced with the strain of cultural differences between themself and their client (Davis et al., 2016; Hook et al., 2016). Cultural humility also entails the therapists’ awareness of their own limitations in understanding their client’s cultural background and experiences being open, curious, and capable of monitoring their own beliefs and reactions toward their client’s cultural values (Gafford et al, 2019; Owen et al., 2016). The culturally humble therapist is also able to regulate their perspective, lacking arrogance, and having a genuine desire to understand and honor the perspective and cultural identities of their client (Gafford et al., 2019; Owen et al., 2016).

Another aspect of multicultural orientation is cultural opportunities in which the therapist takes initiative in attending to the client’s cultural identity such as cultural heritage, values, and beliefs integrating them into the therapeutic process beginning at intake (Gafford et al., 2019; Owen et al., 2016). Such opportunities are deemed as moments in therapy sessions when the therapist and client can engage purposefully and meaningfully about the client’s cultural identity (Owen et al., 2016). The last pillar of multicultural orientation is cultural comfort. Cultural comfort includes the therapist's level of ease when discussing cultural material with their client influenced by the

therapist's probability of initiating cultural dialogue and their ability to relate positively to discussions about the client's culture (Gafford et al., 2019). Though the therapists may experience discomfort when engaging in dialogue about cultural issues with the client it is up to the therapist to address the discomfort in session with the client if appropriate or explore their reaction in consultation with a supervisor outside the session (Gafford et al., 2019).

Broaching and Cultural Humility

As previously discussed, therapists' unwillingness to broach topics surrounding race, ethnicity, and culture (REC) with their Clients of Color risks rupturing the counseling relationship and working alliance (Day-Vines et al., 2022; King & Summers, 2020; Lee et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2021). "From a humanistic perspective, broaching reflects the principle of irreducibility, in which a person's strengths and struggles must be understood in terms of their whole selves, including dimensions of identity and structural privileges and oppressions" (King, 2021a, p. 30). Broaching is seen as a foundational intervention in cross-racial dyads (King & Borders, 2019) and is identified as a skill related to the establishment of safety across identity differences and the building of rapport between therapists and clients enhancing working alliance (King & Summers, 2020). An actionable skill for multicultural competency (MCC) broaching conveys therapists' multicultural orientation demonstrating their cultural humility and openness to prioritizing culture (King & Borders, 2019). Broaching is viewed as an alternative to upholding Whiteness and other dominant identities within the status quo (King, 2021b).

According to King (2021b) broaching is the responsibility of the therapist in which they are to 1) prioritize initiating discussions of power and culture in sessions with

their clients' removing taboos surrounding such topics, 2) engage in broaching as an ongoing process occurring throughout the therapeutic relationship developing as working alliance arises or when the client presents with concerns, 3) take into consideration the client's dynamic identities in relation to intersectionality as well as shifting sociopolitical or relational contexts, 4) attend to the various levels of power and identity, and 5) acquire a flexible stance for which the client is able to determine the focus and direction of conversations. Though there is some debate related to the skill components of broaching, the timing and usage of such skill, directness of language used when broaching, the goals of broaching, and whether differences or similarities between client and therapist should be emphasized the components of broaching identified by King (2021b) highlight the humanistic approach of client-centered therapy, particularly as it relates to cross-racial counseling dyads and the therapists' multicultural orientation specifically White therapists.

In an experimental analog study examining undergraduate students' ($N = 575$) perceptions of counselor broaching behaviors via vignette linking the benefits of broaching to potential clients' perceptions of therapists' initial broaching statements and client perceptions of therapists' multicultural orientation, King and Borders (2019) found significant differences supporting their hypothesis that research participants in the broaching treatment conditions would differ from those in the control condition related to culture-centered variables when controlling for ethnicity-race. Cultural-centered variables included cultural opportunities, cross-cultural counseling competence, and cultural humility. While participants in the three broaching conditions all demonstrated differences from those in the control condition, participants in the broaching condition

specifically assessing therapists' broaching of relationship, similarities and differences were the most distinct as those participants rated the counseling experience better on each culture-centered variable than those in the control group (King & Borders, 2019). These findings indicate that when therapists explicitly mention cultural dynamics in clinical sessions, particularly when power and identity are acknowledged cultural responsiveness is enhanced (King & Borders, 2019).

Lastly, broaching has been linked to therapists' challenging CBRI patterns of thinking and commitment to MCC (King & Summers, 2020). According to Day-Vines et al. (2018) possessing beliefs that ethnic-racial differences matter in relation to access, identity, and inclusion along with viewing oneself as culturally competent were crucial to broaching behaviors. These findings suggest that awareness and knowledge of power and culture may lead to a willingness to apply MCC skills (King & Summer, 2020).

Colorblindness, White Racial Identity Development, and Cultural Humility

Psychologists and other mental health professionals are ethically bound to take into consideration how their assumptions, privileges, and biases are influenced by intersectional identities as well as how they may influence sessions with their clients (Lenes et al., 2020) therefore, those who hold racial attitudes in line with colorblind racial ideology (CBRI) or deny the existence of individual racism have lower levels of empathy towards Clients of Color (Burkard & Knox, 2004; Constantine, 2007; Hook et al., 2016) as previously discussed. As empathy is a core component of cultural humility and client-centered therapy those within the helping professions who hold these views risk doing harm to their clients (Spann, 2022). Like kindness attitudes surrounding nice racism the concept by DiAngelo (2021) previously discussed therapists too are called to move

beyond “nice counselor syndrome” which is motivated by apathy, fear, perceived powerlessness, anxiety, or people pleasing leading to unquestioning approaches towards policies and practices which serve to support the status quo (Lenes et al., 2020. P. 148).

Relevant to the characteristics of a culturally humble therapist based on client perceptions are lower CBRI, greater attitudes toward prosocial justice advocacy, lower impact of racial microaggressions, and willingness to discuss and disclose religious beliefs all of which were linked to therapy continuance, positive working alliance and treatment outcomes, higher competence ratings of the psychotherapist, and expected treatment effectiveness (Zhang et al., 2021). For instance, Wright (2019) found that cultural humility significantly predicted working alliance among 324 clients (80.9% White) that were currently in therapy in which empathy, congruence, and positive regard mediated the effect found on the positive relationship between cultural humility and working alliance. This finding is in line with previous studies of Clients of Color, particularly those for which cultural identity was salient in which therapists were rated higher on scales of cultural humility in relation to higher perceptions of session quality compared to those with lower cultural identity salience (Morales, 2019). These findings indicate that cultural humility is important for those who view cultural background as important to them (Morales, 2019).

The last area we consider in relation to characteristics of the culturally humble therapist is in relation to racial identity development. As research discussed previously indicates that White individuals with higher levels of Phase 2 (pseudo-independent and autonomy) White racial identity development (WRID) are color-conscious encompassing behaviors leading to the abandonment of racism and the racial status quo (Ferguson et al.,

2022; Helms, 2017; Moffitt et al., 2022) WRID is also an area that has been studied among therapists. Middleton et al. (2005) found that White racial identity development among White counselors ($N = 412$) was positively correlated with self-reports of their multicultural competence findings in line with previous studies. Specifically, those in Phase 2 WRID reported higher levels of self-perceived MCC (Middleton et al., 2005).

While the studies discussed in this section are not without limitations as previously discussed, what is apparent is being open and willing to discuss racial, ethnic, and cultural (REC) differences and similarities in therapeutic relationships along with awareness of one's own biases and privileges is important toward fostering a multicultural orientation particularly cultural humility. Evident is that the ignoring, denying, or minimizing of REC does harm to the therapeutic/ working alliance, congruence, and positive regard within the counseling relationship. Like the positive effects noted in relation to skills acquired through taking diversity courses such as increased empathy, perspective taking, decreased denial of racism, and increased cultural awareness (Sleeter, 2011; Jewett, 2018) therapists high in multicultural orientation and cultural humility foster these same attributes indicating the value to MCC and color-consciousness in cross-racial therapeutic dyads.

Biblical Foundations of the Study

Some of the most horrific atrocities committed throughout human history have been those committed by man upon his fellow man in the name of religion, specifically Christianity. From racialized chattel slavery in which enslaved Africans were believed to be the descendants of Ham and therefore relegated to a life of enslavement from generation to generation, to the Salem Witch Trials in which women were murdered

because they were believed to be witches, to murders committed by anti-abortionists in the name of God, just to name a few (Reed, 2015; Sundstrom et al., 2013; van Oort, 2023). Seeing history from this point of reference along with the belief that Christianity and religion, in general, are historically prone to violence, fostering separatist views, authoritative doctrine, and close-mindedness (Cavanaugh, 2007) it may be easy to determine that the separation of science from such limiting views of any form of religion makes sense. As human beings have become more "enlightened" the shift away from religious worldviews in science is evident.

However, this separation of learning and faith was not always the case as during colonial times in the U.S. institutions of higher education were established under Christian principles (Esqueda, 2014). Though the secularization of society and hence social institutions have relegated Christian beliefs to being viewed as opinions and regressive therefore, having no place in science and no place in advancing knowledge and truth regarding human emotion, human behavior, consciousness, relationships, and personality (Johnson & Jones, 2000; Johnson, et al., 2010) we argue that perhaps faith integrated with learning is a missing ingredient to understanding those very things, specifically as it relates to our understanding of human differences. As noted by Esqueda (2014) "although the integration of faith and learning is considered very much the heart of the mission of Christian higher education" (Esqueda, 2014, p. 91) Christian faith is further fragmented due to gaps in Western Christianity related to metaphysical dualisms, epistemic dualisms, and ethical-political dualisms (Esqueda, 2014). These dualisms are viewed as contributing to disintegration affecting people from all cultures as people live

fragmented lives in which different areas coexist independently of one another lacking an apparent relationship (Esqueda, 2014).

As a conceptual framework worldview refers to “our view of the world, a belief system that guides individual behavior” (Esqueda, 2014, p. 93). Tension exists in our contemporary culture between the dualisms apparent in a secularized worldview versus a Christian worldview. It is the “tension” between the two with regards to which worldview provides the “truth” as it relates to the human condition and the cosmos which from a Christian worldview is said to have come about due to man's fall from grace (Wolters, 2005). This dichotomous relationship in which there is an “either, or” rather than how both could provide valuable insight to human understanding is what Wolters (2005) refers to as old paradigms related to dividing the world into secular versus sacred is an incorrect interpretation of Scripture.

Foundational truth for Christians lies in the “natural order” in the world and comes from God who continues to guide it (Johnson et al., 2010). Christians believe Scripture is both the answer to and the cure for all human ailments (Johnson et al., 2010) relying on Scripture and the Grand Narrative in which creation, the fall, and redemption are used to understand how sin has distorted all of God’s creation (Wolters, 2005), this worldview is in stark contrast with contemporary science. Science and its achievements have and continue to propel humanity forward separate from a biblical worldview (Johnson et al., 2010). Yet, we continue to struggle with finding resolutions for those human behaviors that contribute to the many conflicts we continue to witness enacted in the U.S. and across the globe related to how we as human beings treat one another.

What follows is the author's understanding of how the distortion of biblical scripture stems from man's fall from grace and how biblical scripture serves a clear source for remedying these same ailments, particularly regarding ethnic-racial differences. Myers and Jones (2010) state respectively "differing Christian views is due to differences in interpretation not biblical commitment" (p. 74) and "…it is one's own interpretation and commitment to biblical truth, and one's own embrace of certain theological principles that will shape one's own work…" (p.106).

The Fall, Culture, and Social Institutions

Fundamental to Christian belief is God is the supreme being in whose image man was created and who created every aspect of the universe including the cosmos (Genesis 1:27, New International Version, 2001; Wolters, 2005). As God's creation is good and this goodness came before sin, sin is not inherent in God's creations (Genesis 1:31, New International Version, 2001; Wolters, 2005). However, man's disobedience towards God as demonstrated in Genesis 3:6 (New International Version, 2001), and our fall into sin has led to a distortion of God's created goodness in both the nonhuman and human realms therefore every aspect of creation has been affected by sin and distorted (Genesis 3:17-19, New International Version, 2001), so too has the church (Wolters, 2005). Man's reluctance to see the distortion of sin as represented in a dichotomy between that which is seen as secular versus that which is sacred contributes to both our unwillingness to critique the church as well as our continued belief that holiness cannot reside in social institutions (Wolters, 2005).

As every aspect of human life and experiences have been tainted by sin humans have a distorted view of the world around us as well as our place in it not only are our

personal lives negatively affected by sin so too are our social institutions and all aspects of our cultural lives (Wolters, 2005). Esqueda (2014) notes that sin has so distorted our understanding of our relationship to God and to one another we have removed God from his proper foundational place in our lives and institutions. As we argue that reckoning with our past through a thorough understanding of how the founding of the United States is rooted in the enslavement of human beings from Africa, alongside the rise of capitalism, and the genocide and theft of land from Indigenous/ Native American human beings is needed to reconcile ethnic-race relations in contemporary society so too do we need to reconcile the role that Christianity played in those past transgressions and the role it continues to play in the complicity of some Christians involving ethnic-race relations in the U.S. today.

In association with the fall, man's inability to recognize the image of God in one another (Genesis 1:27, New International Version, 2001) leads to our categorizing of one another based on a socially constructed hierarchy. As previously discussed, the race-religion constellation connecting the socially constructed categories of religion and race (Topolski, 2018) justified the "discovery," exploitation, and colonization of non-Christian and non-European land and peoples by European colonial powers (Greenberg, 2016; Rah, 2021). European biases informed by a distorted belief in human hierarchy is built into our social institutions in which those of differing ethnic-racial backgrounds suffer inequalities that the dominant ethnic-racial group of White/ European Americans do not. This perversion of God's creation in our cultural lives is attributable to the fall in which we do not recognize that "social institutions should be governed by considerations of stewardship" (Wolters, 2005, p. 54). According to Wolters (2005), sin introduced a new

dimension to God's created order and established an unprecedented axis plotting various degrees of good and evil that is fundamentally distinct from God's good creation. In which "the axis attaches itself to creation like a parasite" (Wolters, 2005, p. 57). For instance:

> Hatred... has no place within God's good creation. It is unimaginable in the context of God's plan for the earth. Nevertheless, hatred cannot exist without the creational substratum of human emotion and healthy assertiveness. Hatred participates simultaneously in the goodness of creation (man's psychic makeup as part of his full humanity) and in the demonic distortion of that good creation into something horrible and evil. In sum, though evil exists only as a distortion of the good, it is never reducible to the good (Wolters, 2005, pp. 57-58).

As culture includes values, beliefs, knowledge, customs, and language (Kendall, 2021) informing one's worldview it plays an integral role in one's biases because culture dictates what we view to be "normal" and true which is subjective (Moskowitz, 2021). As religious beliefs are an extension of culture, Christian beliefs can also contribute to bias which informs one's worldview and the knowledge that one seeks. As bias limits our understanding and is prone to error bias based on Christian beliefs is as sinful as bias based on a secular worldview (Wolters, 2005).

From a Grand Narrative standpoint in which creation, the fall, and redemption are the pathways towards humanity being in realignment to our rightful relationship with God there is a need to understand how man returns to God. The fall by which Adam and Eve went against God's command has so distorted human relationships, as noted by

Liberty University (2020) man must overcome our greed and selfish need for self-aggrandizement in which:

> People love their own property more, and they take advantage of others to gain it. People love their own success more, and they will lie to achieve it. People love their own "tribe" more, and they are willing to disregard everyone who isn't in it. People prefer others who are like them because they love their own image most, and this results in all forms of sexism, racism, and prejudice (Liberty University, (n.d.).

Furthermore, our distorted views through the veil of sin, not Scripture has led to "genocide, apartheid, and war" (Liberty University, n.d.). As no one is exempt from error and bias (Johnson et al., 2010) the Grand Narrative can support healing the ethnic-racial strife that plagues not only U.S. society and culture but also those across the globe keeping humankind from fulfilling God's commandments as instructed in 1 John 4:11-12. "Foundational thinking lays bare all of our assumptions so that we may discover those assumptions that are false and lethal. Foundational thinking cares about the difference between truth and falsehood because it cares about good and evil" (Sproul, 2009, p.11).

The hate crime statistics referred to earlier in this work, along with all forms of racism, biases, and discrimination illustrate the sin and distorted view man has towards his brother whom he is commanded to love. While human beings are attracted to one another based on ingroup similarities (e.g., romantic relationships, friends, etc.) our culture conditions us to pay particular attention to each other's differences (Lalonde, et al., 2015). As God's creation is good, he created from one man every nation of men (Acts 17:26, New International Version, 2001) as such man has naturally evolved and like God

has been given the capacity to create culture (Gingrich & Smith, 2014). Scriptural truths focused on Jesus Christ (Esqueda, 2014) as a remedy in working towards holistic ethnic-racial healing is needed within secular and Christian worldviews.

Biblical Foundation for Ethnic-Racial Unity

Gingrich and Smith (2014) provide an analysis of culture and ethnicity in which they posit central themes found in Scripture in which the word "ethnic group" refers to "nation" as referenced throughout the Old and New Testaments (p. 140). Based on this perspective God's "table of nations" rather than referring to political states is accurately speaking to the gift of ethnic diversity seen in human beings across the earth as noted in Acts 17:26-28 (p. 140; New International Version, 2001) and Revelations 7:4-9 (New International Version, 2001). As all human beings are made in the image of God, we posit that all human beings no matter where we are located on earth are therefore a reflection of God which includes the gift of ethnic-racial diversity (Acts, 17:26, New International Version, 2001). Though Genesis 1:27, serves as the foundation of how we as God's creation should interact with one another as we are commanded to love our neighbors as we love ourselves, human beings continue to struggle with this second command as indicated by group differences and conflict.

While we humans share many similarities, our differences keep us in conflict. As Kung et al. (2018) notes when we view others as different, [rather than embracing those differences] we create boundaries and struggle to trust those who are not members of our ingroups. Group differences and conflict are the struggles outgroup members face regarding being seen and treated as equals to the dominant ingroup. We posit this distorted way of viewing human beings is rooted in the fall as it relates to the strife, we

experience concerning our ethnic-racial differences. Therefore, racism, microaggressions, ethnic-racial discrimination, and the consequences that result are in direct conflict with Scripture as they infringe on "God's creational design for human life" (Wolters, 2005, p. 55). These transgressions of the human mind, body, and spirit manifest as mental and emotional disturbances (Liberty University, n.d.; Wolters, 2005) as previously discussed related to race-based trauma contributing to "the groaning of creation" (Wolters, 2005, p. 55).

The root cause of what ails us in relation to ethnic-racial strife is human sinfulness. We fall short of God's commandments to love and not judge one another. 1 Peter 3:8 states, "Finally all of you, live in harmony with one another, be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and be humble" (New International Version, 2001, p. 676) and 1 John 4:11-12, "Dear friends since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is made complete in us" (New International Version, 2001, p. 681). These Biblical truths serve as a guide for how we are to treat and interact with one another. These commands from Scripture highlight how the integration of biblical truths is in-alignment with psychological truths as we consider the core elements of multicultural orientation, particularly as we strive for cultural humility in our understanding of one another as culturally diverse human beings.

Biblical Foundation for Intergroup Contact, Community, and Love

The importance of intergroup relationships from a biblical perspective involves our ability to resolve conflict with one another as an important aspect of our ability to forgive and work together in harmony. As reflected in Matthew 5:25-26, matters of

conflict are to be resolved quickly in which we are called to put our pride and differences aside to reach a resolution (New International Version, 2001). While Christianity and Scripture have historically been misused as previously mentioned it has also been used as it was intended as a resource provided by God to be used by man for our grace, redemption, and salvation. Christianity and Scripture have played an integral role throughout U.S. history regarding ethnic-racial unity with events such as the Civil Rights and the Abolitionist Movements. Demonstrating that we are called to stand in solidarity taking action together being of the same mind and attitude as Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:10; Romans 15:5, New International Version, 2001).

As humans, we are inherently social beings (Heatherton et al., 2004; Genesis 2:18, New International Version, 2001) our willingness and ability to work together may be explained as being motivated by the inherent human need and recognition that social relationships lie at the root of our humanity contributing to our survival through which covenantal relationships with God and others, value the dyad, encourage involvement with a faith community for continued fellowship and support, interdependence, and communication which fosters long-term commitment (Strom & Faw, 2017). Requiring that we "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32, New International Version, 2001, p. 649).

Employing multiculturalism throughout the discipline of psychology strives to affirm human dignity across all social differences whether socially constructed or inherent (Smith et al., 2019). The importance of intergroup relationships from a biblical perspective highlights the positive value that social relationships have for the well-being of humans (Strom & Faw, 2017) as we strive for peace and harmony through embracing

the ethnic-racial diversity of humanity, and may our faith in Scripture provide us with a guide in doing so as we embrace love as God is love, we therefore also acknowledge 1 John 4:19-21:

> We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, who he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother (New International Version, 2001, p. 681).

We argue that through the embracing of rather than rejection of one another's ethnic-racial diversity and the realization and recognition of God as creator of all of humanity, our ability to see the God in one another removing the blindness imposed by sin will lead to our unity and acceptance towards one another across our ethnic-racial differences fulfilling God's commandment.

The Marginalized, Jesus, and Antiracist Action

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, we are provided with countless instructions on how to treat one another, especially those who are marginalized within society due to discrimination and bias. Psalm 9:9 states, "the Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble (New International Version, 2001, p. 300), Proverbs 14:31, "He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God (New International Version, 2001, p. 355), and Zechariah 7:10, "Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. In your hearts do not think evil of each other" (New International Version, 2001, p. 525). Scripture is our blueprint demonstrating the reality that the perversions of creation as

demonstrated by hatred, division, and biases have existed prior to colonial times (Gench, 2022; Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, 2022). Noting this is not to excuse the acts predicated upon humankind through the distortion colonialism brought upon us but to suggest that if we are to evolve as a species, biblical accounts of racism, prejudice, and discrimination are a sociohistorical account that we must heed to evolve past the consequences and historical legacy of racism (Gench, 2022).

The Gospels as found in the New Testament provide us with qualitative accounts of Jesus' teachings and messages through firsthand observations, oral tradition, and written manuscripts (James et al., 2015). Focusing on these lived experiences we are provided with countless accounts of Jesus' interactions with those who were marginalized, teachings for those who did the marginalizing, and remedying of such relationships. John 4 and Luke 10 provide firsthand accounts of Jesus a Jewish man demonstrating kindness, compassion, perspective-taking, and healing of relationships as he spoke out against the racism demonstrated between Samaritans and Jewish people (John 4:9, Luke 10:30, New International Version, 2001; Palmer, 2020). Jesus did not ignore the ethnic difference of the Samaritans as a colorblind racial ideology would suggest, rather he saw this "difference" from his Jewishness and embraced it as demonstrated through his actions (Thurman, 1976).

Through our reading of the life of Jesus Christ, we are presented with examples of grace being demonstrated to many of the same marginalized groups we see marginalized today such as those of lower social economic status, the working class, women, and people of different ethnicities (Gench, 2022). Though we are called to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all

your mind; and, Love your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27, New International Version, 2001, p. 575) our Western culture emphasizes individualism as a core value (Esqueda, 2014; Kendall, 2021). Our emphasis on individualism "fosters isolation from others and a disconnection from many social structures" (Esqueda, 2014, p. 92). According to DiAngelo (2010), the culture of individualism is "one of the primary barriers preventing well-meaning (and other) white people from understanding racism" (p. 1). As our culture of individualism dictates, our relationships are depersonalized as we value competition and achievement within our social interactions (Esqueda, 2014).

According to Gench (2022) in contemporary U.S. society we are currently living in a "*kairos* moment of racial reckoning" (p. 39) indicating an opportune moment "when the future God has in mind for us struggles towards realization now, demanding decisive action on our parts (p. 39). Our calling is not only to resist oppression and racism but to name it regardless of persecution or negative reactions as Jesus did (Gench, 2022; Thurman, 1976). In the spirit of antiracism social and racial justice action, Psalm 72:4 provides us with this instruction "He will defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy; he will crush the oppressor" (New International Version, 2001, p. 321). Building bridges across what divides us ethnically, racially, and culturally requires our steadfast commitment to removing our blindness, rejecting sin, and making the ministry of Jesus a reality.

Summary

The study of Whiteness through an analysis of it at both the micro and macro-levels of socialization have demonstrated how the unwillingness to reconcile our history

surrounding ethnicity-race in contemporary U.S. society continues to keep us divided as an unwillingness of the dominant ethnic-racial group of White/ European Americans continue to deny, ignore, or reject how this legacy is intertwined with their feelings of guilt, shame, and complicity towards Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) today. This is evident as the research reviewed highlights the common ethnic-racial socialization strategies practiced by White parents are colorblind racial ideology (CBRI) color-muteness, and egalitarianism (Gillen-O'Neel et al., 2022; Hagerman, 2017; Pahlke et al., 2021) all of which have been shown to contribute to the denial of contemporary racism leading to more biased behaviors, and a lack of understanding of the systemic nature of racism as a sociohistorical phenomenon negatively affecting BIPOC (Gillen-O'Neel et al., 2022; Hagerman, 2017; Moffitt et al., 2022; Pahlke et al., 2021; Underhill, 2019).

Further, parents' influence over their child's social environments influences how White children and youth produce ideas about ethnicity-race influencing their attitudes toward racial issues (Hagerman, 2017; Pahlke et al., 2021; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). Like schools, our churches too are symbolic of the ethnic-racial divisions we see in society as most people attend church with those of their own ethnicity-race which also contributes to ingroup biases (Roberts et al., 2020). These patterns of parental socialization contribute to White racial identity development (WRID) as interpersonal and social experiences shift a White individual to either progress towards autonomy and adopting an antiracist identity or regressing through the other stages of WRID rejecting such an identity remaining stagnant contributing to the racial status quo (Moffitt et al., 2022; Tatum, 1992; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). The education system too serves as an

agent of socialization as students are taught to participate in cultures, traditions, and social systems assisting them with acquiring the skills society views as important (Biesta, 2015; Schuelka & Engsig, 2022). This participation looks different for White students versus their BIPOC peers as demonstrated through the review of literature of racial trauma in the education system (Del Torro et al., 2021; Douglass et al., 2016; Henderson et al., 2019; Yeager et al., 2017).

The traditional mainstream curriculum across all educational levels and disciplines such as psychology is criticized for being Eurocentric in nature reflecting the worldviews and experiences of White people while omitting or superficially adding the voices, experiences, and contributions of BIPOC (Burkard & Knox, 2004, Foste, 2020; Sleeter, 2011; Sappleton & Adams, 2022). Taken together White parental ethnic-racial socialization and ethnic-racial socialization within the education system support "new racism" (Hunt, 2019, p. 88) preserving the racial status quo contributing to the subtle ways microaggressions and racism represented as race-based trauma impact BIPOC experience at school, work, in the media, or in any social environment they may experience intergroup contact with a White person (Bonilla-Silva, 2022; Golash-Boza, 2021; Liu et al., 2019; Perez Lopez, 2021; Sue et al., 2019) adversely affecting the physical and mental health of BIPOC (Hemmings & Evans, 2018; Kapadia, 2022; Sue et al., 2019; Walton, 2017).

Multicultural counseling and equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) initiatives serve to counter-hegemonic Whiteness while simultaneously acknowledging and giving voice to the experiences of BIPOC people (Dee & Penner, 2017; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2015; Vasquez & Altshuler, 2017). Like race-conscious parenting strategies among

White parents in which acknowledging the existence of ethnic-racial discrimination promotes awareness of systemic racism and reduces ethnic-racial bias (Perry et al., 2019; Zucker & Patterson, 2018), race-conscious curriculum is an action-based strategy for attaining the knowledge needed to identify racism and racial trauma leading to the ability of identifying effective interventions at both the micro and macro levels of society (Allwood et al., 2022; Hemmings & Evans, 2018). Awareness of racial biases and openly discussing racial issues contribute to perspective taking, increased empathy, problem-solving, critical thinking, and acquiring a multicultural orientation (Davis et al., 2016; Hook et al., 2016; Jewett, 2018; Sleeter, 2011; Wells et al., 2016) rather than leading to increased biased behaviors or ethnic-racial disharmony (Zucker & Patterson, 2018). The banning of EDI and antiracist education serves to reinforce the ethnic-racial status quo.

As White/ European Americans represent 84.47% of the workforce in psychology (APA, 2022), equipping them with the knowledge necessary to succeed in a racially, ethnically, and culturally (REC) diverse society is ethically responsible (Henderson et al., 2019; Killian & Floren, 2020; Lenes et al., 2020; Spann, 2022) as the clients they serve will include those from the BIPOC community soon becoming the ethnic-racial majority in U.S. society (Craig et al., 2018; Kubota, 2017). Therefore, White clinicians' ability to understand the importance of multicultural counseling and fostering a multicultural orientation is vital to their ethical treatment, intervention planning, and assessment of their Clients of Color (Spann, 2022). As we are all made in the image of God, we are called to embrace one another across our REC differences not to ignore, reject, or fear broaching these differences but to embrace them and act against marginalization and

oppression as demonstrated through the acts of Jesus Christ (Gench, 2022; Gingrich & Smith, 2014).

The theoretical frameworks of intergroup contact theory and antiracism highlight the teaching of Jesus Christ as He did not shy away from ethnic-racial group differences between himself and the Samaritans He acted against the oppressors for their treatment of the oppressed. The distorted view and hence the treatment of those who do not represent the ethnic-racial majority of White/ European Americans is representative of humanity's fall from grace. We bear witness to Jesus' acts of antiracism and social justice through qualitative observations, oral history, and written accounts as provided through the Gospels (James et al., 2015), so we can glean an understanding of Jesus' grace toward the marginalized through the lived experiences of his disciples (John 4:9, Luke 10:30, New International Version, 2001; Palmer, 2020). It is in this same tradition that I seek to understand the lived experiences of White undergraduate psychology students enrolled in a multicultural counseling course.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD

Overview

Chapter 3 presents a summary of the study procedures. This qualitative study employed an existential-phenomenological analysis to discover the experience of being a White undergraduate psychology student in a multicultural counseling course. Existential-phenomenological research (EPR) was selected as the researcher deemed it the best method for capturing the experience being studied as it attended to each participant's first-person account of their experience in a multicultural counseling course. As there is a lack of literature providing a firsthand account of such experiences, EPR was used to address this deficit. This chapter describes how EPR was used for the study, includes the research design, data collection and how the data were analyzed, researcher positionality, and the methods concerning informed consent.

Research Questions

RQ1: How do White undergraduate psychology students describe their lived experiences with an undergraduate multicultural counseling course?

Research Design

Qualitative research is described as “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 7). In locating the observer in the world, qualitative research allows the researcher to describe reality or phenomena from the perspective of the research participant, systematically capturing the meaning participants give to a social problem or phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Hill et al., 1997; Willig

& Rogers, 2017). Hegel's perspective of phenomenology refers to “knowledge as it appears in consciousness” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 2) in which the science of “describing what one perceives, senses, and knows in one’s immediate awareness and experience” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 2) informs the selection of phenomenology as the research design. Therefore, this study was a phenomenological qualitative study in which in-depth semi-structured interviews were used to capture the “essence” (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Eatough & Smith, 2017) of White undergraduate psychology students’ experiences as they were enrolled in a multicultural counseling course.

As qualitative research allows for a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon by talking directly to research participants, utilizing phenomenology focuses on first-person accounts of the lived experiences of people and their subjective and objective experiences with a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Winn, 2016; Valle & Halling, 1989). Specifically, employing an existential-phenomenological analysis (EPR) was deemed appropriate for directly attending to each participant's experience of being in a multicultural counseling course. The researcher's goal was to provide a detailed examination of how White students described the essence of their experience (Valle & Halling, 1989) to better grasp what the experience looks like. The researcher also sought to understand the meaning-making research participants gave to their experience as socio-historically, situated persons (Eatough & Smith, 2017) within the context of the topics explored in the multicultural counseling course, it is in this regard that the research participants were viewed as experts of their subjective experience (Trzeciak-Kerr, 2016).

Participants

The study consisted of nine research participants who self-identified as White/European American and who were undergraduate psychology students enrolled in an 8-week online course titled “Multicultural Counseling and Research Issues.” The course was taken at a private, predominately White Christian university in the Southeast United States. The ethnic-racial demographics of enrolled students are as follows: White students represent 50% of the student population (n = 39.4% male, n = 28.2% female; Data USA, 2020), 14.6% Black/African American, 6.25% Latinx/ Hispanic American, 3.03% Two or More Races, 0.247% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 0.467% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 1.88% Asian American (Data USA, 2020). Institutional Review Board approval was granted on February 14, 2023 (see Appendix A). See Table 1 for additional demographic information.

The multicultural counseling course is a core requirement for students seeking a Bachelor of Science degree in the discipline of Psychology. As the study was concerned with describing the experiences of only those students who self-identified as White/ European American, the sampling technique used was homogeneous purposive sampling. Students of Color enrolled in the course were excluded based on the recruitment criteria for those who self-identified as White/European American. Other recruitment requirements met were undergraduate students 18 years or older and current enrollment in multicultural counseling. Participants who completed the demographic questionnaire and interview were given a fifteen-dollar Starbucks gift card for their participation in the study.

Sample size

The small sample size is consistent with phenomenological analysis as the individual experiences of each participant were attended to before a comparative analysis of the material was completed (Eatough & Smith, 2017). The small sample size further allowed for an in-depth analysis of both the diversity of and shared experiences among the participants (Eatough & Smith, 2017; Gill, 2020). The sample size was sufficient for generating quality data providing an understanding of the experiences being described and the phenomenon being investigated (Gill, 2020). Recruitment of research participants ceased when the saturation point was met, signaling the discontinuation of data collection as no new information was obtained and responses became exhaustive and repetitive (Gill, 2020; Saunders et al., 2018).

Researcher Positionality

When I initially began this journey, I was interested in researching the effects of ethnic studies courses on White high school students as I was particularly interested in investigating such courses as a form of prejudice reduction. However, having lived through the COVID-19 pandemic and what some called the racial reckoning that occurred here in the U.S. and globally in the summer of 2020, prompted by the video recording of the murder of George Floyd, my interest shifted. As a Black American woman, the racial violence that has been recorded over the past several years has impacted me in a way that I think only those of us who experience life in non-White bodies, particularly Black bodies, can truly understand. I admit that I have never watched the entire video of Mr. Floyd's death. I have refused to watch such trauma since the

killing of Tamir Rice in November 2014. Despite not having watched the countless deaths of human beings who are Black, the vicarious trauma experienced by me and other members of the BIPOC community is something that we carry with us daily.

As a social psychologist, I became interested in multicultural counseling courses seeking solutions for helping BIPOC heal from racial trauma. Though within our various communities, there continues to be some stigma associated with discussing our personal problems with others outside of our homes and communities, this is beginning to shift. I have personally sought therapeutic services several times throughout my adult life and have two children who have also done so. While I have been blessed to receive such services from women who look like me, knowing that the field of psychology continues to struggle with recruiting Professionals of Color is something I hope will continue to shift, in the meantime, as discussed in the literature review, the field continues to be overrepresented by White Americans.

I began to wonder what a person from the BIPOC community does when they have experienced racial trauma and there is no one from their ethnic-racial and cultural background in their area to turn to for help. How do White therapists support non-White clientele with the issues we face living in a society that continues to deny its history and the legacy of that history that persists? As an adjunct sociology professor, I thank my White undergraduate students for their genuine want of this knowledge and for solutions to the racial issues we have in contemporary society. It is those students who inspired me to be curious about the experience of White undergraduate psychology students in multicultural counseling. It is also those students who taught me to see them as human. In this came the recognition that there is a process that one goes through when learning “the

truth," especially for the first time, especially depending on what that truth is. The history of the United States of America isn't pretty and shouldn't be seen through rose-colored glasses. While our history has its rosy parts, that is not the only history we should know.

I strive through my research to understand the process of what it means to be White, particularly White American. That process begins with socialization in a society that continues to uphold an ethnic-racial hierarchy with White people maintaining their position at the top. That maintenance comes by way of passing policies and laws against teaching U.S. history, the truth about U.S. history. That maintenance comes by way of banning books that one believes will make their children feel or be a certain way without ever having to consider other children and their feelings. Those Black, Indigenous, and other Children of Color who must sit through lies being taught about them and their history. Those are some of the power dynamics of Whiteness and white supremacy.

Rather than harbor ill feelings, I as a Black woman researcher seek to understand the process of learning multicultural competency from a White student's perspective. I chose undergraduate students to gain an understanding of what the experience is like at an entry level when multicultural counseling may be the first time some students experience learning about the experiences of non-White people, White identity, White privilege, white supremacy, and their place in the maintenance of such systems within the helping profession of psychology. Rather than conducting a study comparing White students' experiences to those of BIPOC students, I seek to focus on White students only because though it is a social construct they too "have" a race. In line with current theorists, I seek to bring Whiteness out of the "invisible" to better understand how to counter it and to support the training of professionals who consider everyone their

potential clientele, not just those who look like them or that they are comfortable with. As APA takes up the mantle toward antiracism, I hope that this study supports that call to action.

Study Procedures

Because students with knowledge and experience being in a multicultural counseling course was a necessary condition for the study, homogenous purposive sampling was used to recruit students with current enrollment in the course. This sampling technique validated the research as students enrolled in the mandatory course were used without the researchers' influence. A recruitment announcement was sent to students enrolled in the course throughout two different 8-week terms to generate interest in the study (see Appendix B). The study consisted of one semi-structured interview with each participant in which three open-ended questions were used to allow the participants to reflect and reconstruct their experiences with the course in their own words (Seidman, 1991). As the researcher aimed to capture the psychological structure of the students' lived experience, without the use of structured research questions (Johnson, 2020) the researcher deemed this the most appropriate design for enhancing our understanding of White students' experience being in a multicultural counseling course.

All interviews occurred within the first three to six weeks of the course prior to the course's completion. Interviews were conducted face-to-face virtually and lasted between 15-30 minutes. Eight interviews were video recorded and transcribed verbatim using Microsoft Teams. The researcher manually reviewed the transcripts to determine their legitimacy and made any necessary corrections. One interview was video recorded using Zoom at the participant's request and manually transcribed verbatim by the

researcher. In line with EPR, the transcribed interviews were sifted into meaning units, and formed into essential constituents (Johnson, 2020; Churchill, 2022).

From this analysis the most salient structures of the participants' lived experience were revealed (Johnson, 2020). An analysis of participants' significant sentences, statements, or quotes were used and in effect enhances our understanding of how White undergraduate psychology students' experience being in a multicultural counseling course (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Johnson, 2020; Seidman, 1991). Clusters of meaning from the participants' statements allowed for a textual description in the participants' own words capturing the essence of their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Instrumentation and Measurement

As existential-phenomenology is committed to examining a subject matter in its own terms (Eatough & Smith, 2017) with the life-world of the participant as the foundation (Valle & Halling, 1989) the first instrument used to collect data was a demographic questionnaire used to gather basic information about each participant (see Appendix C). The gathering of data from several sources, ensuring maximum variation of participants, and ensuring that the data analysis followed the structure of phenomenological reduction enhanced the reliability of the study (Eatough & Smith, 2017; Rogers, 2018).

Interviews

Initial contact with each participant occurred via email, with the participant contacting the researcher, indicating their interest in participating in the study upon seeing the recruitment announcement (see Appendix B). Measures of ethical

considerations and trustworthiness were employed by obtaining the informed consent of the participant prior to engaging in the virtual video-recorded interview, in which participants were informed of the video recording of the interviews and publication of the data obtained. The second instrument used to collect data was an interview guide (see Appendix D) created by the researcher and approved by the Institutional Review Board at Liberty University. The researcher utilized the interview guide during each interview with the opening guide question, "What does multicultural counseling mean to you?" Followed by "Describe your experience being in a multicultural counseling course" and "Describe the challenges you faced, if any, with being in a multicultural counseling course?" Probing and elaboration questions such as "You mentioned ____ can you tell me more..." and "Please tell me more about that..." were used as needed (see Appendix D). Protection of the participant identities and other personal information was done using pseudonyms. Written and printed transcripts were stored and locked in a cabinet, while electronic transcripts and video recordings were protected using passwords to ensure confidentiality. Conflicts of interest were another ethical consideration, as the researcher is a human instrument that has experienced some of the adverse effects of racism and discrimination discussed thus far. The researcher attempted to embody a facilitative presence or way of being encompassing "*empathic dwelling*–ways of being with the

informant that invites them to further self-disclose" (Churchill, 2022, p. 45) throughout each interview.

Bracketing

As much as possible, the researcher engaged in bracketing through reflexive journaling to minimize her subjective experiences, biases, and common-sense assumptions prior to and after the interview process and during data analyses to maintain fidelity as it related to the participants intended meanings of their experiences (Yeung et al., 2013). The researcher relied on faculty debriefing to address concerns that arose related to assumptions she may have had related to White students' unconscious or conscious racial attitudes that were expressed during the interview process (Yeung et al., 2013). As the researcher engaged in bracketing and rebracketing, shifting from the "natural attitude" toward a "transcendental attitude" through the process of reduction, the researcher acknowledges that bracketing is a never-ending process and complete reduction is impossible (Valle & Halling, 1989).

Race-of-interviewer Effect

In awareness of the race-of-interviewer effect and the potential limitations it may present in the cross-racial dyad between interviewer and interviewee (Cabrera, 2012; Foste & Jones, 2020; Hagerman, 2017; Maxwell & Chesler, 2021; Yeung et al., 2013), the researcher began each interview with a description of the purpose of the study and addressing the "elephant in the room," as the researcher is a self-identified Black American, and the participants were White/European American. Acknowledging this upfront and addressing the discomfort that may arise from having conversations surrounding cultural differences, racism, Whiteness, and discrimination in a cross-racial

dyad interview process was deemed necessary by the researcher and her dissertation committee. This was done to establish rapport and to initiate a warm and neutral stance while maintaining enough distance to allow the participant to construct their responses as independently and openly as possible.

Like the therapeutic relationship, the interview relationship consists of issues related to equity and power, which are affected by the social identities of the researcher and participant (Seidman, 1991). In relation to negotiating these social identities and developing an interview relationship based on equity Seidman (1991) suggests that "the interviewer must be acutely aware of his or her own experience with them as well as sensitive to the way these issues may be affecting the participants" (p. 76). Due to the historical legacy of racism and racial politics in contemporary U.S. society, the cross-racial dyad between the Black American interviewer and the White American interviewee may be particularly complex (Seidman, 1991). The bridging of racial barriers employed by the researcher was to maintain sensitivity to issues that may trigger distrust, exhibit respect, good manners, and a genuine interest in the stories of research participants (Seidman, 1991).

Data Analysis

According to Polkinghorne (1989) the aim of phenomenological research is to "reveal and unravel the structures, logic, and interrelationships" (p, 50) obtained in the phenomenon being investigated. Data analysis for this study consisted of content analysis of interview transcripts from nine face-to-face virtual interviews with White undergraduate psychology students enrolled in an 8-week online multicultural counseling course. Eight interviews were video recorded and transcribed verbatim using Microsoft

Teams. One interview was video recorded using Zoom at participant request and manually transcribed verbatim by the researcher. The researcher then watched each recording while reviewing the transcripts to ensure accuracy, making corrections as needed. The researcher then read and re-read each transcript in its entirety for familiarity. As dialogue is essential to the existential-phenomenological process in understanding that "People and the world are always in dialogue with each other" (Valle & Halling, 1989, p. 9), being both active and passive participants in the world, data analysis for this study consisted of a reflexive analysis (Churchill, 2022) of interview transcripts from virtual interviews with nine White undergraduate psychology students enrolled in an 8-week online multicultural counseling course. This was achieved in two phases.

Phase One

Phase one of analysis consisted of what Churchill (2022) describes as reading and reflecting on the data for a "sense of the whole" (p. 49), dividing the individual interview transcripts into meaning units, and transformative reflections on the psychological meaning contained within the data. Each interview transcript was re-read in its entirety so the researcher could familiarize herself with the data to gain a sense of the whole (Churchill, 2022). Considered a micro-level of analysis in which the analysis of individual moments of experience contained in each transcript was carefully examined "to bring out the meaning inherent in the data" (Churchill, 2022, p. 50), the researcher then divided the data into meaning units. This process occurred as transitions in meaning

were perceived intuitively by the researcher (Churchill, 2022) using slashes, then cutting the transcripts and putting them in individual Ziploc baggies.

Upon identifying meaning units, based on participants' use of adjectives, verbs, or adverbial phrases the researcher then assessed what each moment revealed in regard to the participants' psychological interests within the overall experience of being White (being-in-the-world) in a multicultural counseling course. Questions such as: "What does this moment reveal about the participants' psychological interests (general orientation, intentionality) within the overall situation?" (Churchill, 2022, p. 51) assisted in this transformative process. Notes were then taken assisting the researcher with articulating the participant's implicit contribution regarding how their experience transpired while in the course (Churchill, 2022). This transformative process entailed the researcher's shift from the participants reporting of the experience being in a multicultural counseling course in their own words to the researcher elucidating the intentions and meaning inherent in the participants' overall experience of being-the-world of multicultural counseling (Churchill, 2022; Valle & Halling, 1989).

Phase Two

A macro-level of analysis was employed in phase two of the data analysis process consisting of a comprehensive synthesis of the individual and general descriptions providing the overall structure of the experience under investigation (Churchill, 2022). Units of meaning were identified as sentences, words, or phrases creating units of significant meaning based on the overall experience being investigated (Churchill, 2022). The frequency and use of words such as awareness, understanding, diversity, and White privilege were tracked across all the interviews and highlighted by the researcher

(Polkinghorne, 1989). The researcher then developed descriptive codes that relied on the words of each participant, including codes such as “as a White person, I feel” and “being aware of different cultures.” Interpretive codes developed by the researcher included “coded language,” “perspective taking,” and “experiencing being White.” All interviews were then uploaded into ATLAS.ti (version 23.0) in which codes were further developed, such as “cultural diversity” and “cultural awareness.”

Data were further reduced into theme clusters (Polkinghorne, 1989), connecting similar concepts or experiences across the participants’ narratives forming constituents that were then grouped, numbered, and named using the words of the participants. Like themes, constituents emerged, providing the structure of interrelationships found across all nine participants (Johnson, 2020; Shaver, 2013) as they experienced being White in a multicultural counseling course, as well as “those characteristics that have to exist in every imaginable case” qualifying as general phenomenological findings (Churchill, 2022, p. 84).

As the researcher utilized an existential-phenomenological approach, the investigator was called to bracket her subjective experiences, setting them aside (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Valle & Halling, 1989). In line with Husserl’s call for describing how the world is experienced and formed through consciousness, the researcher attempted to strip away her preconceptions and biases (Eatough & Smith, 2017) related to her assumptions regarding White students’ lack of knowledge and understanding of the effects of race and racism in their lives and the lives of BIPOC. However, the researcher acknowledges that bracketing is a difficult process as through the analysis of the data

gathered, the researcher's interpretations and assumptions will be brought to the subject (Cresswell & Poth, 2018).

Delimitations, Assumptions, and Limitations

Delimitations for this existential-phenomenological study were the inclusion of White/European American undergraduate psychology students enrolled in an 8-week online multicultural counseling course. Those students who did not identify as White/European American were not eligible for the study as they did not meet this specific criterion. This group was selected because there is a gap in the literature discussing the lived experiences of White undergraduate psychology students in multicultural counseling education. The field of psychology and White students were chosen because White Americans represent most of the psychology workforce (APA, 2022). With these delimitations noted, there were several potential challenges and limitations to the study. One important limitation of the study was student discomfort with discussing issues surrounding race and ethnicity, such as racism, discrimination, and White privilege (Maxwell & Chesler, 2021; Warde et al., 2022; Yeung et al., 2013). Such discussions in ethnically and racially mixed settings have been found to initially be difficult for both Students of Color and White students (Maxwell & Chesler, 2021; Warde et al., 2022).

Another limitation of the study was recruiting students interested in and having the time to participate. Due to the interview structure of the study, scheduling conflicts arose, making it difficult to follow through. The researcher initially indicated that interviews would take one hour to 90 minutes (about 1 and a half hours). Due to minimal

recruitment, this was updated to reflect a more accurate time of 20-30 minutes for the interview. The most salient challenge to the study was that the primary researcher is a Black woman interested in interviewing White students to better understand their experience being in a multicultural counseling course. Previous research has documented the numerous ways an interviewee's level of comfort, trustworthiness, honesty, and openness with an interviewer of the same ethnicity-race may lead to more candid discussions (Maxwell & Chesler, 2021; Yeung et al., 2013).

Gaining an awareness of students' potential discomfort in openly expressing their thoughts and feelings regarding the topics discussed in the course may have influenced the results of this study, given these findings. Due to the qualitative approach used for the study and the small sample size, another limitation is that the findings of this study are not generalizable to the broader population. Due to the participants attending a private Christian university, the results may be particular to this subset of students. Participants did not come from a random sample of students but from students already enrolled in the course who were 18 years of age or older and who self-identified as White/European American. Other limitations included the potential for social desirability and moderation bias (Warde et al., 2022). Lastly, as the study occurred over two 8-week terms, no longitudinal data can be gleaned from the study findings.

Summary

This existential-phenomenological analysis sought to give voice to the experience of nine White undergraduate psychology students enrolled in a multicultural counseling course. In so doing, the researcher sought to understand how White undergraduate

psychology students described their experiences in a multicultural counseling course. This section described the methodology and rationale for the use of EPR, the research design, data analysis, and collection procedures, the trustworthiness, and ethical considerations of the study, as well as the limitations of the study. Results from the study will inform future research related to how best to engage White psychology students in understanding the importance of multicultural counseling in their lived experience and that of their future clinical practice.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Overview

This existential-phenomenological analysis explored the experiences of White undergraduate psychology students enrolled in a multicultural counseling course with the aim of understanding 1) how White undergraduate students process their racialized identities as members of the dominant ethnic-racial group in context to the topics learned throughout the course and 2) how White undergraduate students describe their lived experiences with a multicultural counseling course. The primary research question was: How do White undergraduate psychology students describe their lived experience with an undergraduate multicultural counseling course? This research identified constituent elements of the experience of being White for those enrolled in an 8-week online multicultural counseling course.

The findings revealed eight experiential constituents reduced to the essential psychological characteristics experienced by the participants or the characteristics of the experience that may exist in “every imaginable case” (Churchill, 2022, p. 84). The emergence of three essential constituents and the manifestation of sub-constituents vital to understanding the experience of being White in a multicultural counseling course were revealed, providing the general structure of the study's overall findings. This chapter begins with a brief description of the nine participants. The remainder of the chapter focuses on the data analysis of the essential constituents, sub-constituents, and significant findings.

Descriptive Results

This study's nine participants ($N = 9$) were all undergraduate psychology students who self-identified as, ethnically, White/ European American. Eight of the nine identified as female, and one participant identified as male. Participants were 18-55 years old. Seven participants have career goals of becoming counselors; one seeks to become a school psychologist, while one hopes to become an ESL teacher. Students were asked to provide their current grades in the multicultural counseling course and to assess their writing skill level. All participants indicated having received an A+, A, or A- in the course at the time of their interview. Only two participants indicated their writing skill level as B-level and all other participants indicated their skill level as A-level. The demographic questionnaire asked these two questions, as it was believed that how well the student was doing in the course would indicate how committed they were to the study of multicultural counseling. Seven participants resided in the Southeast United States, with two participants residing outside the U.S. in Costa Rica and Brazil, respectively. The following briefly describes each participant, all of whom were given pseudonyms (see Table 1).

Table 1

Participant Demographics

	Gender	Age Range	Week in Course	Current Residence	Career Goal
Amy	Female	18-25	6	Virginia	Therapist
Penny	Female	36-45	7	Costa Rica	Pastoral Counseling
Bobby	Male	26-35	3	Virginia	Counselor
Sienna	Female	46-55	4	Texas	VA Counselor
Bailey	Female	36-45	4	Tennessee	Marriage, Family, Therapist (MFT)
Kayla	Female	36-45	6	Texas	Addiction and Recovery/ Christian Counselor
Mrs. Akinola	Female	36-45	6	Texas	Counselor
Brooke	Female	26-35	6	Virginia	ESL Teacher
Heather	Female	46-55	7	Brazil	School Psychologist

Participants

Amy

Amy is an 18–25-year-old student who resides on campus. However, she elected to take the multicultural counseling course online. Amy's career aspirations are to become a therapist. Amy described the neighborhood she grew up in as "suburban" with a "middle-class suburban cul-de-sac kind of vibe." At Amy's school growing up, she reports being able to "probably list the Students of Color, on two hands."Amy knew that being raised in such an environment limited her exposure to diversity, so she tried to connect by following various groups on social media. For instance, she shared, "I follow Jewish people online, and there's a lot of antisemitism going on. So, they post about that

and just realizing that experience is something I will never understand but acknowledging that it exists that makes sense."

Penny

Penny is in the 36-44 age group and has resided in Costa Rica for the past 15 years with her two school-aged children. Penny also lived in India for an extended period. Penny's career goal is to become a pastoral counselor. Penny is aware of herself as a "minority," being a White American woman living in a country where she is not a member of the ethnic-racial majority. Penny described several instances related to her ethnic-racial "minority' status as well as her gender being obstacles while living in Costa Rica. Penny provided an example of being called a "gringa" and the feelings that came up for her "...they usually mean it as a compliment, but it's not, you know, that word is not complimentary at all, it's used in such a derogatory way." Instances such as this have informed how Penny perceives her experiences and those, she read about in the multicultural counseling course.

Bobby

Bobby is a 26–35-year-old White male with the career goal of becoming a counselor. Bobby appeared thoughtful throughout the interview, as often, before responding to a question, he would pause before providing an answer. Bobby expressed a desire to gain "more knowledge about diverse cultures" specifically related to "... learning things about family dynamics, I think would be really important in each culture. The family system and the parent-child relationships within each culture." Bobby referred to his own counseling experience and related many of his "issues" to his childhood. Due to this, he hoped to understand how family dynamics impacted various ethnic-racial

cultures regarding “how parents treat their children in each of those cultures, I think is probably one of the biggest things I wanna get out of it [multicultural counseling].”

Sienna

Sienna is a White female veteran in the 46-55 age group, married to a veteran, with one adult daughter. Sienna described her upbringing as “really diverse” because her father was in the military. Though she reported having had a diverse childhood, she remarked on how her mother, who was East German, held prejudice toward Jewish people, “She was raised during the Holocaust, and she was raised to have, I hate to say it, but she had a disdain for Jewish people.” Sienna described instances of her mother believing rooms in their home were bugged and demonstrated her whispering; when her mother spoke about Jewish people, “she would whisper about them because that’s just how she was.” Despite her mother's views, Sienna stated that her mother did not pass those views onto her: “She didn’t pass it down to us. She didn’t tell us this is how you should feel.” Sienna’s career goal is to become a counselor at a VA (Veterans Affairs) center “and just talk to the mix of all the old guys that are kind of just there wanting to tell their story.”

Bailey

Bailey was halfway through the course upon meeting for our interview. She is a 36–45-year-old married White female with two sons. Her career goal is to become a Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) in her hometown in East Tennessee, where she has lived her entire life except for a brief time when she and her family lived in Pennsylvania. In describing her community, Bailey stated, “We do have other ethnicities around us. There are Black people here; there are Hispanic people here. Um, but yes,

overwhelmingly, the population's White." Of her community, Bailey shared, "I have never experienced anyone teaching me to be racist. I have never experienced a situation where any of the minority, and it's *definitely* a minority in my area of people being racist against them." Regarding some things, Bailey understands her existence as "I guess maybe I'm sheltered. I shouldn't say maybe; I am. I believe that I must be very sheltered." Due to her love for her community, Bailey has no intention of leaving, "Unless God just does something crazy in my life and moves me from this area, you know, I've always loved being here. It's very southern. It's, you know, home."

Kayla

During our interview in the sixth week of the course, Kayla, a White female in the 36–45-year-old age group, was working towards a degree in addiction and recovery with a minor in Christian counseling. Kayla described her upbringing, "I grew up in a small town, you know... I was sheltered, you know, that is predominately White." Kayla currently resides in a small town in Texas which she described as "overrun by a bunch of meth addicts." Kayla now works for a non-profit agency focused on prevention and character building "geared toward the youth in our community that has been affected by drugs." Kayla shared that she would also like to obtain a trauma certification. Her dedication and passion for her community influenced her future goal of wanting to open a drug rehab center in her local community.

Mrs. Akinola

The next research participant formally introduced herself as Mrs. Akinola when inquiring about participating in the study, which I respected throughout. Mrs. Akinola is a White female in the 36–45-year-old age group. In week six of the course, she was

thankful for the articles she read in the course and for "...studies like yours as well, which is one of the reasons I decided after reading that article, is when I was like "you know what I should participate." because these studies really do help." Mrs. Akinola lives in a diverse community in Texas with her husband of 14 years, who is Nigerian. Mrs. Akinola grew up in Texas. She described, "Growing up in Texas, you know, my school was [a] multiracial school. We had lots of different races..." Due to an experience with a counselor when she was young, which Mrs. Akinola described as a "multicultural issue," her career goal is to become a counselor, "...probably one of my main reasons for wanting to get into counseling is for multicultural counseling. To expand counseling into rural areas for underserved populations."

Brooke

Brooke is a White female aged 26-35 with the career goal of becoming an ESL teacher. Brooke was in the sixth week of the 8-week course when she and the researcher met virtually for our interview. Due to her working nights, Brooke appeared tired but was fully engaged throughout the interview. Brooke shared her experience working at a hospital in the labor and delivery unit, where she encounters people of diverse cultures. Brooke shared that she is currently unsure of what age group she hopes to work with when she becomes an ESL teacher, "I love younger kids, but I'm open to working with any age group."

Heather

Heather is a White female aged 46-55 from rural Iowa. Heather and her family have resided in Brazil for the past 31 years, where she and her husband are employed at a mission school that he and his parents helped establish. Heather was in the seventh week

of the course and appeared comfortable throughout the interview, using humor throughout our time together. In describing where she grew up, Heather stated, “My roots are in North America, rural Iowa, farmland, you know, really good and solid work ethic. Protestant background, very independent.” Heather noted this as a difference in how Brazilians are socialized as Brazil consists of “family, communal[ly] oriented cultures.” Heather has the career goal of becoming a school psychologist at the school her husband’s family started, where she is currently a coordinator/principal for students in 5th to 9th grade.

Study Findings

Data analysis for this study consisted of a reflexive analysis (Churchill, 2022) of interview transcripts from face-to-face virtual interviews with nine White undergraduate psychology students enrolled in an 8-week online multicultural counseling course. This was accomplished in two phases. The first phase of analysis consisted of what Churchill (2022) describes as reading and reflecting on the data for a “sense of the whole” (p. 49), dividing the interview transcripts into meaning units, and transformative reflections on the psychological meaning contained within the data. Each interview transcript was re-read so the researcher could familiarize herself with the data to gain a sense of the whole (Churchill, 2022).

Phase One

In line with the protocol set forth by Giorgi (1985), each piece of data was slowly and carefully examined individually and broken into manageable meaning units based on the phenomenon under investigation (Churchill, 2022). Each time the participant made a

transition in meaning as perceived by the researcher, a meaning unit was established based on significant statements made by each participant (Churchill, 2022). This was done using a forward slash at the transition mark, then cutting the transcript and putting it in a Ziploc bag. Upon identifying meaning units, the researcher then assessed what each moment revealed regarding the participants' psychological interests in being in a multicultural counseling course and the overall experience of being White (being-in-the-world). Through this transformative process, the researcher shifted from the participants reporting the experience in their own words to the researcher elucidating the intentions and meaning inherent in the participants' overall experience of being-in-the-world (Churchill, 2022; Valle & Halling, 1989).

Phase Two

Phase two of the data analysis process was comprised of a comprehensive synthesis of the individual and general descriptions, which provided the overall structure of the experience under investigation (Churchill, 2022). Descriptive words used by each participant were identified and highlighted as units of significant meaning. The frequency and use of words such as awareness, understanding, challenging, and White were tracked across all interviews and highlighted by the researcher (Polkinghorne, 1989). Thematic units were identified, which contained the essence of the experiences most salient to the participants forming constituents. Like themes, constituents emerged, providing the general structure of interrelationships found across all nine participants (Johnson, 2020; Shaver, 2013) as they experienced being White in a multicultural counseling course, as

well as “those characteristics that have to exist in every imaginable case” qualifying as general phenomenological findings (Churchill, 2022, p. 84).

Constituents

From an analysis of the data, constituents were derived from each interview. The constituent elements presented in the data appeared as emergent essential constituent groups composed of meaning units. Not every unit of meaning was deemed essential by the researcher, as essential meaning units embody a sense of interrelatedness among the parts that form the whole (Churchill, 2022; Winn, 2016). Attending to the coherence of structure while “thinking through the togetherness and relations (for example, temporal, spatial, social) of constituents, the research[er] sees relative priorities, for instances that some aspects of the phenomenon depend upon or presupposes others in its overall structure” (Wertz, 1985 was quoted by Churchill, 2022, p. 62). The researcher then coded similar and essential experiences described by each participant.

Descriptive codes such as “as a White person, I feel” and “I think being aware of different cultures” were identified. Interpretive codes developed by the researcher included “making sense of what it means to be White,” “understanding the need for multicultural counseling,” and “sense of experiencing being White.” All interviews were then uploaded into ATLAS.ti 23.2.2 for Windows, in which 28 codes, such as “cultural diversity” and “cultural awareness,” were further developed. Data were further reduced into theme clusters (Polkinghorne, 1989), connecting similar concepts or experiences across the participants’ narratives, and then clustered into thematic units. Constituents were then grouped, numbered, and named according to the words used by the participants. The examples provided in each constituent provide the essential

psychological elements that each participant experienced providing the general structure representative of all the participants' experiences (Johnson, 2020) as well as “those characteristics that have to exist in every imaginable case” (Churchill, 2022, p. 84).

Three key interconnected experiential constituents (Essential Constituents 1-3), along with their interconnected sub-constituents, emerged from the analysis of data as described by the participants as they made sense of their experience demonstrating the interrelationship between the constituents and sub-constituents. For instance, all nine participants described experiencing appreciation and conflict as they gained an understanding of the value of multicultural competency for licensed therapists (Essential Constituents 1 & 2). Simultaneously, all the participants also described a felt-sense of conflict with becoming culturally competent specifically related to challenges to their identities, beliefs, and values (Essential Constituent 3). Also, interwoven with Essential Constituents 2 and 3 are the experiences of the sub-constituents within each, which indicate the degree to which each was experienced by all ($N = 9$) participants, most ($n = 5$) of the participants, or some ($n = 4$) of the participants (see Table 2).

Table 2

Constituents and Sub-Constituents from Data Analysis

Constituents	Sub-Constituents
Essential Constituent 1: The Experience of Appreciation and Conflict Becoming Culturally Competent	
Essential Constituent 2: The Experience of Understanding the Value of Multicultural Competency for Licensed Therapists	Sub-Constituent 1: Sense of Knowledge Attainment and Willingness to Learn More Sub-Constituent 2: Awareness of Personal Biases, Assumptions Sub-Constituent 3: Being Open to REC Diverse Points of View
Essential Constituent 3: Felt-sense of Conflict Gaining Awareness and Understanding of White privilege and white supremacy	Sub-Constituent 1: Felt-sense of Conflict to One's Identity, Beliefs, and Values Sub-Constituent 2: Reconciling Conflicts to One's Identity, Beliefs, and Values Sub-Constituent 3: Reflecting on Preparation for Working with REC Diverse Clientele

Essential Constituent 1: The Experience of Appreciation and Conflict Becoming Culturally Competent

In response to being asked to describe their experience being in a multicultural counseling course, most of the participants described their experience in positive terms sharing "I really enjoyed the course, and I think a lot of the information was impactful…," "I found it very enlightening, and I enjoyed it, and it made me see things from a different point of view," "I really love it," "It's been invaluable. It really has, I've appreciated it," and "I've actually been really impressed by the course. It's the most relevant class I've had… it helped me gain a broader perspective and understanding of

different types of cultures." Specifically speaking to the relevancy of the textbook used in the course, Brooke shared:

> It's the most relevant textbook I've had yet in school. So, I'm really grateful that they kept that up to date because I don't know. I feel like some of the other textbooks we have they just haven't caught up, but this is something that actually stayed really relevant.

Heather, who lives in Brazil, entered the course with the assumption that because she lives in "another culture," there would not be anything new for her to learn. However, as she went through the course, she realized, "…at the very beginning, I probably thought not out loud, but [I] thought that there really isn't gonna be a whole lot of new stuff for me [to learn], and that was really [the] wrong thinking." While all the participants expressed sentiments of relating positively to various elements of the course and gaining more understanding about diverse cultures, others also described their experience in the course as "challenging," "frustrating," and "… some of the material is hard to work through [due to being a White person]. It's hard to read those things and to realize the things that you've assumed, that I've assumed… to have those assumptions challenged is not easy."

Bailey spoke specifically about her identity being White and what the experience was like for her as a White person in a multicultural counseling course, stating:

> Honestly, I mean, and I'm being very transparent here, the literature, in particular, the book… makes me, as a White person I feel like I'm on trial. Kind of like I'm being held accountable for not being more aware of the racial issues that take place in our culture and through[out] our country.

In describing a specific chapter in the course required textbook that dealt with White privilege and white supremacy, Bailey further described her experience being White in a multicultural counseling course:

> I think what got me with it was the way that it's presented that me as a White person that even if I am not racist, I have never acted in a racist way, even if I view the things that have happened in our country as terrible, and even if I go to the brink to speak up about that and it does come up in conversation, it comes up in conversation with every culture… it's still like; it's not enough. That's what I feel like. It's like if I'm not out marching for rights that I'm still in the wrong somehow. And that's so frustrating because it almost puts it in my head like, ok, even if I do speak up in situations that are relevant to me, it would never be enough like it's never enough.

Kayla also specifically spoke about her experience as a White person within the context of the course. In her response to being asked to describe her experience in the course rather than using the word frustrating, she described the course as "challenging" sharing:

> I would call it challenging. Because, you know, I appreciate gaining a deeper understanding into what's going on in our world and about the different races, how they're going through their awakening, and realizing that their heritage is something to be celebrated, not something that needs to be suppressed and looked down on. I just felt the part that gets me is when there are 26 veterans every day that take their lives, and I had to write a paper about illegal immigrants' mental health needs. I found that to be challenging… It took me to remove my biases about it… and look

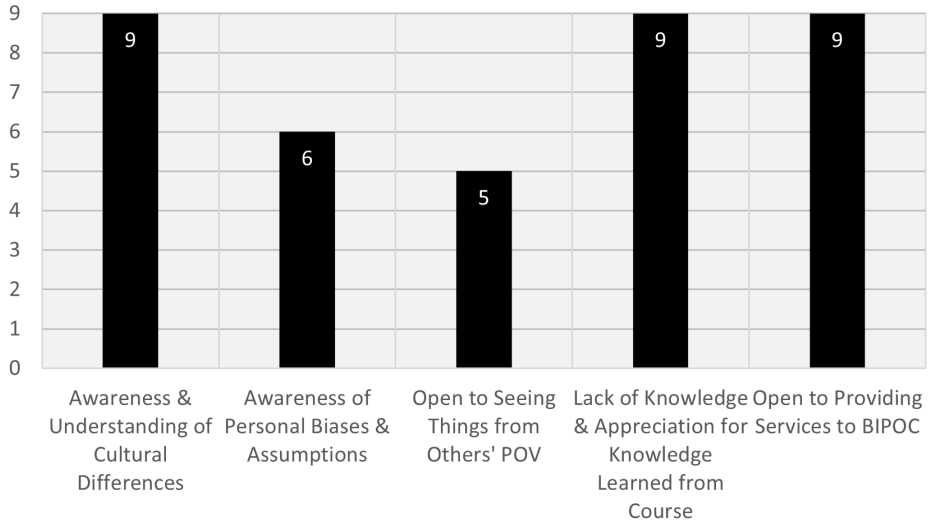
at it as… I know that they're human and they need help too, but I would like to focus on people in my country that have died for this country that have risked their life for this country because there's such a need.

Essential Constituent 2: The Experience of Understanding the Value of Multicultural Competency for Licensed Therapists

All nine participants expressed the experience of understanding the value of multicultural competency for licensed therapists (see Figure 1). In describing what multicultural counseling meant to them this sentiment was determined based on statements such as “I think being aware of the different cultures that come into counseling, someone that sits across from you, might not have been raised the same way you were,” “…it means working with a person who is not from the same cultural background. It would be diving into learning about what other cultures are about [and] how they function,” and “It means that the person who walks in the office and sits down has a completely different background as I do, and most likely appears differently from me as far as skin color…” were common expressions found throughout the participants’ responses.

Figure 1

Participant Responses Understanding the Value of Multicultural Competency



Note. Frequency of participants' statements describing their understanding of the value of multicultural competency for licensed therapists.

Specifically related to articulating his understanding of what multicultural counseling meant to him by virtue of taking the class, Bobby stated that the course had given him an awareness that "... not every person that I'm going to counsel comes from the same background." He went on to disclose his belief that when a person's "... race is different," he then needs to take that into perspective and be aware "because their background matters, their race matters." Overall, the value and understanding of multicultural awareness were present throughout all nine participants.

Sub-Constituent 1: Sense of Knowledge Attainment and Willingness to Learn More

All of the participants also described their lack of knowledge of ethnic-racial and diverse cultures (REC) and expressed a willingness to learn more. Examples of statements included, "If I ever did have a situation where the minority was with me, I

would need to do some homework," "…when I was with someone who was of a different culture than I was, I never really thought of it," and "…showing me the importance of getting to know their culture and trying to understand and empathize with them." Kayla shared her understanding of multicultural counseling through a lack of knowledge and a willingness to learn more, as she expressed:

> I know that we live in a very diverse world, and there are cultures that I don't have an understanding on… and I want to gain an understanding on because I know [that] whenever you can understand the person fully and gain knowledge into their culture, into their heritage, then you can reach them at a deeper level, and your counseling session [can] be more beneficial and more effective and more fruitful for that person.

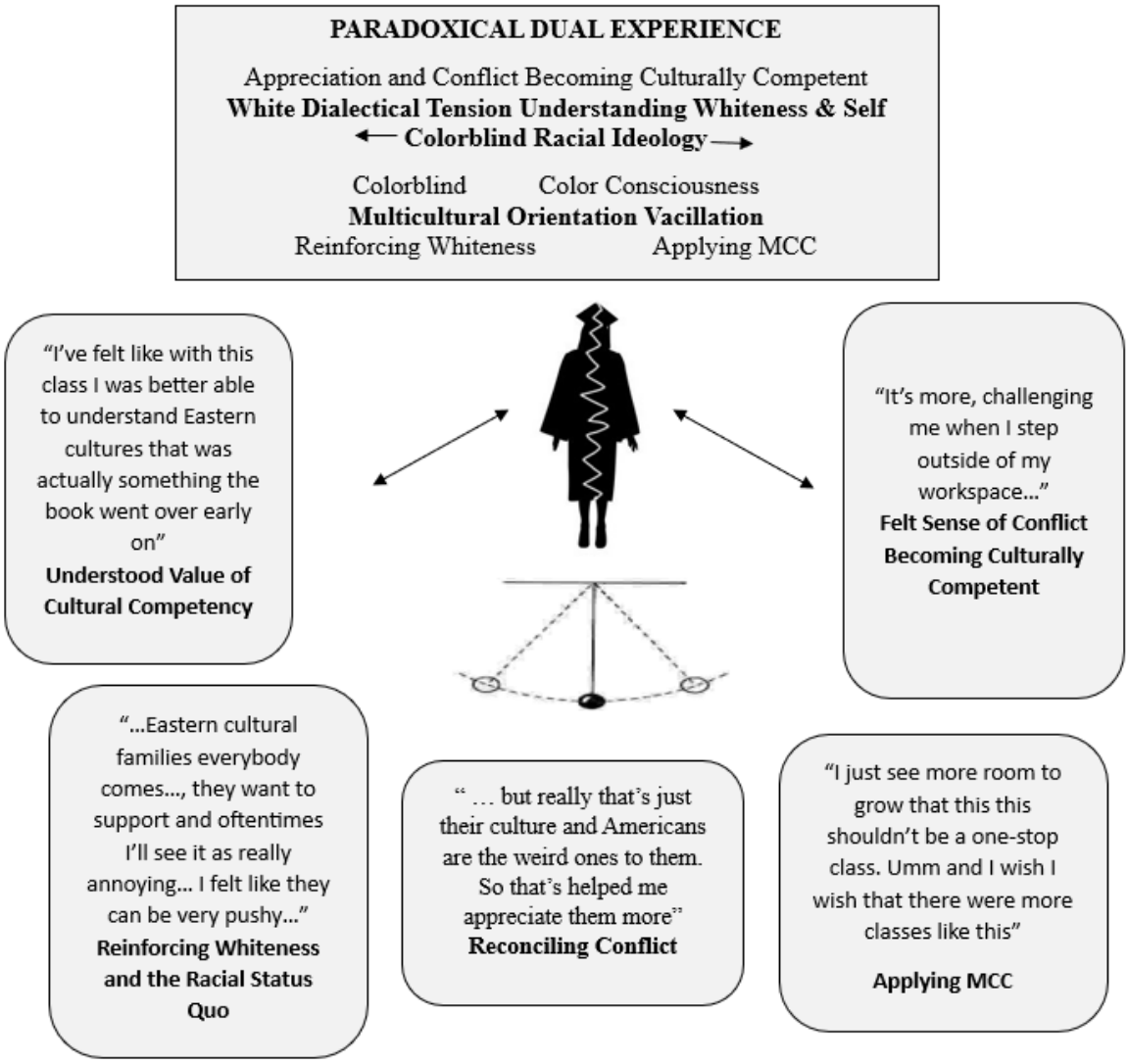
In describing how she has not experienced any challenges in the course per se, only her need to "continue growing" she explained how the course is more, "challenging me when I step outside of my workspace." Brooke described (see Figure 2):

> I've felt like with this class I was better able to understand Eastern cultures that was actually something the book went over early on. How other like collectivist cultures or something like that, how those families when they come to visit our patients in the hospital how they interact with us differently. So, for example I work in a labor and delivery unit, and we have a lot of the American families and they're very individualistic. They just stick to themselves and their like "it's just going to be me and dad. Maybe my parents will come. Its fine." But the Eastern cultural families everybody comes. Everybody's there, they want to support and oftentimes I'll see it as really annoying because I felt like they can be very pushy but really that's just

their culture and Americans are the weird ones to them. So that's helped me appreciate them more.

Figure 2

Paradoxical Dual Experience Developing Multicultural Orientation



Note. Constituent Map of Brooke's Dual Experience of Conflict and Appreciation.

Sub-Constituent 2: Awareness of Personal Biases, Assumptions, and Being Open to REC Diverse Points of View

Most of the participants (n = 5) spoke of the importance of being open to the points of view of REC diverse group, and most participants also described the importance of described the importance of being aware of one's personal biases and assumptions

when describing what multicultural counseling meant to them. Statements such as, "...understanding where you come from and where they come from and understanding your own personal bias and looking from their point of view," "It's being able to keep an open mind and understanding where that person, whatever their racial or cultural background is, just understanding what they're going through and where they're coming from," "Being able to see things… accept things from others' points of view," and "One of the standards was to make sure that we put our biases aside and we don't discriminate, we listen to the client" articulated their understanding.

Penny who has lived in Costa Rica for the past 15 years also shared how the course expanded her view by challenging her previously held assumptions. Having recently completed a unit in the textbook that covered Arab Americans, Penny shared that she works with "a lot of Muslim Arabs here in Costa Rica," during her time in the course she came to realize that people of Arab descent are more than she'd assumed, "…but it's not just that, I mean they come from all different countries too, and they have different languages, and they have different cultures, and they have different religions." Describing what multicultural counseling meant to her, Penny also reflected on an experience of being called a "gringa," by a Costa Rican woman and how she felt after explaining to the woman that she did not like being called that:

> Hopefully, I can come into a multicultural type of counseling and therapy with a little bit more of an understanding of just how much thoughtlessness can hurt people

and how much our unawareness of the biases that we bring into the room can hurt the client or the client-therapist relationship.

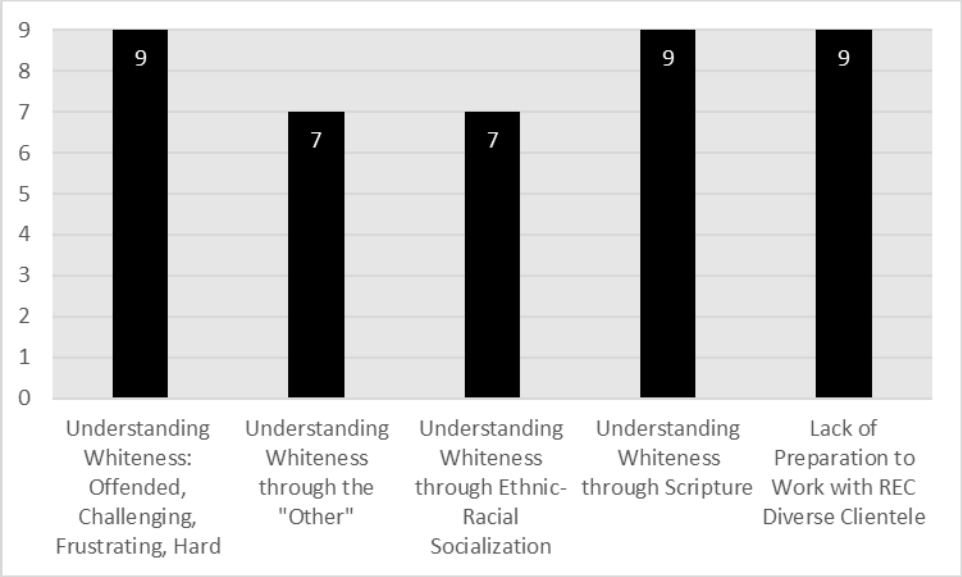
Essential Constituent 3: Felt-sense of Conflict Gaining Awareness and Understanding of White privilege and white supremacy

Sub-Constituent 1: Felt-sense of Conflict to One's Identity, Beliefs, and Values

While all the participants expressed sentiments of relating positively to various elements of the course and gaining more understanding of ethnically and racially diverse cultures, the felt-sense of conflict to one's identity, beliefs, and values was implicitly and explicitly expressed by all of the participants throughout the interview process as they described their understanding of what multicultural counseling meant to them or when describing their experiences in the course (see Figure 3 and 4). Some students explicitly described their experience in the course as "challenging," "frustrating," and "… some of the material is hard to work through [due to being a White person]. It's hard to read those things and to realize the things that you've assumed, that I've assumed… to have those assumptions challenged is not easy."

Figure 3

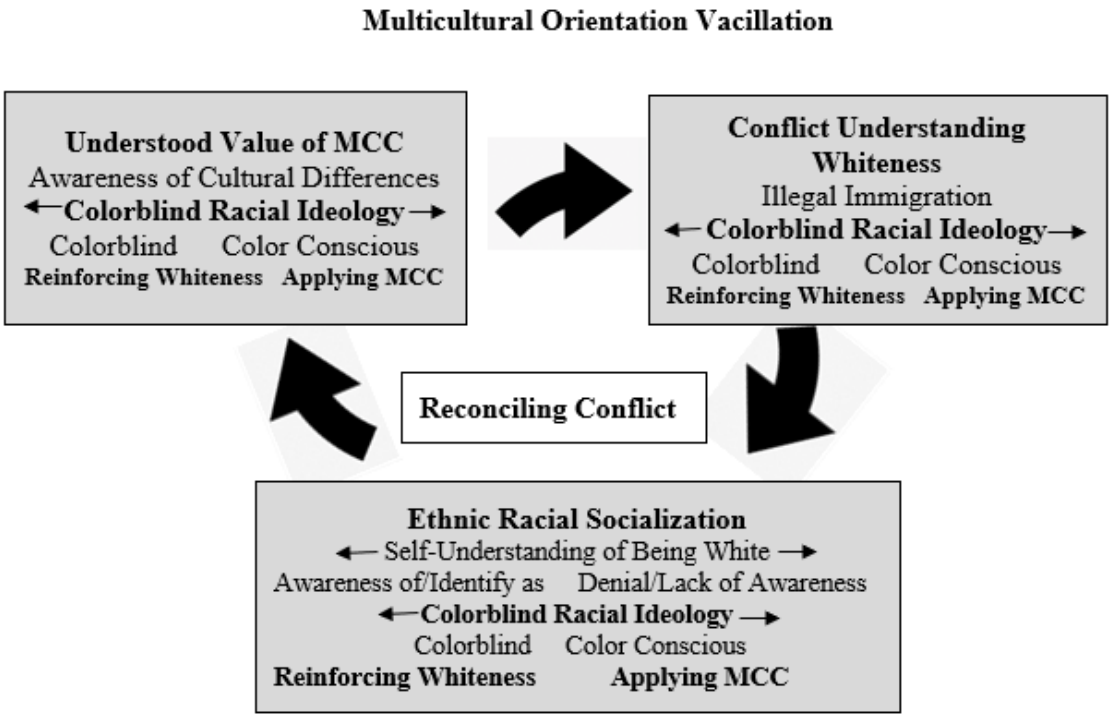
Participant Responses of Felt-sense of Conflict



Note. Frequency of participants' statements describing the felt-sense of conflict gaining awareness and understanding of Whiteness and how the conflict was reconciled.

Figure 4

Model of Multicultural Orientation Vacillation



Note. Conceptual Model Multicultural Orientation with White Dialectical Tension.

Understanding Whiteness. Other examples of meaning units that were grouped together to compose the reconciling conflicts to one's identity, beliefs, and values constituent manifested as most of the participants processed their racialized identities within the context of the topics learned in the course. The data collected under this constituent consisted of statements such as, "I never looked at being White as a privilege… it's just something normal," "…the subject kind of got broached a little bit in class about "what does it mean to be White?" and I did a lot of thinking about that, I have

zero answers," and "…sometimes just the word White privilege makes some people very uncomfortable." Penny shared her perspective on living internationally and realizing:

> One of the most difficult things has been over the years going from a country in the United States growing up there and, in a sense, being invisible, but in a good way in the way that you can blend in when you want to. You know, and you don't stand out for any particular reason in most places, and that is the experience of a majority population.

Kayla explained how initially she was offended when hearing the phrase White privilege:

> [Be]cause I don't see me having privilege. I see me having to work for stuff… I do have a knowledge that I am White, and I now see that it does come with some privileges just because it's a dominant culture, and I would have never seen that before this course.

When asked to elaborate on what things she now sees as her having White privilege, Kayla shared that through her textbook readings, she has gained an understanding of how an "African American … growing up in a predominantly White culture, how they look at their skin as something to be hated…" Not realizing this as something African Americans go through, Kayla further recognized "…that they'll come to this awakening, that they

have been suppressing their heritage. That's something that I haven't had to go through. So, I feel like that's part of my privilege."

Bailey spoke specifically about her identity being White and what the experience was like for her as a White person in a multicultural counseling course, stating:

> Honestly, I mean, and I'm being very transparent here, the literature, in particular, the book… makes me, as a White person I feel like I'm on trial. Kind of like I'm being held accountable for not being more aware of the racial issues that take place in our culture and through[out] our country.

In describing a specific chapter in the course required textbook that dealt with White privilege and white supremacy, Bailey further described her experience being White in a multicultural counseling course:

> I think what got me with it was the way that it's presented that me as a White person that even if I am not racist, I have never acted in a racist way, even if I view the things that have happened in our country as terrible, and even if I go to the brink to speak up about that and it does come up in conversation, it comes up in conversation with every culture… it's still like; it's not enough. That's what I feel like. It's like if I'm not out marching for rights that I'm still in the wrong somehow. And that's so frustrating because it almost puts it in my head like, ok, even if I do speak up in situations that are relevant to me, it would never be enough like it's never enough.

The awareness of her White racial identity was described by Heather within the context of her living outside of the U.S.:

> With everything that's going on right now in the United States, you know, the woke culture and all that kind of stuff that's happening. And I myself as a White person,

> I mean, you know, I can't change that just like nobody can change where they came from. It was by the Grace of God that I was born to the parents, I was born in the place I was born, you know, it's just there's nothing I could have done to make that different. And just like, I can't change myself the other person can't change themselves either in that respect, you know, but realizing that through all that's been happening in the United States I would look at a person and I would see a person, but now it's almost. It's crazy. I've never had this thought before, but that there could be people looking at me thinking bad things of me just because of the color of my skin. And it's just like, wow, folks, is that really where we're at? That's just, you know, I guess that awareness like has you know, everything within the United States and then and then taking this class has probably made me more sensitive to that. Yeah.

Illegal Immigration. Several participants spoke about an assignment regarding a hypothetical situation in which they were asked how they would counsel a family who had immigrated to the U.S. from Mexico. Most participants described the assignment as "I think it was a really good exercise. Just showing me the importance of getting to know their culture and trying to understand and empathize with them. Like, how that transition can be different," and "I found it very enlightening, and I enjoyed it, and it made me see things from a different point of view." Brooke expressed her dissatisfaction with some of the outdated material related to immigration that was in the course and felt that discussions of immigration should include updated information related to the U.S.' acceptance of refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine. She also shared her perspective of some of her peers, "mixed perspectives" in the discussion board post on this topic, stating, "… I think

that there's a chance of the students to be more conservatively biased against immigration issues and they're just not aware of everything going on and how it is really impacting immigrants."

In elaborating on why she described the course as challenging, I felt it important to include the entirety of Kayla's dialogue because it illustrates the internal turmoil, she discussed regarding her attempts to empathize with and see "illegal immigrants" as human:

> Because there's such a need. I mean, I live in a small town that is just overrun by a bunch of meth addicts, you know? So, I just find this course to be a little challenging. But it also opened my eyes to you know that I am White and that I never realized that my White culture is being shoved down throats, because to me it's just normal. It's just a part of normal everyday life. And so, to have that awakening inside of me, it's removed more of a vail in my eyes…

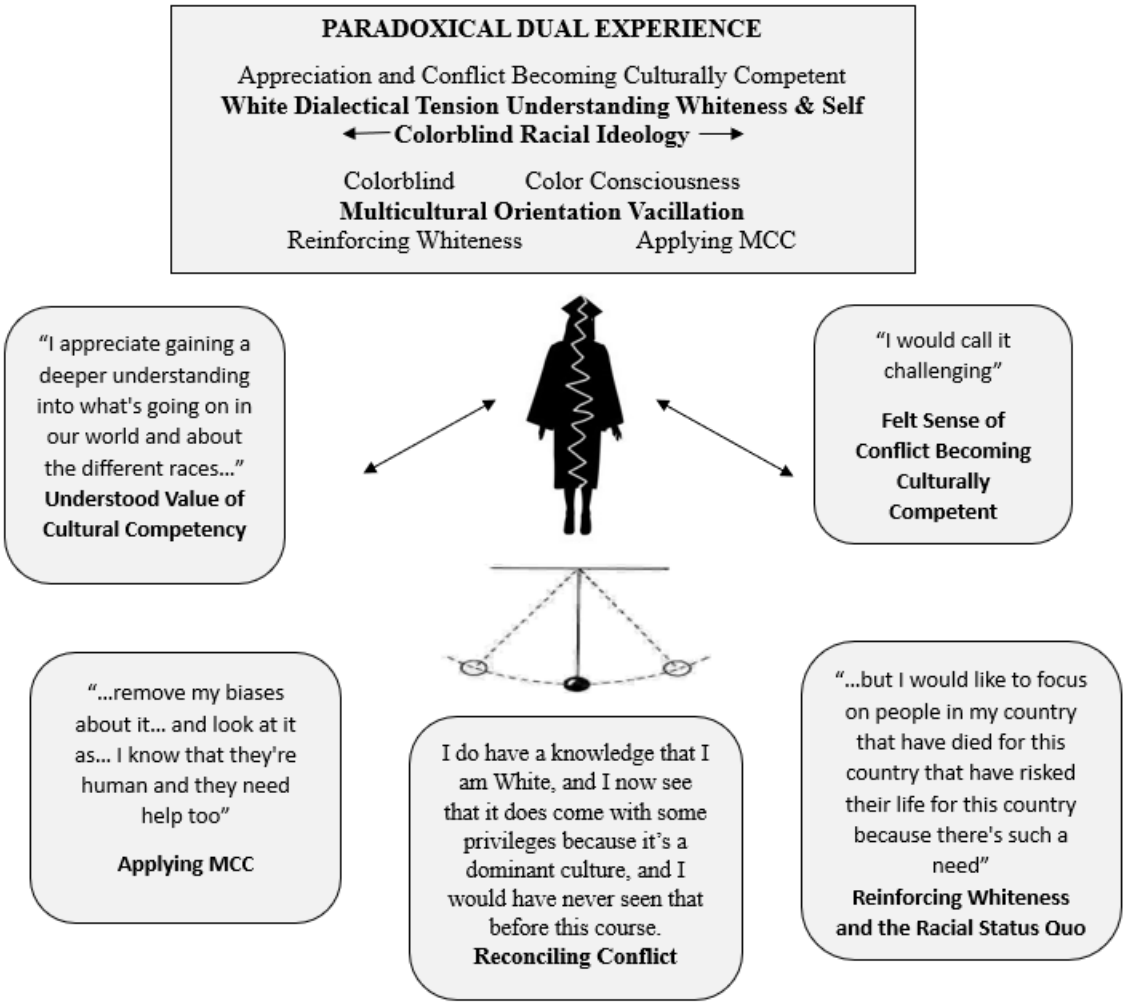
Though she explained that the topic of illegal immigrants "irked me so bad" and she knows "I need to work on that," Kayla further elaborated (see Figure 5):

> I had to do a paper about the mental health needs of illegal immigrants, and I just see that there. I live in Texas, where I'm being personally affected by the border being so overran. Three people in my community last week were killed by illegal immigrants driving drunk, and I was doing my paper over the mental health needs of illegal immigrants whenever that happened. And they were all young people with very bright futures. I found it interesting that I was doing that paper at that time and because it showed me… because my goal is to open up a drug rehab here in my small town because there's not one. And there's such a need for it. So, it kind of it

opened my eyes [to] what the illegal immigrants go through, getting here. Some of them, if they have money coming over here, it's not as traumatic. But a lot of them, like the women being raped constantly, you know that like, oh my gosh, that's traumatizing, but. I also see you know that there is so much need for our citizens. Our citizens are really, really struggling right now. I just feel like our government is focusing so much on illegal immigrants, giving them medical insurance when I myself don't even have medical insurance, and giving them all of this stuff whenever there's citizens here that are paying taxes and going without. I have a problem with that, not because of their race, but it's because they're overrunning our resources, and we don't have any more resources to give.

Figure 5

Dual Experience Being White in a Multicultural Counseling Course



Note. Constituent Map of Kayla's Dual Experience of Conflict and Appreciation.

Grappling with some of the course material without the dynamics of an in-person course to support processing difficult information was described by some of the participants. Statements included, "I do think they are doing the best they can with what they have because it's an online eight-week [course] so they're just trying to like steamroll it," "…It's only eight weeks and we don't interact in person… I'm doing my homework in the middle of the night, so I don't talk to anybody," and "I find myself

having to do the bare minimum due to my time restraints and [I'm] a little bit hating that all of the material is online because once the class is over I won't have access to the book." Regarding her experience in the course, Penny described:

> Well, let me start by saying this. I would have really liked to be able to do it in person to do it residentially because I feel like online, you lose a little bit of that group dynamic that would have been helpful for, just conversing about how people feel, you know, from different angles and from different cultures. And when you do it virtually, not even face to face like we're doing, but just on discussion boards and things. You hear people, but it's not. It doesn't have the same level of complexity that there is when you sit down with, you know, 20 or 30 people from all different experiences and work through the material because some of the material is hard to work through. It's hard to read those things and to realize the things that you've assumed that I've assumed… so to have those assumptions challenged is not easy, I think. On some levels, it would be harder to do it in person, but I think it would be better overall. I would have gotten more out of the course. Maybe.

This sense of isolation Penny described taking the course online and dealing with material that is "hard to work through" was also expressed by Mrs. Akinola and Brooke. In discussing whether discussion boards in the course generate more conversation related to comments made by other students, Brooke explained, "I just think that because of the

nature of the topics I think that we need to address them more deeply than we are." She further explained:

> I think the problem [is] because it's an online class, once you post your assignment and you check it off for the week, you typically don't go back and look at it… once you're done, you just move forward, and you don't have any other interaction with your classmates.

LGBTQIA+ Community. Other manifestations of the felt-sense of conflict to one's identity, beliefs, and values arose as five out of the nine participants described their thoughts regarding members of the LGBTQIA+ community, specifically those within the community who identify as transgender. While no question specifically asked participants about this community, the topic came up in response to participants sharing challenges they faced while taking the multicultural counseling course. Due to their university being a Christian institution, some participants described "feeling conflicted" regarding members of the LGBTQIA+ community. However, given that the participants are psychology majors, with all but one intending to become therapists, understanding this conflict is essential to supporting professional development.

In response to being asked to describe any challenges she may have faced while in the course, Amy discussed her challenge of "reconciling some of what the class teaches and then some of what you hear at like Liberty." Speaking specifically about chapters in the textbook that discussed different sexualities, she shared, "…at Liberty, that's not as OK, obviously, but it's just reconciling those differences because the textbook is obviously not

written like a Christian textbook. So, reconciling that with like the preaching's here." When asked to elaborate, Amy further shared:

> Yeah, it [was] a lot during election season. Specifically, I remember they were really just like, we're gonna keep women, like men, out of women's sports and the transgender issue was just such a hot-button issue, like on campus and in convocation. And to me, it just felt like we were really demonizing this people group that seems really confused in their lives and just needing people to listen to them. So that's just an issue that's in my own heart. So, it's just weird taking this class where it's like no, you have to understand [where] everyone comes from, and then you go back to that conversation, and they're just yelling about how they're going to keep sports segregated and it's just a weird dichotomy like, aren't we supposed to be loving? So…

Also, in response to describing any challenges experienced while in the course, Bailey also struggled to reconcile her Christian values with what she was learning in the course. Bailey began by describing the "fire" that took place in her life when she was saved at 17 years old, stating that she wished to keep and harness the enthusiasm that one experiences, however:

> It dims as time goes on… the older you get and the more junk you go through in life, the harder it is to maintain that fire. And I wish that I had that enthusiasm and that fire driving me in regard to homosexuality. This course speaks quite a bit about counseling with the gay and the lesbian population and things like that. And I'm thinking all of this, ultimately comes back to a society that is starving for, the Lord.

> And it stems from, you know, godless homes, godless marriages, and godless homes.

Bailey also shared concerns related to her perception of not receiving any instruction from the course readings on "how you should counsel these people, and it's not come out and said you know, these people, need this, this and this… and you know that's something that I wish was a little more of an open conversation."

In her discussion of reconnecting with her childhood friend who is Black, whom she found on social media, Sienna stated, "What's really weird is… He's gay and as soon as I reconnected with him, I go, "Barry, you're gay! What the hell's that about? I didn't think you were gay when we were kids. Were you?" Though Sienna explained that she wasn't aware of his sexual orientation when they were children, and "…this weird openness we had. There was nothing. It was innocent." She shared about Barry's response to her reaction toward his being gay. "And he goes. "You know what? If we weren't such good friends, I think I would question the way you said that." When sharing discussions, she'd had with co-workers regarding things she was learning in the class, Kayla shared that "some of the topics that upset me upsets them." In describing how she and her co-workers were able to work and talk through things to gain a better understanding of what's going in U.S. society the one challenge that Kayla continued to face was:

> The one thing that I just can't gain an understanding of is the whole transgender thing that I do have a lot of… not understanding how we can transition kids in schools without the parent's knowledge or making pedophilia OK… I just, I can't get behind hurting a child nor changing your sex that God gave you whenever you

> were born. I just don't. That, I can't get behind or understand. And I'm praying about that. But I don't think I'll ever get there.

When asked to elaborate on whether sexuality is discussed in the course Kayla responded that it was sharing, “Yeah, there was a whole interview with two different gay and lesbian. Luckily, there was no transgender.” Noting that she understood “We're gonna have to deal with that at one point or another, you know?” She shared “I don't hate them. I just see them as someone that's very deceived, and touched by spirit that's here to separate us from God's plan…” Kayla is aware that as a developing professional with the goal of becoming a therapist even though she “can't get behind it,” she is aware that, “I need to work on that because I will face that one day, how would I counsel one?” Lastly, Heather also openly discussed her experience in the class related to the challenges she experienced. In describing some of the “crazy stuff” that was going on in the U.S. that was trickling to Brazil, Heather provided an example of what she meant by stating:

> I suppose all this stuff with the trans in... Umm, the gay, lesbian, all that kind of stuff happening. You know, just kind of go “whoa,” you know, and everything, all the legislation that has to happen or I won't say has to happen is happening. Because it's just, it's changing the whole face of the United States and that has just trickled down here, here to Brazil.

Heather went on to describe her current position as the coordinator at the “confessional” school where she works overseeing children in 5th to 9th grade, stating, “We have students who are declaring themselves bisexual. So far, no crossdressers because

they have to wear a uniform." In describing how they respond to this at the school, Heather shared:

> How do we deal with this in our school? And this is a confessional school that we teach the Bible, we teach Jesus Christ is the son of God, born of a virgin and the only way to salvation or only way to have it is through faith alone in Jesus Christ… yet we've got kids in our school who obviously don't come from church families, but they are. Ahh, they are eating the stuff up. This stuff is on the news. This stuff is on Facebook and wherever else they are and they're just eating it up and it's… I almost wanna use the word fad, but I don't use that term lightly because it's much heavier than that. You know, it's not like everybody is, you know, wearing Converse tennis shoes and in the next two years it will be a different brand of tennis shoe, that type of a thing because these things that they're playing with. Umm, are life changing? And they can really, they've got some big consequences for the future for these kids, so. Umm, I don't know.

Sub-Constituent 2: Reconciling Conflicts to One's Identity, Beliefs, and Values

White Ethnic-Racial Socialization. The experience of reconciling conflicts to one's identity, beliefs, and values was expressed both implicitly and explicitly by seven of the nine participants throughout the interview process as they described their understanding of what multicultural counseling meant to them or when describing their experiences in the course. Reflections on the differences in one's background based on the communities they were raised in were expressed with descriptions referring to either the diversity or multicultural nature of said communities or descriptions of the predominately White, "rural," or "suburban" communities that participants were raised

in. For instance, Amy, when asked to elaborate on what she meant by personal bias when describing what multicultural counseling meant to her, shared, “If you’re raised in a certain environment if you’re raised in a suburban neighborhood like I was, you’re not exposed to a lot of stuff… or just different experiences like different holidays.” When asked to describe the type of neighborhood she grew up in Amy explained it as “probably middle-class suburban cul-de-sac kind of vibe.”

Though Amy does not explicitly refer to the experience of being White in this description, there is an implied meaning of her Whiteness and the Whiteness of her community through her use of the racially coded phrases “middle-class suburban” and “not being exposed to a lot of stuff.” When asked to elaborate on the ethnic-racial composition of her prior school experiences, Amy then stated that she could “list the Students of Color on two hands.” Amy’s experience of ethnic-racial segregation and sheltering from Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) was expressed by other participants who also grew up in predominantly White communities. Kayla shared, “I grew up in a small town that was sheltered, that was predominantly White.” Unlike Amy, who did not explicitly refer to her community as predominantly White, Kayla appeared more comfortable broaching the topic of race.

When asked what multicultural counseling meant to her, Bailey described her experience of being raised in and living in a predominantly White community. She stated:

> We’re a population of 65,000-70,000 tops. And we do have other ethnicities around us. There are Black people here. There are Hispanic people here. But yes, overwhelmingly, the population’s White. I grew up in school with the majority of my classmates being White… when I say the majority, I probably went three, four,

> or five years through grade school and didn't have a Black kid in my class or [a] Hispanic kid or an Asian kid in my class.

Though this experience shifted during middle and high school for Bailey, she described her high school sports teams:

> This area, in particular, is so White, that even those teams were basically what ours was. You have two or three Black kids on the team, and that was, it was just normal. Not because they weren't allowed to be on there or nobody wanted them, but because it's just mostly White people here.

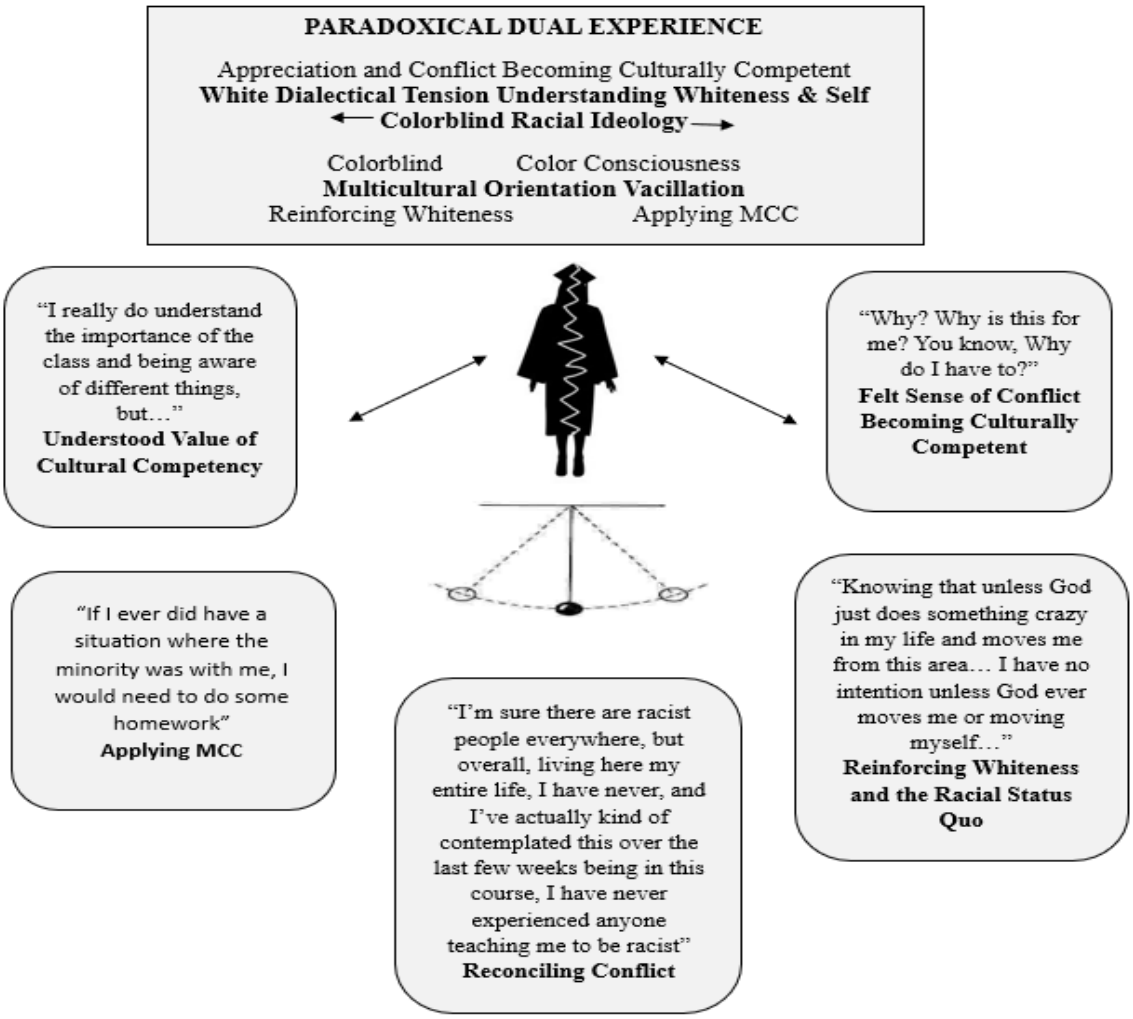
Bailey went on to explain what multicultural counseling meant to her and her experience with "racists" or lack thereof in her community as perceived through her lens as a White woman. She explained (see Figure 6):

> You know what, like me going into counseling, something that I've had on my mind going through this class so much is, is this going to impact me very much, you know. Knowing that unless God just does something crazy in my life and moves me from this area, you know I've always loved being here. It's very southern. It's, you know, its home. And so, I have no intention unless God ever moves me or moving myself. And so, a lot of my thoughts through this course so far have been, "Why? Why is this for me?" You know, "Why do I have to?" And I do understand it. I really do understand the importance of the class and being aware of different things, but in this area, I'm not gonna promise you that there's no racists here because I'm sure there are, as I believe there are racist people everywhere, not just [in] this nation but in the world. I'm sure there are racist people everywhere, but overall, living here my entire life, I have never, and I've actually kind of

contemplated this over the last few weeks being in this course, I have never experienced anyone teaching me to be racist. I have never experienced a situation where any of the minority, and it is *definitely* a minority in my area and people being racist against them. It's just something that I've not had to deal with much, so in some ways, I guess maybe I'm sheltered. I shouldn't say maybe; I am. I believe that I must be very sheltered.

Figure 6

Paradoxical Dual Experience Developing Multicultural Orientation



Note. Constituent Map of Bailey's Dual Experience of Conflict and Appreciation.

In her response to what multicultural counseling meant to her, along the same lines as Bailey, Heather gave a detailed description of where she grew up:

> For example, my roots are in the north, in North America, rural Iowa. You know, farmland, just basically really good and solid work ethic. Protestant background, very independent, and I moved to Brazil 30 years ago, 31 years ago, and I'm just

> now through this class beginning to discover why people think and do the things they do here in Brazil.

Other meaning units of reconciling conflicts to one's identity, beliefs, and values were revealed as participants described the diverse, multicultural, or multiracial communities they were raised in. In describing what multicultural counseling meant to her, Sienna discussed understanding how when she becomes a therapist, she will "…[be] speaking to someone just completely away from what I've been raised as." When asked to elaborate, she described what it was like growing up with a mother who was East German, "…there was a whole different prejudice there. She was raised during the Holocaust, and she was raised to have… a disdain for Jewish people." Sienna further stated, "Growing up, I never really thought that or really cared. She didn't pass it down to us." Elaborating on her childhood experience being raised with a father who was in the military alongside a mother with explicit prejudice toward Jewish people, Sienna shared, "…we traveled all over, so we were at military bases and, you know, the military is a big giant mixed bucket of people, and so everything was just really diverse growing up." Highlighting the impact of growing up within a military family among a "mixed bucket of people," she also shared, "I hate when people say I don't see color because it's the first thing you see when you walk in the room. I'm seeing color left and right. I see all kinds of color…." Sienna further elaborated:

> It's just what you do with that. You know, what am I gonna do with what I see? … what I'm saying is, what's opening my eyes is because I was in the military, my husband was in the military, it's all I know. I never knew what went behind all that?

> I never knew there were struggles because I think growing up, you know, there was no social media.

In attempting to describe what it meant to be White in the context of taking the multicultural counseling course, Mrs. Akinola shared that she was not taught what it means to be White, stating:

> My family was multicultural… and so that kind of got blurred for me personally growing up in Texas. My school was [a] multiracial school, we had lots of different races, and as a Christian, I wasn't raised with any racial views…"

Responding to how learning about Black racial identity development was helpful toward her understanding of the experience and perspective of Black people, Brooke stated:

> I thought it was really helpful for me to understand because I grew up in a very multicultural, very diverse community. I had classmates in elementary school from all over the world, and it's just something that was very common to me… I was always immersed in a very diverse community.

Understanding Whiteness through the "Other." Seven out of the nine participants reflected on their personal relationships or their lack of relationships with members of the BIPOC community. Statements referring to personal relationships with BIPOC included "one of my best friends, she's African American, you know, and we celebrate her heritage," "I have lots of friends who are illegal immigrants. I've grown up with both legal and illegal as people would say, immigrants," and "growing up one of my best friends in elementary school was this guy… and he was [a] Black guy… and he was like my coolest friend ever."

Mrs. Akinola relies on her identity as a Christian to highlight similarities between her and her Nigerian husband, who is also Christian, stating:

> I just kind of put White aside. I'm like, yes, clearly, I'm White, and that is, you know, [how] I grew up. I've chose[n], I guess, to identify more with my Christian values, which obviously could be for anyone [and] my family values. My husband is Nigerian, and so he has some Nigerian values and cultures… But even still, it's very blended; it's very similar. We're not deep down as different as we think that we are within Christians.

She goes on to describe how her union with her husband works because of their shared Christian identities, which she acknowledges wouldn't have worked had she married "a Muslim and we would have been very different, and it probably would never have worked because God said it wouldn't." Reaffirming their presumed shared identities and hence experiences, Mrs. Akinola goes on to explain:

> I believe, especially as Christians, if we at least have that foundation of Christian together, there's no reason why we can't see past anything and we can define our Whiteness, Blackness, Brownness, whatever it is, the way that we want to, we don't have to let other people tell us this is what it means to be White, or this is what it means to be Black.

In describing childhood friends that her daughter had while attending an international school when their family was stationed in Germany, Sienna discussed how one of her daughter's "best friends was a girl, and she was African, she was African American. She was from Africa…" Describing how her daughter pointed out her "best friend" when they were walking home one day, Sienna shared, her daughter stated:

> "It's the girl with the coconut skin," and I just thought that was so cute because she knew nothing. You know, she was only like 4. So, she wasn't aware that there were tensions, that there was anything going on, and truth be told, neither did the other little girl… Caroline played [with] this other little girl, and then there was a little Japanese girl there, and I thought, look at that innocence.

In expressing her disgruntlement toward the chapter in the textbook dealing with White privilege and white supremacy, Bailey described how she and her husband have tried to raise their sons to be inclusive. Explaining that when she homeschooled them during their younger years, she made sure to have "Martin Luther King Junior Day. And I'm not saying… that's it, that's all we need to cover… in our home, it's a… point that we make that we talk about, you know, we treat everybody the same." Bailey shared that they also taught their sons that "God doesn't see us in color, and we talk about God looks on the heart…" Bailey continued to explain how she and her husband have taught their sons that they should "…never be mean to anyone who has, like, special education needs," explaining that as her sons became more aware of children with various degrees of abilities at their school "we would make it a point to talk about how we were never mean to them, imagine if that was you, the only difference is that you weren't born with a special education need."

Reflecting on the effects of raising her children in a predominantly White community Bailey described:

> I remember specifically having conversations with our kids, knowing that we were in an area that is mostly a White population. We have gone out of our way to try to make them aware that, you just live in an area that there's not a lot of Black or

> Hispanic or such and such. And God doesn't love us anymore than them. And we've talked about the fact that Jesus was a Jew. Jesus didn't have this creamy White colored skin. And we've talked about so much of that and you know so to go through this course and [to] constantly feel like "OK, well that's still not enough," it's very frustrating on my end…

Perhaps at the heart of Bailey's discontent is in response to a particular page in the textbook, where:

> It talks about how most Whites perceive themselves as unbiased, and as admirable as that is it's a barrier for us being able to still see that we came from a racist background and a racist upbringing. That's my terms for how it is worded. Some of the books and some of mine. Overall, that was hinted at in all of the other chapters, but it was never outright said. And then we get to chapter 7, and it's like [makes a sound] "Blahut" you know, here you go this is what you need to deal with.

Understanding Whiteness through Historical & Contemporary Racial Events. While describing their experiences in the course, manifestations of reconciling conflicts to one's identity, beliefs, and values emerged as participants attempted to understand Whiteness took form as some participants made references to historical and contemporary racial events. Statements such as "Well, there were always struggles, you know. I mean, straight from watching Amistad, we can go way back, we can trace it all the way back then" and "…[the] United States would be a very different place if the first settlers hadn't pushed the Native Americans away and out of their lands… We would just have a very different country. It would be nothing like it is now." Examples of meaning units in reference to current racial events and social movements

included, “I think the biggest struggles are just people taking things like with George Floyd… it hurts my heart to see that video footage… but then you go back to the 90s when they had the riots in LA when those four officers were acquitted in the murder [beating] of Rodney King,” and “I was glad that they talked about the different racial issues that were brought up in the last few years… like the Black Lives Matter Movement (BLM), [and] the George Floyd shooting.” Kayla also made references to BLM stating:

> You know what, the whole Black Lives Matter movement and all of the protests scared me because I didn't understand it. But now I have a deeper understanding of what is going on, and it makes me a little bit more sensitive and understanding in how I treat people.

Understanding Whiteness through Biblical Scripture. Throughout the previous constituents, participants have attempted to make sense of their realities of being White in a multicultural counseling course through invoking God, Jesus, or referencing Scripture. The application of Scripture was required in the course as students gained an understanding of multicultural counseling. All nine participants referred to applying biblical scripture to their understanding of course material with statements such as “Our final chapter was on Biblical counseling principles and how that relates to the multicultural thing and how we come from a place of love when we counsel,” “We had some verses that tied back to our Proverbs about gaining understanding and insight,” “I think that it’s been properly placed, when we’re asked to incorporate Biblical principles into an assignment I think that helps me gain a broader perspective of everything and remind myself of the values that Christ has of us,” and “I really appreciate the

presentations because they put things into a Biblical perspective. They give us a Biblical worldview, and that's very important."

Bailey, who was the only participant who explicitly questioned whether she had a use for multicultural counseling, found value in applying Scripture to her understanding of teachings in the course, stating, that it "has been beneficial to how I feel on my end… because we're all just His children. We're all just His people so that has definitely helped..." Applying such teachings to her understanding of race relations and the need for change, Bailey further shared, "…I believe that what's happening in our country, ultimately… stems just from a godless society. It stems from the fact that the devil will take anything that he can to cause a division." Applying this belief to her understanding of the conflict between diverse cultures as the devil causing divisions in society, she explained, "… if race is it, then he has no issue doing that. If homosexuality is, he has no issue using that, he'll use whatever he can get."

Bailey also acknowledged, "…and you know this, open dialogue [interracial dialogue by virtue of the interview], this is something that the devil doesn't want. Because when people can get together and they can talk openly like this, that's when changes will happen." Penny also expressed a deep appreciation for what she perceived as "… a really good job of intersecting psychological theory and social theories with a Biblical worldview." Penny used her understanding of:

> God as our creator and his just absolute creativity and making so much diversity in people in His world and the ability to see it as a blessing has been really emphasized

> to see that diversity is a blessing, as something that God gave us as a gift and not so much as something that should be a barrier. It is, but it shouldn't be.

Lastly, Heather like Bailey and Penny also applied a detailed understanding of relating Scripture to multicultural counseling, referring to the story of Jesus and the Good Samaritan, and linking such historical events to contemporary race relations, stating:

> I guess when we really stopped to think about it, I guess maybe some of the things that are being dealt with in God's word, even, you know, Jesus telling about the Good Samaritan, the incredible multicultural things that were happening there, and realizing that this is nothing new, absolutely nothing new. We should always be constantly sensitive to those around us, whether they're from the same background that we are or they're from different ones.

Sub-Constituent 3: Reflecting on Preparation for Working with REC Diverse Clientele

Examples of meaning units that spoke to this experience for the nine participants were derived from participants' responses to either their experience in the course or in describing the challenges they faced while in the course. In response to the researcher asking Bailey whether discussions of White privilege or white supremacy were discussed in the class, Bailey stated, "I think it's something that everyone is tiptoeing around, to be completely honest. I can't say that with certainty, and I don't know, from anybody else's point of view, but it seems like it's something that's tiptoed around." Amy referred to the format of the online course and the course not preparing one to handle certain situations, sharing, "I think it starts to, I think especially since it's an 8-week course it can't go as deep as you would want to and it's online, but I think it begins to…" Mrs. Akinola, Brooke, and Amy referred to the potential to go deeper in graduate school, with Amy

stating that she thinks the undergraduate multicultural counseling course “lays a foundation.”

Similar sentiments include, “It opened the door; I don’t think I’ve nearly enough information. It’s like a little pamphlet… It’s a teaser,” “I would think all counselors should experience it multiple times, just like we do other courses. They kind of repeat in order to get that thoroughly embedded in us,” and “I'm not really going to be able to absorb everything in multicultural counseling in the quick speedy 8-week course.” Though the course was only 8-weeks, Penny shared that she enjoyed it, and that the information was impactful. Referring to the information she gleaned from the textbook, Penny stated:

> There were a lot of personal testimonials and stories from different people and all of that was really good to read and to just go a little bit more in-depth with my understanding of what people are dealing with, based on how people judge them and the prejudices that are around and maybe overall for me and where I am, it just helped to kind of. I don't know what to say. Remove some layers there so that I can be a little bit more aware of the people around me and curious to hear their stories too.

However, as noted in Essential Constituent 1 due to the online format, Penny also noted some of the challenges in processing course content and the experience of group dynamics as different online than in face-to-face courses. Penny explained:

> That ability to practice may be too. In a relationship [with classmates] maybe there's less at stake than there is in a client-to-therapist relationship and to be able to practice how to respond when someone says something that makes you

uncomfortable. Or how to ask those questions in a way that isn't uncomfortable for the other person, right? You lose that totally when you do the class online.

Summary

This investigation into the experience of being White in a multicultural counseling course revealed three emergent experiential constituents as described by all nine participants. The interrelationship between the three constituents is further represented in the interrelatedness of the sub-constituents represented in Essential Constituents 2 and 3, which represent those experiences described by all ($N = 9$), most ($n = 5$), or some ($n = 4$) of the participants. Essential Constituent 1 (EC) was the experience of appreciation and conflict becoming culturally competent. All nine participants described a paradoxical dual experience of appreciation for the knowledge obtained in the course while simultaneously describing the experience of conflict with the knowledge obtained in the course. Essential Constituent 2, along with its two sub-constituents, emerged as the experience of understanding the value of multicultural competency for licensed therapists.

Based on this study's findings, when it comes to understanding the value of multicultural competency for licensed therapists all nine participants expressed an understanding of the value in reference to learning about BIPOC. The benefits of taking multicultural counseling were demonstrated by all participants as they described how the course contributed to their understanding of the value of being aware and knowledgeable of diverse cultures and cultural differences that may present between themselves and future clientele. Most of the participants ($n = 6$) also described their understanding of the

importance of being open to REC diverse experiences, and the importance of recognizing one's own biases and assumptions (n = 5). The manifestation of Essential Constituent 3 and its sub-constituents revealed the felt-sense of conflict all nine participants described as they gained awareness and attempted to understand White privilege and white supremacy. All participants also described being unprepared to work with REC diverse clientele. This study's findings support previous research as all participants struggled with understanding the effects of Whiteness and white supremacy in their lives and those of REC diverse groups. Chapter 4 provided an overview of the research results. Chapter 5 discusses the results, conclusions, and implications for future research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Overview

White Americans make up 84.47% of the workforce within psychology, disproportionate to the representation of diversity in the overall U.S. population (APA, 2022). As ethnic-racial differences between counselors and their clients have been found to contribute to attrition rates, particularly when the counselor is White and a client is a member of the BIPOC community this has a direct impact on treatment outcomes for Clients of Color (Kim & Kang, 2018; Lantz et al., 2020; Steinfeldt et al., 2020). This existential-phenomenological study aimed to explore the experiences of White undergraduate psychology students enrolled in a multicultural counseling course. This was done to understand how White students understand their racialized identities as members of the dominant ethnic-racial group in context to the topics learned throughout the course and how they described their lived experiences in the course. In addition to the completion of a demographic questionnaire, the nine participants who took part in the study did so via virtual interviews. Chapter 5 begins with a summary of the study's findings and their significance. Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research are discussed. The chapter ends with a summary of the study's key results and implications.

Summary of Findings

This study explored the experiences of nine White/European undergraduate psychology students enrolled in an 8-week online multicultural counseling course. The study's findings revealed three key experiential constituents describing the experience of being White in a multicultural counseling course, with two of the constituents consisting

of several sub-constituents. The three key experiential constituents are the essential psychological statements that emerged explicitly or implicitly based on the experienced perspectives described by all of the participants. While, the sub-constituents represent those perspectives represented by all ($N = 9$), most ($n = 5$), or some ($n = 4$) of the research participants.

Overall, all nine participants described the course in positive terms related to its having contributed to their experience of understanding the value of multicultural counseling for licensed therapists. All participants acknowledged a lack of knowledge and expressed a willingness to learn more about the ethnic-racial and cultural (REC) differences that may present between themselves and potential clientele. Most of the participants ($n = 5$) described understanding the importance of being open to others' points of view and the importance of being aware of one's own biases and assumptions ($n = 6$). However, a dual experience also emerged (see Figure 4) in which all nine participants either implicitly or explicitly described an experience of conflict with becoming culturally competent, particularly related to analyzing their own White identities, Whiteness, and white supremacy indicating a lack of understanding of how systemic racism functions in their lived experiences and those of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and other marginalized communities.

Discussion of Findings

As described by the participants, being White in a multicultural counseling course is complex and was met with a range of responses both positive and negative (King et al.,2018; Lowery et al., 2020). All participants described their overall experience in the

course positively, even those who also described the course as challenging, frustrating, and difficult based on the nature of the material and information provided in the course. To our knowledge, this is one of the only studies to investigate the lived experience of White undergraduate psychology students enrolled in a multicultural counseling course (Gonzalez-Voller et al., 2020; Hicks et al., 2023; Patterson et al., 2018). Few studies have focused on giving voice to the positive aspects White psychology students experience related to knowledge attainment, learning to see the world through the perspective of non-White people, experiencing the awareness that one's worldview is not the only view nor the "ideal" view of the world, and confronting Whiteness and white supremacy.

While there are concepts that describe the tension that White students experience in multicultural or diversity-type courses, our findings indicate that there is no concept that fully captures the paradoxical dual experience of feelings of appreciation for the knowledge obtained by virtue of the course while simultaneously experiencing feelings of conflict for the knowledge obtained through the course. This study's findings indicate that all participants either explicitly or implicitly described the experience of appreciation and conflict with becoming culturally competent as demonstrated in Essential Constituent 1. Findings revealed that only two participants were able to successfully reconcile these conflicts by applying what was learned in the course to their lived experiences, while most participants demonstrated an inability to reconcile conflicts to their cultural beliefs and values and instead reinforced Whiteness and white supremacy as reflected in the sub-constituents. This study's findings indicate that understanding and appropriately attending to these fluctuations in feelings as described by the participants is crucial in understanding how to support White students in acknowledging, validating, and working

through contradictory feelings, so they are better equipped with the skills necessary for developing a multicultural orientation and cultural competency.

Essential Constituent 1: The Experience of Appreciation and Conflict Becoming Culturally Competent

This study's findings support previous research on the experience of both positive and negative emotions students experience in multicultural training courses particularly related to resistance toward the development of awareness of one's own biases and values (Lowery et al., 2020; King et al., 2019). Further, while our study's findings support previous findings of multicultural training reactance, in which a student's response to having their beliefs and convictions challenged causes those who are resistant to training to hold onto their previously held beliefs more strongly (Lowery et al., 2020), there was also an apparent catalyst for change. Most participants described such a change which led them to reject a more resistant stance of denial and rejection of the course information and doubling down on their previously held beliefs. Even Bailey, who was the only student who explicitly and implicitly rejected the course information and her own self-awareness related to White privilege and white supremacy, she did, however, recognize her biases toward members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Within her rejection of this culture based on her beliefs and values Bailey was able to recognize the likelihood of the possibility that she may have to provide therapeutic services to this community and recognized that she is currently ill-prepared to rise to this occasion as she expressed her desire for more tools to prepare her for this possibility.

Our ability to recognize students' catalysts for change and intervene is noted in the extant literature (Hicks et al., 2023; Lowery et al., 2019; Todd & Abrams, 2011). Though

most participants described experiencing some challenges to their identities, beliefs, and values our results differ from previous research findings as only one out of the nine participants outright resisted the teachings in the course demonstrating multicultural training reactance (King et al., 2019; Lowery et al., 2020). While the other eight participants explicitly or implicitly described experiencing some conflict to having their beliefs challenged, all the participants described a catalyst of change regarding their worldview stemming from the knowledge and information received from the course, with two describing how they have applied what they learned in the course.

This study's findings support previous research findings of uncomfortable feelings experienced as one's worldview is challenged which could either turn students toward or away from the learning process as participants attempted to reconcile challenges to their identity, beliefs, and values (King et al., 2019; Lowery, 2020; Todd & Abrams, 2011). Though none of the nine participants described experiencing guilt, shame, or fear a sense of empathy and being overwhelmed with the information particularly related to understanding White privilege and white supremacy was described in line with previous findings (King et al., 2019), this study's findings indicate however that there is no concept that fully captures the dual experience of appreciation and conflict experienced by students, the catalyst for change, and reconciliation of challenges to one's identity, beliefs, and values. We believe that crucial to understanding the experience of being White in a multicultural counseling course is listening to, validating, and normalizing the experience of vacillation between one's previously held beliefs and understanding of their own experience being-in-the world of multicultural counseling. Also crucial is how to intervene when resistance becomes apparent and how to encourage

White students to continue on the path towards developing a multicultural orientation, so they are receptive to receive and open to the experience of attaining cultural humility and ultimately becoming culturally competent.

As a catalyst for change was witnessed in all of the participants as they described being open to processing challenges to their worldviews, this study's findings indicate that there is no concept that fully captures this paradoxical dual experience of feelings of appreciation for the knowledge obtained by virtue of the course while simultaneously experiencing feelings of conflict for the knowledge obtained through the course and the coping strategies used to reconcile challenges to one's understanding of themselves and how they view the world.

Essential Constituent 2: The Experience of Understanding the Value of Multicultural Awareness for Licensed Therapists

Multicultural competency (MCC) refers to a counselor's knowledge of different ethnic-racial groups, an awareness of one's own personal biases and beliefs, and one's ability to utilize appropriate therapeutic skills when working with ethnic-racial and culturally (REC) diverse groups of people (Chao et al., 2011; Gonzalez-Voller et al., 2020; Vandiver et al., 2021). All nine participants described the value of the course in contributing to their understanding of the benefits of licensed therapists being aware of diverse cultures and the cultural differences that may present between themselves and potential clients (see Figure 1). This finding is supported by previous findings of students' increased levels of multicultural competency related to awareness of diverse cultures and cultural differences upon completing a multicultural counseling course or training (Chao et al., 2011; Gonzalez-Voller et al., 2020; Patterson et al., 2018).

Sub-Constituent 1: Sense of Knowledge Attainment and Willingness to Learn More

All participants described their having a lack of knowledge regarding diverse cultures, even those who described growing up in diverse communities and or those with current or past relationships with BIPOC. Further, all participants described a willingness to obtain more knowledge to assist with providing therapeutic services for those who differ from them related to REC diversity. Overall, this study's findings indicate that by virtue of taking the course, participants demonstrated a growing understanding of the REC differences and their need to be cognizant of such differences that may present between themselves and future clientele in line with previous research findings (Gonzalez-Voller et al., 2020; Hicks et al., 2023; Patterson, 2018).

Sub-Constituent 2: Awareness of Personal Biases, Assumptions, and Open to REC Diverse Points of View

The importance of recognizing one's own biases and assumptions along with being open to other people's points of view were described by most participants as important to their understanding of what multicultural counseling means. This is a key finding as awareness of one's own attitudes and beliefs and understanding that others have differing worldviews and experiences is core to developing competency (Gonzalez-Voller et al., 2020; Patterson et al., 2018). These findings support previous study findings of mixed results particularly related to findings of increased knowledge and awareness however no significant changes in empathy and skills were found in some studies while others have demonstrated a significant increase in skills, awareness, and knowledge (King et al., 2019; Patterson et al., 2018). Still, others have found that multicultural training increased knowledge but not awareness (Gonzalez-Voller et al., 2020).

Demographic characteristics, the efficacy of self-report measures, and lack of consistency in defining cultural competency are noted as contributing factors to previous studies' mixed findings (Patterson et al., 2018). In relation to this study's findings while most students described the importance of being aware of one's own biases and assumptions, also fundamental to awareness is one's ability to understand how their personal attitudes, identities, and experiences influence their worldview and interactions with those who are REC different from them (Patterson et al., 2018) influencing the client-therapist relationship (Smith et al., 2019). This study's findings indicate that most participants were able to make this connection. For instance, Kayla described feeling challenged in the course due to her negative feelings toward those who immigrate to the U.S. illegally as well as toward members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

In recognition of this bias, she also understood how holding such views could negatively impact her relationship with a potential client. According to previous findings, this awareness is crucial as it can either lead a student to double down on their beliefs and resist the knowledge obtained in multicultural training as demonstrated by Bailey or lead the student toward continued self-reflection and working toward establishing cultural competency (King et al., 2019; Lowery et al., 2020). The findings from this study extend the literature on multicultural counseling at the undergraduate level, in assisting most participants with developing an understanding of how their assumptions and biases may negatively impact their treatment of clients who are of different REC backgrounds from their own.

Psychologists and other mental health professionals are ethically bound to take into consideration how their assumptions, privileges, and biases are influenced by

intersectional identities, as well as how they may influence sessions with their clients (Lenes et al., 2020). Central to attaining multicultural competency is an understanding of how systems of oppression and privilege not only affect access to resources and shape psychological experiences and relationships but also an understanding of hierarchical power and how "our statuses affect our relationships because of power dynamics related to privilege and oppression" (APA, 2019, p. 11). Based on this study's findings, most participants' understanding of multicultural competency lacked an understanding of how their culture, attitudes, and beliefs are related to their social group identities. Most participants also lacked an understanding of their individual power and privilege as a White person, and the effects both individual and collective power and privilege have on intersectional and marginalized group statuses (Gonzalez-Voller et al., 2020). Like previous research, this study found that most of the participants lacked an understanding of how systemic racism and structural inequality, are perpetuated via White privilege and white supremacy both individually and collectively and the role both play in their lives and the lives of BIPOC (Lowery et al., 2020; Todd & Abrams, 2011; Yeung et al., 2013).

Essential Constituent 3: Felt-sense of Conflict Gaining Awareness and Understanding of White privilege and white supremacy

Sub-Constituent 1: Felt-sense of Conflict to One's Identity, Beliefs, and Values

Understanding White Students' Discomfort Understanding Whiteness. While all participants expressed receiving value from the course the experience of being White in a multicultural counseling course as described by the participants supported previous research on the tensions, resistance, lack of understanding of their dominant group membership, and contradictions White students experience when attempting to

understand their racialized White identities and White privilege (Smalling, 2022; Todd & Abrams, 2011; Lowery et al., 2020; King et al., 2019). Specifically, Todd and Abrams' (2011) described such tensions as White dialectics, contradictions to their identities White people experience as dominant group members given the imbalance of power between themselves and BIPOC in U.S. society. White dialectical tension is the experience of being pulled in two directions simultaneously along a continuum in which one must attend to two different and opposed poles of thought (Todd & Abrams, 2011).

White dialectics is a framework that consists of six dialectics or tensions that White students experience when reflecting on their race, "Whiteness and self, connection in multiracial relationships, color blindness, minimization of racism, structural inequality, and White privilege" (Todd & Abrams, 2011, p. 353). Supporting their findings all six White dialectics were supported throughout our data, however, colorblindness, minimization of racism, White Privilege, and Whiteness and self (Todd & Abrams, 2011), were consistently demonstrated by all participants as they described their experiences being White in a multicultural counseling course. Therefore, Essential Constituents 1 - 3, and the corresponding sub-constituents demonstrate the interrelationship between constituents, laying the foundation for understanding the complex experience of being White in a multicultural counseling course.

As the concepts of race and racism have evolved over time, modern forms of racism or new racism are subtle and reliant on CBRI, racial silence or passivism; egalitarianism, microaggressions, belief in the good-bad binary view of racism, and aversive racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2022; DiAngelo, 2021; Dovidio et al., 2010; Ferguson et al., 2022; Hunt, 2019; Neville et al., 2013) all of which manifested as the participants

described their experiences in the course. The White dialectic colorblindness where at one end of the continuum, race is recognized, and it is understood that BIPOC have different access, opportunities, and experiences than their White counterparts, and at the other end, race is ignored or viewed as it shouldn't or doesn't matter overlapped with participants' Whiteness and sense of self which links one's sense of self with their social location as a White individual (Todd & Abrams, 2011). Along the continuum, at one end is awareness and identification with being White, and at the other end is the distortion, unawareness, or denial of being White (Todd & Abrams, 2011). This study's findings support those found by Todd and Abrams (2011) in which participants demonstrated a limited ability to connect their White social membership with their sense of self.

This was demonstrated by both Kayla and Bailey as they described their experiences being in the course. For Bailey the course made her, "as a White person I feel like I'm on trial…" Personalizing the textbook teachings on White privilege and white supremacy she is aware of and claims her racial identity as White, yet she dialectically moves away from this connection to her White social group membership with her refusal to analyze white supremacy and White privilege. Simultaneously, the White dialectic, White privilege was also demonstrated as Bailey in essence denied her White privilege which overlapped with colorblindness. Her description of "being held accountable for not being more aware of the racial issues" and the presentation of the information in the textbook as presented in a way "…that me as a White person that even if I am not racist, I have never acted in a racist way…" and though she speaks up "in situations that are relevant to me, it would never be enough like it's never enough." Bailey demonstrated that she is aware that BIPOC have different experiences from White people some

relevant enough for her speak up against, while simultaneously she implicitly expressed that race shouldn't matter, particularly as it related to assessing Whiteness.

As a Black woman researcher, Bailey's transparency in expressing her frustrations with the course as a White person was surprising. Though I worked on bracketing my assumptions and preconceptions before, during, and after each interview, I was surprised that Bailey openly expressed her views to me. While "the process of self-reflection on social group membership" is essential to becoming a culturally competent counselor (Todd & Abrams, 2011, p. 358), Bailey's frustration indicates that such a process is not easy for some. Like other White students grappling with what it means to be White (King et al., 2019), Bailey expressed irritation that her perceived individual efforts to speak up against racist treatment toward BIPOC in situations that are relevant to her are perceived as "never enough" for an individual White person to not be viewed as a racist.

This lack of understanding of systemic racism and reliance on understanding racists through the good-bad binary, which suggests that racist acts are intentionally committed by malicious individuals (DiAngelo, 2018) was demonstrated throughout the data which speaks to the crux of the problem when attempting to get some White students to understand themselves as racialized beings and the role that plays in a society built upon a legacy of white supremacy (Belfiore et al., 2021; Foste & Jones, 2020). Rather than comprehending racism as a system, the reliance on the good-bad binary posits racism as the result of individual bad apples or the failing of BIPOC (Mayorga-Gallo, 2019). Such views are consistent with aversive racism, which consists of CBRI, egalitarianism, and views of oneself as not racist (Bonilla-Silva, 2022; Dovidio et al.,

2010). Based on this study's findings Bailey was the only participant who explicitly rejected course material related to White privilege and white supremacy in relation to her understanding of herself as a White person and her potential for counseling a member of the BIPOC community, contradicting the awareness she had regarding her bias toward members of the LGBTQIA+ community and understanding of the need to change in that regard.

Like Bailey, Kayla also openly described her experience being White in a multicultural counseling course highlighting the contradictions to her identity and the tensions that exist within the descriptions of her experience. Describing the course as challenging Kayla, was also able to recognize the value in taking the course as it "opened my eyes to you know that I am White." In this realization Kayla was also aware of the bias she held toward those who illegally immigrate to the U.S. Though both women share a similar social location by virtue of their Whiteness, how they and the other participants realized their Whiteness varied (Hagerman, 2017). As Kayla struggled with the tension of appreciating gaining awareness and understanding of other ethnic-racial groups "going through their awakening," she was confronted with her own biases as it related to the topic of illegal immigration, counseling those who have illegally immigrate to the U.S., and the presumption of scarce resources.

While Kayla explicitly expressed an awareness of her biases toward members of the BIPOC community, Bailey did not. However, like Bailey, Kayla also recognized her bias towards members of the LGBTQIA+ community. In describing whether she would be able to overcome her biases towards members of this community, Kayla recognized the possibility that she may experience having to provide therapeutic services to members

of the LGBTQIA+ community. This study's findings indicate such moments, as described by most of the participants, as critical points indicating a catalyst for change and a moment to intervene. According to Helms (2020) to overcome aversive racism, it is crucial to expose one's biases, and from there, action steps are required to actively work toward "turning them into us by recognizing common goals or human conditions," as opposed to "we" versus "them" (p. 24). Rather than shaming or blaming, being cognizant of crucial moments of intervention is important for reducing student reactance and resistance as ignoring or pretending one does not have biases serves to reinforce Whiteness and white supremacy (Todd & Abrams, 2011).

Given that having an awareness of one's own biases, assumptions, and values (Chao et al., 2011) is within the guidelines of multicultural competency, it is important to explore how best to assist budding White professionals in the helping field of psychology reconcile these contradictions and discrepancies to their identity and how they view the world around them. Overall, the dialogue offered in Essential Constituent 3 and its sub-constituents provide the most candid look into the process of what it was like to be a White student going through a multicultural counseling course and the expectations of the process of attaining cultural competency. The findings from our study further support the literature on White hegemony, White racial identity development (WRID), intergroup contact theory, and White ethnic-racial socialization as the results indicate White students struggled to make sense of their White identities, white supremacy, and White privilege (Todd & Abrams, 2011).

Furthermore, this study's findings suggest the hegemonic nature of Whiteness and CBRI are not easily disrupted with one course leading White students toward the

development of their multicultural orientation, so they are receptive toward attaining competency indicating the continued need for multicultural training and research. The range of emotions described by the participants supports the research on White student responses toward learning about race and racism and having their assumptions and worldviews challenged (Yeung et al., 2013; Lowery et al., 2020), yet their responses also differed. This study's findings indicate that when one's identity, values, and beliefs are challenged as one goes through the process of obtaining cultural competency and hence a multicultural orientation, there is a normal process of vacillation that occurs as one learns new information particularly information that challenges their way of being-in-the-world (King et al., 2019; Todd & Abrams, 2011).

Given that understanding hierarchical power, privilege, oppression, and the role our statuses play in our relationships due to power dynamics is important to the development of competency (APA, 2019) and one is expected to "strive" toward developing multicultural competency, missing is a clear understanding of how to develop the orientation needed for such competency.

Sub-Constituent 2: Reconciling Conflicts to One's Identity, Beliefs, and Values

Multicultural orientation is defined as "a counselor's way of being with a client, guided by the counselor's philosophy or values that involves the ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the client" (Hook et al., 2016, p. 271). The development of a multicultural orientation involves cultural humility (openness and respect for the client's cultural identity), cultural comfort (ease broaching and discussing cultural material with one's client), and cultural opportunities (the therapist takes

initiative in attending to the client's cultural identity; Gafford et al., 2019; Owens, 2016). One is expected to maintain their multicultural orientation and humility even when faced with the strain of cultural differences between oneself and their client (Davis et al., 2016; Hook et al., 2016). Lacking from the literature is a clear path toward the development of a multicultural orientation, particularly when students are faced with an ethical standard that expects them to strive toward developing cultural competency (APA, 2019).

Here we offer a term to assist with describing the experience of the natural process to having one's way of being-in-the-world challenged and disregarded for a new way of thinking and being-in-the-world, *multicultural orientation vacillation*. Inspired by both Todd and Abrams' White dialectics and Helms' White racial identity development, *multicultural orientation vacillation* is defined by the researcher as a naturally occurring process in response to some catalyst (i.e. multicultural training) exposing and bringing to one's awareness their biases prompting one to reconcile challenges to their identity, beliefs, and values. Like White dialectics, *multicultural orientation vacillation* (MOV) represents a non-linear continuum of vacillating back and forth one experiences as they learn to develop an orientation that is rooted in the establishment of a multicultural orientation.

In response to some catalyst, one vacillates between their old belief system shifting to an openness toward acquiring a stance of cultural humility and the development of a multicultural orientation. Where at one end of the continuum one is reinforcing Whiteness and white supremacy and at the other end one is developing a multicultural orientation becoming a culturally humble therapists capable of applying cultural competency (see Figure 4). One's level of WRID is indicative of one's shifting

on the continuum. One's ability to recognize the point of intervention is prompted by a catalyst signaling a moment to intervene as this vital period is when one is vacillating either toward reinforcing the status quo or movement toward the development of an anti/ nonracist identity (Helms, 2020). We extend on Todd and Abram's (2011) White dialectics and offer *multicultural orientation vacillation* as an intervention in conjunction with White dialectics to counter resistance in reconciling one's identity, beliefs, and values toward becoming culturally competent.

The process of reconciling challenges to one's identity and worldview is neither positive nor negative. Rather it represents the mental processes and coping strategies one uses to reconcile conflict. As counseling students are expected to obtain competency what isn't acknowledged and adequately addressed in the literature is how to support students recognize and process their resistant behavior, validate the experience, and explain what the behavior reveals to better inform the student as they become open to shifting their perspective and acquiring the mindset and skills necessary to becoming a culturally humble therapists applying multicultural competency.

White Ethnic-Racial Socialization. Paramount to understanding the White dialectics that arise in White students when taking courses such as multicultural counseling is an understanding of the White ethnic-racial socialization (WRS) experience that one was raised in and their level of White racial identity development (WRID). Most of the participants referred to their early experiences within the families and the communities they were raised in when describing their experiences being in the multicultural counseling course. This finding is supported by the WRS literature, as social environments influence how White children produce ideas about ethnicity-race,

therefore influencing their racial attitudes (Pahlke et al., 2021; Zucker & Patterson, 2018).

As reviewed in Chapter 2, ethnic-racial socialization refers to the set of practices used by adults to transmit values, information, and perspectives about ethnicity-race to children (Gillen-O'Neel et al., 2022; Hughes et al., 2006). Shielded by White privilege, the prevalence, contexts, and motivations for White families to engage in racial discussions and the ethnic-racial socialization practices engaged in by White parents are vastly different from those engaged in by Parents of Color (Abaied & Perry, 2021; Gillen-O'neel et al., 2022). Therefore, children learn to navigate society via a position of structural advantage or disadvantage (Hagerman, 2017; Pahlke et al., 2021). At the micro-level, White parents engage in ethnic-racial socialization consciously and unconsciously as they make decisions regarding the neighborhoods, schools, recreational activities, and peer groups their children engage in, influencing their children's racial attitudes (Hagerman, 2017; Pahlke et al., 2021; Zucker & Patterson, 2018).

White parents also consciously and unconsciously communicate to their children that race is not openly discussed (race-mute) or are indifferent (passivism) toward discussions of race, as demonstrated through their level of racial identity development (Ferguson et al., 2022; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). Understanding the ethnic-racial socialization strategies and practices engaged in by White parents are also believed to contribute to our understanding of how Whiteness and white supremacy permeate throughout U.S. society and culture (Ferguson et al., 2022; Gillen-O'Neel et al., 2022; Pahlke et al., 2021; Perry et al., 2019; Spanierman, 2022; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). As the social environments one is exposed to influence their racial attitudes (Hagerman,

2017; Pahlke et al., 2021; Zucker & Patterson, 2018) these early experiences made a strong enough impression on most of the participants regardless of age (M_{age} = 36-45 years old) as they relied on these early experiences to inform their understanding of themselves as White. The results of this study extend the previous research on how White hegemony and CRBI are reinforced and perpetuated through the socialization process (Hagerman, 2017; Ferguson et al., 2022; Gillian & O'Neel et al., 2022).

The hegemonic nature of Whiteness, coupled with the hegemonic nature of CBRI, (Ferguson et al., 2022) was revealed as participants reflected on the ethnic-racial composition of the communities they were raised in. The implied significance of being raised in either a diverse or predominantly White community supported Todd and Abrams (2011) findings of the White dialectic Closeness and Connection in Multiracial Relationships. Described as the perceived barriers and bridges in multiracial relationships where at one end of the continuum, such relationships are nonexistent or shallow while close and deep at the other end (Todd & Abrams, 2011). Our study's findings indicate that to understand their Whiteness participants were reliant on the close relationships they had in the past or that they currently have with BIPOC (Todd & Abrams, 2011).

The reconciling of White dialectical tension was demonstrated as participants used White racial ignorance, which includes a lack of self-awareness as well as collective ignorance, as the foundation of "anti-People of Color racism" (Cabrea & Corces-Zimmerman, 2017, p. 300) and White innocence, "practiced unconsciousness about the reality of racism in the United States" (Taylor, 2021, p. 702). Described as both an everyday discourse and a fantasy in normative society, White innocence is also "the material effect of allowing whites to avoid being directly accountable for racism"

(Inwood, 2018, p. 5). Both concepts are related to CBRI, as they allow White people a distorted view of the world based on CBRI and ahistorical perspectives (Foste, 2019). Both strategies were used implicitly and explicitly throughout the interviews by most of the participants. For instance, the use of both strategies was demonstrated by Sienna as she professed ignorance of historical racism and used race neural language as she described the diverse communities she lived in and her relationship with a Black friend, yet she described being unaware of [racial] "struggles," rejecting the use of the words associated with race relations. The use of race neutral language indicated this participant's discomfort with broaching topics of race central to the development of a multicultural orientation (Davis et al., 2018).

This finding extends those found by Todd and Abrams, as the participant demonstrated a denial or distortion of her social group membership being White as connected to historical racial oppression, yet she was unable to connect it to her identity as a White person. Professing ignorance of historical racism though she was in fact aware reconciled the felt sense of discomfort reinforcing her innocence in the transmission of Whiteness and white supremacy. Along with Sienna's perceived closeness to BIPOC being raised with the military described as a "mixed bucket" of diverse people, both instances demonstrate the participants' reliance on CBRI, though she "hates when people say they don't see color" implying that she recognizes the significance of race yet minimizes racism by demonstrating racial ignorance and referring to "struggles" rather than racism as the issue.

Furthermore, this participant acknowledged awareness of the historical significance of Amistad again demonstrating her awareness of race and racism. To

reconcile this dialectical tension, the participant reinforced Whiteness and the racial status quo, as she relied on White racial ignorance and innocence as she proclaimed, “I was friends with everybody, but it never got relayed to me, you know?” In essence, she removed the blame from herself for her professed lack of awareness and knowledge of the historical legacy of racism and placed it on the lack of social media or “anything that was negative was just what I read in my history class.” Though she also described the influence of racial events within the past 20 years as she described the beating of (incorrectly stated as the death of) Rodney King and the murder of George Floyd in conjunction with the course for influencing her to educate herself, her practiced ignorance of racial struggles though she is aware provided her the cover of innocence. For instance, Sienna was able to absolve herself for not being “…some warrior who’s gonna march in the street” to a passive stance of “all I can do is keep learning about it and maybe put some value on what someone feels.” Effectively absolving herself from “individual responsibility for the condition of racism in U.S. society” (Inwood, 2018, p. 3). Therefore, the participant was unable to recognize how she benefits from Whiteness and white supremacy, while also unable to analyze how these systems operate and the role her passivism plays in the reproduction of systems of oppression (Inwood, 2018).

The avoidance of the use of certain words was present throughout the interviews and highlighted students' discomfort with broaching certain topics. Coded language or racially coded language (Bennet & Walker, 2018; Burke, 2017; O'Donnell, 2020) “involves talking about race indirectly while not mentioning it explicitly, which enables the speaker to enjoy plausible deniability” (Bennet & Waker, 2018, p. 691). For instance, racial code words referring to a community’s safety, affluence, and the presence of White

people are synonymous with words such as suburbs, suburban, and affluent (Goetz et al., 2020). While racial code words such as inner city, urban, and low income refer to Communities of Color (O'Donnell, 2020; Quaranto, 2021) conceptually and politically understood to be dysfunctional and disadvantaged (Goetz et al., 2020). Synonymous with colorblind rhetoric (Burke, 2017) racially coded language and symbols play on racist stereotypes communicating racial subordination and exclusion, tapping into subconscious White assumptions about BIPOC (Bennet & Walker, 2018; Quaranto, 2021).

For participants who described being raised in predominantly White communities, the use of racially coded language to describe said communities for some and referring to these communities as "sheltered" exhibited colorblind ideology, White racial ignorance, and the minimization of racism through their lack of contact with members of the BIPOC community. What this lack of interracial contact revealed was that the lack of BIPOC presence sheltered these participants from having to know about racial issues, suggesting White privilege via White racial ignorance "practiced unconsciousness about the reality of racism in the United States" (Taylor, 202, p. 702). These findings further suggest that such neighborhoods are normal and offer the material reward of White hegemony, contributing to our understanding of how white supremacy and White privilege are perpetuated (Hagerman, 2017). As race is an uncomfortable topic for most White people to acknowledge they attempt to find to other terms to describe it (Helms, 2020).

Further, their lack of contact with BIPOC was reinforced in their school environment, as described specifically by Amy and Bailey. As an agent of socialization, the education system contributes to children's beliefs, self-image, and values. As such, students have different experiences depending upon their social class standing, the

neighborhood they live in, their ethnic-racial group membership, and their gender, among other social categories (Holt-Lunstad, 2017; Kendall, 2021). This finding supports previous research highlighting the important role school environment plays in the socialization process. Indicating how ethnic-racial segregation from BIPOC contributes to biases, a lack of knowledge and awareness of systemic racism, and misperceptions (Hazelbaker et al., 2022; Pahlke et al., 2021; Roberts & Rizzo, 2021) "sheltering" White people from knowing about race. As both race and social economic status are based on one's subjective evaluation of resources (Helms, 2020), we posit that some participants' reliance on racially coded language when describing the predominantly White communities they were raised in reconciled their discomfort of broaching topics surrounding race and racism.

While Bailey explicitly rejected the course lessons on White privilege and white supremacy, a clear privilege of Whiteness lies in her questioning "Why? Why is this for me?" You know, "Why do I have to?" take multicultural counseling. This is an example of the material reward of being surrounded by Whiteness which "sheltered" Bailey from having to think critically about White privilege and white supremacy, and the role they both play in her life. White privilege also "sheltered" her from having to assess how structures of inequality impact herself as well as the lived experiences of BIPOC, though as a budding MFT she, is expected to do so for licensing (APA, 2019). According to Lewis (2004), hegemonic Whiteness does not refer to "a quality inherent to individual whites but it is a collective social force that shapes their lives just as it shapes the lives of racial minorities… and carries material reward" (as quoted by Hagerman, 2017, p. 63).

Bailey's lived experience as a White woman from a southern town in the United States which she described as "*so* White," highlights the hegemonic nature of Whiteness as "normal" as experienced through her lack of contact with those from the BIPOC community (Roberts & Rizzo, 2021). Her and other participants' reference to this residential segregation as "normal" and "sheltered" contributed to her lack of awareness as to whether the BIPOC in her community have ever experienced racism. According to Goetz et al. (2020) "White space is often understood by its inhabitants as neutral space that "naturalizes" exclusion and privilege (p. 146). Viewing her lived experience as a White woman as the norm with no intention of moving from the community "unless God does something crazy" led her to believe that she does not need multicultural counseling, since her community represents people who look like her and presumably must also experience the world as she does, "sheltering" one from BIPOC and their issues therefore Bailey did not recognize the ethical importance of her being culturally competent related to the BIPOC community.

Participants' use of "rural" and "suburban" further highlighted their predominantly White communities as the proportion of White Americans that live in "peripheral regions" within the U.S. is higher than those living in city centers (Roberts & Rizzo, 2021). In her description, though Heather is not explicitly referring to the ethnic-racial demographics of her "rural Iowa" upbringing, like Amy, it was implied using racially coded phrases such as "solid work ethic," "Protestant background," and "very independent." Such coded language implies [White] American culture (DiAngelo, 2010; Roberts & Rizzo, 2021). As such, "category labels may promote the belief that category members share an essence that grants them their identity" (Roberts & Rizzo, 2021, p.

477). Amy and Heather's implicit reliance on racially coded language suggests their discomfort with directly broaching topics surrounding ethnicity and race (Day-Vines et al., 2022; King, 2021a). Though Heather has lived in Brazil for 31 years, she has relied on her "rural Iowa," hence her White American background, to inform how she relates to and perceives native Brazilians. Through her being in a multicultural counseling course, she recognized how that upbringing limited her understanding of "why people think and do the things they do" in Brazil. My understanding from this dialogue is that without the course, Heather may not have had the motivation to view the world from a non-White point of view.

For participants who were raised in either type of community, the White dialectics minimization of racism overlapped with colorblind racial ideology (CBRI), as some participants stated that they had not been taught to hold prejudiced views indicating White racial ignorance of the ways in which such views are transmitted. This implicit naiveté in understanding how "racist" attitudes and beliefs are learned suggests a lack of understanding of the impact of living with a mother who has an open "disdain for Jewish people" as described by Sienna and how such messages, beliefs, and attitudes are internalized and passed down during the socialization process (Helms, 2020; Pahlke et al., 2021; Perry et al., 2019; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). For Bailey, growing up in an environment of ethnic-racial segregation as "normal" contributed to her perceptual narrowing due to a lack of interracial contact (Roberts & Rizzo, 2021).

Both demonstrated a lack of awareness of their group membership and the ways that Whiteness and white supremacy are reproduced and maintained regardless of one's intentions (Foste, 2020). This finding supports a similar overlap found by Todd and

Abrams. Further, this finding suggests that some White students are unable to reflect on their social group membership and analyze the cultural presence of white supremacy and White privilege, therefore they are unable to connect how these systems function in their lives and the lives of others. For those raised in diverse communities, these findings support previous findings that exposure to diversity does not equate to understanding and analysis of systemic racial inequalities (Hagerman, 2017; Underhill, 2019) indicating the continued need for understanding White ethnic-racial socialization to assist with strategies on how to counter White hegemony (Ferguson et al., 2022; Hagerman, 2017; Pahlke et al., 2021).

White Racial Identity Development. Previous research has found that clinicians' level of racial identity development was positively correlated with self-reports of their multicultural competence (Middleton et al., 2005). Therefore, White racial identity development (WRID) signifies another important aspect of understanding White students' perspectives. As discussed in chapter two, WRID provides a framework for analyzing Whiteness and racism, which encompasses the psychological processes White people go through in understanding themselves racially, including the behaviors and attitudes held toward other White people and toward BIPOC (Carter et al., 2019; Helms, 2020; Tatum, 1992).

Through the socialization process, racism is internalized in Phase 1 through the covert and overt messages received from family, friends, and media portrayals of BIPOC and includes racial silence, racial evasiveness, and CBRI (Ferguson et al., 2022). In Phase 1 of WRID, an individual may shift from confusion and a lack of understanding of race and the meaning of Whiteness to consciously embracing the racial status quo and

Whiteness (Moffitt et al., 2022). Being a non-linear process one can shift between contact (denial of racism or lack of awareness of the significance of race), disintegration (ambivalence about the significance of race), and reintegration (recommitment to white supremacy; Carter, 2019; Moffitt et al., 2022; Zucker & Patterson, 2018) representing either confusion and a lack of understanding of race and the meaning of Whiteness to one consciously embracing the racial status quo and Whiteness (Moffitt et al., 2022).

Upon some catalysts pushing one toward Phase 2 and the abandonment of racism, one begins to shift from recognizing racism and believing they must save BIPOC demonstrating an assimilationist view to actively exploring the role of systemic racism to becoming racially conscious and challenging systems of oppression moving towards an identity of an antiracist/ White allyship (Ferguson et al., 2022; Moffitt et al., 2022). Phase 2 of WRID consists of pseudo-independent (intellectual awareness of the significance of race), immersion/emersion (reflection and discomfort with the significance of race and what it means to be White), and autonomy (positive racial identity actively rejecting white supremacy actively committing to an antiracist identity (Carter et al., 2019; Moffit et al., 2021; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). As WRID is non-linear an individual can support the beliefs of multiple schemas within Phase 1 and 2, making it possible to progress towards autonomy or regress through the other stages (Helms, 2020; Moffitt et al., 2022; Zucker & Patterson, 2018).

Current research indicates that White parents in Phase 1 of WRID are more reliant on CBRI, egalitarian messages encompassing power and color evasiveness, and racial muteness when choosing whether they would discuss highly publicized racial events with their children than White parents in Phase 2 of White racial identity development

(Ferguson et al., 2022). Those in Phase 1 of WRID were more likely to be silent when it came to discussions of race with their children, had lower multicultural orientation, and were not racially responsive in ways that demonstrated the recognition of the systemic nature of racism (Ferguson et al., 2022). The avoidance of discussions surrounding race and racism (race-mute) is the strategy most practiced by White parents found throughout the literature (Pahlke et al., 2021; Perry et al., 2019; Zucker & Patterson, 2018).

Our results support previous and current literature on the importance of understanding parents' level of WRID as influencing their children's racial attitudes, as indicated by most of the participants in our study reflecting on their childhood when describing their experience in the multicultural counseling course (Ferguson et al., 2022; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). As previous studies have found that White therapists in higher levels of Phase 2 of WRID reported higher levels of self-perceived multicultural competency (Middleton et al., 2005) the results of our study support the need for more research in this area. This study's findings extend those of multicultural counseling competency as most of the participants demonstrated shifts into the mid-level of WRID immersion/emersion (reflection and discomfort with the significance of race and what it means to be White; Carter, 2019; Moffitt et al., 2022; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). These findings indicate that at the undergraduate level, most White students shifted between the schemas in Phase 1 to the lower and mid-levels of Phase 2 pseudo-independent (intellectual awareness of the significance of race and immersion/emersion (reflection and discomfort with the significance of race and what it means to be White; Carter, 2019; Moffitt et al., 2022; Zucker & Patterson, 2018).

These findings support current research suggesting that the racial identity development of most White people may potentially stagnate during early adolescence (Moffit et al., 2021) with most White adults remaining in Phase 1 (Ferguson et al., 2022), and some shifting to the pseudo-independent schema of Phase 2 as the potential last step of their racial identity development (Moffitt et al., 2022). These findings were revealed as several participants described their lack of awareness as to the significance of race, evidenced by the "shelter" they described their communities provided. For participants who were raised in diverse communities, a lack of awareness as to the significance of race was also demonstrated as these participants expressed how the course opened their minds to the experiences and perspectives of BIPOC.

Though raised in proximity to BIPOC, participants descriptions indicated the minimization of racism overlapped with CBRI. For example, Mrs. Akinola indicated that she had not been taught what it means to be White, and Sienna that though her mother held openly prejudicial views toward Jewish people, she was not raised to have prejudiced views. These findings indicate shifts between the lower levels within Phase 1 of WRID, contact, and disintegration. Sienna demonstrated shifts between the contact schema (denial of racism or lack of awareness of the significance of race), in which though she was "friends with everybody, it never got relayed to me, you know?" Through taking the course (i.e. the catalyst) Sienna "discovered" that she has managed to avoid personal involvement in issues affecting BIPOC (Helms, 2020).

The catalyst for Sienna's entrance into the next level of Phase 1, occurred as she acquired more information while being in the course and seeking out information on her own shifting into disintegration (ambivalence about the significance of race) describing

that she is not "…some warrior who's gonna march in the street", to teetering between reintegration (recommitment to white supremacy) to the lower level of Phase 2, pseudo-independent (intellectual awareness of the significance of race). Each catalyst represents a point where intervention is needed as Sienna is developing her multicultural orientation in order to maintain her commitment to expanding her knowledge and shifting into becoming a culturally humble therapist. Shifts between the lower levels within Phase 1 were also demonstrated as Bailey rejected learning about White privilege and white supremacy. For this participant, the schema reintegration, recommitment to white supremacy, and the racial status quo were demonstrated as she rejected her need for multicultural counseling unless she were to move to "inner-city Baltimore."

Shifts between the three schemas in Phase 1 to a shift to the first schema of Phase 2 were demonstrated by Kayla as she described the course as challenging. As White dialectical tension increased, Kayla attempted to reconcile her negative feelings toward "illegal immigrants" which she appeared more open to than in her providing services to members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Kayla's discomfort signals the need for intervention to encourage her with continued movement toward the higher levels of WRID. Her explicit awareness of her biases toward these two REC diverse groups again is a vital inflection point in her need of assistance cultivating empathy and a multicultural orientation to the ethical requirements as a budding culturally competent clinician.

Taken together, these results support the previous research on multicultural training reactance in which uncomfortable feelings experienced as one's worldview is challenged may turn students toward or away from the learning process (King et al., 2019; Lowery, 2020). These findings indicate the need for intervention as students

display resistance or reactance during the multicultural training process (Todd & Abrams, 2011). Acknowledging and validating such experiences as normal and possible to overcome may contribute to countering resistance.

Understanding Whiteness through the "Other." According to Goetz et al. (2020) Whiteness could not exist without its "fabricated other" as it derives its meaning from various forms of non-Whiteness synonymous with exclusion (p. 144). Our findings support Todd and Abrams (2011) findings of the White dialectical tensions of Closeness and connection in Multiracial Relationships, Colorblindness, and the Minimization of Racism. Participants' reliance on descriptions of the BIPOC in their lives when reflecting on their Whiteness demonstrated the hegemonic nature of Whiteness transmitted through the socialization process, normalizing the invisibility of Whiteness by "Othering" BIPOC and other marginalized communities. While unintentional, participants' "Othering" of BIPOC and other marginalized communities using passive language implied that it is "bad" to be different from "us," but we have to love "them" anyway (Miller et al., 2022, p. 35).

In Sienna's description of her daughter's childhood friend with the "coconut skin," her presumption was the children were unaware of ethnic-racial dynamics within society. Ignoring her daughter's awareness of the apparent difference in her own skin color and her friends, Sienna did not appear to understand that children as young as three years old have a basic understanding of both the ethnic-racial groups and the ethnic-racial hierarchy in the society they are socialized in (Baron & Banaji, 2006; Zucker & Patterson, 2018). The assumption that her daughter, as well as the "the girl with the coconut skin," were oblivious to the [racial] "tensions" that existed was again a

demonstration of colorblind ideology as well as White racial ignorance (Neville et al., 2013; DiAngelo, 2018; Foste, 2020).

Mrs. Akinola who acknowledged that she is White, while simultaneously rejecting her Whiteness for a colorblind Christian identity to relate to her Nigerian American husband. This avoidance of recognizing the racial differences between herself and her husband and the unwillingness to acknowledge their different experiences based on race demonstrates the color-evasion practice within colorblind ideology (Neville et al., 2013). Highlighting the power-evasion aspect within colorblind ideology (Neville et al., 2013), Mrs. Akinola believes that her husband has the power to negate his Blackness and any obstacles that may arise due to his Blackness, as she does with her Whiteness and can instead rely on Christian values as his sole identity. In a similar way, Bailey also invoked her Christian identity when attempting to teach her sons about REC differences between themselves and other groups.

Such egalitarian messages fall in line with previous research on the ethnic-racial socialization strategies utilized by White parents (Perry et al., 2019; Gillen-O'Neel et al., 2022). Though well-intentioned, such egalitarian and CBRI messaging reduces awareness of racial bias which may lead to ignorance regarding the implications of ethnicity-race in society (Perry et al., 2019). Including humans with differences in ability, Bailey continued to explain how she and her husband have taught their sons that they should "…never be mean to anyone who has, like, special education needs," explaining that as her sons became more aware of children with various degrees of abilities at their school "we would make it a point to talk about how we were never mean to them, imagine if that was you, the only difference is that you weren't born with a special education need." This

"Othering" of children with "special education needs," and prompting her children to imagine if that was them while in good spirit highlights such differences as something to be avoided rather than explored to gain understanding.

Like the racialized "Other" (Rah, 2021; Topolski, 2018) in which race is primarily associated with BIPOC leaving Whiteness mostly unanalyzed (Goetz et al., 2020) the "Othering" of people with disabilities gives the perception that those with disabilities are deviant or "different" from those who are considered able-bodied (Murdick et al., 2004; Tarvainen, 2019). Such views of bodily differences as individuals with disabilities are perceived as possessing "unwanted differences" from the majority may lead to conscious or unconscious bias and marginalization as such differences are viewed outside the social norm (Murdick et al., 2004; Ekpe & Roach, 2023). Just as Whiteness is seen as the norm and ideal for being a full human, bodily differences defined as disability hold social meaning that one is less than human and therefore occupies an unequal position in society (Tarvainen, 2019). While generic empathy may generate more positive attitudes toward individuals with disabilities (Maftei, 2022), the strongest predictors are indirect or direct exposure, and increased knowledge about those with disabilities (Hellmich & Loeper, 2019; Maftei, 2022), with direct exposure favorably eliminating stereotypes and prejudice (Maftei, 2022).

White Fragility refers to a state experienced by White people in which "even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves" (DiAngelo, 2010, p. 15). Such defensive moves include outward displays of emotions such as guilt, fear, and anger (DiAngelo, 2010). White Fragility also induces behaviors such as cognitive dissonance, distancing oneself from a stress-inducing

situation, silence, and argumentation (DiAngelo, 2010). Bailey's cognitive dissonance was apparent in her dialogue related to "…how most Whites perceive themselves as unbiased, and as admirable as that is it's a barrier for us being able to still see that we came from a racist background and a racist upbringing." She demonstrated an unwillingness to self-reflect on her biases (King et al., 2019) and an unwillingness to understand white supremacy as a system that perpetuates structural power privileges elevating the White collective while simultaneously oppressing members of marginalized communities (DiAngelo, 2018).

Discontentment toward the assumption that a White person is complicit in racism without having "acted" in a racist way is part of Bailey's dissonance as she, like many, is drawn to the good-bad binary view of racism. This display of resistance toward the course content is in line with previous research (King et al., 2019) and demonstrates passive racism, the denial of and apathy toward systems of racial advantage (Roberts & Rizzo, 2021). Rather than focusing on the effects of systems of inequality and their socio-historic significance (DiAngelo, 2010), Bailey demonstrated White Fragility and relied on her individual experiences as opposed to her social group membership as a White person (Todd & Abrams, 2011). There is a sense of victimhood (DiAngelo, 2018; Zembylas & Matias, 2023) being claimed as Bailey viewed how she and her husband have gone out of their way to make their sons aware of how living in a predominantly White community limits their interracial contact, yet there appears to be an avoidance within those discussions of structural inequality and how such inequality is perpetuated. The notion that pointing out surface-level differences in race, such as teaching her sons that "Jesus was a Jew," in essence "Othering" Jesus without acknowledging how such

differences impact the lives of White people and marginalized communities undermines her attempt at teaching her sons to be inclusive.

Overall, the experience of understanding one's own White identity by reaffirming Whiteness and the racial status quo demonstrated all six White dialectics (Todd & Abrams, 2011). As White dialectics is a continuum and demonstrates how one dialectically moves along the continuum (Todd & Abrams, 2011), this was apparent throughout the dialogues in this constituent, highlighting the contradictions that arise as White students attempt to understand one's racialized identity as a White person.

Understanding Whiteness through Historical and Contemporary Racial Events. This study's findings also demonstrated that some participants were able to connect historical race relations to contemporary racial unrest, particularly as witnessed after the murder of George Floyd (Ferguson et al., 2022; James, 2022). According to Guideline 5 of the American Psychological Association's Multicultural Guidelines, the recognition and understanding of historical and contemporary experiences with oppression, power, and privilege are aspirations required for psychologists (APA, 2019). Though there was a lack of analysis of the systemic and institutional barriers that have historically contributed to contemporary racial inequities, this study's findings represent a starting point toward the recognition and comprehension of the role power, oppression, and privilege play in experiences from both a historical and contemporary lens in line with multicultural guidelines (APA, 2019). However, due to the sample size and the demographic of students being those who attend a Christian faith-based institution, these findings may only apply to this demographic.

Understanding Whiteness through Biblical Scripture. As one's ability to recognize that they hold beliefs and attitudes that may influence their clinical conceptualizations, interactions, and perceptions of others is integral to multicultural competency (APA, 2018), so too is one's ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented as it relates to aspects of cultural identity that are crucial to the client (Hook et al., 2016). In maintaining such as stance, the development of cultural humility is important to a clinician's multicultural orientation in which one is expected to maintain their multicultural orientation and humility even when faced with the strain of cultural differences between themself and their client (Davis et al., 2016; Hook et al., 2016).

Understanding and recognizing that identity and how one defines oneself is fluid and complex dynamically interacting is a multicultural guideline psychologists are expected to strive toward (APA, 2018). The findings of this study indicate that when it comes to members of the LGBTQIA+ community students had difficulty reconciling their personal beliefs and values that conflicted with this guideline. Like other studies, this study also revealed a lack of training and skills regarding meeting the needs of LGBTQIA+ members (Arora et al., 2016). Previous research has found that therapist's knowledge about gender and sexual diversity and their attitudes are desirable characteristics (Boroughs et al., 2015). As previous research indicates course content involving gender identity, privilege, and racism or discrimination may be perceived as challenging or threatening to some students' beliefs (Lowery et al., 2020). More research is needed on best practices toward assisting students with reconciling challenges to their beliefs (Burroughs et al., 2015). The need for increased training and skill attainment is

crucial as research indicates that training and increased knowledge improve treatment toward members of the LGBTQIA+ community (Arora et al., 2016).

All participants discussed in this constituent were consciously aware of the bias they held toward the LGBTQIA+ community with several expressing the need for tools on how to manage this conflict to their beliefs. We deem this a crucial area of continued research as demonstrated by Sienna's response to learning that her childhood friend was gay could be interpreted as unintentional bias or as a microaggression, which could negatively affect the therapeutic relationship, posing barriers to effective treatment (Hook et al., 2016; Spann, 2022; Torres et al., 2022; Vasquez, 2007) if such a response occurred within the clinical setting. How such an "innocent" reaction is interpreted by a client regardless of the clinician's intent is important to the therapeutic relationship.

Like her acknowledged awareness of the biases, she holds toward those who immigrate to the U.S. illegally, Kayla was aware of her bias toward the LGBTQIA+ community. While having an awareness of own's own biases is important for improving how one treats individuals within the LGBTQIA+ community (Arora et al., 2016) lacking again was clear guidance on how to reconcile such feelings toward communities one is conflicted about in relation to one's own cultural values and beliefs toward those who may become potential clients. As the researcher, it seemed crucial to include what was shared by the five participants in this constituent as the attitudes expressed are in line with previous research (Arora et al., 2016; McCabe & Rubinson, 2008).

According to Hook and Davis (2012) Christians differ in their convictions regarding issues of importance found within multicultural counseling and social justice movements. A few of these areas include differences in views on how to change social

structures, differences in views toward racial reconciliation, prejudice and racism, and differences in views toward sexual orientation (Hook & Davis, 2012). Particularly, “Prohibitive views toward homosexuality may be difficult to hold in concert with the push in multicultural counseling toward advocating for equal rights…” (Hook & Davis, 2012, p. 104) for the LGBTQIA+ community.

How does one reconcile their own cultural beliefs and attitudes with the guidelines set forth for obtaining multicultural competency? As one such guideline reads, “Psychologists seek to recognize and understand that identity and self-definition are fluid and complex and that the interaction between the two is dynamic... psychologists appreciate that intersectionality is shaped by the multiplicity of the individual’s social context” (APA, 2018, para. 4). Though a therapist may ethically decline to treat a client within the ACA Code of Ethics, they may not terminate or refer a prospective client due to the therapist's own personal values, behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes (ACA, 2014). A potential client's sexual orientation is a protected identity within the ACA (2014) professional qualifications of nondiscrimination. Counselors are, therefore, expected to seek the necessary training in those areas where they run the risk of “imposing their values onto clients, especially when the counselor’s values are inconsistent with the client’s goals or are discriminatory in nature" (ACA, 2014, p. 6).

Sub-Constituent 3: Reflecting on Preparation for Working with REC Diverse Clientele

This study found that participants benefited from the course, indicating that regardless of discomfort with some of the topics all participants found value in taking the course. These findings contribute to the multicultural training reactance literature as they reveal that having one's worldview challenged and the range of emotions ignited is a

normal process toward attaining a multicultural orientation and hence multicultural competency (King et al., 2019; Lowery et al., 2020). To support Clients of Color with not experiencing unintentional bias and racial microaggressions that can occur in counseling negatively affecting the therapeutic relationship and posing barriers to effective practice and treatment (Hays, 2019; Hook et al., 2016; Spann, 2022; Torres et al., 2022) it is imperative that White students and practicing clinicians in training learn the skills necessary toward obtaining multicultural competency, which includes regulating their perspective, lacking arrogance, and having a genuine desire to understand and honor the perspective and cultural identities of their clients (Gafford et al., 2019; Owen et al., 2016).

Previous studies have found that experiencing unpleasant emotions may hinder or stall multicultural development (King et al., 2019; Lowery et al., 2020), however, if managed well at an optimal level unpleasant emotions may spur development (King et al., 2019). The need for skills and tools is a requirement within multicultural competency as one's ability to utilize appropriate therapeutic skills when working with ethnic-racial and culturally diverse groups of people is essential (Chao et al., 2011; Gonzalez-Voller et al., 2020; Vandiver et al., 2021). These findings support the literature on multicultural counseling training and the call for changes in multicultural counseling pedagogy and practices to equip students with the tools and skills needed to become culturally competent (Gonzalez-Voller et al., 2020; King, 2021; Lowery et al., 2020). Lastly, given the online nature of the course, several students described feelings of isolation when attempting to grapple with the difficulty of some course topics on their own implying the

need for pedagogical strategies and curriculum to support online multicultural learners with managing difficult and uncomfortable course content (Chen et al., 2020).

Theoretical Foundations of the Study

Intergroup Contact Theory

Intergroup contact theory states that given optimal conditions, direct exposure to outgroup members can lead to reduced prejudice while increasing positive interactions between marginalized and majority group members based on four criteria: group members having common goals, group members having equal status, intergroup cooperation, and institutional support (Grapin et al., 2019; Hewstone & Swart, 2011; Paluck et al., 2021). Intergroup contact theory was observed throughout the data collection as participants described their childhood experiences related to the families and communities, they were socialized in. Childhood contact, proximity to, or having personal relationships with ethnically and racially diverse people contributed to participants' descriptions of the course in more positive terms than those who described being raised in predominantly White communities. This study supported the theory that having childhood and or current contact with members of the BIPOC community improves attitudes toward outgroup members, makes one more open to experiences, and reduces implicit pro-White bias (Hodson et al., 2018; Kubota et al., 2017).

Antiracism

Antiracist pedagogy utilizes Critical Race Theory (CRT) to critique racism in the U.S. which includes an understanding that racism is inherent and functions as a normal fixture within U.S. society contributing to the production and maintenance of social

inequalities (Davis, 2018; Vasquez & Altshuler, 2017). CRT posits that racism is a hegemonic force within society as it is deeply embedded in the culture of society's institutions which includes educational, political, legal, and economic systems to name a few (Davis, 2018). Antiracist pedagogy seeks to deconstruct Whiteness using a critical Whiteness framework composed of three tenets: 1) at the foundation of racism is Whiteness and this must be understood to understand and disrupt it, 2) Whiteness must be understood to understand how Students of Color are marginalized, and 3) scholars must attend to those who normalize and perpetuate racism (Foste, 2020).

The American Psychological Association (2021) has resolved to become an actively antiracist discipline through culturally response training and by encouraging practitioners to consider the limitations of "White Western-oriented clinical practice" and gaining awareness of other healing traditions centered in Indigenous, cultural, and other non-Western traditions (APA, 2021, pp. 3-4). This study reifies the importance of implementing antiracist pedagogy within the framework of multicultural counseling to support all clinicians, particularly White clinicians, as they make up most of the workforce within psychology with understanding the significance of and willingness to act as agents of social change addressing issues of oppression and promoting client well-being (Mallot et al., 2018).

Biblical Foundations

According to Gench (2022) we are currently living in a "kairos" moment of racial reckoning indicating an opportune moment:

> When the future God has in mind for us struggles towards realization now, demanding decisive action on our parts. The White church cannot be silent at such a moment. It cannot emerge on the other side of it unchanged. It must engage the reality of racism with eyes wide open to painful memories that must be fully exposed. Dangerous memories must be awakened, for *kairos* moments reveal things that have been hidden (p. 39).

Vital to this study is the notion of our being in a kairos moment as we strive toward healing race relations in contemporary U.S. society through racial reconciliation. Racial reconciliation, also known as reconciliation theology, refers to a continuous spiritual process that involves developing primary interracial relationships between White majority group members and members of ethnically and racially marginalized communities, repentance of majority group members, forgiveness from members of ethnically and racially marginalized communities, and justice (Foster, 2020; Yancey, 2002). The goal of racial reconciliation is focused on restoring "broken relationships and systems to reflect God's original intention for all creation to flourish" (Foster, 2020, p. 67).

The concept of reconciliation, the harmonious restoration of broken relationships (Foster, 2020) comes directly from biblical teachings (2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Matthew 5:23-24; Romans 12:18). Specific to humanity's fall into sin which ruptured our relationship with God, this relationship is reconciled through the love and death of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:19; Ephesians 1:17-21; Foster, 2020; Romans 5:8-10) upon which a new creation will be formed (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:13-18). Those involved in the process of reconciliation must be genuine and intentional toward repairing

relationships with those they have become alienated from (2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Genesis 32 3-5; John 3:16; Luke 17; Proverbs 28:13). Scripture provides examples of racial reciliation throughout the ministry of Jesus Christ as he worked toward reconciling relationships between those of different ethnicities calling us all toward the kingdom of God regardless of our demographic location (Acts 17:26; Gench, 2022; Revelations 7:4-9).

In line with biblical teachings, the development of primary interracial relationships between members from different ethnic-racial groups consisting of members from both majority and marginalized communities requires those who are intentionally vested in creating a multiracial community within the church (Yancy, 2002). Racial reconciliation is in direct compliance with biblical teachings (John 4:9; Matthew 5:25-26; 1 Peter 3:8; Revelations 7:9). Those involved in the development of close interracial relationships must be purposeful and committed to overcoming the structural barriers that exist preventing such interactions (Yancey, 2002). Through committed effort toward living in diverse communities and cultivating diverse primary relationships with those of different ethnic-racial backgrounds a new racial understanding is presumed to emerge that acknowledges the sociohistorical legacy of systemic racism, its effects on contemporary society, and resistance toward its continuation (Yancey, 2002).

The cultivation of interpersonal primary relationships by majority group members with those from marginalized communities may assist with majority group members becoming more open toward proactively working toward social reforms for racial justice (Yancey, 2002). With the acknowledgment of structural barriers historically privileging majority group members, racial reconciliation calls for repentance of the White majority

for the historical legacy of systemic racism or "corporate/institutional sin," (Yancey, 2002, p. 101) as opposed to continued denial and ignoring of its sociohistorical significance as demonstrated using colorblind racial ideology (Yancy, 2002). In repenting from the sins of systemic racism and therefore, its byproducts of White privilege and white supremacy repentance is to bring about collective awareness and accountability in recognition of the responsibility White people play in deliberately dismantling systems of ethnic-racial oppression (Yancey, 2002). Repentance is found within biblical teachings (Acts 17:30; 2 Chronicles 7:14; 1 John 1:9; 2 Peter 3:9).

Removing the blindness imposed by institutional and racial sin, Foster (2020) asserts that truth-telling about how White people have collectively created and used the myth of white supremacy for their own interests to the detriment of Communities of Color is a necessary step in racial reconciliation. Therefore, members of the White church are called forth to engage in the reality of racism being open to "the painful memories that must be fully exposed" within memory, both collective and individual (Gench, 2022, p. 39). According to Joslyn-Siemiatkoski (2022) Whiteness must be decentered to "restore the vision of reconciliation of all people with God that is at the heart of the ministry of Jesus Christ" (p.2). Scripture supports truth-telling (Ephesians 4:25; Proverbs 12:22) and not concealing one's transgressions as found in Proverbs 28:13 as those who conceal their transgressions "will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy" (New International Version, 2001).

Racial reconciliation calls on members of ethnic-racial marginalized communities to engage in forgiveness of those who seek repentance (Yancey, 2002). Therefore, BIPOC are called to forgive White majority group members, the sociohistorical effects of

systemic racism, and the contemporary harm inflicted by these systems (Yancey, 2002). As such, Christians of all ethnic-racial and political backgrounds are called to resist systemic racism and their groups' individual interests toward shared multiple self-interests (Gench, 2022; Yancey, 2002). Seeking the good of others outside of our own self-interests along with unselfish love being the root for true forgiveness appears in biblical teachings (1 Corinthians 10:24; 1 Corinthians 13:5). Therefore, prioritizing the restoration of dysfunctional ethnic-racial relationships within racial reconciliation is viewed as more important than the presumed individual rights of majority and marginalized group members (Gench; 2022; Yancey, 2002). Luke 17:3-4, states "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him." Through the repentance of White majority group members and the forgiveness of members within BIPOC communities, all have different yet mutual responsibilities in eliminating racial alienation and systemic racism (Yancey, 2002).

We are called to stand in solidarity, acting together while being of the same mind and attitude as Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:10; Romans 15:5, New International Version, 2001), therefore, justice, the last principle within racial reconciliation, is in line with biblical teachings as demonstrated throughout the ministry of Jesus Christ (John 4; Luke 10). Justice involves our willingness and ability to work together across our ethnic-racial differences, as outlined above. Jesus lived a life of social justice action providing numerous demonstrations of how we are to treat one another and our coming together, particularly toward those who are marginalized within society due to discrimination and bias. Psalm 9:9 states, "The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of

trouble (New International Version, 2001, p. 300), Proverbs 14:31, “He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God” (New International Version, 2001), and Zechariah 7:10, “Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. In your hearts do not think evil of each other” (New International Version, 2001).

Our calling is not only to resist oppression and corporate sin but to name it regardless of persecution or negative reactions, as Jesus did (Gench, 2022). Building bridges across what divides us ethnically, racially, and culturally requires our steadfast commitment to removing our blindness, rejecting sin, and making the ministry of Jesus a reality through racial reconciliation. Romans 5:10, “For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!”

Implications

Burkard and Knox (2004) stated that fundamental to multicultural counseling is “Counselor awareness of racism and oppression in oneself and the effect of racism on others... Without such awareness, therapists' own biases may perpetuate oppression against racial-ethnic minority clients during the psychotherapy process” (p. 387). The current study’s results contribute to the current literature indicating that White students lack understanding of how systemic racism functions in their lives and the lives of BIPOC demonstrated through reliance on colorblind ideology, including the use of racially coded language and the “Other” to understand their White identities. The minimization of racism was demonstrated through reliance on racial ignorance/

innocence and difficulty reconciling one's own personal beliefs that conflicted with some of the topics learned in the course. Findings further indicate that participants had a lack of understanding of how systemic racism and structural inequality, are perpetuated via White privilege and white supremacy. From students' perspectives, hands-on conflict resolution training and role-playing learning how to engage in uncomfortable conversations may support students with feeling confident and equipped to broach discussions related to ethnic-racial and cultural differences that may arise in the client-therapist relationship.

While participants expressed that undergraduate multicultural counseling introduces students to the importance of cultural awareness and differences, they also shared that the course should include a series of courses rather than one course as an undergraduate and one course at the graduate level. For example, program coordinators may consider multicultural counseling as three courses at the undergraduate level and three courses at the graduate level to emphasize multicultural competency as a lifelong learning process which continues beyond graduation. Posing multicultural counseling as a series of classes may also minimize White dialectics supporting White students with understanding what it means to be White and equipping them with the skills required to work through contradictions to their identities that may arise.

We believe that actively acknowledging, validating, and attending to the behavioral, affective, and cognitive responses elicited from course content could assist White students with moving beyond their initial reactions and discomfort. In this way, White students may be more open and receptive to analyzing and understanding the role White privilege and white supremacy play in their lives and the lives of BIPOC. As

previous research notes, college is the first time some White students experience diversity. As such, the information received in a multicultural counseling course may be the first time students have heard such information. Therefore, we believe White students should have a space to attend to and work through the range of emotions they experience in such settings. Also, as multicultural counseling may be the first course some White undergraduate students have taken which challenges their perspectives and worldviews, this study's findings revealed that being confronted with learning about white supremacy, White privilege, and learning tolerance toward the LGBTQIA+ community may be an unrealistic expectation for one course. Therefore, a series of courses could mediate the experience of multicultural training reactance (Dameron et al., 2020).

While participants described multicultural counseling as challenging, frustrating, and some of the content as difficult to read they also found value in taking multicultural counseling describing it as good, insightful, and as enhancing their awareness of diverse cultures and their need to gain more knowledge of diverse cultures. Participants also expressed their need for applicable tools and skills for working with diverse clientele, which according to several participants the course did not go far enough in providing indicating the continued need for multicultural counseling and training, particularly for White students as they continue to make up most of the psychology workforce and given the increased ethnic-racial diversity of the overall U.S. society.

The results of this study further contribute to the multicultural counseling literature as they indicate that rather than shying away from learning about Whiteness, white supremacy, and REC diversity, most White students expressed a desire to learn more about these experiences implying the systemic inequality in our education system as

it pertains to its being centered on the historical perspectives and experiences of White/European Americans (Sleeter, 2011). While calls to decenter Whiteness and decolonize the education system are made within the antiracism literature (Sappleton & Adams, 2022), we acknowledge that Whiteness will never be fully decentered given its continued power as demonstrated by the passing of policies to restrict learning about race, racism, and diverse experiences in public K-12 education (Sappleton & Adams, 2022). Though clinicians are ethically bound to meet multicultural guidelines, so they are better equipped to serve our communities, our findings indicate that waiting until college to do so is a professional setback for all students, particularly White students as they are expected to "grapple with power, privilege, and oppression at the individual and systemic levels" (Chen et al., 2020, p. 120) however our education system ignores "how the social construction of whiteness has systematically been leveraged into a system of inequality leading to differential life outcomes" (Smalling 2022, p. 606) obscuring understandings of the role White people play in the perpetuation of race and racism in contemporary U.S. society.

Limitations

The present study has several limitations. One limitation is the race-of-interviewer effect, which may have affected the participants' level of comfort, trustworthiness, honesty, and openness they experienced when discussing topics surrounding race and racism and openly sharing their views with a Black female interviewer (Cabrera, 2012; Foste & Jones, 2020; Hagerman, 2017; Maxwell & Chesler, 2021; Yeung et al., 2013). While addressing "the elephant" in the room upfront was implemented to mediate this experience, the interracial dynamics present throughout the interviews may have led to

social desirability bias as participants may have obscured their true feelings (Warde et al., 2022) when reflecting on the course revealing a second limitation. Third, moderation bias (Warde et al., 2022) is a limitation. Though the researcher took care to bracket her assumptions before each interview the interviewer may have unintentionally reacted to participants' descriptions of their experiences being in the multicultural counseling course.

A fourth limitation is all participants took the course online which may have impacted their experience in the course. Specifically, several participants mentioned the online nature of the course as well as the short duration of the course. Five, this study did not capture participants' pre- and post-experiences, therefore no comparisons can be made related to increased levels of multicultural competency except those self-reported by the participants during their interview. Six, given the qualitative nature of the study the results are not based on a random sample and are not generalizable. Seven, as the participants are students at a Christian university, their experiences are not generalizable to other undergraduate students. Lastly, no longitudinal data can be gleaned from the study's findings as it took place over two 8-week quarters.

Recommendations for Future Research

The first recommendation for future research is to study both White undergraduate and graduate-level psychology students enrolled in multicultural counseling comparing their experiences. We believe such a study comparing these experiences may assist in better understanding student reactance, engagement, and ability to retain competency given varying levels of professional development. In addition, a

larger study enhancing the current study's methodology to include a mixed methods approach may be beneficial to understanding the effectiveness of multicultural counseling courses. Given previous research related to White students' experiences of gaining a deeper understanding of their White identity, greater comfort, and safety learning in a White students-only White Racial Identity Dialogue course (Maxwell & Chesler, 2021) we recommend a similar approach when it comes to multicultural counseling courses, particularly given the differences found between White students and Students of Color when it comes to self-perceived and client-perceived multicultural competency, skill, knowledge, and awareness (Gonzalez-Voller et al., 2020).

As the multicultural competency of instructors teaching such courses and their training is viewed as crucial, we recommend this as another area for future research, particularly of those teaching such courses online (Burdine & Koch, 2021; Chen et al., 2020). With distance learning continuing to grow the need for more research focused on multicultural counseling education offered in the online environment is needed (Burdine & Koch, 2021; Chen et al., 2020). Research in which biblical scripture may serve as a mediator toward understanding multicultural counseling is another needed area of future research. Lastly, as a Black woman researcher attempting to understand White student perspectives, the use of White dialectics as presented by Todd and Abrams (2011) was useful for understanding the tension and contradictions that arise in White students when taking courses such as multicultural counseling. Further research using White dialectics as intended by Todd and Abrams to understand and intervene with White students promoting White antiracist behavior is recommended, as well as future research applying multicultural orientation vacillation.

Summary

The purpose of this existential-phenomenological investigation was to explore the experience of White undergraduate psychology students enrolled in a multicultural counseling course. The research question addressed was "How do White undergraduate psychology students describe their experience being in a multicultural counseling course." The results of this study revealed three key experiential constituents, reflecting students' dual experience of conflict and appreciation for the knowledge acquired in the course as reflected in Essential Constituents 1 - 3, and interconnected the sub-constituents. The findings indicate that becoming a culturally competent therapist for White students is complex and wrought with a range of emotions, both positive and negative. As their worldviews, attitudes, and beliefs were challenged, some participants were able to reconcile conflicts by applying what they learned in the course, demonstrating movement toward the higher levels of Phase 2 WRID and the development of a multicultural orientation working toward multicultural competency. Others reaffirmed Whiteness and the racial status quo as they vacillated between Phase 1 of WRID to the lower level of Phase 2. Furthermore, the results supported the need for skill attainment to support students with navigating and broaching uncomfortable conversations, tools for overcoming biases toward REC diverse groups, and tools for preparation and the appropriate treatment development for clients of different ethnic-racial and cultural backgrounds.

The study's findings supported and extended the findings of the usefulness of White dialectics as a framework for understanding the process White students go through when attempting to process their racialized identities (Todd & Abrams, 2011). We

recommend further research applying White dialectics, particularly as an intervention, to determine its usefulness further. The results of the study supported the continued need for multicultural counseling courses and training, particularly assisting White students with understanding the implications of their social group membership as members of the dominant ethnic-racial group in U.S. society and the role they play in intentionally and unintentionally perpetuating White hegemony, white supremacy, and White privilege. In understanding their role in its perpetuation, we believe they will understand their role in countering and eradicating its perpetuation. We conclude with these words from research participant Bailey as she explained her view on racial reconciliation using an example of a husband and wife reconciling after saying hurtful things to one another during an argument:

> When you get in each other's head and openly explain why it hurt you and what effect it has on you then you can start to understand why the other person acts and says the things that they do. But until people can get to a place where there is this open dialogue, there's not gonna be a change. And that's exactly how the devil likes it.

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

February 14, 2023

Mona Swallow
Jessica Winn

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY22-23-621 A Phenomenological Exploration of White Undergraduate Students' Perspectives on Multicultural Counseling

Dear Mona Swallow, Jessica Winn,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the following date: February 14, 2023. If you need to make changes to the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit a modification to the IRB. Modifications can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear Student:

As a graduate student in the School of Psychology at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to understand student experiences upon completion of a multicultural counseling course, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years or older, undergraduate psychology students currently enrolled in PSYC 351 Multicultural Counseling and Research Issues. Participants, if willing, will be asked to complete one virtual face-to-face interview upon completion of the course ranging from 60 to 90 mins regarding their experience in the course. Participants will also allow the researcher to review their written coursework as part of the research study. Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

To participate, please contact me at [redacted] for more information and to schedule an interview.

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. After you have read the consent form, please sign the consent document, and return it to me at [redacted].

Participants will receive a $15 dollar Starbucks gift card in appreciation of their time and participation in the study.

Sincerely,

Mona Swallow
Graduate Student
[redacted]

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Please indicate your gender.
    a. Female
    b. Male
    c. Non-Binary
    d. Other (please specify)
    e. Decline to state
2. Please indicate your age range.
    a. 18-25
    b. 26-35
    c. 36-45
    d. 46-55
    f. 56-65
    g. 65 or older
3. What was your grade in the course?
    a. A+, A, or A-
    b. B+, B, or B-
    c. C+, C, or C-
    d. D+, D, or D-
    e. F
4. How would you rate your ability to write research papers
    a. In general, I have A-level writing skills

b. In general, I have B-level writing skills

c. In general I have C-level writing skills

d. In general I have D-level writing skills

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE AND PROMPTS

1. What does multicultural counseling mean to you?
2. How would you describe your experience of being in a multicultural counseling course?
3. Describe the challenges you faced, if any, with being in a multicultural counseling course?

Prompts: (1) Share as much or as little as you want. (2) Talk about ____ if that's what multicultural counseling means to you.

Prompts: (1) Share as much or as little as you want. (2) Talk about ____ if that was your experience.

Prompts: (1) Share as much or as little as you want. (2) If it wasn't challenging for you how does it make you feel to reflect on your experience with multicultural counseling?

Probing Questions

Elaboration probe:

"You mentioned ____ can you tell me more..."

Continuation probe:

"Please tell me more about that..."

Redirecting probes:

"Let's get back to what you said about ____…"