Black Supervisors Matter: The Experiences of Black Supervisors Working Cross-Racially with White Supervisees

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BLACK SUPERVISORS MATTER:
THE EXPERIENCES OF BLACK SUPERVISORS WORKING CROSS-RACIALLY WITH
WHITE SUPERVISEES

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of
Montclair State University in partial fulfilment
of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by
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August 2020

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DISSERTATION APPROVAL

We hereby approve the Dissertation

BLACK SUPERVISORS MATTER:
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WHITE SUPERVISEES

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ABSTRACT

BLACK SUPERVISORS MATTER:
THE EXPERIENCES OF BLACK SUPERVISORS WORKING CROSS-RACIALLY WITH
WHITE SUPERVISEES

By Candice R. Crawford

As the counseling field continues to become more diverse (CACREP, 2018; NSF, 2016), there is an increase in literature that explores the cross-cultural or cross-racial interactions in counseling and supervision. However, the literature is scarce with research that focuses on the Black supervisor working cross-racially, with literature mainly focusing on the White supervisor working cross-racially or cross-culturally (Constantine, 2007; Ratts, Singh, Butler, Nassar-McMillan, & McCullough, 2016; Wong, Wong, & Ishiyama, 2013). Due to the paucity of research exploring cross-racial interactions in supervision from the perspective of the Black supervisor, this study served to address the gap in literature. A general qualitative research design was applied to answer the research question: How do Black supervisors working cross-racially with White supervisees describe their experience in supervision? This study employed two rounds of semi-structured interviews with the 12 participants who identified as Black, completed a supervision course in a CACREP-accredited program, had at least one year of supervisory experience, and have worked with a White supervisee. Utilizing Critical Race Theory as a theoretical guide to analyze the data, the researcher developed three themes: “I Can’t Run from Being Black:” The Salience of Racial Identity Amongst Black Supervisors; “I Have to Make People Feel Safe:” Methods and Precautions Taken to Maintain Safety in Supervision; and “Is It Because I’m Black?” Perceptions and Impact of Race and Racism. These themes all underscore the importance of race in supervision for the Black supervisors. A discussion of the
results, implications for counselor education, and suggestions for future research are also presented.

*Keywords:* cross-racial supervision, Critical Race Theory
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As I conclude this acknowledgement section with tears in my eyes, I just have to say my
heart is so full. These statements don’t do my feelings justice because there is simply so much
more that I could say. Just know that I have felt the love and support and will always carry that
with me. I love you all!
DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother who has given so much of herself to provide for me and my sister. All of your hard work has not gone unnoticed. This is for you! I see you! I honor you! I love you!
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

According to the American Counseling Association’s (2014) *Code of Ethics*, counselors are to promote and advocate for multicultural competence in counseling and supervision. Multicultural competence, as it relates to counseling and supervision, means being aware of the cultural differences in the counseling and supervisory processes. In addition, counselors and supervisors should be able to address the cultural differences and/or similarities within the counseling supervisory relationships in sessions (Burkard et al., 2006). According to the National Science Foundation (NSF, 2016), the numbers of racial and ethnic minorities in social sciences and psychology fields are increasing. For example, in 2016, Blacks/African Americans represented 11.96% and 10.77% of bachelor’s degrees earned in psychology and social sciences, respectively, whereas in 2010, Blacks/African Americans had represented only 11.32% and 9.91% of bachelor’s degrees earned in psychology and social sciences, respectively (NSF, 2016). Furthermore, according to the annual vital statistics of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), racial and ethnic minorities (non-Caucasian/non-White) represent around 33% of students within accredited counseling programs (CACREP, 2017).

As the counseling and counseling supervision fields continue to grow, there is an increasing number of cultural and racial minorities entering those fields as counselors, supervisors, and even as clients receiving counseling services. Differences, whether cultural, racial, or religious, must be addressed and acknowledged to provide effective and appropriate counseling services and supervision (Crockett, 2011). Because of the percentage of racial and ethnic minorities in counseling programs, the likelihood of cross-cultural and/or cross-racial
relationships is common. These diverse relationships are important to investigate as the demographics of the counseling field continue to shift.

In recent years, cross-racial and cross-cultural studies in counseling and supervision have been more prevalent in the literature (Constantine, 2007; Ratts et al., 2016; Wong, Wong, & Ishiyama, 2013). There is an increasing acknowledgement of the importance of addressing cultural differences between the dyads in either counseling or supervision. In addition, there is an increasing awareness of racial differences within counseling and supervision settings. Nevertheless, regarding counseling supervision, there is a paucity of research in the counseling literature that explores the cross-racial relationship between the Black supervisor and the White supervisee. There is literature, however, that focuses on the White supervisor working with supervisees of color (Chang, Hays, & Shoffner, 2003; Constantine & Sue, 2007; Hutson, 2003). Also, there are other cross-racial and cross-cultural dynamics where the supervisor and counselor are from different cultural backgrounds, but the supervisor is of the dominant cultural group (Priest, 1994). Researchers who have examined the effectiveness of cross-cultural or cross-racial supervision tend to focus on the perspectives of the supervisees (Ancis & Marshall, 2010; Burkard et al., 2006). To develop programs and curricula for supervisors and to enhance cultural competence for supervisors-in-training, it is important to understand cross-racial and cross-cultural dynamics in supervision. There are greater insights into cross-cultural supervisory relationships in a broader sense, but fully understanding cross-racial supervision is not yet possible.

It is critical to differentiate cross-racial dynamics from cross-cultural relationships because of the overt differences between the supervisor and supervisee. Some identities may not often be apparent (e.g., religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status), at least initially, but
race is one identity that can be more difficult to mask. People can judge perceived race upon first
glance, regardless of if being Black means that one identifies as African American or Afro-
Caribbean, or if being White means that one identifies as German American or Irish. Race is
critical to note because although there are often judgments made based on people’s cultures and
ethnicities, the immediate recognition of someone belonging to the White or Black racial group
can allow for individuals to formulate certain (mis)conceptions about another. These
misconceptions or disparities can occur in counseling, supervision, and counselor education as a
whole and can impact the processes in these settings.

The majority of counselor education programs in the United States are comprised of
predominantly White students (CACREP, 2019; Haskins et al., 2013). However, there is a
growth in the number of racial minority students enrolling in social science programs (NSF,
2016), which include master’s and doctoral level counseling and counselor education programs.
Because counselor education programs consist of predominantly White students (Haskins et al.,
2013), courses are geared toward that particular population (Haizlip, 2012). Often, multicultural
courses and textbooks focus on ways in which the majority (White counselors) can effectively
work with minority clients. Moreover, in supervision courses, there are readings that relate to
how to work specifically with minority supervisees (Haizlip, 2012). The curriculum is not aimed
at providing an understanding of how to work with clients or supervisees who represent the
racial majority, particularly if the supervisor represents a minority population. With the increase
in minority students, it is important to understand how counselor educators teach supervision
courses and if the content is sufficient for supervisors-in-training across races.

Because there is a parallel between counseling and supervision (Tracey, Bludworth, &
Glidden-Tracey, 2012), what can often occur in the counseling session is very similar to what
may occur in supervision. Henfield, Owens, and Witherspoon (2010) examined the experiences of Black doctoral students in counselor education programs. In their findings, the authors wrote how Black counseling students did not feel adequately prepared to work with White clients (Henfield et al., 2010). Furthermore, Haskins, Phelps, and Crowell (2015) explored the relationships of Black pre-service counselors with White clients and found that Black counselors’ authenticity was challenged where Black counselors felt that they had to code switch or be the model minority. Similarly, Black counselors reported that they experienced stereotypes such as White individuals assuming Black counselors know about gangs or that Black counselors listened to a particular type of music (Haskins et al., 2015). To that end, examining the experiences of Black counselors and their preparedness to work with White clients raises the inquiry of how adequately prepared Black supervisors are to work with White supervisees.

In a supervisory relationship, there are elements of power and influence that are sometimes inevitable (Hernandez & McDowell, 2010). Considering the intersection of race, the Black supervisor provides a unique perspective. In addition, there are components of oppression and privilege that might unfold within the cross-racial supervisory context due to historical events incited by race. Given our current and historical societal climate where Black individuals have not been viewed as equals to their White counterparts (Tatum, 2017), it is noteworthy to explore the dynamics of Black supervisors working with White supervisees in which the Black supervisor holds power in the supervisory context. There is literature discussing the cross-racial relationship and possible critical incidents that can occur within the supervisory relationship (Schroeder, Andrews, & Hindes, 2009). However, the literature tends to lend its focus to the cross-racial relationship as it relates to the minority supervisee and a supervisor of the majority race.
Statement of the Problem

In previous cross-racial supervision studies, mainly on White supervisors working with racial and ethnic minority supervisees, researchers noted several themes of these relationships. Themes included working alliance, racial microaggressions, racial identity, cultural competence, and barriers to racial dialogues (Crockett & Hays, 2015; Haskins et al., 2013; Henfield et al., 2010; Schroeder et al., 2009; Tracey et al., 2012; White-Davis, Stein, & Karasz, 2016). The focus of cross-racial dynamics in supervision tends to address White supervisors working with supervisees of color (Chang et al., 2003; Constantine & Sue, 2007; Hutson, 2003).

Most CACREP-accredited counselor education programs are within predominantly White institutions (West & Moore, 2015). Therefore, there is no scarcity of White counselors being trained. On the other hand, the percentage of students of color enrolling in counseling programs is approximately 30% to 33% (CACREP, 2018). The percentages of students of color are lower than White individuals in counseling programs currently. However, with the percentage of students of color in counseling programs growing, there are increased chances for Black counselors to train or supervise their White counterparts in the field. There are limited cross-cultural training resources to prepare supervisors of color, specifically Black supervisors, to supervise White counselors and counselors-in-training (Haskins et al., 2015).

The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES, 2011) outlined best practices for supervisors in their “Best Practices in Clinical Supervision” document. Counselor educators and supervisors are charged to abide by best practices, especially as they relate to supervision training and preparation (this is further explored later in this chapter, as well as in chapter two). The dearth of research on the Black supervisor and the dated research on cross-
rational supervision can potentially pose challenges in upholding the best practices in clinical supervision.

**Research Question**

This study explored racial differences affecting the work of the Black supervisor and the White supervisee from the perspective of the Black supervisor. The differences and the dynamics, including power and privilege, between the Black supervisor and the White supervisee may influence or shape supervisory practices and/or the supervisory relationship. Supervisory practice refers to the techniques, skills, ability to build rapport, and orientations that the supervisor utilizes in supervision. The following research question guided the study: How do Black supervisors working cross-racially with White supervisees describe their experience in supervision?

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of Black doctoral-level counselor supervisors working with White counselor supervisees, either at the master’s or doctoral level. Through a general qualitative design, this study aims to understand the unique challenges that Black supervisors may face in working in cross-racial relationships, specifically with White supervisees.

**Significance and Need for the Study**

Cultural competence is essential in counseling and supervision, especially in cross-cultural supervisory relationships between a Black supervisor and a White supervisee. Due to the increase of racial minorities entering the counseling field as clients, counselors, and/or supervisors (Haizlip, 2012), it is crucial to understand what issues the racial minority population might face within this field. There are numerous studies addressing the needs of clients of color and how counselors can effectively work with and provide them with adequate services (Malott
There is a slow yet steady increase in the number of studies that address counselors of color and their experiences in the field (Haskins et al., 2015; Marbley, 2004). However, there has been relatively little research focused on the racial minority supervisor, particularly the Black supervisor.

The Black supervisor is a unique population to identify and address, given the historical and current societal climate where Black individuals are often viewed differently than their White counterparts. Blacks in the United States are often viewed as having less power than majority populations, as evidenced by historical events such as slavery, segregation, Jim Crow laws, and underrepresentation in policy-making arenas, to name a few. The intersections of being a racial minority and being a supervisor pose an interesting concept to explore, considering that being a supervisor offers “supervisory power.” Therefore, being in a position of power in the supervision setting affects not only the Black supervisor’s experience but also the supervision experience as a whole. An exploration of this intersection of race and power can shed insight into the counseling field, in that educators can be more prepared in training Black students who are preparing to be supervisors. In addition, a focus on these distinct experiences can provide future Black supervisors with information and resources on what to expect from cross-racial supervisory relationships and to understand how it can affect their supervisory practice. Understanding how to combat the challenges in the cross-racial relationship is important, and answering the aforementioned research question may benefit Black supervisors and counselor education programs.

It is essential that counselor educators are preparing supervisors to be effective and competent leaders in their field. Supervisors who are not trained adequately to know how to
address racial or cultural differences within the supervisory context may encounter problems. Furthermore, supervisors who do not address racial or cultural differences may not effectively meet their ethical obligations to (a) model effective cultural competence (ACES, 2011) and (b) adequately facilitate the competence of their supervisees (ACA, 2014; ACES, 2011). Cross-racial or cross-cultural supervision training for the supervisor of color is equally important, as the literature currently fails to highlight the perspectives of the Black supervisor or the supervisor of color. White counselors and supervisors have the potential to be more prepared professionally than their counselor or supervisor of color peers (Haskins et al., 2015). Counselors, counseling supervisors, and counseling faculty members inadvertently focus on working with minority clients than minority supervisors (Haskins et al., 2015), which leads to better preparation for White students in counseling programs. In addition to enhancing the counselor education curriculum, it is hoped that this study will inform training for counselor supervisors, particularly Black counseling supervisors.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory (CRT) grounded the present study. This theoretical framework allows researchers to examine the intersections of race and power in particular (Hylton, 2012). These intersections are important to examine because of the relationship between the race of the supervisor and their “supervisory power.”

Founded in response to the U.S. Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, CRT was founded on the basis that race and racism and other forms of oppression affect the lived experiences of people of color (Association for the Study of Higher Education [ASHE], 2015b). CRT is relevant to highlight this study’s focus on the experiences of Black supervisors. CRT as a framework
challenges the “master narrative” (ASHE, 2015b, p. 37), which is the narrative of White individuals and their experiences (Crenshaw & Gotanda, 1996).

Tenets of CRT include the permanence of racism, counter-storytelling, interest convergence theory, intersectionality, Whiteness as property, critique of liberalism, and a commitment to social justice (ASHE, 2015a). CRT is explained and the tenets are deconstructed in chapter two. Haskins and Singh (2015) discussed how five tenets of CRT can be applied in counselor education curricula for counselor training. The tenets also help illuminate potential issues of inequity within the supervisory relationship between the Black supervisor and the White supervisee.

**Chapter Summary**

The experiences of Black supervisors working cross-racially with White supervisees can provide insight into how Black supervisors form or shape their supervisory practice. Qualitative research fills the gap in the literature. The findings provide Black supervisors with ways to better understand their experiences when working cross-racially in supervision. Moreover, the hope is that the findings will aid counselor education programs to develop curricula that are inclusive of supervisors of various backgrounds. Chapter two provides an in-depth review of the literature related to cross-racial dynamics in supervision, potential issues in cross-cultural and cross-racial supervision, racial identity development, and CRT. The third chapter provides an overview of the method and design of the study as well as a clear statement of the research question, detailed description of the participants, and procedures for the study. In chapter four I will discuss the findings of the study, leading to the final chapter in which I will interpret the findings and address implications, limitations, and directions for future research.
Definitions of Terms

In the literature, authors often use terms interchangeably. To not conflate ideas or terms, this section lays out the specifics of particular concepts.

Race

Race is defined as the physiological or physical appearance of individuals, which is categorized into several groups: Black, White, Asian, American Indian, or Native Hawaiian (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Race is a societal construct. Milton M. Gordon (1964) described race as concentrations of gene frequencies that make up our traits, which are confined to skin color and hair form. However, other physiological traits can also contribute to race identification.

Culture

Culture is defined as the set of values and beliefs of a particular group of people. Culture also includes identities related to the Hays (2008) ADDRESSING model, which includes: age, developmental disability, (acquired) disability, region/spirituality, ethnicity and race, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, indigenous group membership, national origin, and gender.

Cultural Minority

Researchers generally refer to those belonging to the majority group as White Americans who are assumed to be heterosexual, Judeo-Christian, middle class, and descendants of White-Europeans (La Roche, Fuentes, & Hinton, 2015). La Roche et al. (2015) defined the term cultural minority to refer to “ethnic or racial minorities and others who differ from White Americans in relationship to the dominant cultural characteristics” (p. 184).
Supervision

Supervision refers to the relationship dyad between a counselor/counselor-in-training and a more advanced counselor, in which the skills, techniques, and orientation(s) of the counselor/counselor-in-training are assessed by a more advanced counselor, also known as the supervisor. Bernard and Goodyear (2019) defined clinical supervision as the signature pedagogy for mental health professionals.

Supervisory Practice

In this study, supervisory practice refers to the interventions, skills, techniques, and orientations the supervisor utilizes throughout the supervisory relationship.

Cross-Racial Supervision

In this study, cross-racial supervision refers to the dynamics between a supervisor and a supervisee of different races, regardless of culture.

Cross-Cultural Supervision

Cross-cultural supervision refers to the dynamics between a supervisor and a supervisee of different cultures or groups, which can include differences in race, religion, ethnicity, and language (Leong & Wagner, 1994). Oftentimes, the terms cross-racial and cross-cultural supervision are used interchangeably in the literature (Schroeder et al., 2009). Although there are strong connections between the two, for the purpose of this study, culture and race are differentiated.

Parallel Process

Parallel process is the concept that what occurs in the supervisory context between the supervisor and the supervisee is similar to what takes place in the counseling context between the
supervisee and the client. Crowe, Oades, Deane, Ciarrochi, and Williams (2011) wrote that what occurs in supervision is an extension of the relationship that the supervisee has with the client.

**Microaggressions**

*Microaggressions* is defined as the subtle and unintentional forms of racial discrimination (Nadal et al., 2014). Microaggressions occur in a variety of ways and are often overlooked. An example of a microaggression would be, “I wonder why she wears her hair like that. I do not think it looks professional” in regard to describing a person of color wearing natural hair.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter aims to provide a thorough literature review of critical topics pertaining to cross-racial supervision between the Black supervisor and the White supervisee. These critical topics include an overview of supervision and its processes, racial identity development, cross-racial dynamics in supervision and counselor education, and the theoretical framework guiding this study, Critical Race Theory (CRT).

Supervision

It is vital for counselors and counselors-in-training to receive adequate supervision in concert with clinical practice. Supervision aids in improving and challenging the counselor’s clinical skills and techniques to provide effective counseling to clients. As in many professions, supervision is understood as the oversight of the functioning and responsibilities within that particular profession or field (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). In counseling, the definition of clinical supervision has varied, but Bernard and Goodyear (2019) used their modified 1992 definition of clinical supervision as: “an intervention provided by a more senior member of a profession to a more junior colleague or colleagues who typically (but not always) are members of that same profession” (p. 9). They stated that the supervisory relationship between the senior and junior members of the counseling profession is hierarchical in nature and extends over a period of time. The supervisory relationship enhances a junior person’s professional functioning, while simultaneously monitoring the services that junior-level people (supervisee) provide to the clients they serve. The more senior person (supervisor) of the supervisory relationship also acts as the gatekeeper of the junior member into the field (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). The supervisor encourages the supervisee to be an effective counselor through training and guidance (Ramos-Sanchez et al., 2002). Bernard and Goodyear (2019) stated that supervision is “an
instrumental goal that works in the service of making the supervisee a better therapist” (p. 17) and fosters the supervisee’s competence.

In clinical supervision, expectations of the supervisor and the supervisee are distinct and help both individuals in the supervisory dyad to be accountable to their responsibilities. The expectations of clinical supervision differ from administrative supervision. Administrative supervisors may focus on the “efficiency of delivery of counseling services,” whereas clinical supervisors focus on the improvement of the application of counseling theory and techniques when working with clients (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019, p. 350). The clinical supervisor must possess competence and have received training, and in some cases certifications (e.g., Approved Clinical Supervisor credential) to supervise counselors. However, there is a lack of formal training of counselors in clinical supervision (Falender, Burnes, & Ellis, 2013). An experienced counselor is not always an effective supervisor (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). Nelson et al. (2006) discussed the need for further exploration of supervisor training processes.

Oftentimes, the supervisor will receive oversight of the supervision (from one’s own supervisor) to ensure competence. Moreover, the supervisee is expected to practice clinical skills, reflect on those skills, and identify what may impede those skills in counseling. Supervisees can develop a heightened sense of “self-awareness of behaviors and motivation within the counseling session,” “consistency in the execution of counseling interventions,” and “autonomy” (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019, p. 50). Understanding the expectations of the supervisor and the supervisee in supervision provides a basis of how to assess the relationship of a cross-racial supervisory dyad.
Best Practices in Supervision

To further understand counseling supervision and its processes, it is beneficial to explore best practices in supervision. The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES, 2011) delineated best practices in clinical supervision as a guideline for counselor educators and supervisors conducting supervision. ACES highlighted the following tasks as best practices: (1) initiating supervision, (2) goal setting, (3) giving feedback, (4) conducting supervision, (5) the supervisory relationship, (6) diversity and advocacy considerations, (7) ethical considerations, (8) documentation, (9) evaluation, (10) supervision format, (11) the supervisor, and (12) supervisor preparation (ACES, 2011). While all of these best practices are critical for effective supervision between the supervisor and the supervisee, four tasks are particularly pertinent to this research study: the supervisory relationship, diversity and advocacy considerations, the tasks of the supervisor, and supervisor preparation.

In *Best Practices in Clinical Supervision*, ACES (2011) emphasized the importance of the supervisory relationship and how the relationship aids in the development of the working alliance between the supervisor and the supervisee. The supervisory relationship is foundational to the functionality of the supervisory process. Racial differences between the supervisor and the supervisee may affect the supervisory relationship (Brown, 2009), which in turn can impact the experiences of Black supervisors working with White supervisees.

Likewise, under diversity and advocacy considerations, the supervisor is expected to introduce and address multicultural considerations in their approach to supervision (ACES, 2011). The supervisor encourages the supervisee to infuse diversity in the supervisee’s work with clients, as the supervisor works with the supervisee to help supervisees develop knowledge on
issues of culture, power, and privilege (ACES, 2011). Exploring these issues can facilitate supervisees’ infusion of diversity issues in working with clients.

Furthermore, as it relates to the tasks of the supervisor and supervisor preparation, the supervisor is expected to be competent in providing clinical supervision and “possesses a range of knowledge and skills in working with diverse supervisees” (ACES, 2011, p. 14). These specific practices help to conceptualize the work of the Black supervisor working with the White supervisee, as there can be numerous discussions of multicultural matters within the supervisory context. Facilitating multicultural discussions in supervision may not be an easy feat but a necessary one that supervisors most often initiate (Brown, 2009; Crockett, 2011; Falender et al., 2013; Ladany et al., 2013; Sukumaran, 2016). The conversation can shape how Black supervisors interact with White supervisees, which could influence how the supervisors form their supervisory practices and define the working alliance between the supervisor and the supervisee.

Working Alliance

To effectively develop a supervisory relationship in which the supervisee is able to implement learned skills with the client, there must be a strong working alliance. Bordin (1983) defined the working alliance as the agreed-upon goals between the supervisor and the supervisee, the agreed-upon tasks between the dyad, and the bond that they form during supervision. These agreed-upon goals allow for less conflict to occur during supervision (Ramos-Sanchez et al., 2002). The supervisory working alliance is just as important as the therapeutic alliance between the counselor (supervisee) and the client. It is presumed that a stronger working alliance is conducive to supervision outcomes (Ladany, Mori, & Mehr, 2013; Powers, 2008). In addition, the supervisory working alliance has been linked to outcomes for individuals in the supervisory
dyad (Gnilka, Chang, & Dew, 2012). Ladany et al. (2013) conducted a study of doctoral-level psychologists and their experiences in supervision. They determined that the development of a strong supervisory alliance is one of the qualities for an effective and highly competent supervisor. The working alliance remains to be explored thoroughly within cross-racial supervisory dyads, particularly dyads of Black supervisors and White supervisees.

Bernard and Goodyear (2019) explained that the working alliance is a means of framing supervision to achieve supervisory goals. There are a number of factors or predictors that contribute to the overall working alliance between the supervisor and the supervisee. Bernard and Goodyear (2019) identified supervisor factors, supervisee factors, and supervision processes that can dictate the strength of the working alliance. Pertinent supervisor factors may include supervisor self-disclosure and the ability to form secure, healthy attachments (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). For example, self-disclosure by the supervisor often leads to positive effects between the supervisor and the supervisee (Ladany et al., 2013). In addition, supervisor and supervisee attachment styles, as it relates to Bowlby’s (1983) attachment theory, can affect the overall connection between the supervisor and the supervisee. For instance, Gunn and Pistole (2012) found that high supervisor attachment security was a strong predictor of rapport and supervisor support. Examples of supervisor attachment security included the tolerance of ambiguity and openness to new information (Gunn & Pistole, 2012).

The supervisee’s level of stress or anxiety, as mentioned by Bernard and Goodyear (2019), can also affect the outcome of the working alliance. Supervisees’ general anxiety can hinder the work being done in supervision, as it can affect skill development, supervisees’ self-efficacy, and supervisees’ ability to be helpful to their clients (Kuo, Connor, Landon, & Chen, 2016). Although anxiety can serve as a hindrance, supervisee anxiety can also be a motivator in
supervision and potentially enhance the supervisee’s performance (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019; Kuo et al., 2016). Nevertheless, it is important that the supervisor can monitor and evaluate the supervisees’ anxiety or stress level (Gnilka et al., 2012). The chance to address the supervisees’ anxiety can allow for a stronger connection between the supervisor and the supervisee. To effectively address supervisee anxiety, it is suggested that supervisors receive adequate clinical supervision training, use assessments and contracts with the supervisee, and develop a strong working alliance (Kuo et al., 2016). When appropriate, effective training would help prepare supervisors to assess supervisee anxiety along with the utilization of scales (Kuo et al., 2016), such as the Anticipatory Stress Anxiety Scale (Liddle, 1986). Furthermore, a strong working alliance can increase supervisee satisfaction and reduce supervisee stress levels (Kuo et al., 2016).

Likewise, the chance to frankly discuss the supervisor and supervisee race and ethnicity is a determinant of the working alliance outcome (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). Discussing racial and ethnic differences or similarities leads to stronger working alliances between the supervisor and the supervisee (Gatmon et al., 2011). The aforementioned supervisory factors (e.g., supervisor self-disclosure, supervisor attachment, supervisee level of anxiety) are specific to the processes that can occur in cross-racial supervision. These antecedents can serve to forecast the relationship between the Black supervisor and White supervisee.

**Supervisee disclosure and its impact on working alliance.** In an exploration of supervisees’ perceptions of working alliance and the level of their nondisclosure in supervision, Hutman (2015) found that a poor working alliance between the supervisor and the supervisee included negative feelings directed at supervisors and supervision as a whole. Gunn and Pistole
(2012) also found that a strong supervisory working alliance supports supervisees’ ability to engage in self-disclosure, which leads to attaining other learning and supervisory goals.

Hutman (2015) utilized the Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory and the Supervisee Nondisclosure Scale, along with the Supervisory Multicultural Competence Inventory, to study the impact of supervisors’ multicultural competence and the supervisory working alliance on supervisees’ non-disclosure. The study was conducted with 221 master’s and doctoral-level trainees across counseling psychology, clinical psychology, social work, marriage and family therapy, school counseling, counselor education, and mental health counseling programs. Hutman (2015) found that supervisees’ perceptions of a strong working alliance were inversely correlated to supervisees’ non-disclosure. The supervisees offer different perspectives of the supervisory working alliance within a cross-racial supervisory relationship and its impact on the supervisor’s experience.

Gunn and Pistole (2012) investigated supervisee attachment style to the supervisor and supervisee disclosure in supervision as mediated by the supervisory working alliance. The researchers hypothesized that the supervisor attachment and disclosure in the relationship would be fully mediated by the supervisory working alliance (Gunn & Pistole, 2012). Gunn and Pistole’s (2012) results indicated that “trainee supervisor attachment security and disclosure in supervision was in fact fully mediated by the supervisory alliance rapport and client focus” (p. 234). When trainee supervisor attachment security was higher, the working alliance was also higher. There were also higher rates of self-disclosure in supervision by the trainee.

From these studies, implications include supervisors working to maintain positive working alliances with their supervisees and creating a climate in which supervisors can have open discussions about their relationship, including power differentials (Gunn & Pistole, 2012;
Hutman, 2015). Therefore, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to institute a positive working alliance where discussions on multicultural issues and power differentials can be explored in an effective way.

**Cultural competence and working alliance.** Estrada, Frame, and Williams (2004) postulated that supervisors are responsible for providing an environment where the supervisee feels safe. A strong working alliance helps the supervisor to achieve this goal. As it relates to cross-racial supervision, supervisees who are international students might feel more vulnerable to issues of perceived prejudice (Schroeder et al., 2009). It is, therefore, imperative to ensure a safe supervisory environment and develop a strong working alliance in order for the supervisee to navigate vulnerability. The idea of perceived prejudice could also be felt by the Black supervisor, which in turn could impair the working alliance.

Research on cross-cultural supervision found that supervisees, regardless of the cultural background, reported a stronger working alliance when the supervisor was willing to discuss cultural issues (Ancis & Marshall, 2010; Burkard et al., 2006; Schroder et al., 2009). A strong working alliance can be used as a means to influence the supervision outcomes when there are cultural differences between the supervisor and the supervisee (Crockett, 2011). For example, the supervisor could negotiate goals and tasks with the supervisee, which could, in turn, promote trust and mutual respect (Crockett, 2011). These examples are noteworthy, as broaching cultural issues or differences can allow for a greater working alliance, particularly between the Black supervisor and the White supervisee.

Schroeder et al. (2009) also reported a stronger working alliance between the supervisor and the supervisee when the supervisor was more culturally responsive and competent. Studies on cross-cultural supervision and its impact on the working alliance (Burkard et al., 2006;
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Crockett, 2011; Schroder et al., 2009) can guide how racial and cultural differences between the supervisor and the supervisee can influence the working alliance. Hall and Spencer (2017) stated that effective cross-cultural supervision requires a strong, trusting relationship. Addressing cultural differences in supervision, instead of avoiding potentially difficult conversations, can facilitate the development of a strong working alliance.

Crockett (2011) conducted research on cultural differences between the supervisor and the supervisee, the supervisor’s multicultural competence, and the supervisory working alliance. Crockett hypothesized that “the effect of the supervisor-supervisee cultural differences on supervisee counseling self-efficacy and satisfaction with supervision is mediated by the supervisory working alliance” (p. 9) and postulated that distinct cultural differences between the supervisor and the supervisee may correlate with a weaker working alliance. Participants in Crockett’s (2011) study were counselor trainees, both doctoral and master’s students, who completed the Supervisor Multicultural Competence Inventory, Working Alliance Inventory–Short Form, and the Counselor Self-Estimate Inventory to measure perceived supervisory multicultural competence, the strength of the supervisory working alliance, and supervisee counseling self-efficacy, respectively. The results indicated that supervisees’ satisfaction with the supervision, the supervisee’s counseling self-efficacy, and the supervisory working alliance were not statistically significant (Crockett, 2011). However, it is noteworthy that the majority of the participants (92%) and their supervisors (80%) were White. This statistic highlights minimal racial differences between supervisee and supervisor dyads.

The working alliance between the supervisor and the supervisee is significant to the overall functioning of supervision. It has an influence on the outcomes of supervision (Crockett, 2011). A strong working alliance between the supervisor and the supervisee can also allow for
the supervisee’s self-disclosure (Gunn & Pistole, 2012; Hutman, 2015), which is the foundation of supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019) and is necessary for effective cross-cultural dyads (Ancis & Marshall, 2010; Burkard et al., 2006; Schroder et al., 2009). Trepal and Hammer (2014) indicated that one of the most common critical incidents in supervision involves the supervisory relationship or working alliance. To that end, the working alliance between the Black supervisor and White supervisee is essential to explore, as a strong working alliance can lead to overall positive supervision outcomes. However, it is also critical to examine what may affect the working alliance between the Black supervisor and the White supervisee that may not produce positive supervision outcomes.

Parallel Process

In addition to the working alliance between the supervisor and the supervisee, parallel process is another concept essential to supervision. Parallel process can be defined as the reflection process between therapy and supervision (Searles, 1955) or the phenomenon in which supervisees unconsciously present themselves to their supervisors similarly to how their clients have presented to them, and likewise, how the supervisee may mimic behaviors and attitudes in therapy with their clients (Friedlander, Siegel, & Brenock, 1989). Parallel process can occur when the therapist brings the interaction pattern that occurs between the therapist and client into the supervision session and enacts the same pattern but with the therapist in the client’s role (Tracey et al., 2012). Another example of parallel process is when the trainee takes the interaction pattern in supervision back to the therapy session as the therapist, now enacting the supervisor’s role (Tracey et al., 2012). Below is one example of parallel process:

A client comes into therapy seeking guidance because things are not going well in her relationships. She desires structure and direction from the therapist…The therapist
attempts to help the client by providing guidance…The client then starts to see problems
with each of the suggestions offered by the therapist…The therapist over time starts to
become subtly ‘critical,’ complementing the behavior of the client. This pattern
continues over time, and the therapist comes into supervision complaining about the
client and how the therapist needs help and direction because nothing is working…As the
supervisor provides some direction the trainee also engages in…‘distrustful behavior.’
(Tracey et al., 2012, p. 331)

Parallel process is the relationship dynamic traveling from the clinical relationship to the
supervisory relationship and then back from the supervisory relationship to the clinical
relationship (Doherman, 1976; Mothersole, 1999, as cited in Crowe et al., 2011). Thus, similar
exchanges and interactions can occur in both the supervision and counseling contexts.
Interactions that occur in the counseling sessions with the White counselor and the client can be
reflected in the supervisory process with the Black supervisor, such as issues related to race and
power. Alternatively, dynamics occurring within the cross-racial supervision space can be
reproduced in counseling between the White counselor and the client.

**Parallel process and cross-cultural issues.** Supervision offers an important opportunity
to discuss race and culturally related topics, to allow for the supervisee to then be able to openly
discuss these topics with their clients (Estrada et al., 2004). Cultural issues, including race and
ethnicity, are often viewed as taboo topics (Brown, 2009; Constantine, 2007; Estrada et al., 2004;
Sato, 2014; Utsey, Gernat, & Hammar, 2005), and although programs are training their students
to be multiculturally competent (Ratts et al., 2016) counselors and counselors-in-training they
often fail to acknowledge cultural differences effectively.
There is a possibility that how cultural issues (e.g., racial issues) are addressed in supervision can have an impact on how those same issues are addressed in the counseling setting between the supervisee and the client. Sato (2014) explored the experiences of racial and ethnic minority supervisors from the United States and Canada in cross-cultural counseling supervision. In Sato’s (2014) study, some supervisors reported that their White supervisees were resistant to discuss cultural issues with clients, particularly with clients of color. Supervisors also reported that they attempted to discuss cultural matters in supervision, with the hopes that the supervisees would work with their clients more effectively (Sato, 2014). The implications of this study were that educators and supervisors should address issues of power and privilege and, in turn, help supervisees address power and privilege in therapy with their clients (Sato, 2014).

Crowe et al. (2011) stated that parallel processes are important to highlight and that when supervisors use more “empowerment focused practices” (p. 57), such as being less directive and being supportive, it is less likely that certain ineffective patterns would transfer to the therapy relationship with their clients. In addition, Sato (2014) suggested that the “complexities of race” (p. 223) and other multicultural aspects should be embraced to encourage majority supervisees to better understand the cultural contexts of their clients.

In their study regarding doctoral students’ perspectives of their supervision training, Trepal and Hammer (2014) asked participants to reflect on critical incidents during their training that affected their development as a supervisor, either positively or negatively. From their findings, the researchers grouped the critical incidents into three themes: support, parallel process, and gatekeeping. Trepal and Hammer (2014) summarized that the critical incident of parallel process “challenged the way in which they worked with their supervisees” (p. 36). The examples in the study related to parallel process do not necessarily speak to cultural issues such
as race; however, it is important to note that the participants reported parallel process as a means to facilitate growth and self-awareness for both the supervisee and the supervisor. Inserting the discussion of race into parallel process can be deemed challenging, but is important for professional development.

The literature is scarce on parallel process and multiculturalism. However, research surrounding the uniqueness of parallel processing in supervision suggests a conjunction of parallel process and cross-racial supervision (Crowe et al., 2011; Searles, 1955; Tracey et al., 2012; Watkins, 2017). Supervisors who are unable to effectively integrate racial and cultural issues in supervision may hinder knowledge and skills that are passed on to the counseling dyad (Jernigan, Green, Helms, Perez-Gualdron, & Henze, 2010).

Critical Incidents

Several studies have explored the critical incidents that occur in supervision (e.g., Ellis, 2006; Trepal & Hammer, 2014) as well as in multicultural/cross-cultural supervision (Fukuyama, 1994) and its impact on the supervision process. Fukuyama (1994) reported that critical incidents are significant points in a person’s learning experience in which individuals learn to construct meaning of their experience. Trepal and Hammer (2014) conducted a study on critical incidents in supervision training with doctoral-level counseling students who were also identified as supervisors-in-training. The participants were asked to conduct a self-report utilizing the Critical Incident Technique in which the participants shared with the researchers critical incidents that occurred during supervision (Trepal & Hammer, 2014). The reported critical incidents included self-awareness, supervisor support, the supervisory relationship, treatment planning, and personal issues in supervision and their impact on therapeutic work.
More specifically, Fukuyama (1994) focused on critical incidents that occurred in multicultural supervision where there were differences of either race or ethnicity between the supervisor and the supervisee. These participants were racial or ethnic minority psychology students who completed a survey to report critical incidents from their individual supervision experiences (Fukuyama, 1994). The responses were then grouped into three headings: openness and support, culturally relevant supervision, and opportunities to work in multicultural activities. Negative critical incidents were identified as lack of supervisor cultural awareness and the questioning of the supervisee’s abilities (Fukuyama, 1994).

**Racial Identity Development**

In studies of Black supervisors’ experiences of working with White supervisees, race is a significant factor. As mentioned in chapter one, race is a societal concept that often influences how individuals navigate through the world. Although individuals can be seen as racially ambiguous, or “passing” as another race, race is more of a visible identity that is difficult to mask. To that end, race can be a significant factor in cross-racial supervision. Race seemingly has an impact on the dynamics within the supervisory context and affects supervisors’ ability to function in cross-racial supervision settings (Utsey et al., 2005). Exploring racial identity development allows for a better understanding of how individuals interact with others and how they interpret their experiences in various settings. Therefore, understanding the racial identity development of the supervisor is pertinent to this research. Pillay (2013) stated that the main premise of racial identity development theory is the “evolution of an individual’s racial identity on a continuum that ranges from being oblivious to the impact that race has on everyday interactions to a heightened awareness of its impact” (p. 50). The racial identity of the Black supervisor can influence or affect the experience with the White supervisee, especially
considering the power differential between the two. Supervisors must be knowledgeable of racial issues and be able to assess racial identity status (Jernigan et al., 2010).

Identity Development Models

There are numerous identity development models to aid the understanding of who individuals are and their identity transformation. Several identity models and theories specifically discuss the development of Black identity. In addition, there are numerous models that showcase the development of White identity. This section highlights prominent models that explore the stages of development for Black identity, White identity, and Racial/Cultural identity.

**Black identity.** William Cross (1971, 1991) explored the Negro-to-Black Conversion Experience, or Nigrescence, which describes the process of becoming Black. Cross’s (1991) model has been influential in understanding the identity development of Black individuals in the United States. The purpose of the model was to empower Black individuals by moving from a White frame of reference to a Black frame of reference (Sue & Sue, 2016). According to Cross (1991), there are five stages in this development:

1. Pre-encounter: The stage at which the individual is unaware of race.
2. Encounter: The stage at which the individual has an experience that brings race to the forefront.
3. Immersion/emersion: The stage at which the individual expresses pride at being Black but may have some insecurities.
4. Internalization: The stage at which the individual has a strong sense of racial identity.
(5) Internalization-commitment: The stage at which the individual is comfortable with their own racial identity and other racial identities, while still advocating for social change and justice for one’s own community.

**White identity.** Janet Helms (1990) produced a similar model for the identity of White persons. Her stages are as follows: Pre-encounter, Encounter, Reintegration, Pseudo-independence, Immersion/emersion, and Autonomy (Helms, 1990). Helms’s (1990) model has a similar sequence to Cross’s model, but with additional stages of Reintegration and Pseudo-independence before Immersion/emersion, and having Autonomy as the final stage. The additional stages are Reintegration, where the individual is intolerant of other racial minority groups; Pseudo-independence, where the individual begins to understand the racial, cultural, and other differences utilizing intellect; and Autonomy, where the individual has an increased awareness of their Whiteness and reduced feelings of guilt (Helms, 1990). This model aims to successfully and appropriately guide White identity development and to allow individuals to move away from racist and biased thinking (Helms, 1990). Both Cross’s (1991) and Helms’s (1990) models of racial identity development exemplified the complexities of racial identity development and movement through each stage of development. Transitioning through or being cemented in the various stages can impact interactions within cross-racial supervision.

**Racial/Cultural identity.** Given that Black individuals are from various cultures (e.g., Black Americans, Black Europeans, Black Caribbeans, Black Latinos), it is pertinent to explore the cultural influences and identity of Black individuals. Sue and Sue (2016) described the Racial/Cultural Identity development model that includes “five levels of development that oppressed people experience as they struggle to understand themselves in terms of their own culture, the dominant culture, and the oppressive relationship between the two…” (p. 366). The
five developmental stages are Conformity, Dissonance, Resistance and Immersion, Introspection, and Integrative Awareness. In addition to the developmental stages, Sue and Sue (2016) presented correlating attitudes and beliefs that detail how a person views oneself, others of the same minority, others of another minority, and majority individuals. For the purpose of this study, the focus is on how Black supervisors view themselves and their White supervisees (majority individuals).

Sue and Sue’s (2016) Conformity phase is similar to Cross’s (1991) Pre-encounter stage. Both stages are characterized by a preference for the dominant White culture. Individuals in the conformity stage adopt behaviors and adjust to the group with “greater prestige” (Sue & Sue, 2016, p. 368) and avoid being defined by racial terminology but rather by general terms of “human being” (Jernigan et al., 2010, p. 63). The next developmental stage, Dissonance, occurs when an individual denies or disowns their own racial and/or cultural heritage. Sue and Sue (2016) stated that during this gradual phase, “the individual is in conflict between disparate pieces of information or experiences that challenged current self-concept” (p. 370). The next stage, the Resistance and Immersion phase, involves the process of rejecting ideologies of the dominant culture and favoring perspectives primarily held by minorities or by individuals belonging to the same racial and cultural group as their own. Feelings of guilt and shame emerge upon reflecting on thought processes and beliefs in the former phases (Sue & Sue, 2016).

The Introspection phase involves the recognition of anger, guilt, and shame that can be “psychologically draining” and can challenge the individual to find a more positive way to define oneself in a proactive manner (Sue & Sue, 2016, p. 374). Lastly, individuals at the Integrative awareness phase have developed a sense of security and appreciation for their culture: “One’s
own culture is not necessarily in conflict with White dominant cultural ways” (Sue & Sue, 2016, p. 375).

The aforementioned racial identity development models are helpful in understanding the development of both the supervisor and the supervisee in this study. Identifying the racial identity development of the Black supervisor, the interaction with the White supervisee, and the developmental circumstance of the supervisor can have a significant impact on the supervisor’s experiences.

**Identity conflict.** It is sometimes complicated for individuals to move through the stages outlined in the racial identity development models. Because of numerous identities, experiences, and encounters, some individuals may be faced with conflict in their identity development. Racial identity conflict can be seen as the measures between feeling closeness to Blacks versus closeness to other racial groups (Whaley, 2016).

**Dual consciousness.** Dual consciousness is the balance between Euro-centric and Afro-centric polarities (Nobles, 1986). It is the notion that in order to succeed in America, Blacks must take on the Euro-centric perspective as their own. In cross-racial supervision, this could be potentially challenging for Black supervisors, especially when they work with supervisees of the majority, because the struggle of dual consciousness can inform their supervisory practices and drive the identity conflict (Whaley, 2016).

W.E.B. DuBois (as cited in Whaley, 2016) stated, “It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others…One ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strings; two warring ideals in one dark body…” (p. 9). Whaley (2016) highlighted that a key component of Africentricity or Afrocentricity is that a multicultural identity such as reconciling European
American and African American culture is untenable. In fact, negative stereotypes regarding Blacks contributed to a greater identity conflict among young Black Americans (Whaley, 2016). Even through stages of identity development, dual consciousness suggests that there is always something more to explore and a search for balance for Black individuals who wish to succeed in American society.

**Racial Identity in Supervision**

In her writing on racial identity in supervision, Cook (1994) utilized Helms’s (1994) racial identity ego statuses to explore how racial issues are broached or avoided in supervision. Racial identity ego statuses refer to the “various differentiations of ego that mark more mature and complex racial identity development” (Carter, 1996, p. 195). Cook’s (1994) focal point of exploration was the interactions of the ego statuses between the supervisor and the supervisee, which were deemed to be either parallel or crossed. Parallel ego status occurs when the interaction of the individuals—in this case, the supervisor and the supervisee—have similar ego statuses such as conformity (Cook, 1994). Alternatively, crossed ego status interactions occur when the supervisor and the supervisee have opposing ego statuses (Cook, 1994). Cook (1994) stated that individuals with crossed ego status interactions would face continuous conflicts emanating from ‘anti-other-race’ sentiments. Due to racial prejudices and stereotypes, even conflicts that may not be race related would be attributed to race because their views of each other as racial beings overshadow even basic personality issues. If the pair consists of a [person of color] supervisor and a White supervisee, each person may react to each other back on a history of White dominance. (p. 136)
Cook (1994) posited that racial and cultural matters can have an impact on various aspects of supervision, including the supervisory relationship, the conceptualization of clients, and the expectations of supervision. Furthermore, Cook (1994) implied that supervisors should be willing to openly discuss racial identity attitudes. Understanding the racial identity development and attitudes of both the supervisee and the supervisor is pertinent in the supervisory sessions, as these can impact the outcomes of supervision.

**Supervisors’ Racial Identity Development**

Jernigan et al. (2010) asserted that understanding racial identity theory is critical in assessing racial dynamics in supervision. Nevertheless, there is limited research addressing supervisor racial identity. Bhat and Davis (2007) investigated counseling supervisors’ assessment of race and racial identity in supervision and its influence on the supervisory working alliance. Of the 119 participants that were a part of this study, 108 identified as White, 10 identified as African-American, and one identified as Latino. White participants were given a White Racial Identity Attitude Scale (Helms, 2002; Helms & Carter, 1990), and those who self-identified as a person of color were given a People of Color Racial Attitude Identity Scale (Helms, 1995).

Bhat and Davis (2007) found that when the supervisor reported having a high racial identity, there were stronger working alliances between the supervisor and the supervisee and greater agreement with goals. In addition, the authors reported that the “supervisor’s racial identity status has a more powerful role in shaping interactions between supervisor and supervisee and supervisee and client” (Bhat & Davis, 2007, p. 79). Therefore, the supervisor’s acknowledgement and awareness of one’s racial identity status is crucial to supervision outcomes, particularly when working cross-racially. One limitation of this study, as reported by
Bhat and Davis (2007), was that the study had a lack of supervisors who identified as persons of color. In addition, the study was limited to the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale and the People of Color Racial Attitude Identity Scale to assess racial identity attitudes and development.

Although the research on the racial identity development of supervisors is limited, it is still an appropriate subject to explore, especially considering the Black supervisors’ experience of working cross-racially in supervision. Ladany, Brittan-Powell, and Pannu (1997) reported that supervisory dyads that have higher racial identity attitudes are more likely to agree on supervision processes and goals. Further research on the supervisor’s racial identity development is needed to provide support for the racial identity attitudes in supervision, particularly in cross-racial supervision.

**Supervisees’ Racial Identity Development**

In exploring the experiences of Black supervisors working cross-racially with White supervisees, it is beneficial to address the development of racial identity for White supervisees. In a qualitative study, Utsey et al. (2005) explored the reactions of White counselor trainees to racial issues in both counseling and supervision. The authors found two major themes: White racial consciousness and discomfort with racial issues. The theme of White racial consciousness captures the “instances in which the participant seemed aware of himself or herself as a (White) racial being, not so much aware of race in the abstract or of someone else as White but rather aware of oneself as White” (Utsey et al., 2005, p. 463). The subcategories of this theme—minimizing race as an issue and White racial awareness—suggested that respondents were not aware of their race or failed to acknowledge racial issues in counseling and supervision. In relation to the overall research question, the categories and subcategories offered by Utsey et al. (2005) point out that White supervisees may avoid discussions on race.
The theme of discomfort with racial issues captures the idea of how the White participants in this study expressed “agitation, anxiety, and/or confusion in reaction to racially provocative material” (Utsey et al., 2005, p. 467). The subcategories included reducing the threat of race and finding a comfort level. The themes and subcategories highlighted reactions to discussing race and racism in supervision, particularly when Black supervisors are supervising White supervisees. Black supervisors should be aware of reactions that may occur when discussing race; they should also know how to assess the White supervisees’ level of racial identity development to broach cultural matters, including race. In their discussion, Utsey et al. (2005) emphasized how race and racism can remain taboo discussions, which can lead supervisees to have difficulty in articulating their thoughts.

Understanding the racial identity development status of the supervisor as well as of the supervisee can aid in the appropriate and effective training of the supervisee (Jernigan et al., 2010). Sukumaran (2016) stated that the racial identity of supervisees influences the supervisees’ ability to notice and interact with racial microagressions and thus impact the working alliance between the supervisor and the supervisee: “Being at varying levels of racial identity development will likely influence supervisees’ ability to identify, interact, and respond to racial microaggressions in cross-racial supervision” (Sukumaran, 2016, p. 97). Furthermore, the varying levels of supervisees’ racial identity stages can indicate their different levels of multicultural competence (Ladany et al., 1997), which is pertinent to how the Black supervisor may interact with the White supervisee during supervision. These varying levels of racial identity stages could also influence how power and privilege can be perceived in cross-racial supervision.
**Power and Privilege**

Power and privilege also have to be considered in cross-racial supervision (Butler-Byrd, 2010; Scarborough, 2017; White-Davis, 2016). The impact of power and privilege is an essential component of the discussion on race and supervision. Supervision is hierarchical in nature (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019), with the more seasoned professional serving as the supervisor. Therefore, there is typically a power differential between the supervisor and the supervisee. Supervisors serve as gatekeepers, consultants, and teachers. Supervisors also have the ability to evaluate and give feedback, which can ultimately affect supervisees’ ability to pass a practicum/internship course, obtain licensure hours, or practice independently. There is often a great deal that supervisees can learn from supervisors, frequently putting the supervisees in a vulnerable position.

Furthermore, there is a power differential as it relates to race. White individuals have historically held more power over other racial minorities despite possessing other cultural identities (Sue & Sue, 2016). White individuals, categorized as the majority in America, are often awarded more privilege than other racial minorities, specifically Black individuals. Sue and Sue (2016) stated that Whiteness is associated with unearned privilege. Often, the Whiteness is invisible, which makes it difficult to acknowledge and can lead to implicit bias (Sue & Sue, 2016). This Whiteness and White privilege can appear in various settings, even in counseling supervision.

To that end, there is seemingly a juxtaposition of a Black supervisor working with a White supervisee. When working with a supervisee of a dominant culture, there are varying levels of power and privilege between the supervisor and the supervisee. Minority supervisors, on their own, have to navigate ways to manage issues of power and supervisees’ challenges to
their authority, due to the lack of research, training, and support (Sato, 2014). In cross-racial supervision, power can be challenging, considering that both parties hold some level of privilege in this supervisory context (White-Davis et al., 2016). The power dynamics can potentially affect the cross-racial dynamics in supervision.

**Cross-Racial Dynamics in Supervision**

Race is an influential concept within society. As much as we attempt to either unite racial divides or be “color-blind,” we are still consistently affected by this social construct. These social constructs can be even more apparent in supervision when the supervisor and the supervisee identify differently in terms of their race.

The complexities and intersections of various cultural identities such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and age contribute to the understudied exploration of cross-cultural matters in supervision (Hall & Spencer, 2017; Sato, 2014). Supervisors who identify as Black supervising mental health counselors who self-identify as White may experience dynamics that are unique to the cross-racial relationship in comparison to mono-racial supervisory dyads: “This color-blind ideology that emphasizes everyone is the same or has the same life opportunities, can potentially lead to racial microaggressions…and have deleterious effects on valuing the experience and background of the other member of the dyad” (White-Davis et al., 2016, p. 349). White-Davis et al. (2016) reported that differences in racial consciousness can affect the rapport and supervisory relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee.

**Multicultural Competence in Cross-Racial Supervision**

One goal for supervisors is to aid in the development of multicultural competence for the supervisee. Supervisors are critical players in counselors’ multicultural development, as they are expected to challenge and broach issues of multiculturalism with their supervisees in order for
supervisees to be adequately prepared to serve their diverse clients. Wong et al. (2013) stated that multicultural competence can affect the quality of supervision. Moreover, supervisors must be aware of biases toward their culturally different supervisees (Schroeder et al., 2009), which can impact the level of multicultural competence within the supervisory context. Ladany et al. (1997) postulated that supervisors of color would facilitate the development of multicultural competence in supervisees more than their White supervisor counterparts: “Merely interacting with a supervisor of color may offer supervisees, particularly White supervisees, a multicultural experience” (p. 296).

Dressel, Consoli, Kim, and Atkinson (2007) explored successful and unsuccessful behaviors in multicultural supervision. Dressel et al. (2007) utilized a Delphi model to study doctoral-level psychologist supervisors who have experience working with supervisees of different ethnic backgrounds. Out of the 21 psychologist supervisors surveyed, nine were White, five were Asian American/Pacific Islander, four were African American, two were Latino, and one identified as multiethnic. The multicultural expertise and experience of the supervisors included their research on racial identity, multicultural competencies, other multicultural training, or participation in associations or organizations with a multicultural mission. Dressel et al. (2007) condensed 141 behaviors into 35 behavioral statements, including the following:

- creating a safe environment for the discussion of multicultural issues, values, and ideas;
- discussing and supporting multicultural perspectives as they relate to the supervisees’ clinical work;
- attending to racial/ethnic cultural differences reflected in parallel process issues;
- discussing the realities of racism/oppression and acknowledging that race is always an issue;
- acknowledging, discussing, and respecting racial/ethnic multicultural similarities and differences between the supervisor and the supervisees and exploring these feelings.
The aforementioned supervisory behaviors are pertinent to consider when working within a cross-cultural or cross-racial supervisory setting, as it allows cultural matters to be addressed effectively and can inform the supervisory processes that occur. Between a Black supervisor and a White supervisee, certain behavioral statements such as self-disclosing aspects of one’s own cultural background (Dressel et al., 2007) is beneficial because Black supervisors may want to explore how their own race and ethnicity may potentially affect the supervisory relationship. In addition, the behavioral statement of “acknowledging and discussing power issues in supervision that may be related to racial/ethnic multicultural differences” (Dressel et al., 2007, p. 57) offers the opportunity to address power dynamics between White and Black individuals and how that may occur in cross-racial supervision. Behaviors mentioned by Dressel et al. (2007) can aid in the discussion of multicultural competence in supervision. These findings indicate that multicultural competence is critical, especially when working cross-culturally or cross-racially in supervision.

**White Supervisors Working Cross-Racially**

Although the literature on minority supervisors working cross-racially is limited in the counseling literature, there are numerous studies and conceptual writings that highlight the supervisory relationship of White supervisors working cross-racially and cross-culturally (e.g., Chang et al., 2004; Estrada et al., 2004; Jernigan et al., 2010; Schroeder et al., 2009; Sukumaran, 2016). Research on cross-racial supervision generally reports that supervisees of color have negative experiences due to White supervisors’ inability to address racial matters in supervision. For example, Jernigan et al. (2010) postulated that the difficulties in cross-racial supervision may be due to the fact that many experienced and skilled supervisors may have entered the profession
before the “multicultural movement in psychology” (p. 63) and are unaware of how to address race or other cultural issues in supervision.

In cross-racial supervision, there are expectations that incidents can occur with respect to differences in culture, particularly differences in race. Wong et al. (2013) investigated what helped and hindered supervision outcomes and the working alliance in cross-cultural supervision and the critical incidents that occurred. From their study of 25 visible minority graduate students in supervision, the researchers found themes of positive incidents, which included the following: the supervisor was appreciative, accepting, supportive, encouraging, and validating; the supervisor had cross-cultural competencies; the supervisor taught me lessons, skills, and insights; and the supervisor provided timely, clear, constructive feedback, guidance, and debriefing (Wong et al., 2013). The researchers also reported negative incident themes, which included the following: difficulties of being a visible ethnic minority; the supervisor was too rigid, controlling, insulting, intimidating, or judgmental; feeling worried, unsafe, confused, helpless, and stressed out; the supervisor lacked multicultural competencies; or the supervisor did not provide a safe environment (Wong et al., 2013). This is important to mention in relation to the present study because the negative themes are often how minorities or Black individuals in power can be perceived. The authors focused on the minority visibility of the supervisee rather than the visibility of the supervisor; however, these critical incidents could also occur between the Black supervisor and the White supervisee.

Experiences of Supervisors of Color

As previously stated, the majority of supervision studies focus on the perspectives of the supervisee (particularly related to cross-racial/cross-cultural supervision). This missing component in the literature adds to the need for this present research that focuses on Black
supervisors working with White supervisees. As Scarborough (2017) stated, “Minority supervisors have a worldview that influences their perspectives and informs the way in which they approach supervision” (p. 40).

Regarding the experiences and perspectives of supervisors in cross-cultural supervision, Sato (2014) reported that “minority supervisors are in a unique position to encourage supervisees to process direct cross-cultural contacts” (p. 23). In cross-racial dyads in supervision, it is presumed that discussions of race, culture, and ethnicity are inevitable (Constantine & Sue, 2007). There are reports that the racial and ethnic minority supervisor tends to address issues of race and culture more than their White counterparts in supervision (Hird, Tao, & Gloria, 2004; Schroeder et al., 2009). Schroeder et al. (2009) reported that racial and ethnic minority supervisors do not consider one cultural difference more important than another, compared to White supervisors who placed more importance on a particular cultural difference. These expectations put more responsibility on the Black supervisor to address issues of culture, especially if issues of culture are not broached in other types of supervision or teaching.

Jernigan et al. (2010) suggested that supervisors of color should be willing to (a) bring up race and acknowledge the conflict in the dyad, (b) evaluate their own competence and self-efficacy with respect to racial dynamics, (c) seek out racially progressive professional relationships, and (d) offer extra positive regard to supervisees who are courageous enough to initiate such conversations. These strategies help supervisors to stay attuned to racial and cultural matters in supervision.

Scarborough (2017), writing from the perspective of an African-American supervisor working cross-culturally with supervisees from the dominant culture, identified particular values and beliefs that can influence the direction of the supervision sessions: time, building
relationships, boundaries, poverty, and involvement with larger systems (e.g., welfare systems, child protective services, the police system) and their influence on therapeutic issues. Butler-Byrd (2010) also reported utilizing her own experiences a counseling supervisor to challenge stereotypes of African-Americans or people of color.

Supervisors of color reported that their skills and competence are often challenged or questioned (Butler-Byrd, 2010; Sato, 2014; Scarborough, 2017). One said, “I have often felt like that I have to work ‘twice as hard’ to prove I am as good as or better than European American supervisors or faculty” (Butler-Byrd, 2010, p. 12). The experiences of being challenged are potential issues that Black supervisors may face when working with White supervisees. These particular challenges can influence the supervisory practices of Black supervisors. There is a pressure to feel competent in supervision, especially regarding multicultural issues (Butler-Byrd, 2010). Sato (2014) also posited that racial and ethnic minority supervisors encounter reverse oppression and defense mechanisms from majority supervisees.

**Microaggressions.** It is not rare for supervisors of color, specifically Black supervisors, to be exposed to microaggressions in and out of the counseling field. Microaggressions are defined as subtle forms of bias and discrimination (Nadal et al., 2014). Although their focus was on Black supervisees in cross-racial dyads, Constantine and Sue (2007) reported that racial microaggressions can be detrimental to the supervision experience and may create difficulties within the supervisory relationship. In addition, microaggressions can lead to particular emotional experiences of minority supervisors (Sato, 2014). This could also be evident in the relationship between Black supervisors and White supervisees. When there is a lack of multicultural knowledge or experience, or if there is anxiety about racial or cultural issues, White individuals can be unaware of racial biases (Constantine & Sue, 2007), which in turn can result
in microaggressive acts. Moreover, experiences of racial microaggressions and oppression can lead to higher multicultural competence (Sato, 2014) and can lead to the supervisors’ ability to facilitate discussions on race and culture.

Redmond (2011) studied 34 Black supervisors enrolled in CACREP-accredited doctoral programs and junior faculty members in CACREP-accredited programs who have provided supervision to a White supervisee within the past two years. Redmond (2011) wanted to explore the relationships between perceptions of microaggressions and the supervisors’ racial identity, as well as the perception of the supervisory working alliance. The more Black supervisors perceived racial microaggressions, the more they perceived lower levels of the working alliance, which included goals, tasks, and bonds (Redmond, 2011). Participants reported how their White supervisees did not acknowledge their White privilege and how the lack of acknowledgement affected the supervisory relationship (Redmond, 2011). These findings and implications for further research guide the direction of this present study on the experiences of Black supervisors working with White supervisees.

**Related Experiences of Black Individuals in Counselor Education**

As previously mentioned, the literature is scarce in regard to the topic of Black and other minority supervisors. However, there is literature that explores the perspectives and experiences of Blacks (sometimes labeled as African Americans in other studies) in counseling, as counselors, and in counselor education programs (Haskins et al., 2013). Understanding these experiences can provide a better perspective of Black supervisors’ experiences and how similar experiences can occur in supervision with White supervisees.

Haskins et al.’s (2013) qualitative research explored the experiences of Black master’s counseling students. The themes of their study included isolation as a Black student, tokenization
as a Black student, lack of inclusion of Black counselor perspectives within coursework, differences between support received by faculty of color and support received by White faculty, and access to support from people of color and White peers (Haskins et al., 2013). The themes present issues faced by Black counselors that Black supervisors can also encounter or experience.

One theme that is pertinent to explore when discussing Black supervisors and supervisors-in-training is the lack of inclusion of Black perspectives within coursework. Haskins et al. (2013) wrote that Black master’s counseling students often had to teach faculty members about Black culture and that students reported that the professors were oblivious to the specific needs of the Black counseling students. Students reported feeling overlooked or forgotten in the classroom (Haskins et al., 2013). Since supervision is a narrower focus or specialization within the counseling field, one can assume that supervision curricula may, too, lack the perspective of the Black supervisor.

Furthermore, Haskins et al. (2015) explored Black counselors in training and their preparation in counseling White clients. Their findings revealed five themes: (1) relevant content excluded, (2) stereotyping experienced, (3) authenticity challenged, (4) counter spaces should be included, and (5) cultural sensitivity of faculty warrants increase. Microaggressions experienced by the Black students/counselors-in-training were highlighted within the first two themes. The next theme, authenticity challenged, touched on the challenges of “feeling the need to conform” to try to succeed when working with White clients (Haskins et al., 2015, p. 68). The last two themes suggested strategies that address challenges experienced by Black students to prepare them to counsel White clients (Haskins et al., 2015). This present study highlights the growing need for curricula in counselor education to recognize the importance of discussions of cross-
racial dynamics in counseling and, more particularly, in supervision. Students’ experiences in Haskins et al.’s (2015) study parallel what could potentially be experienced in supervision, and relate to some themes of the theoretical framework guiding the present study.

Critical Race Theory

CRT is a theoretical framework from which to examine the Black supervisor’s work in supervising White supervisees. In the United States since historical times, Black individuals have encountered countless occurrences of microaggressions, discrimination, and oppression. CRT is a framework in which race and racism are at the center of research investigations (Hylton, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2010; McGee & Stovall, 2015; Trahan & Lemberger, 2014). Hylton (2012) wrote of CRT’s central premise: “society is fundamentally racially stratified and unequal, where power processes systematically disenfranchise racially oppressed people” (p. 24). Because the focus of the present study is on Black supervisors’ experience with White supervisees, it is inevitable to disregard the racial differences and the possibility of racism within the supervisory context. CRT often focuses on the cross-racial dynamic between Blacks and Whites due to the normalization of ideologies such as “Whiteness” and “White privilege” in America: “Racialization will always be a precursor for cross-cultural relationships among African Americans and Whites” (Schaefer, 2006, as cited in Trahan & Lemberger, 2014, p. 115).

There are several themes within the CRT framework that address how critical race theorists explain racism and the reaction to racism, including the permanence of racism, Whiteness as property, counter-storytelling, interest convergence, a critique of liberalism, and intersectionality (ASHE, 2015a). Hylton (2012) described CRT as a framework that “explains issues and isolates realities in a way that many critical theories struggle with” (p. 24). This framework is relevant to the present study, as it acknowledges the oppression and racism faced
by people of color. The theory also acknowledges the power differential between Whites and people of color. Hylton (2012) posited that “Black people are regularly profiled in positions of success where in many other professions, outside of entertainment, they are less likely to be so prominent” (p. 30). Therefore, it is essential to do a critical analysis of the power differential between the Black supervisor and the White supervisee utilizing the CRT lens. The supervisor should be aware of racial dynamics in supervision, particularly because of the power that the supervisor holds (Jernigan et al., 2010).

The permanence of racism, critique of liberalism, intersectionality, and counter-storytelling (Hylton, 2012) relate to this study’s focus on cross-racial supervision. Below is a brief description of the four relevant tenets related to the present study on Black supervisors working with White supervisees.

**Permanence of Racism**

This theme highlights the idea that racism is ordinary. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2017), racism in America is commonplace despite notions to dismiss racism. When applying the tenet of permanence of racism to supervision, it is important to know if the Black supervisor is aware of how racism is or can be present within the supervisory relationship. Open discussions about race and racism are possible (Ladany et al., 1997), especially in cross-racial relationships like the Black supervisor and the White supervisee.

**Critique of Liberalism**

This tenet refers to the critique of basic ideas and notions that liberal ideology accepts constructs such as colorblindness (Ladson-Billings, 2010). In regards to cross-racial supervision, colorblindness can be challenged by the Black supervisor who can acknowledge the racial
differences between the White supervisee and the Black supervisor. The critique of liberalism can aid in bringing cultural and racial awareness into the supervisory relationship.

**Intersectionality**

The tenet of intersectionality emphasizes the intersection of race with other identities (Ladson-Billings, 2010). Although race is a pertinent factor in many contexts, it is imperative to examine other identities that can impact particular processes in supervision. As it relates to supervision, Black supervisors can identify how race, gender, ability, or age informs how the supervision processes will occur, such as the working alliance, reception of feedback, or parallel processes. The focus of this study is on race, but identities such as gender and age also have an impact on supervisory working alliance and experiences.

**Counter-storytelling**

Counter-storytelling is a CRT tenet that enhances the voices of individuals of color against dominant narratives, as described by Hiraldo (2010): “The use of counter-stories in analyzing higher education’s climate provides faculty, staff, and students of color a voice to tell their narratives involving marginalized experiences” (p. 54). While Hiraldo’s (2010) study focused on CRT in higher education in general, the same concept applies to counselor education and supervision. Counter-storytelling allows Black individuals to share their stories and to challenge the assumptions made by the dominant culture. For Black supervisors, counter-storytelling can be seen as an empowerment practice and a healing method for the pain caused by racism and oppression (Hylton, 2012) that can also occur in the supervision of White supervisees.

Although there are other tenets to CRT, these four are the most relevant to this study’s focus on instances of racism, whether subtle or overt. It is interesting to examine Black
supervisors’ unique stories and experiences of working with White supervisees and how they challenge potential racist attitudes and biases. Last, CRT guides the participants’ discussions on how they define their experiences working cross-racially with White supervisees.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided an overview of the literature on cross-racial supervision. Because the literature is lacking in its explorations of Black supervisors working cross-racially with White supervisees specifically, the overview was on supervision and the processes that can be affected by cross-racial supervisory dyads. The discussion also reviewed the racial identity development of both the supervisor and the supervisee, research on cross-racial and cross-cultural dynamics in supervision, and related experiences of Black individuals in counselor education and how similarities may exist in cross-racial supervision. Further, I provided a focus on power and privilege.

The working alliance and parallel process in supervision can be affected by differences in culture and, in the case of the present study, race. In addition, racial identity development and stages were explored with the notion that understanding the racial identity statuses and attitudes of both the supervisor and the supervisee can inform how the Black supervisor informs supervisory practices based on the interactions of varying racial identity statuses. Research is increasing regarding practices and experiences with cross-racial and cross-cultural supervision. With that, it was important to highlight in this chapter how dynamics are presented within cross-racial or cross-cultural supervision to provide an understanding of what can occur between Black supervisors and White supervisees. Furthermore, an exploration of experiences of Black individuals was crucial in this chapter, as it offered a foundation of how Black people experience training and curricula in counselor education, which in turn can lead to a lack of adequate
training for Black individuals preparing for supervision. Lastly, CRT is the theoretical lens and foundation for this study, as it keeps race and racism at the forefront.
CHAPTER 3: METHOD

Chapter three focuses on the method and design of this study. As mentioned in chapter one, this study is significant because of the lack of research surrounding minority supervisors working cross-racially—specifically the Black supervisor working with the White supervisee. The literature does not address the unique challenges or benefits of the cross-racial supervisory relationship among Black supervisors and White supervisees, nor does it adequately speak to the dynamics between the Black supervisor and the White supervisee. The gap in literature also fails to address the need for the training of supervisors to include the perspective of Black and other racial and ethnic-minority supervisors. Chapter two highlighted and provided a thorough review of the areas related to cross-racial supervision and Black supervisors working with White supervisees, particularly within the counseling profession. The CRT theoretical framework helped inform the present research.

The purpose of this study was to underscore the experiences of the Black supervisor working with the White supervisee and to further understand what happens in the supervisory context when such cross-racial interactions are present. For example, are there any unique challenges to this relationship, and what may be the potential benefits of this cross-racial arrangement? How do Black supervisors working with White supervisees define their experiences? This chapter also addresses the rationale for the chosen research design, the procedure, the recruitment process, the trustworthiness of the study, and the role of the researcher.

Research Design and Rationale

This study used a general qualitative design because this research approach may help to uncover and highlight the lived experiences of the Black supervisor. Merriam and Tisdell (2015)
wrote that qualitative research “is based on the belief that knowledge is constructed by people in an ongoing fashion as they engage in and make meaning of an activity, experience, or phenomenon” (p. 23). The research question was, “How do Black supervisors working with White supervisees define their experiences?” The objective was to explore how Black supervisors make meaning of their supervisory experiences. Qualitative researchers capture participants’ perspectives (Heppner et al., 2016) and believe that there is not a single reality and that realities are socially constructed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Furthermore, qualitative researchers are interested in how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experience (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The focus of this study was on how Black supervisors describe and define their experiences working with White supervisees, how they make meaning of their lived experience as Black supervisors, and how those experiences may potentially inform their practices as supervisors working with White supervisees.

As the researcher, I was the primary instrument of data collection and analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), so it was important to position oneself within the research and understand how one’s beliefs or biases affect data collection and data analysis. This role also allows the researcher to process information immediately, clarify and summarize material, and explore unexpected responses (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). These advantages were helpful when exploring the experiences of Black supervisors, as it helps check and verify the understanding of participants’ responses.

Method

A general qualitative approach utilizing interviews was used in this study because interviews allow the gathering of an in-depth knowledge from a range of participants. Because
qualitative inquiries are common in social sciences fields such as counseling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), this design was an appropriate method for this study. Rather than exploring the phenomena of a particular population, or conducting an in-depth analysis of a bounded system (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), the focus is on meaning and understanding of Black supervisors’ experiences; therefore, a general qualitative design was ideal. In addition to gathering in-depth data from the participants about their experiences as Black supervisors working cross-racially with White supervisees, there was rich data gathered from Black supervisors, especially considering there is a scarcity of research on this particular population. This design captures the meaning of the experiences and the thematic understanding of meaning making: “The overall purpose is to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 24).

This study used an interview guide and semi-structured interviews with participants to co-construct meaning and work toward a shared meaning (deMarrais, 2004). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) described how meaning making is not discovered but constructed; therefore, the interaction between the researcher and the participant was critical.

The interview then becomes a unique form of discourse between two people where one is an informed learner who is there to learn more about another’s experiences or series of experiences, views, or perspectives, or reactions to particular, phenomenon or event. Researchers’ theoretical and disciplinary perspectives, life experiences, cultural backgrounds, genders, ages, physical appearances, and other characteristics influence the way in which they attend to and respond to the conversation and construct meaning. (deMarrais, 2004, p. 55)
Black supervisors’ lived experiences as well as their interactions with their White supervisees tell a story that can inform their practices, given the history and current realities of racial disparities among Black and White individuals in America, as discussed in chapters one and two. The primary goal was to be able to interpret these experiences: “Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 109). deMarrais (2004) postulated that interview studies as a research method are effective at discovering the participants’ view of an experience or phenomenon of study. Studies using interviews focus on developing rapport and obtaining detailed descriptions of the participants’ experiences. Therefore, a general qualitative design utilizing interviews was beneficial for this study. As the researcher, I developed good rapport with all participants, which allowed for honesty and transparency from the participants.

**Participants**

I completed interviews with 12 counseling supervisors who self-identify racially as Black and who have worked with White counseling supervisees in practicum, internships, or community settings. This number allowed for adequate rich data to be obtained, which is pertinent to qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The participants completed doctoral-level supervisory training at a CACREP-accredited counseling program to maintain the same or similar levels of educational training on counseling supervision. Therefore, some participants could be current doctoral students or doctoral-level counselors. All supervisors had to have at least one year of supervisory experience, post completion of their doctoral supervision course, to be eligible to participate in the study. The number of years of experience beyond the first year varied, as the number of years was not significant to this study, but perhaps may be narrower in future studies. The sample of participants was also stratified by characteristics such as age,
gender, and years of experience. Stratifying the sample of participants allowed for the exploration of characteristics during the data analysis phase. Table 1 presents the characteristics of the participants in the study.

Table 1: Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alias</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Year Completed Supervision Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATL</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
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<td>31</td>
<td>2016</td>
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<td>2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recruitment

In general qualitative studies, the recruitment of participants is described as purposive sampling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Purposive sampling for this study was important to examine a certain phenomenon from a specific group of people. Purposeful or purposive sampling guides in the identification of cases that are rich in information, which allows for fitting themes and categories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Purposive sampling allows for learning “about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 97). The objective of this study was to interview counseling supervisors who identify as Black and have
also worked with White supervisees. Another form of purposive sampling that the researcher engaged in was snowball sampling, which is defined as “locating a few key participants who easily meet the criteria you have established for participation in the study” and who can recommend other potential participants who meet the criteria for the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 99). There were several participants who were able to recommend potential participants or provide the informed consent to other potential participants for this study.

The recruitment stage involved a variety of methods, including counselor education listservs, social media sites, conferences, and other locales to meet Black counseling supervisors. There are several listservs primarily for counselor educators such as the Counselor Education and Supervision Network Listserv (CESNET-L), the American Counseling Association (ACA) Connect, and Counsgrads, so the recruitment script with the contact information was posted there, with the permission of listserv administrators. Further, there are several social media sites dedicated to clinicians of color: Black students who are pursuing doctoral degrees, Black women who are pursuing PhDs, Black men who are pursuing PhDs, and first-generation doctoral students of color. Upon obtaining permission from the social media site administrators, I posted the recruitment script to these mentioned sites. Additionally, there are various counseling conferences, such as the ACES conference, which is specifically geared toward counselor educators and supervisors, and is a good site for networking and the distribution of the recruitment script. The researcher networked with other counselors and counselor educators at the ACES conference and was able to connect with colleagues within that network who met the criteria for my study.
Procedure

Once participants were chosen for the study or reached out to inquire about participating in the study, they then completed an online demographic form, via SurveyMonkey.com, that contained questions regarding how they identify racially, how long they had been supervising, when they completed their CACREP supervision training, the type of counselor they are, if they have supervised White supervisees, and if they were currently providing supervision. Following the completion of the demographic survey, each participant was provided with an informed consent document stating all benefits and risks of the study as well as contact information and approximate length of time requested in the study.

Data Gathering

Following the distribution of informed consent and the demographic form, semi-structured interviews were utilized. Only one interview was conducted face-to-face, which was the preferred method. However, scheduling and location prevented the researcher from being able to conduct the majority of the interviews in person. The remaining interviews were conducted via Zoom and were confidentially recorded. In the first round, each interview lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes and was semi-structured, based on an interview guide (see Appendix B) that consisted of questions related to the participants’ experiences as Black supervisors. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed utilizing the service Rev.com, and then I engaged in open coding. I conducted the second interview with participants for clarity and to allow the participants to elaborate on anything that was mentioned in the first interview. The second interview lasted approximately 45-60 minutes and was recorded, transcribed, and also
open-coded. All data was stored securely on a password-protected drive on the researcher’s computer.

**Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is important to address when utilizing qualitative approaches and methods. A researcher’s aim is to develop trustworthiness throughout the study through bracketing, reflexive writing, member checking, and utilizing reviews from critical friends. The researcher’s own experiences of being a Black supervisor, feelings about the experience of being a Black supervisor, and how one is situated within this study were considered throughout the study. As a Black supervisor, I held notions of what it is like to work cross-racially. However, I did not want any judgments and biases to impede the data collection and analysis process. Therefore, I wrote personal experiences and reactions and “temporarily set aside” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 32) those thoughts and ideas to maintain an open mind during the process. The researcher’s experiences, feelings, and insights were continually examined in a critical way throughout the research study, individually and with critical friends. In addition, these feelings and experiences were considered during the analysis of the data as I learned more about myself and my initial thoughts and beliefs were challenged.

**Reflexive Writing**

It is critical to engage in reflexive writing to consider issues such as positionality (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Reflexive writing can address the impact that the research has on both the researcher and the participants. Qualitative research is a dialectical process and to some degree can change both the researcher and the participant (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Reflexive writing can entail journaling throughout the entire data collection and analysis stages to continually be aware of biases, emotions, and positionality. During data collection and analysis,
the researcher maintained a digital researcher journal on Penzu.com. I wrote journal entries before the first interview to address positionality and other ideas of what the researcher expected from the data. Further, the researcher utilized the journal after each interview to notate anything related to the interview, what stood out the most from the interviews, and ideas of how the researcher would approach the second round of interviews. In addition, the journal served as a place for the researcher to compile any ideas or thoughts between the interviews. During the data analysis and category construction, the researcher often referred back to the researcher journal to challenge any biases.

**Member Checking**

Saldaña (2016) stated that one way to maintain trustworthiness is by checking the interpretation of data with participants throughout the data gathering phase. Following the first round of interviews, tentative interpretations, codes, and themes were shared with each participant, to allow for clarification and accuracy. Following the second round of interviews, two participants served as key informants and were presented with the findings for their recognition and input. Bogden and Biklen (2011) highlighted that key informants can help to advance analysis and to fill gaps in the description of themes and data being collected. Key informants were chosen based on stratified sampling. Strata were determined by qualities or identities of some of the participants, such as gender and supervisory experience. Once the strata were defined, the researcher asked participants if they were willing to serve as key informants, to which they obliged. Two key informants were chosen from the participant pool. One key informant was a male and the other was a female participant who offered significant statements related to her supervisory experience. The constructed themes were shared with the key informants for review and for them to clarify, agree, or challenge any themes or interpretations in
the transcripts. Saldaña (2016) highlighted that the values and beliefs of what the participant
stated may not be in line with their observed actions or interactions. To that end, it is imperative
that the researcher’s interpretations were corroborated with the participants.

Critical Friends

Critical friends can be of importance during data analysis. Critical friends can be
identified as persons who are supportive and critical regarding the research (Storey & Wang,
2017). Selected individuals can help to process some of the coding, biases, and research
questions, and can also provide the support needed to critically analyze the data. In addition,
doctoral students, doctoral candidates, or those who have completed their doctoral degree may be
able to understand the importance of critique in regards to dissertation research. Choosing a
diverse critical friend group was important in order to be challenged, critiqued, and/or validated
by varying perspectives. In regular meetings with critical friends, they can help explore new
thoughts and findings, ask provocative questions in relation to the categorization of categories,
advocate for the success of the study, and provide feedback that is significant to the research
(Costa & Kallick, 1993).

During this study, the researcher worked with three critical friends who aided in
organizing thoughts, reframing codes, category construction, providing feedback, and offering
overall emotional support. The critical friends were fellow doctoral candidates. The researcher
strategically chose critical friends who were aware of the dissertation research process but who
were removed enough from this research topic to provide clear feedback. Some critical friends
were of different racial backgrounds and fields of study.
Positionality

I currently serve as a supervisor and received my supervision training from a PhD counselor education program. I also identify as a Black woman; therefore, the topic of the proposed study is salient to my own work. As mentioned earlier, the counseling field is a predominantly White institution. As a counselor and even as a student in my master’s and doctoral-level programs, I have noticed that there are not many Black students or counselors in general with whom I feel that I can relate or have open dialogue about what it means to be a Black counselor or supervisor. Having experienced my own issues as a Black counselor working with clients who are of the majority race, I recognized that my level of expertise and competence were questioned on numerous occasions. I am sure there are other personal aspects that have affected clients’ perspectives of me; however, the difference of race and culture was most prevalent, as evidenced by questions about my hair or my style. Through my personal experiences, I wonder how the microaggressions that I have encountered and the assumptions I hold impact my practice as a supervisor.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, the researcher seeks to co-construct meaning with the participant, so data analysis was critical in the co-construction of meaning and the meaning making of experiences:

Data analysis is the process of making sense of the data. And making sense of the data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read—it is the process of meaning making. (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 196)
Data analysis began immediately with the first interview, was iterative, and allowed the researcher to make meaning and inform the interview guide. The review of the literature was important throughout the data analysis phase, as there were approaches that guided the co-construction of data meaning. The researcher began with open coding each interview transcript utilizing a qualitative software program, Dedoose, which allowed for more organization during analysis.

**Category Construction**

Open coding entailed reviewing each transcription and highlighting significant and relevant statements. The significance and the relevance pertained to the way in which participants described their experiences of being a Black supervisor working with a White supervisee. Each highlighted statement was identified as a code and given a code name. Saldaña (2016) defined *codes* and *coding* as “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p. 3). I also provided a description of each code to aid in comparing the transcripts and participant statements. In addition to providing a description of the code, the researcher maintained analytic memos. In the review of any field notes or other documents from the interviewing process, data that were useful or relevant to the purpose of the research are marked. Notable comments were defined as codes. Approximately 85-90 codes were derived from the data. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) described that the process of attaching or assigning codes to data is the beginning of category construction.

After codes were determined, related codes were grouped into themes or categories by patterns and multiplicity. According to Saldaña (2016), patterns demonstrate trustworthiness, salience, and importance. Before codes are put into categories, it was essential, however, to
“discriminate more clearly between criteria for allocating data into one category or another” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 197). The researcher’s process of discrimination included reviewing the descriptions of the codes for clarity, reviewing the research question to ensure relevance, and a further review of the analytic memos.

Following the discrimination process, the related codes were put into categories. There were seven categories constructed from the approximately 80 codes. Each category was assigned a name or short phrase to describe that category. Further, each category had an average of about seven to eight codes. There were some codes that did not fit into any of the categories and were left out of the category formation, due to lack of relevance to the research question or lack of importance in comparison to other codes. Following the development of categories, each category was re-evaluated to ensure that the categories are appropriately related to the study’s purpose. In addition to re-evaluating the categories, there were also categorizations into subcategories that later became the overall themes that will be presented in chapter four. I continually reviewed the codes and categories throughout the data analysis and discussed them with my dissertation chair, methodologist, and critical friends. The intent of the continual evaluation of the codes and categories was to construct complex subcategories that then became the overall themes of the data. Three overall themes were derived from the coding and categorization, which I will discuss in chapter four. The study involved continual and careful revisions of the categories that accurately reflect the study’s purpose and is informed by the theoretical framework of CRT. Utilizing a lens of CRT, the categories helped illuminate the tenets of intersectionality, permanence of racism, counterstorytelling, and the critique of liberalism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Hylton, 2012).
Concurrent with coding, analytic memos were compiled. Saldaña (2016) wrote that analytic memos help the researcher to reflect on the coding process and the way codes are decided. As the researcher was conducting the coding, analytic memos served as reminders for the researcher, further explanations of codes, description of how codes and categories were related, and suggestions for continual evaluations of codes and categories. Analytic memos can contain some preliminary data analysis and interpretation of the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) and serve as a way for the researcher to write about the “participants, phenomenon, or process under investigation by thinking and thus writing and thus thinking more about them” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 44). The analytic memos that the researcher maintained during this study were compiled in the Dedoose software alongside the codes for easy access while the researcher continued to code.

**Chapter Summary**

Chapter three presented information in regard to how the researcher conducted this study. A general qualitative approach was used to highlight the uniqueness of the Black supervisor’s experiences in supervision. Also, this approach allowed the researcher to explore how the participants make meaning of their experiences. Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants who identify as a supervisor and also identify as Black. Following recruitment, participants engage in two semi-structured interviews. I also provide my positionality as well as how this study maintained trustworthiness. Trustworthiness was developed throughout the study by bracketing of the researcher, reflexive writing in a researcher journal, analytic memos, and member checking through several rounds of interviews and the utilization of critical friends.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

In the previous chapter, I explained the methods that I utilized to conduct this qualitative study. I shared the procedures, the recruitment process, the participants involved in this study, and how CRT guided my analysis. I also shared the evidence as to why a qualitative design was most appropriate for the research question I set out to answer. In this chapter, I will present the findings of the data after conducting two rounds of interviews and a thematic analysis. I will further expound the major themes and subthemes by providing excerpts from the data that exemplify the themes.

Following my coding and chunking of the data, I developed three themes that represented the overall data. The three themes that I identified from the data were: “I Can’t Run from Being Black:” The Salience of Racial Identity Amongst Black Supervisors; “I Have to Make People Feel Safe:” Methods and Precautions Taken to Maintain Safety in Supervision; and “Is It Because I’m Black?” Perceptions and Impact of Race and Racism. As I will explain in further detail in this chapter, the most pertinent and prominent experiences of Black supervisors working with White supervisees are highlighted through each of the themes and their subthemes. The three themes and subthemes are related, as race is the focus of each, but the themes are distinct in nature.

Introduction to Developed Themes

When exploring the experiences of Black supervisors working with White supervisees, participants shared their awareness of their race and how it was prevalent in most, if not all, of their supervisory experiences when working with White supervisees. This overarching idea is indicative of the consciousness that Black supervisors possess as it relates to race when in supervision. This idea also is apparent in the three themes presented in this chapter. All of the
participants (n=12) acknowledged how race was influential for them. Although discussions about race are not always the center of supervision interactions, race is often on the participating Black supervisors’ minds and how they interact with their White supervisees, whether negatively or positively. While the interview discussions around race were not always explicit, the awareness of race was, more often than not, something that the participants reported being a part of their supervisor identity, interaction, and approach.

Interestingly, some participants reported that they do not often think about how race affects supervision explicitly. However, as the interviews continued, the participants went on to describe how subconsciously they were aware of how often they do think about their race, as it is a constant but silent idea they process daily. Therefore, even though some Black supervisors may not be actively thinking about their race, their racial identity is prominent in their day to day lives.

Many of the participants shared how their race was significant for them in cross-racial supervision. In addition, participants shared how their race and working cross-racially impacted their supervision approach. These concepts are exemplified in the themes discussed throughout this chapter. The racial consciousness of the participants is apparent in how they discuss their experiences working with White supervisees. Consequently, the racial consciousness can be seen in the developed three themes: “I Can’t Run from Being Black: ” The Salience of Racial Identity Amongst Black Supervisors; “I Have to Make People Feel Safe: ” Methods and Precautions Taken to Maintain Safety in Supervision; and “Is It Because I’m Black? ” Perceptions and Impact of Race and Racism. The main themes highlight the racial identity and the intersection of various identities of the participants, safety in supervision, and the permanence of racism that Black supervisors perceived. The themes that I derived from the data were consistent with the tenets of
CRT that served as the theoretical framework that I utilized to analyze the data. As stated in the previous chapters, race and racism are central to CRT research (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Hylton, 2012). Therefore, the themes presented in this chapter are all related to race and the impact of overt and covert racism in supervision. For example under CRT, the tenet of permanence of racism addresses how racism is pervasive and commonplace (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Further, the tenet of counterstorytelling is prevalent throughout the themes, as counterstorytelling allows Black individuals to share their experiences and challenge the notions of the dominant culture (Hiraldo, 2010; Hylton, 2012). Each of the themes had subthemes that further explained the theme, as noted in Table 2.

Table 2: Themes and Subthemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) “I Can’t Run from Being Black:” The Salience of Racial Identity Amongst Black Supervisors</td>
<td>Racial identity of Black supervisors informs their day to day lives, which in turn informs their supervisor identity including supervisory practices and interactions that occur in supervision with their White supervisees.</td>
<td>“I don’t get the privilege to suspend that part of, and not that I want to, but it’s like always there, especially because I mean it shows up if I’m walking into the room {supervision}.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1a) Intersecting Identities</td>
<td>Acknowledgement of how other social identities intersect with racial identity to inform supervisory practices or dynamics that occur in supervision.</td>
<td>“…because I fear that, unless they have faith in my abilities, they are only going to judge me by their perceptions of what it means to be a Black woman. And so, I can’t fully be my Black woman self from the jump because they won’t hear. I feel like they won’t hear what I’m saying or what I’m teaching.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b) Navigating Hyperawareness of Racial Identity</td>
<td>The hypervigilance of racial identity and racial differences in supervision</td>
<td>“Sometimes it’s a burden, you know, um having to be aware of your identity,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and how supervisors navigate in supervision. right. As an African American, it can be a burden in spaces. Like I have to carry that weight of being the only or the only two, um, supervisor or supervisors that they've come in contact with…”

| 2) “I Have to Keep Everyone Safe:” Methods and Precautions Taken to Maintain Safety in Supervision | Black supervisors acknowledge the varying levels of safety they have to be aware of in supervision with White supervisees particularly because of racial differences. The idea of safety includes the Black supervisor’s safety, the safety of their White supervisees, and the safety of the supervisees’ client. | “I have to find a way to make people feel safe, not threatened. And I had to work twice as hard…” |
| 2a) Safety of the Black Supervisor | Black supervisors’ acknowledgement of safety, or lack thereof, in supervision with their White supervisee and in their institution. | “no, I don’t always. I don’t always feel safe. I see, I feel safe often, sure, there are time when um, when I don’t, whether it comes to students (supervisees) complaining or going to higher ups and things like that going on in the relationship. not to the point where I’m afraid to do my job. Sure, I’m gonna do my job, but I do think about that and um, so no, I don’t always feel safe.” |
| 2b) Keeping the White Supervisee safe through Intentionality | The intentional methods that Black supervisors relied on to ensure safety of their White supervisees, especially to broach difficult topics in supervision. For example, establishing a working alliance. | “I’ve gotten better at collaborating with my supervisees to create a safe atmosphere. And so, in the beginning, I make myself more responsible for creating that. But as we progress, I share that power with my supervisee. It’s both of our responsibility to create a space or to |
| 2c) Parallel Process: Safety of the Client | Vicarious responsibility of the client the White supervisee counsels. | “So there’s a piece of me that expects and wants those microaggressions to occur because I know biases exist and I would prefer that they come out in the room than hurt the clients that they’ll be working with or are working with.” |
| 3) “Is It Because I’m Black?:” Perceptions of Race and Racism | The recognition of subtle and overt acts of racism that occurred in supervision. In addition to occurrences in supervision, the impact of the racism on supervisors’ sense of self as a supervisor. | “I would always say, Oh they’re questioning me because I’m young. They’re questioning me because I’m less credentialed. They’re questioning me for whatever reason. They, that’s why they’re questioning me. For whatever reason, I don’t think I ever landed on, they’re questioning me because I’m Black.” |
| 3a) Impact on Black supervisors | How Black supervisors may internalize racist attitudes, encounters, and experiences and how it may alter Black supervisors’ supervisory identity. | “Because then it’s like, you know, I dunno…in some ways it makes me question like, well why am I doing this if I’m just going to be looked, looked at as less than, um, so yeah.” |

The first theme, “I Can’t Run From Being Black:” The Salience of Racial Identity

Amongst Black Supervisors, highlights the Black supervisors’ racial identity and how the participants explained how their racial identity is salient in their supervisory practices, especially
when working cross-racially with White supervisees. The second theme of “I Have to Keep Everyone Safe:” Methods and Precautions Taken to Maintain Safety in Supervision, emphasizes the physical, emotional, and institutional safety of the Black supervisor, the White supervisee, and the client the supervisee serves. Lastly, the theme of “Is It Because I’m Black?:” Perceptions of Race and Racism, explains the Black supervisors’ perception of race and racism and its impact on supervision and their supervisor identity. The racial consciousness that is present in all the aforementioned themes, in different ways, informed some of the supervision processes, which in turn informed how the Black supervisors made meaning of their experiences working with White supervisees. Throughout the interviews, participants exemplified their racial consciousness by discussing the ways in which they have to present in supervision due to their race, whether as a way to protect themselves, to combat stereotypes, or to establish an effective working alliance. Participants continually expressed during data collection that they believe as though they have to put in more effort in supervision as opposed to their White counterparts. The consciousness of race or race being at the forefront of the Black supervisor’s mind was infused in most, if not all, of the participants’ interviews and their experiences working cross-racially. Examples of these statements will be presented in the themes in this chapter.

“I Can’t Run From Being Black”: The Salience of Racial Identity amongst Black Supervisors

The first theme that I derived from the data was “I Can’t Run from Being Black:” The Salience of Racial Identity amongst Black Supervisors. This theme focuses on the racial identity of the Black supervisors and how despite other identities, their racial identity informs how they navigate through the world, which includes how they navigate through supervision. There are
two subthemes within this theme including, Intersecting Identities, and Hyperawareness. Each of these subthemes will be further explained in this section.

In approximately 80% of the interviews, participants indicated that despite the knowledge, training, expertise, or titles, the Black supervisors often believed they were going to be viewed as a Black individual first, and everything else (titles, expertise) seemed to follow that identity. Meaning that their racial identity preceded their interactions with their White supervisees. Per the Black supervisor participants, the supervisor and supervisee interactions in supervision were determined by how White supervisees perceived Black individuals or as a few participants stated, “Blackness.” Further, participants explained that not only did they identify as supervisors, but more specifically Black supervisors, acknowledging that their race was pertinent to their supervisor identity.

Not only were the participants aware of their racial identity in supervision, particularly cross-racial supervision, but the participants acknowledged that their supervisees were aware or made aware of their racial identity. Marquita acknowledged this point when she stated, “I don’t get the privilege to suspend that part of, and not that I want to, but it’s like always there, especially because I mean it shows up if I’m walking into the room.”

Black supervisors in this study often referred to how they identified and how their racial identity was one of their most salient identities. The racial identity of the Black supervisor informed their supervisor identity as well. As the researcher, what I noticed from the participants was their eagerness to report how important their racial identity was to them. Jalen shared, “I’m Black as all get out! Can I cuss on here? …I’m Black as shit! (laughs) Black, African American is how I identify, strong Black man, Black, Black. All those things of Blackness. I don’t shy away from it.” Mahogany added, “So in my life, overall, race, for me, is my most salient
identity.” Likewise, Denise stated, “Identifying as a, um, African American female that is something I hold near and dear.” One participant, Brian, who identifies as a biracial man, stated that despite multiple racial identities, his Black identity is most salient for him.

Mmm. I think if it were entirely up to me, I would say I'm a, I'm, I'm a biracial Black man, I think is the way I want to identify, to give all credit to my identity, recognizing that I am in fact biracial, but that my blackness is most salient to me. If people are making me check a box, I'm going to check black. I mean, that's just that, that's the most, that's, that's most important. That's just what I was raised with. That's just how I feel. Um, so yeah, so I identify as, as, as openly as a biracial Black male. But, but if, if forced to choose, I would definitely say I'm a Black male. That's the most inviting. I don't know. There's no part of me identifies with whiteness. So.

These statements characterized the importance of identifying as a Black individual for the participants and how the racial identity of the participants was at the forefront of their minds.

As it relates to supervision and racial identity, Black supervisors discussed how they were aware of how their supervisees, particularly their White supervisees, might view them. Denise shared, “Like I know I'm privileged in some certain aspects with some things I’ve never had to go through. However, my race, you know, always is very indicative of how some may perceive me.” Mahogany added, “What matters is how people view my race, the people who get to decide how do they view my race, because that’s going to impact how they view me. So it doesn’t matter how positive my racial identity is to me, if it’s not positive to them, everything and every other identity I hold is shaded and shaped by their viewpoint on how I look.” For Mahogany, her racial identity can influence how she is seen in supervision, whether positively or negatively.
There was recognition by all participants that their race was evident in supervision. Thalia expressed herself by saying,

I mean, with everything that I do, like I’m, I’m still Black. Like I can’t take off my skin, you know what I mean? Even if I told someone or my, even my supervisees, that like I’ve done this x amount of times, like I’m very confident in this. I’ve done this theoretical orientation. That’s what I do when I’m in supervision and my theoretical orientation for counseling. I’ve done this x amount of time. It still doesn’t erase what they see. I come into the room and if they already have preconceived notions or bias about Black people already, um there’s nothing that I can physically do to remove that unless they want that to be removed or they’re open to that, those biases and those prejudice and discrimination factors to actually be removed.

This theme means there was a mutual awareness of race in supervision by the supervisors and the supervisees. For all participants, their racial identity was something that they were proud of and understood that it was not something that they could change. From the above statements related to racial identity, it was apparent to me, as the researcher, that the participants strongly embraced their racial identity.

**Intersecting Identities**

In addition to identifying and acknowledging how their race is more prominent for them, participants did acknowledge the intersections of different identities, particularly other marginalized identities, such as gender, age, and ethnicity. The subtheme of intersecting identities is important to note under this theme because in addition to their racial identity, there is significance in understanding how participants navigated cross-racial dynamics in supervision while other identities were also evident for the Black supervisor. This subtheme is unique
because while racial identity is salient, it would be negligent not to consider other identities that interact with racial identity that could potentially impact cross-racial supervision.

The participants shared their experiences of navigating supervision and holding multiple intersecting identities. For example, Black women participants often discussed how the intersection of gender and race further added to their complexities of being in supervision with their White supervisees. For Mahogany, her inability to be herself initially when working with White supervisees is apparent and there is some concern about how White supervisees might perceive her as a Black woman,

…because I fear that, unless they have faith in my abilities, they are only going to judge me by their perceptions of what it means to be a Black woman. And so, I can’t fully be my Black woman self from the jump because they won’t hear. I feel like they won’t hear what I’m saying or what I’m teaching.

Other Black women participants shared a similar sentiment as it related to the intersection of gender and race and how it may guide the way they work cross racially with White supervisees. Throughout the interviews, I noticed that the intersection of race and gender, particularly as it relates to Black women, was prevalent. It appeared that the race and gender held the same weight for Black women participants, as they not only identified as being Black or being a woman, but clarified that they were Black women, specifically. For example, Virginia shared the way in which she navigates the world as a Black woman,

I mean, I like, you know, if I put it besides female, I would deem to say that they’re [race and gender] almost equal because they both color my existence. So, you know, would, would, would I look at things the same way if I were a Black male? No. Would I look at the same things if I was White female? No. And so I would say that those two,
um, individually, and together really have a strong color to how I experienced the world and how I kind of moved through the world.

Therefore, Virginia is always aware of her role as a supervisor and how her intersecting identities of being Black and a woman permeates her work as a supervisor. For Virginia, the intersection of her race and gender is meaningful in how she experiences the world, which also informs how she might present in supervision, particularly with her White supervisees. It was evident to me as the researcher that it is seemingly difficult for Virginia to separate those identities, as each of those identities is significant to her and her identity as a professional, including being a supervisor.

Participants also shared how they often feel they have to work to combat stereotypes of Black women especially in supervision. Some known or common stereotypes about Black women often are related to the “Angry Black Woman” or the “Black Superwoman Complex,” also known as the “Strong Black Woman Complex.” The “Angry Black Woman” stereotype refers to the notion that Black women are seen as aggressive, angry, or combative when they exercise their voice or challenge a thought or opinion (Jones & Norwood, 2017). The Black Superwoman Complex or the Strong Black Woman Complex refers to the idea that Black women can accomplish every task and challenge with ease, without praise or validation from others. This concept is historically based on the fact that Black women have taken care of and nurtured children who were not their own, particularly slave owners’ children, and then went to take care of and nurture their own family, in addition to other taxing responsibilities. Giscombe-Woods et al. (2016) shared that the “superwoman” role that some Black women face involves certain obligations to project strength, suppress emotions, resist feelings of vulnerability, succeed
despite limited resources, and prioritize caretaking over self-care (p. 1124). These concepts were apparent in the participant interviews.

Particular stereotypes about Black women were discussed and informed how participants entered or conducted supervision. Rena shared an experience of working with a White supervisee and another supervisor and how she was aware of her identities. Further, she explained how intentional she planned to be in order to combat particular stereotypes about Black women stating, “I had it in my mind, like, the student isn’t going to lie on me. I know what I said and make sure that I have this documented, that type of thing. Um and knowing that I need it to convey myself in a professional manner and not come across as the ‘angry Black woman.’”

Because of the negative connotations associated with some of the stereotypes related to Black women, the Black female participants spoke about how they had to ensure that their supervision approach was received in a more positive and proficient way. Hence, Rena’s approach when she was interacting with a White supervisee and another White supervisor.

ATL spoke about her experiences of being a Black woman supervisor and navigating certain stereotypes in supervision and stated,

And then as far as my racial identity, you know, I have to check my superwoman complex. Okay. And what does that mean. Um, when I say that, Just having to always be strong, having to always, you know, never let them see you sweat and all of that and maybe a little more vulnerable in supervision with students. So show them that, um, you know, yeah. Okay. We as Black women…we’ll take it another level, not just a Black supervisor, but a Black female supervisor You know, we, we think we have to be strong. We have to always have it together. We have to always, and maybe that’s not the best,
um, to show our clients. And when I say our clients, our supervisees and especially if, you know, they’re White students in there.

Mahogany echoed ATL, in regard to the stereotype of the “Strong Black Woman” and shared,

And there is no room for weakness, or you can’t disappoint. You have to keep pushing. You can’t give up. You can’t lose your mind, all of those things, because you’re durable, you’re resilient. You should be able to take a licking and keep on ticking, kind of thing. In some regards, my awareness of that stereotype is empowering because I truly there isn’t much I won’t be able to endure and I won’t be able to handle. And so, I move through the world from a confident standpoint, and so, when you add supervisor or professor or any other roles that hold power on top of that, I actually feel empowered.

Black women have to work to strike a balance between not perpetuating a stereotype of seeming aggressive and not perpetuating a stereotype of taking on more than they should. In addition to processing and attempting to combat stereotypes about Black individuals in general, Black women participants also discussed how they have to effectively process the stereotypes about Black women. The statements above exemplify how Black women supervisors’ racial identity and gender identity are influential in how they navigate their lives. Thus, the intersecting identity of race and gender for Black women supervisors could require more effort in supervision.

Furthering the discussion about intersectionality related to race and gender, the two Black male participants highlighted how the intersection of their gender and racial identities informed their supervision practice as well. Jalen stated, “It’s a part of my journey as a Black male navigating these White spaces. This is just another area of doing that. So my blackness, I can’t
change. You’re going to see it. You’re going to experience it. Even if I don’t talk about it.” Jalen further explained that there are challenges being a male working in a predominantly female field, particularly being a Black male. He added,

Because being a Black male in a space with a White woman…in the South… I’m at risk for anything, right? And for me, my first line of defense of how do I reduce as much risk as possible, that on my ra…that was on my radar. Every time I worked with a White student, especially a White female, because at any time I could be considered a perpetrator.

Because there were only two male participants in this study, describing the intersection of race and gender was not as evident as when Black female participants discussed intersectionality. Nonetheless, from the interviews with the two male participants, I gathered that their gender was also significant for them in addition to their racial identity. Being in a female dominated field, such as counseling, the Black males in this study were aware of their gender especially when they interact with female supervisees. Thus, their gender identity coupled with their racial identity is present in the work that occurs in supervision when working cross-racially.

In addition to gender, the intersection of race and age was also noted in the interviews with the participants. Some participants stated that because of their younger age or their perceived young age and their identity as Black individuals, they could potentially encounter some challenges. Virginia reported in one of her interviews how she often received pushback or challenges from her White supervisees, where her supervisees would ask other White professors/supervisors for validation instead of relying on what Virginia said in supervision. Virginia stated, “I couldn’t figure out if it was a Black thing or a youth thing. Um, and it was
interesting because many times I think they thought I was younger than what I am. Um, and so there was that in place as well. So, it was a little bit of both.”

When asked about her experiences about being a Black supervisor, Mahogany shared she has had mostly positive experiences but has encountered moments where identity differences have allowed for some challenges to occur in supervision. Mahogany explained that her perceived age in conjunction with race contributed to some less than positive experiences in cross-racial supervision. She elaborated when she expressed,

But again, I’ve had the opposite experience as well with…and not just supervisees who are racially different, where there’s gender differences, where there’s class differences, that impacted our sessions. And also, I think I look older now than when I first started out, but I also know that people perceive me younger. I think they perceive me to be younger than I am, and so we know society equates youth with immaturity or inexperience and I know that certainly has impact interactions with supervisees and students.

When listening to the participants speak during the interviews, it became clear to me as the researcher that there were certain identities that the participants had to be mindful of in supervision including age and race. Therefore, age and race are an interesting intersection to consider when exploring the experiences of Black supervisors working with White supervisees because of perceptions that others have of what it means to be young or what it means to be Black.

Furthermore, racial identity is unique because even though a Black individual may be from a different culture, specifically different ethnicity, their race is more prominent, especially in today’s society. While there was only one participant who spoke specifically about the
intersection of ethnicity and race, her feelings regarding her ethnic background were particularly
 germane, considering her experiences in supervision. Monique shared her experience of being 
from Africa and growing up not referring to race or having race be a distinguishing factor in her 
culture. Upon arriving in the United States, she reported that she began to recognize that despite 
her history of not being labeled as Black, she still endured some of the racial experiences that 
Black Americans do, even though she was accustomed to identifying herself by her ethnicity.

Yeah, so I mean, it’s interesting because initially I, my identity when I first came to this 
country was African, right? I was African. I didn’t really have to, to, or being Black was 
not something that I really felt like I needed to say because where I come from, everyone 
is Black. So Black was not, was not something to identify. But I think I’ve become a 
lot…the most salient identity for me in America is being Black more than being African.

Um and that’s because, you know, of how I’ve come to be perceived, right? People see 
me as a Black woman first before I open my mouth and then they are like ‘Oh, where are 
you from? Um so because of that, that identity has been sort of, has come to the forefront 
and within in the last 20 years that identity has become more salient or the thing that 
when I, if anybody says, ‘who are you?’, I would say, I’m Black, and I would say I’m 
African, and I would say I’m a woman.

Monique shared that sometimes she was met with pushback in supervision because of her 
race, however when others found out about her ethnic background the dynamics shifted. As a 
researcher, the anecdotes from Monique led me to believe that racial identity, particularly if one 
identifies as Black, can be met with more challenges and pushback. Although Monique identifies 
as a Black woman, her ethnic background seemingly provided a buffer to potential challenges in 
cross-racial supervision. However, as previously stated, only one participant spoke specifically
about the intersection of race and ethnicity, and thus it is difficult to adequately provide any
generalization about the intersection of race and ethnicity. Nonetheless, Monique’s statements
regarding intersectionality are significant in the discussion on racial identity in cross-racial
supervision. Despite the intersection of various identities with race, the participants’ racial
identity was important for them, especially in supervision, and even more so when working with
White supervisees.

Navigating Hyperawareness of Racial Identity

In line with racial identity, participants discussed their hyperawareness to their racial
identity and how that hyperawareness impacted them in supervision, especially when working
with White supervisees. This awareness and vigilance meant that Black supervisors were more
often than not cognizant of their racial identity and how their identity was presented and/or
perceived in supervision. As a result, Black supervisors reported how they then had to figure out
how to navigate and maneuver in supervision with their White supervisees. Marquita shared,

So I think being able to, to meet individuals where they are and be aware of like gaps in
education, or um, definitely being able to see things from, uh, lots of different
perspectives, because I’ve had to, um, in life. Hmm and sometimes it’s a good thing.
Sometimes it’s not. It’s a part of what I think, um having to be aware of that. Sometimes
it’s a burden, you know, um having to be aware of your identity, right. As an African
American, it can be a burden in spaces. Like I have to carry that weight of being the only
or the only two, um, supervisor or supervisors that they’ve come in contact with…

Marquita recognizes the added effort that she must put into working with supervisees,
particularly White supervisees, as a result of her Black racial identity. She reported that because
her White supervisees might not have the opportunity or access to interact with other Black
supervisors or supervisors of color, then the responsibility may fall on her to acknowledge the racial and cultural differences that supervisees may encounter.

Mahogany provided a statement that was very similar to Marquita, “even in the academic, and even academia, what it is in the classroom, you know teaching or whether supervising, I’m always aware and conscious that I’m a Black woman, right?” Per Mahogany, the awareness that she spoke about challenges her to “show up” in a different way with her White supervisees being a Black woman.

When asked about his racial identity and how his racial identity is evident in supervision, Jalen also added to the concept of hyperawareness of racial identity by stating, “Yes, because we always have to be, we always have to be on. And I think, it’s just my opinion, I think it’s harder for Black men and Black women specifically because of the belief that other people, especially people…White people have of us.”

Moreover, there is, more often than not, a heightened sense and awareness of the racial differences between the Black supervisor and the White supervisee and often that hypervigilance influences how Black supervisors practice in supervision with their White supervisees. This hyperawareness, while beneficial at times, can be a “burden” as Marquita stated, or it could force a Black supervisor to be “on” and constantly cognizant of the racial differences in supervision. All in all, racial identity, along with intersecting identities and the hyperawareness of identities, were influential in how Black supervisors navigated through supervision with White supervisees.

Under the first theme of “I Can’t Run from Being Black:” The Salience of Racial Identity Amongst Black Supervisors, I presented relevant findings of how the Black participants discussed their racial identity and how important identifying as a Black person was for them. In addition to their racial identity, I presented ways in which other identities of the participants
intersected with their racial identity and how the Black supervisors navigated through cross-racial supervision as a result of their hyperawareness of their racial identity. Participants’ hyperawareness of their racial identity also contributed to how participants thought about safety in supervision.

“I Have to Find a Way to Make People Feel Safe:” Methods and Precautions to Maintain Safety in Supervision

Throughout the interviews the idea of safety was prevalent amongst participant statements. Safety referred to not only physical safety, but emotional, psychological, and institutional safety of the Black supervisors. In addition to the safety of the Black supervisor, the safety of the supervisees and the safety of the clients are also pertinent to this theme. As it relates to safety, Black participants shared their experiences of working intentionally in cross-racial supervision to reduce their risk of malfeasance as supervisors. Participants also reported on their experiences of not feeling protected in their institutions where the participants taught supervision. The lack of power and privilege in supervision and within their institution and how it ultimately impacts supervision processes is explored under this theme. In addition to the efforts that Black supervisors implemented to make themselves feel safe in supervision and within their institution, the participants also discussed their considerations and responsibility for the White supervisees in supervision. From the interviews, Black supervisors worked to create safe and welcoming supervisory environments in which the White supervisee felt comfortable to have difficult but constructive conversations in a cross-racial supervision setting. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to consider the actions of their supervisees working with clients and prevent vicarious liability (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019); thus, participants expressed their responsibility to consider the safety of the supervisees’ clients. To further expound upon this
theme, there were three subthemes: Safety of the Black Supervisor, Keeping the White Supervisee Safe through Intentionality, and Parallel Process: Safety of the Clients. There are other concepts under the aforementioned subthemes that will be further explained in this section.

**Safety of the Black Supervisor**

While most participants reported that they felt safe physically, there were reports about how to broach certain topics and conversations for fear of the response from White supervisees. One participant shared that they avoid the conversation of race altogether as a way to protect themselves.

> Uh, I never offer or indulge in the conversation about race. And part of that was unless it came up, I didn’t talk about it. And part of it was the fear of this could be uncomfortable for this supervisee. And again that could raise the risk of me being a threat or possibly this person feeling in some kind of way about me or about our experience. So I’ve never talked about that…And that was for my own safety and security. (Jalen)

Jalen’s identity as a Black male especially working in the South influenced how he chose not to bring up taboo or controversial discussions even if he knew they were meaningful to have. Jalen also referenced throughout his interviews to the perception and treatment of Black men in society, which he was actively working to prevent from happening to him.

Another participant also described her experience in working with White supervisees. Simone discussed her own perceptions of safety in cross-racial supervisory relationships.

> Not all the time. No, I don’t. Um, sometimes, I feel that there’s a lot of assumptions out there in judgments…no, I don’t always. I don’t always feel safe. I see, I feel safe often, sure, there are time when um, when I don’t, whether it comes to students (supervisees) complaining or going to higher ups and things like that going on in the relationship, um
you know, I think about that too, not to the point where I’m afraid to do my job. Sure, I’m gonna do my job, but I do think about that and um, so no, I don’t always feel safe.

**Power and privilege.** Power and privilege were apparent under this subtheme of safety of the Black supervisor. This concept of power and privilege relates specifically to how Black supervisors do not always feel safe in certain settings, either in supervision with their White supervisee or within their predominantly White institution, due to the lack of power that they hold as Black individuals.

Black supervisors recognized the power they had as supervisors, but also acknowledged how often White supervisees feel privileged enough to challenge them and push back to supervisors’ feedback. The power differential between the Black supervisor and the White supervisee could be challenging to navigate. As stated in previous chapters, the Black supervisor holds power as the evaluator in supervision, however, historically it is recognized that White individuals have more power, particularly over marginalized races. In that navigation of the power differential, Black supervisors have to also be mindful of what it means to be Black even when holding power as a supervisor. Thalia explained,

I think they’re used to having power. I think they’re used to having power at all times and if they don’t have power I think they’re used to someone who looks like them to have the power. I think it feels more comfortable for them to be able to go to their site and they have the power, of course, over the person they are counseling and maybe that their supervisor is another White woman just like them so I feel like it’s easier for them to understand that person has power because that person also looks like them.

From Thalia’s statement, it is evident that, for her, there will more than likely be a challenge in working with some White supervisees who believe that they inherently have more
power. In that, Thalia has to be mindful of how she operates in supervision to either balance power or hold onto power in supervision. She further explained,

but I have noticed that with my White students (supervisees) it’s been a lot harder to let go of the power because when I do, it becomes a very challenging process to where they begin to feel as if everything they say is right. I want them to have some sort of autonomy where they do have some movement in whatever is happening in the supervision session, but then it becomes detrimental to the way they feel they don’t need supervision.

In addition to Thalia’s statements, Mahogany provided a statement that related power and privilege to safety stating,

That is weird because I know I hold both identities of power or privilege and access along with my marginalized identities. I find that I feel more confident in addressing, I’ll say, microaggressions and addressing those things when they occur because there’s a certain amount of assumed power that I hold. Whereas, before I saw it as retaliation because I didn’t know if I had the support of the faculty around me. I feel safer now in the position that I hold and I, honestly, it’s such a weird phenomenon.

The idea of power and privilege can offer some sort of protection for either supervisor or supervisee. Therefore, when there is a sense of safety due to power and privilege, there are more opportunities to address challenging or difficult conversations in supervision.

Further, some participants shared their experiences of being supervisors in an academic setting and how there are often thoughts regarding how White supervisees could report the Black supervisor to other faculty members or department heads/chairs. Most of the participants interviewed also served as faculty members in counselor education programs. Because of their
position as faculty members, they also acknowledged there was limited power when dealing with administration. Some participants were very thoughtful in how they approached supervision with the notion that their White supervisees could ultimately report the supervisor, thus challenging notions of power and privilege.

Another participant, Brian, shared his experience of not feeling like he has power in an academic setting and how he is more mindful of how he approaches particular topics or conversations in supervision. Brian commented on his safety, especially within an institution and what it meant for him in supervision:

And sadly that informs everything and it, it holds me back in many ways. I’m very vigilant, especially around the supervision part, less about my teaching because academic freedom will back me up at the end of the day. Um so I know there’s that, but when it comes to like doing work in a supervisory setting at a clinic, or in an internship or practicum class, um, I’m highly vigilant and I’m very mindful to not get that bad, evil or to not push the student through the place where they may say something to my superior and now I’m perceived as whatever. Because I’ve already, I, I don’t feel safe in an academic institution. I don’t feel, um, I don’t consistently feel validated and heard. I do feel like I’m perceived as having an agenda. Um, so because I, because I feel that way, I’m mindful of that because I lack power in my institution, I’m mindful that I, because I lacked power.

Brian was vulnerable in sharing how he has to be mindful of the position he is in as a junior non-tenured faculty member and how he has to be cognizant of what happens in supervision. Brian went on to say,
So, when we’re talking about these White males that I’ve supervised, um, that is mostly occurred in academic settings. I’m a junior faculty member in academic settings and I’m very mindful of the lack of power that I have there, the impact that a student can have, they raise something about me. Um, so I think more often than not, I’ve let these things go when I’ve been in academic settings. Um, and that, that’s discouraging to myself. It’s unfortunate and eats as me in a certain way.

Power and privilege, or the lack thereof, can provide challenges for Black supervisors and their supervisory practices working cross racially with White supervisees. As the researcher, I was cognizant of how the lack of power and/or privilege in certain settings impeded how some supervisors were able adequately address essential topics in supervision.

**Keeping the White Supervisee Safe through Intentionality**

The question of whether the Black supervisor feels safe in supervision leads Black supervisors to be more intentional about how they approach supervision particularly with White supervisees. Black participants shared how it was imperative that they were able to maintain safety for their White supervisees. Ensuring safety and being intentional about safety measures allows for more vulnerability, development of skills, and overall positive supervisory outcomes. ATL discussed how she has to be strategic in supervision especially around difficult or challenging discussions in supervision in order to feel comfortable,

…if you would have asked me this last time, I would have said, of course, yeah I feel safe. You know, I know that these are difficult things we need to broach, but of course I feel safe. Um, now I do question that. But again, I look at the bigger picture so whether I feel safe or not, I do find myself thinking about, okay, I have to become a strategist.

Right? So I have to have strategy around this because it still has to happen. The
supervision still needs to happen…but is there a way I can strategically do this? You know?

Supervisors also discussed how they feel that they have to navigate supervision in a way that makes their White supervisees feel safe. Some avoid the conversation of race altogether as a way to protect themselves. Jalen shared that as a Black male supervisor, he is very intentional about how he approaches supervision for his own safety, as well as the safety of his supervisees, who he reports have been White females,

Am I being, am I presenting myself in a way that it’s not threatening? It’s not a risk of, um, anytime, any type of inappropriate interaction, connection, physical, verbal. So to me it was always came with that protective factor of how do I reduce any risk? How do I reduce as many risks as possible? Because being a Black male in a space with a White woman…I’m at risk of anything, right? And for me, my first line of defense of how do I reduce as much risk as possible, that on my radar. That was on my radar. Every time I worked with a White student, especially a White female because of at any point in time I could be considered a perpetrator. I could be considered a threat. I can be considered that. And that was really what I live with.

Jalen’s statement highlights what it means to think about working with and forming a working alliance with White supervisees. From Jalen’s statements, it is my observation as researcher that providing a safe environment for supervisees is a priority for him as supervisor. Jalen’s intentionality leads to the potential of an effective working alliance with White supervisees.

**Establishing the cross-racial working alliance.** The establishment of a working alliance coincides with making White supervisors feel safe and the intentionality that goes along with the
idea of safety. In order to assure safety not only for the Black supervisor, but also for the White supervisee, participants discussed their efforts in attempting to create a working alliance or a positive supervisory relationship to increase safety in supervision. Mahogany explained,

I’ve gotten better at collaborating with my supervisees to create a safe atmosphere. And so, in the beginning, I make myself more responsible for creating that. But as we progress, I share that power with my supervisee. It’s both of our responsibility to create a space or to maintain a space that’s safe for us to have these sessions, and these conversations, particularly those conversations that can be seen as difficult for some people.

The idea of intentionality to provide a safe or safer space for the White supervisee as well as the Black supervisor indicates how the supervisor prepares for the broaching of difficult topics including conversations about race. The participants recognize that in order to produce culturally competent counselors and to facilitate the counselor/supervisee cultural competence development, they must be strategic in how they do so.

Thalia added to this idea by saying how she is intentional about how she establishes a working alliance or supervisory relationship to build trust which allows for a greater sense of safety in supervision,

Sometimes the first supervision session, I might not look at tape at all or even talk about supervision. I might do an icebreaker or some sort of activity that kind of cultivates the relationship and I think through my racial identity because of having to understand that there’s going to be a lack of trust and there is a lot of research out there about lack of trust with Black individuals period and I feel like I do that because I want them to have some sort of trust.
Relationally, ATL shared how she works to make supervisees feel safe in supervision and the methods that she takes,

I would like to think that I get them to feel really comfortable. I feel that it’s a safe place and that they can bring anything there. I also...we do a check in and I call them red, yellow, or green. I have these little felt pieces, um just pieces of felt. They’re red, yellow, or green, and I say, ‘Hey, ok, what color are you today?’ And red is like ‘I’m upset, I want this day to be over’. Um, you know, don’t bother me. Um, your yellows are, you know, ‘it’s a stressful day, but I’m coping.’ And then your greens are like ‘I’m having an awesome day.’ Like I’m in my zone. And we kind of discuss...let’s all get to a common place where they’re able to let that out first...So just checking in with them.

The working alliance allows for safety for the Black supervisor and the White supervisee, which in turn offers opportunities for more effective and communication of difficult conversations in supervision.

**Parallel Process: Safety of the Client**

In addition to assessing for safety not only for themselves and the supervisees in supervision, Black supervisors must also be cognizant of the vicarious responsibility they have for the clients for whom their supervisees are providing services. Parallel process was a collective theme and discussion during the interviews amongst the participants. As mentioned in previous chapters, parallel process refers to the concept of the dynamics that can be present in the supervision session can also be present in the counseling session and vice versa (Tracey et al., 2012). Participants described their experiences in navigating parallel processes or even the potential of parallel processes with their White supervisees. Jalen stated,
I think part of it was not being able to understand cultural differences where they supervisees may not work with clients of color and not have an understanding or comprehension of different cultures. So that will come back into supervision of ‘I don’t know what to do, I don’t know what to say, I don’t know the best way to do it or the right way to do it.’ So that will come up in conversation within supervision. Um, and when those topics of conversation came up, my feedback was typically, you know, educating yourself about that client, educating yourself about that client’s culture, educating yourself about what’s going on with the client.

Monique shared similar thoughts about how to protect clients of color that White supervisees could counsel. Monique reported in this statement that she was less worried about herself and more concerned about how White supervisees might perceive clients of color and how White supervisees might treat them.

And this isn’t always the case of course, but by and large, I do feel that kind of safety, but I never really worried about whether they would go and tell on me. I’m mostly worried about whether they would judge other people of color based on me, right? So I worry about representing my people. You know, I worry about pathologizing certain behaviors of my people, you know, so in that sense, I, I…those sort of things I worry about. I worry about, you know, (pause) Say they’re working with a Black client who steals, I don’t want them to now go and be like, ‘Oh, you know, Black people, they love to steal.

Despite wanting to protect themselves in supervision, especially when working cross-racially, Black supervisors reported how they were committed to the protection of their supervisees’ clients. Mahogany, who stated above how she intentionally works to create a safe environment for her and her supervisees, also reported, “So there’s a piece of me that expects
and wants those microaggressions to occur because I know biases exist and I would prefer that they come out in the room than hurt the clients that they’ll be working with or are working with.” It was important for Mahogany to experience challenging moments in supervision to allow them to be teachable moments that could in turn protect the clients her White supervisees were serving. Jalen succinctly ties this idea together by stating, “And to me the more I’m able to help counselors in training, there’s a bigger audience that they’re helping. So I’m helping this trainee. You’re helping clients. I’m able to reach these clients indirectly.”

The discussions around safety during the data collection was striking and significant to address, especially as it related to not only the safety of the Black supervisor, but also the White supervisee and their clients. Safety in supervision can be challenged by the lack of power and privilege that the Black supervisors possess. In addition, the intentionality of the Black supervisors in supervision to ensure safety is germane to the experiences of Black supervisors working with White supervisees. The concept of safety in supervision, and all components related to this concept, is rarely addressed in the counseling literature. Therefore, the theme of “I Have to Make Everyone Feel Safe:” Methods and Precautions to Maintain Safety in Supervision is crucial to the literature and how to better understand the experiences of Black supervisors working cross-racially.

“Is It Because I’m Black?” Perceptions of Race and Racism

Throughout the interview process, numerous participants shared their experiences of facing particular challenges in supervision when working with White supervisees. This theme of “Is It Because I’m Black?” Perceptions of Race and Racism represents the idea of permanence of racism, in that racism can be so subtle that they were unsure if some of the experiences they were having were because they were Black. This theme relates to the previous two themes and is
a culmination of both racial identity and safety; however this theme stands apart as racism and its impact are incredibly salient to this study. The concept of racism, particularly through the lens of CRT, is significant, and although this theme is shorter in length than the previous themes, it highlights racism and its effect on Black supervisors.

Participants shared that while some experiences were more overt in the form of microaggressions, others were more covert where the Black supervisor may have to question whether a statement, action, or response was because of their race. Denise stated, “When I first started…there were a couple of issues and I don’t know if it was necessarily a part of me being Black or…being new, you know, it’s hard to kind of separate some of that stuff.” Similarly, Brian reported that often he attributed certain challenges in supervision to his age or even his experience, but then realized that those challenges could ultimately attribute to his race,

I would always say, Oh they’re questioning me because I’m young. They’re questioning me because I’m less credentialed. They’re questioning me for whatever reason. They, that’s why they’re questioning me. For whatever reason, I don’t think I ever landed on, they’re questioning me because I’m Black. But the more experience I’ve had in the field, um and I’m including academia, cause I think this is where it really shined through the most, the more I realized like, ‘Oh no, they are probably questioning me because I’m Black.’ Like that’s probably the thing, you know my maleness is not, that’s not the thing that adds to my authority in, in a, role. You know, that’s my privilege there, that I’m a man so they’re probably going to perceive me as credible in that capacity. But I got degrees upon degrees now and I’m still getting a little side every now and again. And that doesn’t, to me, I’m just like, maybe this has more to do with degree of change. My age has changed. And I’m not saying that I’m perceived as old. I know I’m not viewed as old,
I’m still viewed as young. Um, but as all those other things have changed to still have that resistance…I’m slowly running out of variables to attribute it to. His experiences of challenges and pushbacks resemble experiences of microaggressions and microinsults.

Virginia reported a similar experience when she first started supervising, “When I first started teaching [supervision], there were a couple of issues and I don’t know if it was necessarily a part of me being Black or (pause) me being new, you know, it’s hard to separate that stuff.” ATL shared her experience of when she has noticed students drop her supervision course for another White instructor, “Um, drop my class and sign up for a White supervisor’s class just when they saw me.” So while some experiences are not clear, participants found themselves questioning the occurrences of events and behaviors and whether it was because of their race.

Mahogany shared an experience of a particular microaggression that relates to the idea of colorblindness,

It’s interesting. I had a conversation with one of my White supervisees the other day. She actually sees me as a mentor as well and she was talking to me and we were talking about our racial differences and she’s younger than I am and she said that, for her, she doesn’t even think about our racial differences. She said it doesn’t bother her, which is a loaded statement. Of course, I challenged her about that and she said, ‘I’m just not…it’s weird. I just don’t think about it. I respect you so much as a person,’ that kind of thing, that race doesn’t even come to mind. And so she’s making these comments that are tinged with judgment so we had to explore that.
Colorblindness, even if not presented with mal-intent, is a form of racism in that the concept does not allow the acknowledgement of a person of color’s lived experiences (Brown, 2009; Constantine & Sue, 2007; Hiraldo, 2010; Shaw, 2017). Colorblindness essentially erases the person of color’s, in this case, the Black individual’s, value, lived experience, and uniqueness.

From the interviews, it was apparent that many of the participants had experienced microaggressions committed by their White supervisees. Denise gave an example of when a White supervisee questioned her experience. Denise shared an experience where a student she was to supervise was confused about her status as a supervisor. Denise reported,

And just like one of the students just saying ‘Oh I didn’t know what it’d be like working with a doctoral teaching intern.’ And then it made me think like, and I didn’t push the issue any further. Um, but it made me kind of think like what did you really mean with it? Like was it because I was an intern or because I was Black…so it wasn’t blatant or anything in that instance. However, it could have been like one of those, like, microaggression, you know, or micro-insult. Um to the fact of questioning competency.

Microaggressions such as the ones that Denise experienced are forms of racism that can impact the supervisor and their supervision approach. Additionally, minimizing one’s racial identity by colorblindness is a form of racism. These forms of racism and others are challenging for Black supervisors, mainly because of having to know how to respond to these instances and its overall impact on the Black supervisors’ sense of self and competence.
Impact on Black Supervisors

The experiences of encountering instances of racism and discrimination, whether they included microaggressions, microinsults, or blatant racism, led some of the participants to question their sense of selves and question their competence as supervisors. In the same vein of questioning one’s competence as a result of experiencing racism, participants discussed their feelings regarding imposter syndrome. Brian provided his own experience by sharing,

“So I don’t want to think about it too often, mmm. Because then it’s like, you know, I dunno…in some ways it makes me question like, well why am I doing this if I’m just going to be looked, looked at as less than, um, so yeah.“

Thalia shared a closely similar thought to Brian’s when she stated, “It’s like imposter syndrome. Am I supposed to be here? Is this right? And I think a lot of that happens.” Rena added,

“Why am I still doing this? If they can’t see that I belong here, then maybe I should just leave or the other hand um, I thought you’d have to keep doing it. This is what you have to do to survive. Um, it becomes exhausting in a sense that I think reaffirms the imposter syndrome.”

These participant statements represent the notion that experiencing racism can be challenging to continue to want to be a supervisor. Likewise, the feelings of imposter syndrome that are evident in the participant statements makes the Black supervisor less confident about their work as supervisors. The questioning of self and one’s competence because of various incidents of racism were common statements from Black supervisor participants during data collection. This theme related to the permanence of race and racism is noteworthy from the findings and exemplifies the experiences of Black supervisors working with White supervisors.
Chapter Summary

The findings that were presented in this chapter highlight the experiences of Black supervisors working cross racially with White supervisees and indicate how race and racism, whether consciously or unconsciously, inform how the interactions in supervision develop. This chapter explored three themes that I extracted from the data: “I Can’t Run from Being Black:” The Salience of Racial Identity Amongst Black Supervisors; “I Have to Make People Feel Safe:” Methods and Precautions Taken to Maintain Safety in Supervision; and “Is It Because I’m Black?” Perceptions and Impact of Race and Racism. In the following chapter I will provide a more detailed summary of the results and discussion that will explore and explain these findings.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to explore the experiences of Black supervisors working cross-racially with White supervisees. In the previous chapter, I presented the findings of the study and the three overarching themes that I derived from the data: “I Can’t Run from Being Black:” The Salience of Racial Identity Amongst Black Supervisors; “I Have to Make People Feel Safe:” Methods and Precautions Taken to Maintain Safety in Supervision; and “Is It Because I’m Black?” Perceptions and Impact of Race and Racism. The final chapter of this dissertation will reiterate the statement of the problem, review the methodology that the researcher engaged in to conduct this study, and discuss the findings in detail. Following, I will discuss implications, strengths, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

As stated in chapter one, there has been an increase in cross-cultural and cross-racial studies and conceptual writings in counselor education (Constantine, 2007; Ratts et al., 2016; Wong et al., 2013). However, the majority of the research that focuses on cross-racial dynamics and interactions tends to focus on the White supervisor and the supervisee of color (Chang, Hays, & Shoffner, 2003; Constantine & Sue, 2007; Hutson, 2003). As the counselor education field continues to enroll people of color into counselor education programs (CACREP, 2017), it is essential to also include perspectives of supervisors of color to more accurately address the training needs of persons preparing to be counselor supervisors.

To sufficiently answer my research question of “How do Black supervisors working cross-racially with White supervisees describe their experience in supervision?” I employed a general qualitative design. The general qualitative design was beneficial as I sought to understand the meaning making of Black supervisors as they described their experiences working cross racially with White supervisees. This study relied on semi-structured interviews
with 12 participants, along with key informants. In the sections that follow I will provide a summary of the findings I presented in chapter four along with my interpretation of the findings as they relate to the theoretical framework for the study. Finally, I will offer implications for training, supervision, and practice, as well as an overview of limitations and directions for future research.

**Summary of the Findings**

My intent with this study was to highlight the voices of Black supervisors. The literature is scarce with perspectives of Black supervisors as it relates to cross-racial supervision. From the findings, I believe that Black supervisors have a lot to contribute to the counseling field as a whole. Based on the information and perspectives that were gathered, the findings did not surprise the researcher, given the existing literature on cross-cultural and cross-racial supervision studies, as some of the findings were corroborated by the literature. The findings of this study aligned with existing literature regarding supervision outcomes, working alliance, parallel process, racial identity in supervision, experiences of supervisors of color, and the experiences of Black individuals in counselor education. In this chapter, I will demonstrate the correlation between this study and existing literature by highlighting similarities and some discrepancies of this study and others.

When deconstructing the data and organizing themes, there were some findings that were unexpected, such as the ideas of safety and intentionality. Some of the existing literature (e.g., Dressel et al., 2007; Estrada, et al., 2004) does mention ensuring safety in supervision; however, the idea of safety is reserved primarily for the supervisee rather than for the supervisor. Other literature highlight the significance of the working alliance (Bhat & Davis, 2007; Sukumaran, 2016; Wong et al., 2013) and parallel process (Crowe et al., 2011; Sato, 2014; Searles, 1955;
Tracey et al., 2012; Watkins, 2017), but does not address how the intentionality that supervisors engage in ensures safety in supervision. While these findings of safety and intentionality from this study make sense for Black supervisors to experience, as the researcher I did not sufficiently account for the significance of these findings. The ideas of safety in supervision and intentionality may seem commonplace, but from these findings safety and intentionality require more of an effort by Black supervisors as compared to White supervisors in the existing literature.

There were other findings related to race and racism that I expected given previous literature on cross-cultural and cross-racial interactions in supervision. For example, some authors (e.g., Butler-Byrd, 2010; Sato, 2014; Scarborough, 2017) implied that the skills and competence of minority supervisors can be challenged by their White supervisees, which was evident in this current study’s findings. Further, Redmond (2011) explored microaggressions endured by Black supervisors, which was also apparent in all of the themes presented in chapter four. Redmond (2011) discussed how microaggressions and the lack of acknowledgement of privilege by White supervisees negatively impacted the working alliance between the Black supervisor and White supervisee. Similar sentiments were shared during this current study.

Throughout the participant interviews, participants shared unique experiences of working cross racially with White supervisees. All of the participants reported positive and less than positive experiences when working cross racially. Further, they also noted critical incidents or significant events that occurred when working cross racially that informed their supervision practices that are apparent in the presented themes. The critical incidents in this study related to the supervisory relationship, lack of cultural awareness, and supervisor support. All of the participants discussed how race was a significant factor in their relationship with their White
supervisees. Race and racial identity were frequently addressed in the participant interviews and the resulting themes.

The first theme, “I Can’t Run from Being Black:” The Salience of Racial Identity Amongst Black Supervisors, presented the ideas and statements of the participants related to the importance of racial identity for the Black supervisors and how their racial identity was a significant factor in their supervision processes. The second theme, “I Have to Make People Feel Safe:” Methods and Precautions Taken to Maintain Safety in Supervision, highlighted the importance of varying levels of safety in supervision for the supervisor, supervisee, and the client the supervisee serves. The final theme, “Is It Because I’m Black?” Perceptions and Impact of Race and Racism presented the experiences of perceived racism, microaggressions, and pushback that Black supervisors encountered and how those experiences challenged their supervisor identity. These three overarching themes all relate to race and racism in some regard as the study highlighted the cross-racial dynamics between Black supervisors and White supervisees.

To analyze the data, I utilized a Critical Race Theory (CRT) framework as my lens. CRT emphasizes race as the central focus of research. CRT acknowledges that race, as a social construct, is influential in how people are perceived and treated (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Further, CRT aims to challenge systems, scripts, attitudes, and social teachings of racism by highlighting voices of marginalized people (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). In this chapter, I will discuss the themes as they relate to the CRT theoretical framework. I will also provide a discussion on additional relevant findings.
**Discussion of Findings through CRT Lens**

Utilizing a CRT framework where the central focus is on Black supervisors helps to understand the “marginalization, alienation, and power relations” in supervision (Hylton, 2012, p. 26). Because there is little research on cross-cultural or cross-racial supervision where the Black individual/person is the focus of the study, this study is critical and CRT is beneficial as a way in which to ground this study. There was rich data obtained from the participant interviews and an abundance of noteworthy statements; however, to fully capture the experiences of the Black supervisor working cross-racially, it was imperative to employ a framework such as CRT that would encapsulate the cross-racial dynamics. Of the numerous tenets associated with CRT, I chose four to guide my analysis of the data: permanence of racism, counterstorytelling, intersectionality, and critique of liberalism.

**Permanence of Racism**

The tenet of permanence of racism was evident in the developed themes. The prominence of this major tenet of CRT in this study was unsurprising as racism is pervasive. Even as the counselor education field is continuing to move in the direction of embracing multiculturalism and social justice in the curriculum and training (Arrendondo et al., 1996; Toporek, Gerstein, Fouad, Roysircar, & Israel 2006), there are still shortcomings. CRT theorists have posited that “racism is seen as an inherent part of American civilization, privileging White individuals over people of color in most areas of life, including education” (Hiraldo, 2010, p. 54-55). CRT theorists also reported how racism is ordinary and a part of day-to-day experiences, particularly for people of color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). This tenet was beneficial in the analysis of the data in that I was able to highlight the instances of racism and perceived racism that the participants shared. As the focus of the study was on the experiences of Black supervisors
working cross-racially, there was little surprise of the evidence of perceived or actual racism due to the existence of racism in our society today. The evidence of perceived or actual racism in this current study is consistent with previous studies related to supervisors of color (Butler-Byrd, 2010; Redmond, 2011; Sato, 2014; Scarborough, 2017), Black students in counselor education programs (Haskins et al., 2013), and Black counselors (Haskins et al., 2015) where stereotypes, microaggressions, tokenization, and oppression were prevalent. Because of the evidence in these studies, there was indication that Black supervisors in this study would also encounter similar acts of discrimination or challenges due to race or racism.

Particularly in the first theme of “I Can’t Run from Being Black:” The Salience of Racial Identity Amongst Black Supervisors, permanence of racism was prominent when participants discussed their racial identity. When the concept of racial identity was shared, participants stated how hyperaware they were of their racial identity because of how others might perceive them. While participants reported that they were proud of their racial identity and background, they were also cognizant of what it meant to be Black in a supervision setting.

Permanence of racism is also reflected in how the participants discussed how they believed their White supervisees perceived them. Black individuals, in this case Black supervisors, perhaps are accustomed to or anticipate acts of racism in cross-racial experiences. Therefore, Black supervisors were hyperaware of their racial identity and how they might be perceived by their White supervisees in supervision. The hyperawareness or hypervigilance challenged many participants to be more intentional on how they interact in supervision. While a previous study conducted by Bhat and Davis (2007) explored the racial identity of supervisors, of the 119 participants only 10 identified as African American/Black. The minimal number of Black participants in Bhat and Davis’ (2007) study potentially limited the researchers from
understanding the hyperawareness of racial identity, particularly for their Black participants. Further, while other studies or manuscripts with a focus on the experiences of supervisors of color acknowledge the cultural/racial differences, there is little discussion of the hypervigilance of racial identity. Therefore, this current study contributes to the literature by providing findings not yet explicitly discussed. Some participants shared that because of society’s view of Black individuals, it was important to them to structure supervision in a way where supervision processes would be received well. Given the permanence of racism, supervisors had to actively think about how to position themselves and their supervisory practices so the supervision process could be received well by White supervisees. This act of intentionality is not currently present in the supervision literature particularly by White supervisors. The idea of intentionality and cognizance of how Black supervisors might be perceived is also seen in the theme related to safety that will be further discussed.

The awareness of racial differences also meant that the working alliance was crucial for participants in how they worked with their White supervisees. Some participants discussed the significance of establishing a good and working rapport with their White supervisees. There is evidence to support that having a high racial identity, which most of the participants seemed to demonstrate, leads to a stronger working alliance with their supervisees in cross-racial supervision (Bhat & Davis, 2007; Schroeder et al., 2009). White-Davis et al. (2016) also postulated that varying levels of racial consciousness in cross-cultural supervision can impact the supervisory relationship and rapport in how it is established and maintained. For participants who shared that they were aware and proud of their racial identity, they also stated their comfort or ease in broaching difficult topics. When participants discussed how they broached discussions of race, particularly the racial differences between supervisor and supervisee, participants also
reported positive working alliances. The idea of broaching difficult discussions is analogous to the study conducted by Jernigan et al. (2010), where the researchers suggested strategies for supervisors of color including offering extra positive regard to supervisees who engage or initiate topics of race in supervision. Although not all participants in this study engaged in or initiated difficult conversations with their White supervisees despite having a high racial identity, 11 of the 12 did.

Within the theme of “I Have to Make Everyone Feel Safe:” Methods and Precautions Taken to Maintain Safety in Supervision, the concept of permanence of racism was also prevalent. Similar to the first theme of racial identity, participants were aware of their racial identity and how they would be perceived by their White supervisees. The hyperawareness of their racial identity in cross-racial supervision led participants to be cognizant of their safety as well as the safety of the supervisees and even the clients of color the supervisees could counsel. This idea was a significant finding of this current study. Participants discussed their intentions regarding parallel process and how the supervisees’ clients would be perceived. Participants shared some concerns regarding how their White supervisees might treat or interact with their clients of color. Black supervisors were also aware of potential incidents of racism that could occur with the White supervisees’ clients if the supervisees engaged with them similar to the way they engaged in supervision.

The participants were adamant about attending to parallel process and preferred that critical incidents occurred in supervision to prevent negative critical incidents from occurring in sessions between the supervisees and the clients of color. Some participants explained that since there was some likelihood that the White supervisee might not have numerous opportunities to engage with Black individuals, it was Black supervisors’ expectation to enact certain behaviors
in supervision to ensure that there were then healthy interactions between a client of color and the supervisee. Jernigan et al. (2010) suggested that supervisors of color should acknowledge race and conflict within the supervisory dyad. Sato (2014) similarly stated that supervisors should address multicultural issues in supervision so that supervisees can be more effective in working with their clients. This idea is further discussed under other CRT tenets, such as counterstorytelling.

In exploring the theme of “Is it Because I’m Black?” Perceptions and Impact of Race and Racism, participants shared how racism appeared in the form of microaggressions, pushback, and challenges. Having to deal with various forms of racism was taxing for the participants of this study. The racism that the participants endured in this study were similar to the experiences of doctoral counseling psychology trainees of color who discussed the idea of Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF; Wang, Hubbard, & Dorazio, 2019). RBF refers to the stress responses of being a target of racial oppression as a person of color (Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007; Wang et al., 2019). RBF was evident in this study as participants discussed their frustrations, exhaustion, and psychological avoidance of certain topics. Although in Smith et al.’s (2007) and Wang et al.’s (2019) studies the trainees of color were not supervisors, their experiences relate to anecdotes of the participants in this current study. In addition to RBF, Redmond (2011) postulated that microaggressions, another form of racism, can impact the supervisory working alliance, goals, and tasks in supervision. Thus, the participants’ perceptions of racism were further indicative of the permanence of racism tenet of CRT.

Some participants struggled to identify if the challenges, pushbacks, and microaggressions they endured were because of racism and often tried to attribute it to other occurrences and perhaps the intersection of identities, rather than just race itself. Black
individuals have historically been challenged because of race. The Black supervisors in my study questioned whether their experiences of pushback and discrimination were because of their race and explained certain experiences in cross-racial supervision. Other studies support this finding stating that supervisors of color are often challenged, or their skills or competence is questioned in supervision (Butler-Byrd, 2010; Sato, 2014; Scarborough, 2017). Participants explained how these racist attitudes, whether subtle or more overt, were emotionally challenging and led some participants to think about whether they had the drive to continue to supervise, particularly in cross-racial settings. Participants expressed concern regarding whether the work they engaged in supervision was enough to compensate for the racism and challenges they encounter in supervision. Participants openly shared how they questioned why they are still serving as supervisors if their White supervisees will continue to push back against them.

Participants also acknowledged the emotional exhaustion associated with working cross-racially. These concerns led some participants to question their own competence and supervision approach. The examples provided by the participants serve as evidence for more support needed for Black supervisors. These examples of emotional exhaustion and questioning of competence can also be seen in research with a focus on experiences of faculty of color (Salazar, 2009; Writer & Watson, 2013). Salazar (2009) studied how faculty members of color have to “rise above” the effects of microaggressions and resistance in academia (p. 181). Writer and Watson (2013) also reported on the obstacles for faculty of color, including marginalization and hyper-visibility, and provided strategies for how faculty of color could “find their space” in academic settings (p. 23). These studies are critical to note as a majority of the participants in the current study served as a faculty member in some capacity. Further, the noted studies correlate with the experiences shared by the participants of this study as Black supervisors.
Counterstorytelling

The CRT tenet of counterstorytelling allows participants engaging in any research to challenge dominant ideologies and offers participants to name their own reality (Haskins & Singh, 2015). Counterstories also offer participants the opportunity to tell stories of their marginalized experiences (Hiraldo, 2010). Participants of this study were able to challenge numerous dominant ideologies by sharing their experiences, their successes in cross-racial supervision, and navigating cross-racial supervision. Participants were also able to openly share their racial identity, ways in which they combat challenges, and their counseling and supervision knowledge. This study served as an empowerment practice for Black supervisors for them to have their voices heard, particularly in the counseling literature. Hiraldo (2010) shared that counterstories, particularly in higher education, enable faculty, staff, and students of color to voice their narratives involving marginalized experiences. As the researcher, it was powerful to hear participants share and be vulnerable regarding their experiences that challenge stereotypes and other dominant notions including statements about how proud they were to be supervisors. Counterstorytelling can be seen throughout all themes and subthemes where many participants shared similar sentiments regarding race/racism and other experiences, specifically in cross-racial supervision.

An example of counterstories from the first theme of “I Can’t Run from Being Black:” *The Salience of Racial Identity Amongst Black Supervisors*, occurs when participants proudly shared their racial identity and what their racial identity meant for them despite the participants’ own experiences of racism. Bhat and Davis (2007) reported that supervisor-supervisee pairs with high racial identity development had stronger working alliances, which could explain the tenacity of participants of this study to continue their role as supervisors despite the challenges
they reported. Almost all participants of this current study reported, with enthusiasm, their recognition of the salience of their racial identities in their personal and professional lives. Delgado and Stefancic (2017) stated “racism is a means for by which society allocates privilege and status” (p. 20), which insinuates that individuals belonging to the dominant culture have more opportunities and benefits than those in non-dominant groups. The abundance of opportunities for the dominant groups can even be seen in the literature regarding cross-cultural/cross-racial supervision as most of the literature on cross-racial supervision focuses on the White supervisor working with supervisees of color as opposed to supervisors of color. Participants’ sentiments regarding their pride in their racial identity counters and challenges the “antiblack prejudice” that still exists in our society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 20).

Further, as it relates to power and privilege under the theme of “I Have to Find a Way to Make People Feel Safe:” Methods and Precautions to Maintain Safety in Supervision, participants relayed what it meant for them to have power in the supervisory setting. Participants openly discussed ways in which they embraced their power in appropriate ways to combat pushback or to challenge their White supervisees, while also tempered by thinking through how they would be received by White supervisees. Historically, in American society Black individuals were not always viewed as ones to hold power (Sue & Sue, 2016; Tatum, 2017). However, participants were able to share their experiences as Black supervisors of holding power. For the participants, power in supervision meant being in control of grades, supervision feedback, and having more counseling experience/knowledge than the supervisees. The statements regarding power and how Black supervisors hold power serve as counterstories to the historical narrative of Black individuals’ inability to possess power in certain settings. Even in
the context of being a supervisor and holding supervisory power, Black supervisors still had their power challenged by their White supervisees.

Another example of a counterstory under this theme relates to how Black supervisors work with their White supervisees to prevent potential negative interactions between White supervisees and their clients. Black supervisors acknowledged the significance of parallel process and the impact supervision can have on counseling processes. Black supervisors discussed how they challenged and countered particular narratives and stereotypes of Black individuals/people of color in supervision to prevent the White supervisee from carrying particular stereotypes into counseling with a client of color. Butler-Byrd (2010) also reported that she utilized her own experiences to challenge stereotypes of people of color that could be held by White supervisees. By challenging those narratives and stereotypes in supervision, Black supervisors are able to protect clients of color. Ladany (1997) also suggested that even just an interaction between a supervisor of color and a White supervisee could serve as a multicultural experience for the supervisee, which could also challenge certain narratives and stereotypes.

The challenging of narratives and stereotypes in this current study of Black supervisors was evidenced by participant reports of developing safe spaces for supervisees, enlightening supervisees on their clients’ cultures, and providing effective and supportive feedback in supervision. Dressel et al. (2007) reported in their study that one successful behavior in supervision is to create a safe environment in supervision to more comfortably broach the discussion of multicultural issues. Moreover, Estrada et al. (2004) highlighted the responsibility of supervisors to provide an environment where the supervisee feels safe.

There are likewise examples of counterstories in the final theme from the findings, “Is it Because I’m Black:” Perceptions of Race and Racism. Although participants addressed some
imposter syndrome and questioning of their own competence under this theme, participants also discussed how they continue to navigate cross-racial supervision despite the racism they encounter. The continued work as Black supervisors serves as a counterstory; Black supervisors in this study feel an obligation to continue their work as a supervisor despite the potential challenges they can experience in cross-racial supervision. Cook (1994) explored the racial identities of supervisors and supervisees and shared that although a crossed pair between supervisor and supervisee exists (where two individuals exhibit opposite racial ego statuses), the relationship could be progressive particularly if the racial identity of the supervisor is more advanced. Therefore, participants in this current study shared that despite the racial battle fatigue, they continued to show up to effectively work with their White supervisees. The emotional exhaustion and challenges that Black supervisors endure may be ways to stifle progression and development in supervision; however, Black supervisors in this study have shown that they are capable of positive supervision outcomes. This emotional exhaustion relates to the racial battle fatigue that is in the literature focusing on faculty of color (Arnold, Crawford, & Khalifa, 2016; Chancellor, 2019).

**Intersectionality**

The concept of intersectionality under CRT is defined differently by CRT theorists and sometimes omitted by some CRT theorists. However, Hylton (2012) stated that “intersectionality is concerned with the tensions of research that consider single issue research, in addition to examining overlapping and lived axes of oppression” (p. 22). For the purposes of this study, intersectionality is germane to the findings. Although race was central to this study, it was also important to explore the intersections of other identities along with race and how it presented in cross-racial supervision. From the findings, it was evident that race and other identities such as
age and gender were influential in how some Black supervisors navigated supervision with their White supervisees.

The concept of intersectionality was most apparent under the theme of “I Can’t Run from Being Black:” The Salience of Racial Identity Amongst Black Supervisors, in which participants explicitly discussed their racial identities and what the racial identities mean for them. In fact, this theme parallels the CRT tenet of intersectionality and underscores its salience as an issue for Black supervisors. The subtheme of Intersecting Identities highlighted this particular CRT component. For participants, the intersection of other identities was just as salient for them. From the findings, Black female participants reported extensively on how they felt their race and gender was influential for them in cross-racial supervision. When the participants think about being a Black supervisor, there are other social identities they must consider.

The intersection of identities, particularly marginalized identities (e.g. race, age, gender), meant that there was more concern about perception as a supervisor from the White supervisee. Often Black supervisors reported that they felt that they could not fully be themselves until they had more interactions with their White supervisees. Participants of this study implied that they would have to code-switch and be inauthentic when working with White supervisees. Code-switching was a way in which some participants felt safer in the cross-racial supervisory contexts. Harris (2019) wrote that code-switching was not a way in which to fit into White culture, rather it was a means of surviving, which relates to the idea of safety in supervision. Participants shared that they could not be their true, authentic selves as they considered the varying levels of safety in supervision. Some participants were concerned with how they would be perceived and whether their supervisory skills and capabilities would be challenged. The idea of perception was also prevalent in other themes.
Critique of Liberalism

The tenet of critique of liberalism is defined as the critique of liberal notions and ideas that attempt to address racial inequities or problems with constructs such as colorblindness (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1998). This tenet was apparent in the themes as participants discussed how, at times, their racial identity was either ignored or not acknowledged in supervision. Lack of acknowledgement of racial identity by White supervisees or White supervisees enacting a colorblind position can be detrimental in addressing the needs of particular groups of people, in the case of this study, Black supervisors. The critique of liberalism tenet is significant to this study as it addresses and challenges the notions of colorblindness. Although colorblindness was not explicitly discussed in all of the themes, the critique of liberalism tenet undergirded a good deal of what participants shared in their interviews and was woven through their experiences. This tenet serves to amplify the participant voices and, while not as in depth as some of the other tenets in this section, still has significant relevance.

Under the theme of “I Can’t Run from Being Black:” The Salience of Racial Identity Amongst Black Supervisors, the critique of liberalism is apparent particularly when participants discussed their experiences of their White supervisees reporting colorblind attitudes. Some participants felt that supervisees who disregarded their racial identity ignored a part of who they were and what they, as Black supervisors, had to offer in supervision. While some participants acknowledged that they could be perceived negatively regarding their race, they still acknowledged how they were not just supervisors, but Black supervisors and their racial identity was important to them. The findings related to racial identity in this study also aligned with findings from Bhat and Davis’ (2007) study that reported that supervisors’ racial identity has a
role in shaping the interactions between supervisor and supervisee. Additionally, Cook (1994) found that supervisors should be willing to openly discuss their racial identity and racial identity attitudes, which was apparent from this current study. The racial identity of Black supervisors meant that they also had more to offer in supervision whether it was cultural awareness and competence or ways to broach difficult topics. This is supported by the study by Ladany et al. (1997) that suggested that supervisors of color facilitate racial discussions and the development of cultural competence more than their White counterparts. The CRT tenets presented were ideal in analyzing the data, and the findings were supported by existing literature as I explored the cross-racial dynamics between Black supervisors and White supervisees. Further, there were findings that were unique to this study that were not as prevalent in the existing literature, such as the concept of safety in cross-racial supervision.

**Implications**

From the findings, there are several implications for counselor education, supervision training, and for counselors and supervisors. These implications may offer methods to enhance the counselor education field as a whole. Although some of these implications refer to supervision and supervisors mainly, these implications would also benefit counselors and counselor educators.

**Counselor Education**

One implication from the findings is that greater diversity should be infused into supervision training. From this study, participants shared that they felt as though they were not represented enough in training, in the literature, or in counselor education as a whole. Participants shared how their racial identity influenced some of their interactions with their White supervisees, including being mindful of how they presented in supervision and some of
the challenges in broaching difficult cultural conversations. The participants implied a need for focus or increased focus on the racial identity development of the supervisor and the supervisee. This could entail explicit assessments in supervision courses that identify the racial identity stages of both the supervisor and supervisee. Examples of assessments could be the People of Color Racial Attitude Identity Scale (Helms, 1995) or the White Racial Attitude Identity Scale (Helms, 2002; Helms & Carter, 1990).

Another implication would be to increase discussions around cross-racial interactions in counselor education programs. These discussions should also focus on ways in which supervisors of color are more equipped to navigate cross-racial dynamics. Perhaps programs can be more intentional about cross-racial/cross-cultural assignments and supervisory pairings. Per the participants, they were not specifically taught or trained in how to navigate cross-racial interactions in supervision. Instead, participants shared how they were dependent on themselves and their own personal experiences to maneuver cross-racial interactions. While some participants shared positive experiences in cross-racial supervision, some still reported that they wished they were more adequately prepared to handle some challenges due to race and cultural differences. Similar to one of the implications presented by Haskins et al. (2015), where the authors suggested that CACREP revises standards to address the needs of Black students as they prepare to work with White clients, the accrediting body should also revise standards to make sure that students in supervision training courses are prepared to work with White supervisees. It is recommended that curricula highlight cross-racial interactions in supervision that emphasize the experiences of both the supervisor and supervisee. For example, in seminal texts for supervision, it is recommended that authors explain and intentionally address cross-racial dynamics. Day-Vines et al. (2007) wrote a seminal article that effectively addresses ways in
which to broach cultural matters and could be used as a foundation for discussion about cross-cultural work. Counselor education programs could educate students and faculty on the impact of racial microaggressions, the impact of race on the working alliance, and how race may influence parallel processing and the safety of supervisors and supervisees in cross-racial settings.

Further, there should be methods implemented to validate supervisors, particularly Black supervisors, as they work cross-racially. There is a need for supervision courses, trainings, or curricula that highlight the effort that persons of color exert in the counseling field. From this study and the findings, it is apparent that Black supervisors do not always feel heard or supported. An acknowledgement or validation may allow for greater success for Black supervisors and an enhanced sense of self and supervisor identity. Because the majority of the participants have served as faculty members in some capacity, counselor education departments should create environments for their faculty members where faculty members can feel safe. Similar to what Redmond (2011) suggested in their study, counselor education programs should create environments where people of color should feel comfortable to express their concerns or experiences.

**Supervisors**

There must be continual assessments of the existence of racism or covert discrimination that may be occurring in supervision. It is imperative to evaluate how racism may be perpetuated in supervision. This evaluation could mean broaching difficult conversations related to race with their supervisees, regardless of racial or ethnic identities. Day-Vines et al. (2007) provided a continuum of broaching behavior for various levels of racial identity functioning of counselors. Although their continuum focuses on broaching for counselors, the same could be utilized for supervisors in their efforts to broach race and other difficult conversations. Moreover,
supervisors, specifically supervisors of color, should provide counterstories that challenge the dominant culture’s ideologies and perceptions of people of color. Counterstories could include descriptions of experiences that contradict stereotypes such as the “Angry Black Woman” or the “Superwoman complex” as described in the findings of this study. Lastly, since the concept of safety was a particularly prevalent concept from this current study, it is imperative for Black supervisors and supervisors of color to be aware of their safety and the importance of safety for them in cross-racial settings. Ways to ensure safety could be to rely on the support from departments in which the supervisors are working. Jernigan et al. (2010) suggested that supervisors should seek out progressive professional relationships. These relationships could serve as support and could also provide an extra sense of security for Black supervisors or supervisors of color.

Counselors/Supervisees

Similarly, it is recommended that counselors and supervisees be mindful of the existence of racism and discrimination in counseling and supervision. Particularly, counselors and supervisees should challenge liberal notions that reduce or ignore the lived experiences of people of color. These challenges include descriptions of how race is influential and informs supervisory practices in addition to what is learned in supervision training. It is recommended that counselors and supervisees encourage and embrace difficult conversations related to culture, particularly race and racism. It is recommended for counselors and supervisees to bring up challenges, concerns, or inquiries regarding race in supervision, especially if racial matters may be a subject that may come up in sessions with their clients.

Day-Vines et al. (2007) suggested that counselors should be aware of how racial politics are not only embedded in their personal lives, but in the lives of the client. Similar to the
implications provided by Day-Vines et al. (2007), counselors should also be aware of the racial politics of their supervisors. Racial politics could also be embedded in the lives of the Black supervisors. Racial politics could be instances in which racism is at the center of social issues. Recent examples include “birdwatching while Black” (Christian Cooper) and “jogging while Black” (Ahmaud Arbery), and Black men and women being killed by police while unarmed (Breonna Taylor and George Floyd). These incidents all occurred after the data collection for my study and may significantly influence the discourse for Black supervisors relative to the findings of the current study. Counselors and supervisors are encouraged to learn about the racial contexts of their clients as well as their supervisors and supervisees. This suggestion is similar to Estrada et al.’s (2004) suggestion that it was an important strategy to learn about the racial patterns of their diverse clients.

Likewise, counselors may use supervision as a place to practice critiques of liberalism by role-playing and engaging in intentional discussions with their supervisors that they can bring to their work with clients. Although the above implications appear limited to counselor education programs, they are also relevant to other settings in which there are cross-racial supervisory interactions, such as hospitals and community settings. Continual assessments, providing safe spaces/environments, and education on race related matters are all applicable to other settings outside of counselor education programs.

**Limitations**

A strength of this study was that it allowed the voices of Black supervisors to be heard. All participants were grateful for the opportunity to share their experiences and reflection. While every effort was taken to ensure that this study was sound and comprehensive, there were a few limitations. One limitation of this study is that there was not an opportunity for a focus group.
There were several methods conducted to maintain trustworthiness such as reflexive journals, analytic memos, critical friends, and key informants. However, a focus group allows for participants to reflect on the interview process and to discuss themes that were developed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I believe that following the two rounds of participant interviews, a focus group could have allowed for more description, clarification, or validation of the developed themes. Conducting a focus group serves as a suggestion for future research to allow for more sound opportunities for member checking.

Another limitation of this study was that the majority of the participants were faculty members. The participants were either adjunct faculty, full-time faculty, or have once served in the capacity of a faculty member. To that end, most of the participants spoke of their experiences of being a Black supervisor and a Black faculty member interchangeably. This interchange occurred because some of the faculty members shared their experiences of being a faculty member in the capacity of teaching a practicum or internship counseling course; therefore, there was often a lot of redirection and clarification in the interviews to decipher between whether the participants were referring to their faculty experience or their supervisory experience. Although significant experiences, the focus of my study was on the experiences of supervisors in supervision practice. While this serves a limitation, the experiences that the participants shared as faculty members also serve as a direction for future research.

Some participants only spoke of their supervision in the form of their classroom setting, such as teaching practicum or internship courses. Some participants only had experience as a triadic or group supervisor instead of conducting individual supervision. This limitation is significant to note because there are different nuances to consider between individual or group supervision. While all the supervision experiences were valid, I am interested in knowing what
the participant statements would have been if all the participants spoke about one type of supervision format. In future research, the criteria could be more specific to include a particular type of supervision or interview questions could allow for more clarity regarding what formats of supervision the Black supervisors engaged in.

Additionally, there were only two male participants who were a part of this study and thus there were limited opportunities to have a male or even more nuanced gender perspective for Black supervisors. Having more male participants, in addition to stratifying the sample along other dimensions, would have been beneficial especially in understanding the intersection of different identities. This is particularly relevant because of the intersectionality issues noted in CRT and the implications of the findings from this study. However, it is important to note that males make up a lesser percentage of individuals in the counselor education field (CACREP, 2017).

Although not explicitly asked in the demographic survey, the participants were mostly from the same geographic regions (Northeast, Southeast). Because perception of race and racial dynamics can be different in varying parts of the country, I believe that it was limiting to have participants to represent only a portion of the United States. For future research, it might be beneficial to consider recruiting participants from a variety of locations in the country.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

This study has influenced some other ideas for future research for the field of counselor education. One suggestion is for research regarding the experiences of Black faculty (non-tenured and tenured) in predominantly White institutions, more specifically how Black faculty navigate cross-racial interactions from students to their department/college leaders. What served as a limitation above also serves as a direction for future research: because the majority of the
participants shared and were eager to share some of their experiences of being Black in academia, I believe that we can learn from their experiences and explore how to shape counselor educators’ training and practice. Participants shared how they were thankful to have the space to be able to share some of their experiences in academia, although the study focus was on their experiences as Black supervisors.

In addition to focusing on the experiences of Black individuals as faculty members in academia, another suggestion for future research includes focusing on the experiences of Black supervisors outside of academia. Because some of the supervision experiences of the Black supervisors were limited to practicum and internship supervision experiences, there is some benefit in also exploring the supervision experiences in other clinical settings such as in agencies, hospitals, private practices, and other community settings. Future research may explore the experiences of Black supervisors working cross-racially with post-graduate and pre-licensed counselors. The exploration of cross-racial supervision outside of academia would be interesting to explore as expectations to have difficult conversations in supervision may be different depending on varying institutions and settings.

From the findings and also mentioned in the implications section is the topic of racial identity. While there are some studies related to racial identity in supervision (Cook, 1994; Jernigan et al., 2010), I believe that there are still some gaps in the literature in regard to how to assess/evaluate racial identity and its impact on supervision processes. Racial identity and its impact on supervision is noteworthy, as evidenced by this current study’s findings and previous literature. I recommend that racial identity measures are utilized to assess the varying levels of both the supervisor and supervisee in a quantitative study. Further, a qualitative approach could
allow for descriptions of supervisors’ and supervisees’ racial identity levels and how the levels of racial identity impact the supervision outcomes in cross-racial supervision settings.

Lastly, I believe that more research on Black males in academia, more specifically in counselor education programs, should exist. Given that counselor education is more female and White dominated (CACREP, 2017), it would be interesting to focus on Black male counselors and supervisors as the numbers of males of color entering counselor education field continues to grow. Although, there is some literature that already exists focusing on Black males in academia (Hannon, Nadrich, Ferguson, Bonner, Ford, & Vereen, 2019), I believe that Black male voices in academia should continue to be amplified.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I provided a brief summary of the findings of this study. I discussed how the findings were presented through a CRT lens and how the findings related to existing literature. Further, I presented the implications and recommendations for supervisors, counselor educators, and counselors. Finally, I explained the limitations of this study and the plans for future research. The findings from this study explained how racial identity and racism were salient in supervision and impacts supervisory processes. Moreover, safety was found to a significant concept related to cross-racial supervision.

This study highlighted the experiences of Black supervisors working cross-racially with White supervisees in supervision. This study was necessary in order to fill the gaps in the literature where the voices of Black supervisors were not prevalent. Furthermore, this study highlighted the need for counselor education programs and the counseling field as a whole to be more inclusive of different perspectives.
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https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2012.638862


https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004


https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000012442652


APPENDIX A

Demographic Questions

1. How do you identify racially?
   a. Black
   b. White
   c. Asian
   d. Other, please specify

2. How many years have you been a supervisor?
   a. 1-5 years
   b. 6-10 years
   c. 11-15 years
   d. 15+ years

3. Did you complete a supervision course from a CACREP accredited doctoral program?
   a. Yes
   b. No

4. When did you complete your supervisor training or complete the supervision course?

5. What is your highest level of education?
   a. Are you currently in a doctoral program?

6. What type of counselor are you? School counselor, mental health counselor, substance abuse counselor, etc.?

7. Are you currently providing supervision?
   a. Yes
   b. No

8. Certifications and/or licenses

9. Gender?

10. Age?
APPENDIX B

Cross-Racial Supervision

Interview Guide

I. General Framework
   A. Review consent form
   B. Reminder and consent to record the interview

II. Demographics
   A. Follow-up on items on the submitted demographic survey.
   B. How many years of clinical supervision do you have?
   C. Please describe for us your training in clinical supervision.
      a. How many and what courses did you take?
      b. How were multicultural issues in supervision addressed?
      c. How were ethical issues in supervision addressed?

III. Racial Identity
   A. How do you primarily self-identify?
      a. Other visible and non-visible identities that you would like to share?
   B. In the supervisory context, what are the challenges that you face as a Black supervisor?
   C. How do you incorporate your identity as a Black individual in the supervisory context?
   D. How important is race to you in comparison to other identities?
      a. Why?

IV. Supervision
   a. What is your supervisory theoretical framework?
   b. How do you integrate matters of culture within your framework?
      i. How is race broached in supervision with your supervisee?
      ii. Does race impact the supervisory relationship?
   c. How do you navigate issues of power in supervision?
      i. What are your experiences or thoughts about race and power within supervision?
   d. How do you feel your feedback, suggestions, or inquiries are received by your supervisee?
   e. How would you describe your role as a supervisor (e.g., teacher, consultant, collaborator)?
   f. Cultural competence
      i. How do you measure/assess cultural competence in within your supervisee(s)?
   g. Working Alliance
      i. How do you build rapport with your supervisees?
      ii. What challenges do you face when developing a working alliance?
   h. Parallel Process
V. Race in Supervision
   a. Are there differences or similarities in working with White supervisees versus Black supervisees?
   b. Does race influence the way you approach supervision?

VI. Experiences in Counselor Education
   a. How adequately prepared do you feel you were to supervise?
   b. Do you feel like issues of culture, particularly race, were pertinent in your supervision training?
   c. Did you feel trained to work with supervisees of the majority?
   d. Did you feel trained to work with minority supervisees?
   e. What do you wish you learned from your supervision training?
APPENDIX C

Recruitment Script

Greetings,

My name is Candice Crawford, a doctoral candidate in the PhD in Counseling Program at Montclair State University. I am writing to let you know about an opportunity to participate in a research study about cross-racial counseling supervision. This study focuses on Black supervisors’ experiences working cross-racially with White supervisees. To be eligible for this study, I am looking for participants who a) identify racially as Black, b) have completed a doctoral level supervision course from a CACREP accredited program, c) have supervisory experience of at least one year, and d) have supervised at least one White supervisee. If you meet the criteria to participate in this study, please feel free to contact me at crawfordc5@montclair.edu. Each participant will be asked to participate in an online demographic survey and two interviews (60-90 minutes each). Participation is completely voluntary, and your answers will be anonymous. There will be no compensation provided.

If you are interested and have more questions regarding eligibility or if you have any general inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me (crawfordc5@montclair.edu) or my dissertation chair, Dr. Dana Levitt (levittd@mail.montclair.edu).

Thank you for considering participation in this study. This study has been approved by the Montclair State University Institutional Review Board, Study no. IRB -FY-19-20- 1518.

Thank you for your time.

Candice R. Crawford
Doctoral Candidate
Montclair State University
Consent Form

Dear ______

You are invited to participate in a study of Cross Racial Supervision: Black Supervisors working with White Supervisees. I hope to learn about the experiences of Black supervisors working cross-racially with White supervisees and how those experiences shape supervisory practices and other incidents in supervision. You were selected to participate in this study because you have identified as a Black counseling supervisor who has at least one year of clinical supervision experience, completed a doctoral level supervision course in a Counseling or Counselor Education program, and have worked with at least one White supervisee.

If you decide to participate, please complete the following set of questions. The survey is designed to verify that you meet all the criteria for eligibility. Also, the survey will provide me with additional demographic information that will be beneficial as I analyze data. After you complete and submit the initial survey, we will contact you to schedule an interview. There will be a total of two interviews (an initial and a follow-up) conducted per participant. It will take about 60-90 minutes to complete each interview via a telecommunication method (e.g. Skype, Zoom, Google Hangout) or in person. You will be asked to answer questions not limited to: challenges you may face as a Black supervisor, your level of cultural competence, how culture, specifically, race is broached in supervision, and parallel process. You may not directly benefit from this research. However, we hope this research will result in an enhancement of the current counselor supervision curriculum.

There are no known risks to completing this interview. By agreeing to participate, you agree to audio and/or visual recording during the interviews. Data will be collected using the Internet. There are no guarantees on the security of data sent on the Internet. Confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the technology used. We strongly advise that you do not use an employer’s electronic device, laptop or phone to respond to this survey or participate in the interviews. You may experience some discomfort when considering your racial identity and experiences as a supervisor. If this should happen, you may stop the interview and we will help you identify some resources for support.

If you decide to participate, you are free to stop at any time. You may skip questions you do not want to answer.

Please feel free to ask questions regarding this study. You may contact me or my Dissertation Chair Advisor, Dr. Dana Heller Levitt, if you have additional questions at crawforde5@montclair.edu or 404-502-7213 (Candice Crawford) or levittd@mail.montclair.edu or 973-655-2097 (Dana Heller Levitt, PhD).

Any questions about your rights may be directed to the Institutional Review Board at Montclair State University at reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu or 973-655-5189.
This study has been approved by the Montclair State University Institutional Review Board, Study no. IRB -FY-19-20- 1518.

Thank you for your time.
Sincerely,
Candice R. Crawford, Doctoral Candidate
Department of Counseling
College of Education and Human Services
Montclair State University

By clicking the link below, I confirm that I have read this form and will participate in the project described. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement, and possible risks and inconveniences have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I can discontinue participation at any time. My consent also indicates that I am 18 years of age.

[Please feel free to print a copy of this consent.]

☐ I agree to participate (link to survey)  ☐ I decline (link to close webpage)

The study has been approved by the Montclair State University Institutional Review Board.
IRB-FY19-20-1518 - Initial: Expedited Review

1 message

cayuseIRB@montclair.edu <cayuseIRB@montclair.edu> To: crawfordc5@montclair.edu, levittd@mail.montclair.edu Cc: reviewboard@montclair.edu, ferrantec@montclair.edu

Sep 11, 2019 2:08 PM EDT

Ms. Candice Crawford
Dr. Dana Levitt
Montclair State University
Department of Counseling and Ed. Leadership 1 Normal Ave.

Montclair, NJ 07043

Re: IRB Number: IRB-FY19-20-1518 Project Title: SS Cross Racial Supervision

Dear Ms. Crawford,

After an expedited review:

6. Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.
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.

Montclair State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved this protocol on September 11, 2019. With the implementation of the new federal rule, expedited studies no longer have an expiration date. Instead we will ask that you complete an Administrative Check In, every two years, updating our office with the status of your research project. Your check in date is September 11, 2021. We will send you a reminder prior to that date.

All active study documents, such as consent forms, surveys, case histories, etc., should be generated from the approved Cayuse IRB submission.

When making changes to your research team, you will no longer be required to submit a Modification, unless you are changing the PI. As Principal Investigator, you are required to make sure all of your Research Team members have appropriate Human Subjects Protections training, prior to working on the study. For more clarification on appropriate training contact the IRB office.

If you are changing your study protocol, study sites or data collection instruments, you will need to submit a Modification.

When you complete your research project you must submit a Project Closure through the Cayuse IRB electronic system.

If you have any questions regarding the IRB requirements, please contact me at 973-655-2097, cayuseIRB@montclair.edu, or the Institutional Review Board.
Sincerely yours,

Amy Krenzer  
Senior IRB Coordinator

cc: Ms. Caren Ferrante, Graduate Student Assistance Coordinator, Graduate School

https://mail.google.com/mail/u/3?ik=072f63dd33&view=pt&search=all&permthid=thread-f%3A1644403421225179181&simpl=msg-f%3A1644403421225179181 1/1