Racial Socialization and Child Health

Ashaunta T. Anderson, MD, MPH, MSHS
DC-Baltimore Research Center on Child Health Disparities Webinar
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Outline

- Case Introduction
- Racial Socialization Overview
- Parenting Practices
- Systematic Review
- Case Conclusion
Case Introduction

- 15 year old black male
- Sits next to white male on the school bus
- Called racial slur and shoved out of seat 3 times
- A physical fight ensues
- Both boys are arrested
Racial Socialization

Reducing the Health Effects of Racism
Racial Socialization Defined

- The process by which children learn the meaning of race in society, including:
  - Racial/ethnic identity
  - Interactions with others
  - Social standing

- Children learn about race from many sources:
  - Parents
  - Peers
  - Community
  - Media
Common Types of Racial Socialization

- Cultural Pride Reinforcement
- Preparation for Bias
- Promotion of Mistrust
Cultural Pride Reinforcement

- Parental practices that promote children’s cultural, racial, and ethnic pride, either deliberately or implicitly such as:
  - Exposing children to culturally relevant books, artifacts, music, and stories
  - Encouraging children to use their family’s native language
  - Discussing important cultural or historical figures
  - Celebrating cultural holidays
  - Eating ethnic foods
Preparation for Bias

- Alerts children to potential race-based discrimination
  - Bullying in physical threats and social exclusion
  - Lower expectations for school success

- Discusses coping strategies
  - How to interact with authority figures
  - Whom to call for help
  - How to stay engaged and encouraged
  - How to stay safe
Promotion of Mistrust

- Advises children NOT to trust other specific racial and ethnic groups
  - Warning to maintain social distance from whites
  - Immigrant blacks wary of interactions with native-born African Americans
- Emphasizes racial barriers to success
- Does NOT provide coping strategies or advice on how to manage racial discrimination
Racial Socialization in Practice

Preliminary Data on Parenting Practices
Focus Group Results

- 16 focus groups of 114 African American, Latino, and Korean parents of young children
- Common racial socialization strategies
  - Cultural pride reinforcement
  - Preparation for bias
  - Egalitarianism
- Nearly half of parents had already talked to their young child about unfair treatment due to race
- Most parents were unsure of the best strategies for healthy racial socialization
Key Survey Results

Talked to Child About Unfair Treatment Due to Race

- African American
- Latino English
- Latino Spanish
- Korean

Percent

Mothers

Fathers
Demographics of Racial Socialization

- Racial socialization is seen in:
  - Non-whites > whites
  - Married > unmarried parents
  - More educated parents
  - Older > younger parents
  - Mothers > fathers
  - Girls > boys
  - Warmer parent-child relationships
  - Western and Northeast US > South

Racial Socialization and Child Health

Systematic Review
Systematic Review of Racial Socialization and Health

- Used 9 search terms for racial socialization (RS) and health in 6 databases
  - Medline
  - Psycinfo
  - Sociological Abstracts
  - Web of Science
  - Scopus
  - Academic Search Complete
Study Selection

999 records identified through database searching
0 additional records identified through other sources

625 records after duplicates removed

625 records screened

84 full-text articles assessed for eligibility

28 full-text articles excluded, with reasons

56 studies included in qualitative synthesis

59 total studies included in qualitative synthesis

Only 15 studies were longitudinal
## RS and Preschoolers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Number of Studies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African Americans</td>
<td>Better behavior with more cultural pride messages</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>Better behavior with more cultural pride messages</td>
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<tr>
<td>African Americans</td>
<td>Strong African American Families Study: Preparation for bias &amp; cultural pride messages related to delayed initiation of alcohol use &amp; sexual activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>African Americans</td>
<td>Fathers and Sons Program: Racial socialization associated with increased intentions to avoid violence</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Americans</td>
<td>Racial socialization and preparation for bias linked to decreased aggression &amp; delinquency related to discrimination</td>
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### Race/Ethnicity and Outcome

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<td>Latinos</td>
<td>Ethnic socialization associated with better behavior and decreased effects of discrimination</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asians</td>
<td>Cultural socialization and pluralism seen with decreased externalizing problems</td>
<td>1</td>
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### RS and Adolescents

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<td>African Americans</td>
<td>Mental health better with cultural pride, worse with promotion of mistrust, &amp; buffered against discrimination with preparation for bias messages</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Americans</td>
<td>Higher cultural pride &amp; preparation for bias linked to less distress with discrimination &amp; lower levels linked to more distress &amp; multiple sexual partners</td>
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## RS and Adolescents

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<td>Cultural pride and preparation for bias messages observed with decreased impact of depression on delinquency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>Ethnic socialization related to more family conflict and risky health behaviors in teen mothers living with their mothers</td>
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RS Data Summary – All Studies

- Studies with observational designs, African American adolescent samples, and mental and behavioral health outcomes overrepresented in the racial socialization literature.
- With rare exceptions, cultural pride was associated with improved mental and behavioral health outcomes across age and racial and ethnic groups.
- Similar outcomes were context-dependent for preparation for bias and negative for promotion of mistrust and mainstream culture.
Future Research Areas

- More rigorous study designs
  - Prospective, longitudinal studies
- Expand breadth of samples with
  - Non-black Race/ethnicity
  - Younger age groups
  - Range of socioeconomic status
- Include physical health outcomes
- Consider contexts of parenting style and neighborhood characteristics
Case Conclusion

- Released on bond with suspension
- Receives a Facebook “apology”
- Asked to sign a “stay away” agreement
- School administration poorly responsive
- No policy on racial harassment among students
RS Application to the Case

- Cultural pride reinforcement helps counter internalized racism
- Preparation for bias helps buffer against negative impact of experiencing discrimination
- Other RS strategies are coping strategies
  - Spiritual and religious coping
  - Extended kinship caring
- Avoiding promotion of mistrust decreases racial bias in the community
RS and the Community

- Schools may adopt **formalized protocols** for managing racially motivated violence on campus.
- Child-serving institutions may promote **conscious racial socialization** to counter unconscious bias.
- These data may guide **anticipatory guidance** and provision of **trauma-informed care** in the clinical setting.
- Everyday citizens are encouraged to act as **allies for children** affected by racism in our society.
Thank You

Community Partners
- Black Infant Health
- Bienvenidos
- Children’s Institute, Inc.
- Esperanza Community Housing Corp.
- Great Beginnings for Black Babies, Inc.
- Healthy African American Families, II
- Koreatown Youth and Community Center, Inc.
- L. A. Care
- Onnuri Church
- R. F. Kennedy Community Schools
- Spiritt Family Services

Academic Partners
- Paul Chung
- Kenneth Wells
- Greer Sullivan
- Loretta Jones
- David Kennedy
- Aurora Jackson
- Heather Patel
- Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Program

Questions?