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ABSTRACT

Life events, particularly those which produce racial trauma, are known to shape both the emotional and physical responses of individuals experiencing these occurrences. These responses are known to affect the health of individuals at the center of such trauma. Historically, there has been a dearth of research in the experiences of Black women and the emotional and physical reactions to racial trauma. This project seeks to contribute to help fill this gap to better understand how Black women experience these events and how researchers can help to develop practices to cope and mediate these traumatic events.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

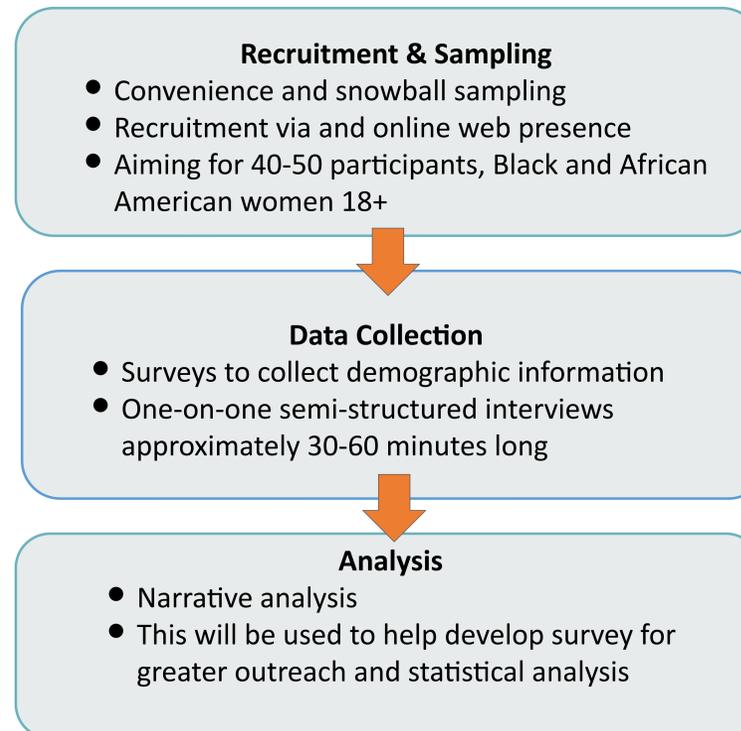
Racial Trauma

- Racial trauma can produce negative health outcomes in individuals
 - Both physical and mental (Anglin et. al., 2014).
- Events not directly experienced can also produce and re-expose individuals to trauma
- Black women experience the intersection of both racism and sexism, which can further promote and compound negative health outcomes (Stevens-Watkins et al., 2014).

Shame Resilience Theory

- Shame is “dominant emotion” of distress signaled by other emotions such as anger, fear, anxiety (Brown, 2006).
- Shame Resilience Theory: framework for coping with shame
 - has been used to help treat other forms of trauma such as sexual violence and substance abuse
- Use Brown’s work surrounding shame to understand emotions behind participant’s lived experiences
- Explore the use of SRT to help cope with racial trauma

PROPOSED METHODS



PRELIMINARY DATA

- Preliminary data consists of pilot interviews
- 6 participants-Black and African American adult women
- Asked about experiences which produced shame and their emotional and physical reactions to the events

"I got sick to my stomach because you know when you start to believe that you know the color of your skin makes that much of a difference that you can't even get a decent job sometimes you know...you realize that it's just because the color of your skin...it's a terrible thing to deal with and it does something to your mindset."

-Participant describing job discrimination

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

Timeline

- Summer-Fall 2020:
 - IRB approval
 - Conducting and transcribing interviews
- Fall/Winter 2020:
 - Finalizing interviews and beginning transcription
- Winter/Spring 2020-21:
 - Finalizing transcription and narrative analysis of interview data
- Spring/Summer 2021
 - based on results, develop survey to reach more participants based on results

Future Work

We hope this work can contribute to the growing body of research on racial trauma to better inform mental health professionals and practitioners.

REFERENCES

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