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The Relationship Between Racial Identity, Coping Style, and Self-concept in African American Adolescents in Independent Schools

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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Abstract

The Relationship Between Racial Identity, Coping Style, and Self-concept in African American Adolescents in Independent Schools

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Donya V. Rhett

Adviser: Professor Anderson J. Franklin

This study investigated the relationship between racial identity, coping style and self-concept in African American adolescents who attend predominantly White private schools. It was hypothesized that adolescents who had a more internalized, positive Black racial identity would use transformational coping methods and would present with more positive self-concepts as a group. It was further hypothesized that those with a negative racial identity would tend to use avoidant coping patterns more often and present with relatively lower self-concepts. Black racial identity, coping style and seven domains of self-concept were examined in 10 African-American adolescents. The Cross Racial Identity Scale, Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale, and Adolescent Coping Orientation for Problem Experiences Scale were used. Some hypotheses were partially supported. Positive correlations were identified between advanced Black racial identity attitudes and coping style. In general, the hypotheses were not well supported. Results and implications for future research are discussed.

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To my family that raised me- all that I have accomplished thus far is a reflection of each of you. Diligence, curiosity, intelligence, compassion, determination, and dedication are just a small fraction of what I have learned from you my parents, brother and sister. Mommy, you especially have been the model of skill and caring in your exceptional work as a teacher.

Thank you Michael for sharing your love and being so patient. Your creativity has inspired me. Johari and I (and of course little "K") couldn't be more blessed. Johari you are truly my jewel. My love for you has driven me this far!

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

"...to all of us who love blackness,
who dare to create in our daily lives
spaces of reconciliation and forgiveness
where we let go of past hurt, fear, shame
and hold each other close.
It is only in the act and practice
of loving blackness
that we are able to reach out
and embrace the world
without destructive bitterness
and ongoing collective rage.
Holding each other close across differences,
Beyond conflict, through change,
Is an act of resistance."
-bell hooks, 1992

During the past few decades, a number of academic programs have been developed to recruit under-represented, yet intellectually gifted students of color and help them gain admission to independent and boarding schools. These schools are historically very exclusive, admitting predominantly youth from the White upper classes. Therefore, admission to such schools for most academically qualified students of color would remain an elusive dream without the aid of such programs as *Prep for Prep* and *A Better Chance*. Such programs seek out and identify pre-adolescent and adolescent students of color whose intellectual abilities are classified as superior. Once these programs have identified students who can handle the academic challenges, they send them to independent schools with varying degrees of academic, mental and psychological preparation and support. The students in these programs overwhelmingly complete their course of study in

these independent schools and proceed on to many of the best colleges in the U.S. (Prep for Prep, 2001).

However, during their years at these schools, students who are of color and/or from poor, working and middle class backgrounds, and ethnic minorities face a number of challenges to their psychological well-being and identity. These students are passing through one of the most challenging stages of development, adolescence, in what some might classify as an alien environment. They are members of the so-called minority trying to establish a cohesive, stable identity and cope with daily challenges while at the same time immersing themselves in the dominant culture of upper and middle class White America. For Black (Black and African American will be used interchangeably throughout) students, this is an especially difficult task because of the history of Blacks in America.

Each racial and ethnic group in the U.S. bears its own set of stereotypes. As James M. Jones writes, *"Society has socially constructed a view of race that makes it easy to see racial differences in traits and behaviors, and to place such traits and behaviors along some evaluative continuum- from desirable to undesirable, from good to bad, and from useful to dysfunctional." (1997, p.367).* Some groups are frequently associated with enough positive traits, such as Japanese Americans (e.g. studious, industrious) so that, although they constitute a racial minority, the expectations with which White America greets them are often positive and not a hindrance to their attempts at success. African Americans on the other hand, have an extraordinarily complicated history in the U.S. that has left a legacy of both negative stereotypes and very real, inherent psychological and

societal obstacles to their success and well-being. Ancestors of today's Black Americans were denied even a basic education and were seen as inhuman. Even as steps were made to remedy such atrocious treatment, Blacks were allowed only an inferior education and continued to be dehumanized. Consequently, many contemporary African Americans unconsciously operate under the legacy of slavery, failing to realize or live up to their potential. Black adolescents bring this inheritance into a foreign environment in which they are sometimes perceived as threatening or inferior. They are then expected to cope not only with the usual stresses of adolescence, but also with racial and class conflicts. Therefore, Black students in predominantly White schools have to struggle to maintain and develop a positive self-concept, to potentially become bi-cultural (Tatum, 1997), to establish their racial identity, and to develop effective coping skills, all in a culturally and racially different environment.

My interest in this area grew out of both work experiences in a New York City independent school and also out of my personal experience as an adolescent from Harlem attending a prep school on NYC's affluent Upper East Side. I have observed Black adolescents struggling to maintain a healthy image of their culture while also trying to fit in with the culture in their schools. I have witnessed some Black adolescents from the inner city grappling with the conflicts that arise in any peer group. Many of these conflicts were race related but many were not. For some of these teens, in their neighborhoods, the solution to a theoretical or verbal conflict would be a physical altercation rather than a higher order coping response such as sublimation or third party mediation. However, in private schools, fighting

would result in expulsion and was therefore not a viable option. There were also occasions when the conflict to be dealt with was racism or malignant cultural ignorance on the part of a teacher. What to do then? These teens then face the added task of developing new means of coping effectively- ways that are acceptable to the culture of their educational environment.

Although there has been significant and substantial research on coping and self-concept, and to a lesser extent, on racial identity, these various domains have not been looked at in conjunction. Therefore an exploration of the correlation between coping, racial identity and self-concept would be a valuable contribution, particularly in this understudied population. Many independent schools are attempting to meet the needs of their changing student bodies and are therefore adding psychologists and counselors to that end. However, there is a lack of empirical research investigating the psychological needs of the Black students. My study will begin to look at some of the identity difficulties these teens are facing and how psychologists can begin to help them.

In the following review, pertinent literature and research on identity formation, self-concept, Black racial identity and coping style will be presented. General identity formation theories will be explored in order to provide the necessary background for understanding self-concept and Black racial identity. In many ways, the process of forming an internalized Black identity parallels overall identity formation, as will be evidenced by the literature. Coping will also be

explored both broadly and as it is specifically related to self-concept and identity formation.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

IDENTITY

Overview

Many writers have conceptualized the lives of humans as being divided into various stages. Although the basic goals and theoretical constructs of these stages may vary, it is widely held that in the U.S., adolescence is an actual and significant stage. This period of development begins at about the age of thirteen and ends in the early twenties. In a thorough review of the literature, Lavoie (1994) clearly demonstrates that adult identity formation crystallizes during this crucial period.

There are a number of different models of identity formation. Blos (1967) presents an Individuation Model, linking the tasks of adolescence to the earlier separation-individuation stage of the toddler years. Steinwand (1984) takes a similar approach in looking at identity and adolescence. Perhaps most known would be Erikson's psychosocial model in which identity formation follows earlier stages and has multiple possible outcomes. There are also cognitive and Constructive-Developmental models. Lavoie (1994) identifies some commonalities amongst these various models. Identity is viewed as a "developmental phenomena characterized by qualitative change as expressed in a series of stages, the order of which is invariant" (p.18). Identity is the establishment of some equilibrium between the self and other. While identity is the

It is the successful formation of identity during adolescence that allows us to face the challenges of adulthood (Goodman, 1972). As the adolescent becomes increasingly autonomous, she begins to try on possible social roles and to independently navigate the world of peers in an effort to define herself. Numerous psychologists have explored these processes and offered various theories as to which intrapsychic and environmental factors have an impact on identity. The following is a brief review of theories of identity formation. This will include a closer examination of the concept of identity formation from psychosocial and developmental perspectives. In addition, there will be some discussion of the factors that either aid or hinder successful completion of this phase of life.

Identity Formation

Erikson's (1968) psychosocial theory of the tasks of adolescence has received widespread acceptance. He essentially posits that adolescence is a period of development occurring between childhood and adulthood with identity formation as the major task. Although it is has at times been dismissed as simply a transitional period, it is a crucial time in our lives during which we try on different roles and establish our identities. During this time, adolescents become capable of exploring how others see them and develop some concern about the expectations and opinions of others. Successfully resolving the dynamic conflicts that emerge during adolescence (identity achievement) is essential for becoming a psychologically healthy adult.

The process of identity formation is precipitated by biological and cognitive maturation and encouraged by changing expectations that a given society has for adolescents. Entrance into adolescence marks the beginning of ever increasing freedom from parental influence as well as a new ability to self-reflect and participate in social role taking. The adolescent progresses from a state of psychological and physical dependence on the primary caregivers towards autonomy. At the same time, she is laying the foundation for a stable identity and ideally, positive self-concept. Goodman defines identity as follows:

> ...self-identity is the relationship of oneself to oneself, to others, and to social institutions. It implies a continuity and sameness within the person (and perception that ego forces are effective in maintaining this) and the sharing of some essential character with others. (1972, p.121)

Therefore, one's identity and self-concept are very much dependent upon how one is perceived and reacted to by others. In a society where there are multiple groups with one group maintaining a position of power, the perceptions of the dominant group are much more potent (Goodman, 1972).

Other theorists support the hypothesis that the process of establishing an identity is thoroughly influenced by new input from the adolescent's social and academic worlds (e.g. Tatum, 1997; Erikson, 1968; Blos, 1967). Peer groups are a crucial source of support during adolescence. Blos theorized that as adolescents relinquish their internalized, idealized parental objects they experience a need for

new introjects or internalized representations of others that allow them to feel connected to the world (1967). They satisfy this by joining peer groups and forming attachments to non-parental objects. Thus, other adolescents serve in a critical, supportive role and comprise the context in which identity and mature ego functions are developing.

Swanson et al. (1998) present a comprehensive picture of identity formation from a psychosocial perspective. According to Swanson and her co-authors, adolescents begin to examine previously held values, roles, goals, and beliefs that they have retained from childhood. They are now able to compare their past self-representation to their expanding present and potential selves and synthesize these often contrasting images. This exploration occurs in both the internalized family context and the external social and academic worlds. Successful identity formation results when the individual is able to feel successfully integrated into society with established, satisfactory role relationships. Josselson (1989), Steinwand (1984) as well as Onyehalu (1981) all support the conceptualization of adolescence as the time when we become ego-autonomous individuals. Adolescents must overcome identity confusion and attain a sense of identity to become psychologically healthy adults. In other words, the question of "Who am I?" is generally answered and the individual can move on to creating meaningful experiences for herself.

Environmental and cultural influences on identity formation

Erikson (1968) suggested that the creation of one's identity is essentially a process of simultaneous reflection and observation. This primarily unconscious process consists of the adolescent judging himself in comparison to how he believes others would judge him in comparison to themselves. This theory then makes apparent the incredible power of the media, context, and widespread stereotypes of the given society. If one's inner experience of oneself conflicts with outer circumstances (e.g. excelling in a domain where outside expectations are for failure), dissonance is created.

Using Eriksonian theory as a foundation, Tatum (1997) draws upon years of clinical and classroom observation to highlight the significance of factors such as race, gender, sexuality and ethnicity. She has observed that members of subordinate groups often choose identifiers related to their minority status (e.g. "Black", "gay", or "Jewish"). In contrast, members of dominant groups, such as White Protestant males, seldom identify themselves based on the categories that make them dominant in this society. These traits may not be salient to them because they are not a source of conflict in identity formation. In addition, it is the dominant group that decides the norm so why would one note a characteristic deemed normal and unremarkable? Tatum suggests that the parts of our identity that become most salient to ourselves are often those that are most noticeable and

reacted upon by others. It is those aspects of one's identity that make one the "other" that stand out.

Swanson et al. (1998) also discuss ecological factors influencing identity formation. Ethnicity, race, and gender are important components in examining adolescent development from an ecological perspective (Swanson, Spencer, and Petersen 1998). This perspective emphasizes the profound impact of cultural stereotypes, school environment, and peer and family relations. Adolescents establish identity partly through their interactions with their various environments. From the ecological perspective, a sense of agency, of being able to influence one's environment is critical in developing a cohesive sense of self. These authors suggest that adolescents use their cultural values as a kind of lens through which they can evaluate the greater society. Furthermore, it was suggested that all "minority" youth are expected to be bi-cultural in this society in order to be successful, thus requiring them to have both an additional skill as well as a complicating factor in self/other-evaluation. Minority adolescents must be more cognizant of the perceptions of their own minority group, and they are also expected to be sensitive to the perceptions of the majority group. African American adolescents must also grapple with imbedded societal stereotypes which attempt to limit their academic and career expectations.

Gender is also a factor which would ordinarily be quite salient in identity formation in terms of developing a sense of autonomy and setting career goals

(Swanson, et al., 1998). It has been suggested that well into the 20th century, females have faced significant pressure to fill more traditional women's roles such as homemaker. These pressures then create a conflict within adolescent girls in regards to their ability to successfully develop a professional-identity. However, the authors posit that for Black adolescents, gender role issues are much less of a factor. They argue that, historically, Black women have worked out of necessity and thus the inherited expectation has been that a Black woman would definitely establish a working identity, something beyond the classic, stereotypical, middle class, American female role. This is in contrast to the expectations that have been held for middle class, White American women through the first three quarters of the 20th century.

Given that there are multiple variables impacting upon identity formation, there are a number of possible outcomes to the process. The most optimal outcome would be identity achievement that includes a clear delineation between self and other, a stable sense of oneself across a variety of situations, and an overall experience of oneself as competent and productive. Researchers have also investigated poorer outcomes of the process. Using Erikson's model as a theoretical framework, Marcia (1989) has taken the least desirable outcome possibility (Identity Diffusion) and identified four subtypes of this identity status. He describes a spectrum or continuum of the diffuse identity status. An adolescent in this category can be anywhere from high functioning and socially skilled, en-route to a more desirable outcome to isolated, confused, and withdrawn.

David Brandt (1991) theorized from a psychoanalytic perspective about the possible sequelae in adulthood of failure to develop an adequate sense of identity in adolescence. Based on the writings of others (e.g. Freud, Blos, and Marcia) as well as clinical material, Brandt identifies various symptoms which might be related to non-optimal identity formation. These include sexual promiscuity, inability to establish a career or to form stable relationships.

In summary, identity can be viewed as a complex construct consisting of self-definition (self-concept), roles, relationships, culture, gender and race. The process of forming one's identity is shaped by environment, culture, and society as well as by history and political context. During adolescence, identity evolves and is refined according to how the previous factors interact and influence the adolescent. A successful journey through this process is clearly necessary for a later productive and stable life.

Self-concept

Self-concept is an aspect or sub-component of identity. It is a quantifiable measure of the level of success of the identity formation process. According to Susan Harter (1990), it is one's self-definition. From a developmental perspective, self-concept is seen as changing in conjunction with cognitive maturation and socialization. At the same time as the child is becoming an adolescent and spending more time apart from his parents, his cognitive functions are maturing. The adolescent has the ability to use social comparison in self-evaluation and to

incorporate these thoughts into his self-concept. The opinions of others, particularly peers, become much more important as the adolescent realizes that others can have negative attitudes and thoughts about him. It is also during adolescence that one's self-concept becomes differentiated into different domains and more psychologically sophisticated (Harter, 1990). During childhood, self-concept is based on simplistic traits tied to surface characteristics and observable behaviors. Adolescents begin to use interpersonal descriptors (such as sociable, shy, etc.) to describe themselves. Self-concept is described in terms of the individual's psychological makeup including their emotions, motives, attitudes, beliefs and wishes. In addition, the adolescent recognizes that his "self" (or how one relates to others) may be different in a variety of contexts, hence the differentiation of self-concept into various domains (Harter, 1990).

In reviewing a large number of studies on self-concept, Wylie (1979) construed the term self-concept as including the following:

> "(a) cognitions and evaluations regarding relatively specific aspects of the self, e.g., mathematics ability, predispositional anxiety in interpersonal situations, family status such as being a parent, racial identity, gender identity, class membership; (b) ideal self, which I see as comprising not only the person's ideals about self-aspects such as being scholastically able, having a sense of humor, being well liked by peers, but also such phenomenal goals as wishing to be a well-educated person...(c) over-all self-regard- my generic term to cover such "global" constructs as self-esteem, self-acceptance..." (pp.3-4)

It is this conceptualization of self- concept that is being used in this thesis. Identity is who you are as a separate, autonomous person in the world. It is one's relatively stable self-definition. Self-concept includes that self-definition, but is more complex and multifaceted. It includes one's evaluation of or regard for that identity, hence the ability to have positive and negative self-concepts. Self-concept also incorporates ideals and aspirations for the self and the comparison of the ideal self to the actual and of the actual self to others.

Measures of self-concept are generally designed with the underlying premise that social comparison is at the core of self-concept. Therefore, most scales ask questions that pull for children and adolescents' views of themselves in relation to their peers. Researchers investigating self-concept have widely used such self-report measures as reliable indicators of self-concept/self-esteem. In addition, researchers have been able to use these instruments effectively in determining correlations between self-concept and other identity related variables. For example, Wylie (1979) cites a number of studies in which self-report measures have been used to relate self-concept to race and ethnicity, age and academic achievement, among other variables.

Wylie (1989) has reviewed a number of the most widely used self-concept scales. In this review, the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale (Piers, 1984) emerges as one of the most highly reliable and valid instruments for use with children ranging in age from 8 to 18. The Piers-Harris Scale will be used in this study and will be explored in further detail later.

Based on the definition of self-concept that has been presented here, it becomes clear that self-concept is an important and necessary component in exploring identity. Furthermore, because self-concept is so heavily influenced by how one is perceived by society, personal factors that lead to prejudgments (e.g. race) very likely share some correlation with self-concept

RACIAL IDENTITY

Overview

The previous review of the literature on identity formation during adolescence demonstrates that the process is complex and influenced by a number of factors. Erikson (1968) made salient the importance of culture. One's racial group is an important part of culture in the United States and is therefore an impacting factor on identity formation and self-concept. Racial identity and overall identity formation are processes that are inextricably entwined for people of color, and should be examined in conjunction. In addition, the theories of racial identity development are based (at least structurally) on the models of overall identity development, thus the need to understand the latter before examining racial identity. Unfortunately, most of the theories and studies of identity and self-concept focus on the average middle class White American. Although many of these theories mention influencing factors such as race, the salience of such factors is not fully appreciated unless investigated as a independent variables.

Individuals in our society develop their identities and self-concept in relationship to the evaluation of others. In the U.S., the overall evaluation of Blacks continues to be negative (Allen, 2001; Banks, 1972). For African Americans, progressing through adolescence requires the individual to not only explore his role in society as an autonomous being, but also to form a unique,

positive, personal identity in spite of numerous internalized negative stereotypes. One example of this is the way Black women are sometimes perceived.

Black women in the U.S. have been depicted as everything from mammies to hyper-sexualized objects to emasculating, overbearing superwomen (Bell, 1992). Contrary to the contention that gender is less relevant for Black girls than it is for Whites (Swanson et al., 1998), I suggest that gender issues are every bit as salient, but the core conflicts are different because gender issues are inextricably interwoven with race. For Black girls the issue is not whether or not to choose a career. They struggle to find a balance between developing a strong, independent self and maintaining some aspects of traditional femininity that are seldom attributed to Black women. At the same time, in order to develop healthy self-esteem, Black females must combat the negative stereotypes, which if accepted, can lead to self-destructive behavior. If she is indeed the Black-man-castrating superwoman, then how does she go about getting her emotional needs met? How does the Black teenage girl cope with conflict if her style of coping is perceived as threatening or results in the withdrawal of support from others?

In an exploration of coping and identity development in Black girls, Stevens (1997) found evidence that supported the idea that the identity development of Black adolescent girls is influenced by the gender devaluation prevalent in this country. In a qualitative study of low S.E.S. African American girls in the northeast, Stevens found the girls actively engaged in a struggle to express their independence in culturally acceptable ways. However, their means of

self-assertion were often at odds with the norms and expectations of mainstream White America. In addition, the parents of some of the girls maintained double standards for their children based on gender, particularly around issues of sexuality. This led to confusion and anger in some of the girls.

African American adolescent boys must also shake the stigma of negative stereotypes in order to develop a healthy self-concept. Black men in the U.S. have historically been emasculated and demonized. A young Black man is often seen as threatening or insignificant, pitiable or shiftless, and perhaps most frightening, endangered (Franklin, 2000; Johnson, 1990; Gibbs, 1988). During the years of slavery, Black men were not permitted to hold the traditional male role in the family or society. They could not protect or provide for their families. To show any sort of pride or a sense of positive self-esteem was perilous. The psychological imprint of slavery remains to this day. A dynamic conflict exists between the self that young black men aspire to be and that which their psychological inheritance prescribes. Franklin (1993) coined the term Invisibility Syndrome to describe the psychological impact of the treatment that Black men and boys receive in American society. Franklin describes the often seemingly futile efforts of Black males to be seen for the individuals that they are rather than feared as predators or overlooked as insignificant. He theorizes that such treatment can lead to internalized anger, disconnection from loved ones, and a macho façade passing as masculinity.

Black adolescent boys coming of age in a White educational institution may then feel the need to learn to become autonomous and assertive without being

perceived as threatening. Or, they must establish a secure enough sense of self that the misperceptions of others become irrelevant. Many of these adolescent boys are conflicted by the wish to be perceived as masculine by their racial peers while also receiving positive regard within their educational environment.

After looking at the unique race and gender-based issues, what becomes apparent is that for Black boys and girls racial identity may significantly influence self-concept and coping style. For Black boys and girls, how does one take a proactive, assertive approach in coping with conflicts if that may be perceived as threatening? If one feels very positively about being Black, does that help bolster self-concept and facilitate a more active style of coping?

Because the history of Blacks in the U.S. has been so filled with strife, oppression, and negativity, a push towards deracination (or the disowning of a Black identity and culture) evolved. Perhaps if Black people could be more like the "average" White American, racism and discrimination would diminish. Before the civil rights era, deracination may have served the purpose of self-preservation. The African American who could become non-threatening and even inconspicuous had a better chance at surviving and providing security for their families. Those who questioned the status quo in which Blacks were inferior literally invited harm to themselves and loved ones. The "Black power" or "Black consciousness" era (1968-1975) spawned the idea of a Black identity and the concept of nigrescence (Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1991). During this era, Black became beautiful, something to be proud of, not to be covered over with obsequious posturing and self-debasement. Dansby (1972) conducted a poll based investigation into the

changing perceptions of blackness among her black college students. She found at that time, the height of the "Black Power" movement, a trend towards increasingly positive views of the self as black and of black people as a whole.

The Black power period signaled the evolution of a new set of dynamics between Blacks and Whites who were now interacting in profoundly different ways. African Americans were now being encouraged to see themselves as equals to all other Americans. This meant an ongoing push towards racial diversity and equality coupled with the psychological strengthening of a people. Not only were Blacks and Whites being encouraged to integrate, but African Americans were also learning to be more assertive and self-confident as a group. This new group sense of self contradicted the deeply embedded beliefs about Blacks in the U.S. at that time. As American educational institutions and workplaces became ever more integrated in the latter half of the twentieth century, the need to understand the influence of race on identity and interpersonal relations increased. New conflicts arose as did a desire to maintain harmonious environments. Facilitating the creation of a racially diverse and equal society has not been as simple as changing laws. It is partly because of an awareness of this complexity that researchers have been working to conceptualize the process of developing one's racial identity.

A number of psychologists have proposed theories of racial identity development specific to African Americans (e.g. Thomas, 1970; Cross, 1971). The following is a summary of the concepts most relevant to racial identity as summarized by Janet Helms (1990) and William Cross (1991). Black racial identity theory will be presented with a specific focus on William Cross' (1971)

model of nigrescence. Although there are multiple racial identity models, Cross' model is one of the most efficient at encompassing the most accepted and empirically proven concepts and provides a sound framework for the purposes of this thesis.

Racial identity theory

In order to embark upon a discussion of racial identity, there must be some definition and differentiation of the different words and euphemisms used in relation to this topic. Race and ethnicity are words that are often used interchangeably. Although there is often some overlap and interaction between race and ethnicity, they have decidedly different meanings.

According to Casas (1984), race is the common underlying genotype and expressed phenotype shared by a certain group of people. In other words, it is a certain broad, yet relatively specific set of physical characteristics which individuals of common origins share. One's race does not bestow any inherent personality or psychological characteristics upon the individual. Race does not directly influence behavior. However, race becomes a significant shaper of one's psychological makeup in that it affects how others in society relate to us. Casas (1984) suggests that society maintains certain beliefs and has certain reactions and expectations based on a person's racial category. In addition, individuals internalize these projections and stereotypes and may then develop self-representations based upon them.

Ethnicity is not biologically determined and is therefore different from race, although the two often evolve in a collateral manner. Ethnicity refers to a shared cultural and social background (Casas, 1984). This includes language, religion, customs, beliefs and even normative interpersonal styles. Ethnicity can at times incorporate a shared racial category. However, individuals of different races can be of the same ethnicity and members of the same race can have very different ethnic backgrounds (e.g. Jamaican Blacks versus American Blacks). This thesis specifically deals with issues of race that adolescents who are ethnically African American (student and one parent both born and raised in the U.S.,) are coping.

Racial identity is more complex than the concept of either race or ethnicity alone. Theories of racial identity generally examine the different ways one can identify their racial identity status. In other words, is there an accepted "shared racial-group membership" with others of similar race (Helms, 1990, p.5)? In exploring Black racial identity, theorists examine the type and quality of interaction between a Black person and other Blacks. Some of the earliest models were based on types wherein an individual was fit into a static profile. In other words, individuals were seen as fitting into permanent categories with little or no potential for growth or change. The stage models that later emerged presented a more useful framework because individuals are seen as being dynamic and also because racial identity can be examined in conjunction with other developmental processes. For example, the stages of some racial identity models can be likened and perhaps correlated to Marcia's (1989) identity diffusion subcategories that were briefly mentioned earlier. Cross (1971) and Thomas & Thomas (1971) both theorize

about the process of converting from a Negro (negative, self-hating) identity to a (positive) Black identity using stage models.

The accepted "standard" Black identity for many decades post-slavery was based upon a history of Blacks as oppressed victims. This identity has been called that of the Negro (e.g. Cross, 1971). This identity state has also been conceptualized as a mental disorder which Thomas dubbed negromachy (1970). The Negro (or one suffering from negromachy) is the African American individual whose sense of self is based completely on internalized European American ideals, values and norms. The person with the Negro identity works to become assimilated and acculturated and expects that successfully doing so will culminate in acceptance into and approval from the dominant society. Such an individual often exists and operates in the world in ways that are at best negligent of other Blacks and at worst, detrimental.

Helms suggests that a study of Black identity should then examine whether an individual internalizes this self-defeating victim role or overcomes it. In other words, does the individual follow a line of development that moves her from the Negro identity to an internalized Black identity? This developmental process is what Cross has called the "Negro-to-Black Conversion Experience" or nigrescence (Cross, 1971). The underlying assumption of such a model is that it is healthier to develop a positive, Black identity with roots in one's original racial group.

The original Cross model is composed of five developmental stages through which a Black American may progress. According to Cross (1991), the model is designed to explain *"how* assimilated *Black adults, as well as* deracinated,

deculturalized, or miseducated *Black adults are transformed by a series of circumstances and events into persons who are more Black or Afrocentrically aligned* (p. 190)." The original stages were pre-encounter, encounter, immersion/emersion, internalization, and internalization-commitment. A Black person may start at the pre-encounter stage and progress through all of the subsequent stages successfully or they can become fixated at any of the five stages (Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1991). In 1991, William Cross revised the stages of this Nigrescence model, allowing for a more nuanced view of the process, and eliminating the internalization-commitment stage. The revised model includes attitudes, characteristics and consequences of certain stages. This revised model was further expanded as the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS) was being developed (Cross & Vandiver, 2001). These stages will be detailed below.

Stage 1: Pre-encounter. The pre-encounter stage was originally conceptualized to describe the pre-existing Black identity, the identity to be changed through the process of nigrescence. After extensively reviewing the literature and research on Nigrescence, Cross revised this stage to include different subtypes or attitudes of the pre-encounter individual.

Anti-Black (Pre-encounter Self-Hatred (PSH)). The Anti-Black individual maintains views of Black Americans that are akin to those of White racists. He despises his own people and derives a sense of self-worth from acceptance and positive regard from White people. Blackness serves as a model of who not to be

in life. Black culture and identity are actually shunned and denigrated. The anti-Black attitude is the only racial identity status thought to be negatively correlated with self-esteem (Vandiver, 2001).

Miseducation (Pre-encounter Miseducation (PM)). Virtually all Blacks in the pre-encounter group have been exposed to some degree of Miseducation. They have not been educated adequately about the roles of Africa and Black people in the evolution of modern society. They believe the negative stereotypes about Black people to be true. Hence, they may simply underestimate their own rich history or they may maintain distorted beliefs about Black people, potentially leading to the Anti-Black attitude.

A Eurocentric Cultural Perspective (Pre-encounter Assimilation (PA)). A European American worldview is embraced and Western art and cultural expressions serve as the watermark of excellence and beauty. In a mild form, African/Black culture is underappreciated. At worst, it is completely devalued. Cross (1991) writes:

> It is when the appreciation of one art form is used as a rationale to reject or neglect another that we have a problem, and that is often what happens at the level of Pre-encounter, where identification with European music and culture may be employed as a measure of cultural "correctness". (p. 194)

It is the person in this stage who adopts the perspective that assimilation/integration into mainstream American culture is the way to success. The basic premise is that, once we as a society have eliminated discrimination, Blacks simply need to learn to be more like the dominant American culture.

Of the three types of Pre-encounter identity (Assimilation, Miseducation, and Self-hatred), only PSH is thought to be associated with low self-esteem (Vandiver, 2001). Self-esteem has been theorized as having little to do with racial identity because it is a component of personal identity. Racial identity is said to be related more to group identity or reference group orientation (RGO). However, when a Black person actively maintains negative views about their racial group of origin, it becomes self-hatred or lowered self-esteem (Vandiver et al., 2002).

Stage 2: Encounter. The encounter stage is the shortest stage and has been likened to a single event or series of events. It is during the encounter stage that someone has a kind of awakening experience which causes him to re-examine their current identity status as a Black American. Generally, this event is something that causes an individual to realize that race is relevant and that deracination or assimilation will not lead to happiness. Emotions associated with this phase are anger, confusion, anxiety, hopelessness, and depression. A person feels as if they are without an identity at this point because their previous identity has been challenged. He or she realizes that they have not established a healthy Black

identity. At the end of this stage the decision is made to begin the journey to truly "become Black".

Stage 3: Immersion-emersion. This stage is perhaps the most intense and most laden with affective extremes. Stage 3 is described as a time of metamorphosis, when the most change in identity occurs. This third stage of nigrescence has two phases.

The first phase is ***immersion*** **(Anti-White (IEAW))** during which individuals withdraw into Blackness. They begin the process of re-discovering "Black culture" including music, style, and language. The person takes on a stereotypical Black ascribed identity and Black reference group orientation (RGO). They begin to judge others based on an externally defined concept of Blackness. The individual at this point is essentially reacting against their previous Negro self and White America and the oppression therein. Affect commonly associated with this stage is anger engendered by anxiety or worry that they may themselves not be Black enough. The person at this stage has little or no tolerance for their previous way of being in the world and for other Blacks who have yet to leave the pre-encounter stage.

Emersion is the more positive and realistic phase of this stage. During this period the individual begins to engage in more pro-social activities. He begins to reach out to other Blacks and to sort out the myths of what it means to be Black from the facts. It is at this time that a Black American can begin to own both the

positive and negatives of their culture. At the end of this period, one has laid the groundwork for finally establishing a Black identity.

Stage 4: Internalization. Cross has designated this as the ideal in the Black racial identity developmental process. For the individual at the internalization stage, race is highly salient in a positive way. This stage is called internalization because it is at this point that the person has processed and integrated the reality of what it means to be Black in America, both positive and negative. The individual no longer behaves according to how she believes would be acceptable to White American society. She is also no longer a caricature of a Black person. It is suggested that the person at the point of internalization will also have a healthy, positive personal identity. Her sense of self is no longer contingent upon the approval of others (Black or White). Although the internalized Black has a decidedly Black ascribed identity and RGO , she is able to value and enjoy aspects of other cultures. There is a recognition that racism exists and impacts upon Black Americans. At the same time, this person can re-connect with certain non-racist aspects of American society (Cross, 1994). In revising this stage, Cross delineated three types of internalization attitudes. The first two detailed below are measurable using the CRIS.

Afrocentricity/Black Nationalist (IA). The Afrocentric identity is characterized by an emphasis on empowering the Black community.

Multiculturalist Inclusive (IMCI). The multiculturalist focuses on two or more salient cultural identities. There is an active effort at working in alliance with communities beyond just the Black community.

Biculturalist. The emphasis is on Black self-acceptance and one other element of culture (e.g. sexual orientation, religion, and gender).

Parham has suggested certain modifications to the Cross Model (Cross, Parham, & Helms1991). One is that an individual does not necessarily move successfully through the stages to an internalized Black identity. One can become stagnant, perhaps never moving beyond the initial pre-encounter stage. Parham also states that one does not have to begin at the first stage of the model. Parham has also presented a lifespan perspective of the process of nigrescence. He posits that individuals may first begin nigrescence during late adolescence, the time when a true identity is being established. Parham has further suggested that the nigrescence experience for an adolescent or young adult may be different from that of a middle aged or older adult, and that one may cycle through the stages of the process repeatedly. One of the ideas to be explored in this study is whether younger adolescents who are being immersed in middle White American culture begin the process of nigrescence at an earlier age than has been speculated.

In summary, nigrescence is the process of establishing a psychologically healthy Black racial identity. The ideal outcome is a movement from the Negro identity to the internalized Black identity. This is the person who has a Black

reference group orientation and ascribed identity. At the same time, they are able to appreciate and have meaningful relationships with individuals of other races and cultures without being defensive or obsequious. There is a general consensus among psychologists that the successful formation of racial identity is important to psychological health. It has yet to be empirically established that there is a set point in the lifespan that the process of nigrescence begins.

Empirical evidence of nigrescence

Hall, Freedle, and Cross (1972) conducted an experiment to provide empirical evidence supporting Cross' original four stage model. The investigators wanted to determine the plausibility of the concept of a developmental process to becoming Black. 180 Princeton undergraduates, 90 Black and 90 White, were asked to sort 28 items which were thought to be representative of the characteristics of the four stages. Some subjects were allowed to sort the items into meaningful clusters of their own creation. Other subjects did the same and were then asked to re-group their self-created clusters into just four and to create a temporal sequencing. A final group was given four pre-labeled clusters into which they sorted the items. Overall, the findings supported the idea of a generally recognized sequence to the process of Black racial identity development. While there were a few differences, both Black and White students generally sorted items according to the grouping and sequence predicted by Cross. It is notable, though that this study involved a very biased sample in that the students were presumably quite intelligent and well educated. The findings may therefore not be

generalizable to the greater population. However, they are applicable to the study at hand, given that the student participants here have been classified as gifted.

Cross (1978) reviewed a number of empirical investigations of the Cross and the Thomas models, the two most dominant theories of Black racial identity. His review of eight empirical studies resulted in the following conclusions. One is that there is clearly a perception of change in racial identity that apparently occurs in a stage-wise fashion. This process, nigrescence, results in a change in the reference group orientation of Black people. Another conclusion is that self-concept and personality were left essentially unchanged once the individual had completed the process. However, while the findings were not significant, a study conducted by Williams (1975) found a tendency towards higher self-concept scores in those in the advanced stages of development in comparison to those in the earliest stages. A third observation was that there was a positive correlation between level of education and advancement in racial identity.

Parham and Helms (1985) conducted a study to explore the relationship between racial identity and self-esteem (a component of self-concept). The authors hypothesized that encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization attitudes would be positively correlated with self-esteem and that pre-encounter attitudes would be negatively related to self-esteem. The subjects were 166 Black college students from four geographically diverse, predominantly White universities. The students were administered the 30-item Racial Identity Attitude Scale and the Self Regard subscale of the Personal Orientation Inventory. The investigators found that pre-encounter and immersion attitudes were associated

with low self-esteem. They also found a positive relationship between encounter attitudes and self-esteem and a non-significant but positive association between internalization attitudes and self-esteem.

Overall, empirical studies have lent support to the structure and sequencing of Cross' model. Over the years the model and derivative instruments have been refined. Although some studies have noted a tendency towards a more positive self-concept in those with advanced racial identity, further evidence is needed to prove significance.

Racial identity and White educational institutions

> "The purpose of [school organizations for minority students] is not only to provide minority students with support but a voice in which we can dispel various myths about our culture and educate the [school name] Community. I don't 'retreat to a racial or ethnic clan.' It's part of who I am, an undeniable part of who I am." (J.H., 12th grade student at a New York City independent school).

Given the complex course of both identity formation and racial identity development, it follows that these processes would be more difficult in an "alien" environment. It may be easier to develop a positive self-concept when one is surrounded by others who reflect a similar heritage and culture. Black adolescents in predominantly White independent schools face the dual challenge of developing in a racially *and* culturally different environment. Although the Black and White kids are engaged in some similar conflicts, race is a much more salient issue for the Black kids and thus separates them. What then tends to evolve is a natural split in which Black kids often congregate together sometimes excluding others who are not Black. This provides them with a support network and a safe holding environment in which they can begin to resolve internal conflicts about their racial identity. Below is a review of some writers who have theorized about the development and usefulness of such isolation.

Beverly Tatum (1997) has explored the intricacies of identity development for adolescents both White and of color with a special focus on Black youth. She observes that students in any minority group will typically use their particular

minority (or racial) label in self-identification whereas students in the dominant group do not. Tatum suggests that race is not salient for White kids because they do not experience any discord between their inner and outer experiences of themselves due to race. Black teens think about themselves with a racial modifier because that is how this society thinks about Blacks. African Americans are never just American as White Americans are. They have an often negatively salient trait that becomes more noticeable when they are in the minority. In addition, the dynamics between Blacks and Whites in the U.S. are such that there is a perceived power dynamic in which the Blacks are in the subordinate group.

In order to survive psychologically in such a setting, Black students must develop certain unique coping strategies (Tatum, 1997). One such method of coping is the periodic, self-imposed group isolation, the "Black table". For the Black students who participate in the "Black table", it is usually a means of self-affirmation, of feeling less different and more empowered. It becomes a way to explore one's Black culture that is often unavailable in the classroom or in other school activities. Fortunately, opportunities for this type of exploration have expanded in many independent schools. Most schools now have organizations specifically for and/or about students of color.

Nevertheless, "Black tables" persist. This type of segregation is akin to the third stage of nigrescence- immersion/emersion. In fact, Tatum (1997) suggests that the process of nigrescence can begin earlier in adolescence than theorized by Cross and others (e.g. Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1991). She cites a study of junior high school kids that supports the hypothesis that the process can begin in early

adolescence. Tatum further theorizes that the pre-encounter and encounter stages are the most relevant for young adolescents.

There are other means of adapting one's identity in order to succeed either psychologically or academically in such schools. Some students take on a so-called oppositional identity in which they underachieve in order to appear "Black enough" (Tatum, 1997). Other students attempt to become raceless or "act White" in order to gain the acceptance and approval of their teachers and White peers.

Fordham (1988) performed an analysis of high-achieving Black students in an integrated high school. What she discovered was that most of the students who had been tracked into the more academically challenging classes were also giving in to an implicit demand to become raceless. These students seemed to receive greater approval and academic success when they adopted the ethos of the dominant White culture. Although many of these students attempted to mask their racelessness when they were in the Black community, they seemed to have lost some connection to their primary reference and support group. In other words, Fordham found that these students were in a sense being encouraged to remain in nigrescence stage 1, pre-encounter. They were receiving the message that they would accomplish much more in a state of non-threatening deracination. Fordham calls for the educational systems to re-examine their structure and underlying ethos. Academic success should not come at the cost of losing an important connection and foundation in the Black community.

Fordham and Ogbu (1986) suggest that this push towards deracination comes from the history of Blacks in America. White Americans created and perpetuated the myth of Black intellectual inferiority. The denial of access to education served as manufactured evidence to support the notion that Blacks were not capable of academic and professional success. As access to educational systems was gained, the psychological damage had already been incurred in Blacks as a people. Some Black Americans doubted their ability to succeed, others believed that it was only possible if one shed one's Black identity. Thus, school success became equated with "acting white". This self-defeating myth continues to be internalized by many Black adolescents. Fordham and Ogbu conclude from their study that all Black students would fare better academically with the removal of the pressure towards deracination.

White and Johnson (1991) write about the types of developmental experiences that Black youth need in order to cope effectively in the world. The primary themes that emerged were the need to have a sense of mastery over certain domains (e.g. verbal skills, personality), social peer groups to interact with, and the ability to detect and analyze social cues and behavior. Having determined that these are important factors for mastering interpersonal relationships and overall coping, one must wonder about the ramifications for Black students in prep schools. Perhaps the creation of a self-segregated group provides a haven in which Black teens can feel competent and bolster their self worth.

Based on the literature reviewed, it is evident that probably the majority of Black students in predominantly White schools struggle with identity issues related

to race. Black students racial identity attitudes seem to be apparent in the personae they create. Some adolescents begin to progress through the Negro to Black conversion process as evidenced by the "Black table". Others seem to be stuck (or paused) at the pre-encounter stage, working to become assimilated. The questions before us then are what is the healthiest choice psychologically and what other dimensions of personality and identity are affected by racial identity attitude.

Coping

Overview

Coping refers to the manner in which an individual deals with various stressors and conflicts intrapsychic, environmental, and interpersonal in nature. Coping serves to protect against harmful physical or psychological consequences (Patterson & McCubbin, 1987). A coping style is an individual's predominant way of dealing with these stressors and conflicts, the typical approach one takes to managing threats to an individual's sense of well being. As the literature reviewed thus far has revealed, adolescence is perhaps the most labile, conflicted, and stressful period of development. It is during this stage of development that the core of the adult identity is formed. It has also been suggested that adolescence may be the period during which coping style is consolidated (Newman, 1979). It is therefore useful to explore the ways in which adolescents may choose to cope and which styles, if any, may be correlated with successful identity formation. Literature on coping will be reviewed here both in general, as well as specifically related to adolescents and self-concept. Given the position of this author that race is an important factor in the formation of self for Black adolescents, I will search the literature for theories attempting to correlate racial development with coping style.

Psychoanalytically oriented theorists have identified a variety of coping mechanisms or defenses (e.g. McWilliams, 1994). Included among these are denial, projection, displacement, repression and numerous others. These defenses are then classified as primitive or higher order defenses depending on their efficacy. Defenses which are less effective, distort reality, and diminish ego strength (e.g. denial) are viewed as primitive. The more effective defenses allow the person to function without any major distortions of reality and at the same time, work towards some resolution of whatever the conflict is. Although many investigations into coping style are in fact studying these defenses, the terminology tends to differ. Coping style has been classified using such terms as salutatory versus stress palliation efforts (Jorgensen & Dusek, 1990), approach versus avoidant styles as well as problem-focused and emotion-focused (e.g. Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989). Defenses from a psychoanalytic perspective are generally thought to be unconscious processes. The more cognitive approach taken by most coping researchers on the surface may appear to focus largely on conscious efforts made by an individual. However, Roth and Cohen (1986) point out that there are usually both unconscious and conscious strategies being employed simultaneously. Therefore, for the intent of this study, coping is being conceptualized as including conscious (behaviors) and unconscious processes (ego defenses).

Lazarus (1966) laid the foundation for much of the research on stress and coping. He performed a conceptual analysis of stress and coping and concluded

that it is a cyclical process with a number of steps. The first step would be primary appraisal, which is the process of perceiving a threat. This is followed by the conceptualization of how to respond. The third step is then to execute a response. The outcome of the third step can lead back to either of the first two steps, thus it is a potentially cyclical process. Such a theory demonstrates the relatively complex cognitive abilities required to cope and to have a dominant coping style. Researchers such as Patterson and McCubbin (1987) have recognized that adolescents are mentally capable of performing the somewhat complex operations laid out by Lazarus and given that adolescence is a time of increased conflict, have identified coping during adolescence as an important area of research.

Approach and Avoidant Coping Styles

In exploring coping behaviors, it quickly becomes evident that there are a plethora of different strategies which could be employed at any given time. The number of possible coping responses are innumerable and the terms for different categories are almost as plentiful. However, avoidant and approach coping styles are two categories of coping which have emerged and are commonly used to describe groups of coping responses (e.g. Herman-Stahl et al., 1995; Holohan & Moos, 1987; Roth & Cohen, 1986).

An approach style of coping is similar to the higher order ego defenses in that the individual uses positive, active strategies to deal with stress. Rather than using reality distorting methods such as denial or retreat (avoidant behavior), the individual develops strategies to alleviate or eliminate the stress (Roth & Cohen,

1986). Included in this group are problem-focused techniques whereby the individual takes direct action to eliminate or reduce the stressor and/or to increase resources (Patterson & McCubbin, 1987). The approach style of coping is considered more effective and psychologically healthy. The individual may engage social support and is able to maintain a higher self-esteem, feelings of optimism, and a sense of control (Jorgensen & Dusek, 1990). In other words, there is both an amelioration of stress and other negative feelings as well as a more thorough resolution of the conflict.

In developing the Adolescent Coping Orientation for Problem Experiences (A-COPE), Patterson and McCubbin (1987) use the term transformational coping to describe a pattern of approach-type responses. This is because this pattern of responses serves to either ameliorate the situation or improve the individual's ability to deal with the stress. The patterns of coping that the authors classify as transformational are: *developing self-reliance, developing social support, solving family problems, investing in close friends, seeking professional support, engaging in demanding activity, being humorous.* As the A-COPE will be used in this study to measure coping, the term transformational will be used to describe a pattern of responding to stress that is positive and ameliorative rather than avoidant.

The avoidant classification of coping responses includes behaviors intended to decrease contact with the source of stress such as withdrawal, denial, and venting of emotions in a non-productive manner (Roth & Cohen, 198is6).

Emotion-focused responses fall in this category in that the purpose is simply to reduce feelings of distress without true resolution of the conflict or source of stress. Included in this category is the use of drugs and other methods of psychological retreat. Although avoidant responses often bring quick relief of stressful emotions, they can also lead to increased stress in the long run. Because the source of stress is not eliminated, an individual may experience intrusive symptoms such as nightmares and hypersensitivity in trigger situations.

Patterson and McCubbin (1987) have classified the following coping patterns as avoidant: *ventilating feelings, seeking diversions, avoiding problems, and relaxing.*

Most authors writing about coping note that while a particular style may dominate, individuals do not usually rely exclusively on one style (e.g. Tolor & Fehon, 1987). There are times when one does not have any control over a situation and an avoidant coping response is the best and perhaps only solution. However, it does seem that even when an individual uses both styles of responding, a preference for either transformational or avoidance exists and tends to predominate.

Coping Style, Self-concept and Racial Identity

Coping with stress is inevitable and the ability to do so effectively is particularly significant for adolescents struggling with the turmoil of identity

formation. Accordingly, optimal identity formation is partially facilitated by having a positive, effective coping style (Swanson, Spencer, and Petersen, 1998).

Jorgensen and Dusek theorized that adolescents who scored higher on a measure of psychosocial adjustment would tend to use more effective, transformational coping strategies (1990). The investigators administered the Inventory of Psychosocial Development (IPD) and the Adolescent Coping Orientation for Problem Experiences Inventory (A-COPE) to 331 eighteen-year-old college freshmen. They found that there was the predicted correlation between the scores on the IPD and the ACOPE with $p < .0001$ including when they looked at males and females separately. Unfortunately, Jorgensen and Dusek did not include any data on the racial makeup of the subjects or possible racial differences in the scores.

Barbara Newman hypothesized that adolescence is a critical period for the development of one's coping style (1979). She further posited that the environment and interactions with others in that environment also play a critical role in the evolution of coping style. Given that perception of a threat is the first step in the coping process (Lazarus, 1966) and perception may be altered by context, one must then consider how an individual's race, stage of racial identity, and environment affect how a threat is viewed and subsequently managed. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of research on this subject.

Research by DeMello & Imms (1999) has demonstrated that there is a significant positive correlation between coping style and self-concept. It is then suggested here that, since racial identity has been shown to be correlated with self-

concept (e.g. Vandiver, et. al 2002; Parham & Helms, 1985), and self-concept and coping are correlated, there maybe a modest correlation between coping and racial identity.

In summary, there are various methods of coping. Research has demonstrated that active, transformational coping has generally been correlated with greater overall psychological well-being. Conversely, avoidant or passive coping tends to be associated with poorer self-concept and psychosocial development. Although theories suggest that race, culture and environment play an important role in the development of a coping style, there has been a lack of research on the specific role that racial identity plays in the process.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Hypotheses

The primary hypothesis of this study is that students who score higher on the three most advanced subscales of the CRIS (Immersion-Emersion Anti-White, Internalization Afrocentricity, and Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive) will be more likely to use transformational coping patterns when dealing with the stress and conflict (as measured by the A-COPE). Second, it is predicted that students with higher scores on the Pre-encounter subscale of the CRIS will report using avoidant coping patterns as measured by the A-COPE at a higher rate than any other group.

The third hypothesis is that those teens that score higher on the IA and IMCI subscales will present with significantly higher scores on the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale. Conversely, adolescents who are struggling with feelings of shame about their race (Pre-encounter Self-Hatred) are predicted to have a poorer self-concept as a group especially in the domains of Physical Appearance and Attributes, Popularity, and Happiness & Satisfaction. Parham and Helms (1985) tested the hypothesis that racial identity is correlated with self-concept. Their results lent support to the idea that there is a negative correlation between the pre-encounter attitude and self-concept.

Method

Sample

Participants were recruited from a program that selects gifted pre-adolescents of color who have been identified as gifted and helps them earn admission to New York independent schools. They are rigorously tested and interviewed to gain admission to the program and thus tend to represent youngsters performing in at least the top 5% of their elementary schools. Therefore, the sample to be used in this study does represent a small and specific group amongst *all* African American students. However, because gifted African American students are more likely to attend private schools across the country, it is appropriate to draw participants from such a program. The study participants represent fairly well a very large segment, and perhaps the majority, of African American students attending New York City private schools in regards to cognitive and academic ability and socialization experiences.

The assistant director of Prep for Prep, gave permission for the investigator to reach out to the students and also provided addressed envelopes on Prep stationary. Letters of invitation (to participate in the study) were mailed to over 250 Prep alum who had been identified as African American in Prep for Prep's database. Approximately 11 students responded, but only 7 completed all required measures. Because the initial response fell short of the planned sample size of 50, a second round of outreach was done via email to the same set of

students. This garnered an additional 3 students. A third outreach was made to the students who had successfully completed the questionnaires inviting them to refer eligible friends.

The final sample size was 10 participants, 90% female. The participants ranged in age from 13 to 16 years old, thus representing adolescents with various numbers of years in independent school.

Instruments

Cross Racial Identity Scale (Cross Social Attitude Scale)

The Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS) was designed by Vandiver, Cross, Fhagen-Smith, & Worrell (2000) based upon Cross' revised and expanded Nigrescence model (Cross & Vandiver, 2001; Cross, 1991). It was used to measure Black racial identity. The CRIS is a 40 item self-report questionnaire using a 7-point response scale and is composed of six subscales. The CRIS measures 6 of the 7 seven Black racial identities defined in the revised and expanded Nigrescence model: *Assimilation (PA), Miseducation (PM), Self-Hatred (PSH), Anti-White (IEAW), Afrocentricity (IA), and Multiculturalist Inclusive (IMCI).* This scale allows for the assessment of racial identity attitudes by tapping into one's beliefs and behaviors. The outcome after scoring is a profile composed of each of the six subscale scores.

Vandiver et al. (2002) embarked upon validating the CRIS. The CRIS was standardized using African American college students ranging in age from 17-59 attending predominantly white universities in the Northeastern United States.

Analysis supported the six factor structure of the CRIS, indicating that the reliability estimates of scores on these factors is in the moderate to high range. Discriminant validity was measured by looking for correlations between the CRIS and measures of social desirability, personality and global self-esteem. Discriminant validity was supported by their findings. The CRIS is a relatively new instrument, but early evidence suggests that it is a psychometrically strong measure of the six Black racial identities targeted (Vandiver et al., 2002).

Although the CRIS was validated using college-aged and older subjects, it has been suggested that, because it is so new, the measure should be used with other age groups to help determine the norms (Vandiver, 2002). In addition, the ages of the participants in this study (13- 16 years old), does overlap with previous participants. Furthermore, the adolescents participating in this study will be students in predominantly White northeastern schools, just as the validation sample was. Use of adult normed racial identity scales with adolescents is not without precedent. Plummer (1996) administered the Racial Identity Attitudes Scale-Form B (designed for use with young adults and older) (Helms, 1990) to adolescents as young as 14 years old and obtained valid and reliable results. Given that one of the hypotheses presented here was that racial identity development can begin in younger adolescents, it seemed appropriate to use the instrument that is based upon the most widely accepted theory of Black racial identity formation.

A-COPE: Adolescent Coping Orientation for Problem Experiences

The A-COPE is a 54 item, self-report instrument designed by Patterson and McCubbin (1987) to assess patterns of coping used by adolescents. It groups coping responses into 12 distinct factors or patterns: *Ventilating feelings; seeking diversions; developing self-reliance and optimism; developing social supports; solving family problems; avoiding problems; seeking spiritual support; investing in close friends; seeking professional support; engaging in demanding activity; being humorous; and relaxing.* Four of the twelve patterns fall under the category of avoidant coping (i.e. *ventilating feelings, seeking diversions, avoiding problems, relaxing).* The remaining eight patterns would be considered more active or transformational means of coping. Reliability for the twelve factors ranges from α= .50 to .75. Eight of the twelve had reliability scores of .72 or higher and only *seeking professional support* had an α score below .60

Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale

The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (Piers, 1984) is an 80 item measure. The Piers-Harris was designed as a unidimensional self-concept scale with items that reflect the following subdomains: *Behavior, Intellectual/School, Physical Appearance/Attributes, Anxiety, Popularity, and Happiness/Satisfaction* (Bracken et al., 2000). The manual reports total scale internal consistency as ranging between .88 to .93, with stability ranging from .42 to .96. Subscale internal consistency ranges from .73 to .81.

Demographic Information

Demographic information was gathered using a questionnaire designed by the author. Information regarding sex, age, socioeconomic status, and cultural/ethnic background was collected.

Procedure

Students and their parents were initially contacted by mail by the investigator. Those students interested in participating contacted the investigator by phone and were then interviewed, along with their parents. The demographic information was completed over the phone using information from both the participant and her guardian and questions about the study were answered. The participant was then mailed consent forms, the Cross Racial Identity Scale, the Piers-Harris Self-concept scale, and the A-COPE along with instructions for completing and returning the packet of materials (see appendices A-I). Once the completed consents and questionnaires were received, participants were compensated with passes to movie theaters valued at approximately $20. The method of compensation was altered from the original planned lottery for $50 (there would have been a 1 in 10 chance of winning) due to the low number of participants.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The relationship between racial identity, self-concept and coping style was investigated using correlation analysis. Means and standard deviations of all variables are listed in Table 1. Tables 3,4 and 5 display the results of bivariate correlation analyses of the data. Table 6 contains the results of a partial correlation analysis of the data on Pre-encounter racial identity attitudes and avoidant coping patterns controlling for the CRIS Internalization Multicultural Inclusive score..

The first hypothesis of this study was that scores on the most advanced three CRIS subscales (*Immersion-Emersion Anti-White-IEAW, Internalization Afrocentricity-IA, and Internalization Multicultural Inclusive-IMCI*) would be positively correlated with scores on the A-COPE subscales of transformational coping patterns (*developing self-reliance, developing social support, solving family problems, seeking spiritual support, investing in close friends, seeking professional support, engaging in demanding activity, humor, and the mean of the scores for all transformational coping patterns*). As is evident in table 2, this hypothesis was generally not supported by the findings. There was a significant correlation (r= .791, p=. 006) between the CRIS IMCI score and the A-COPE Humor score, which supports the hypothesis. However, the correlation coefficient between the mean transformational coping patterns score and the CRIS IEAW, IA, and IMCI subscales was not significant (r=-.550, p=.100; r= -.524, p=.120, and r=.285, p=.424, respectively).

Table 1

Means & Standard Deviations for the Cross Racial Identity Scale, Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale, & the Adolescent Coping Orientation for Problem Experiences

	M	SD
CRIS Pre-encounter Assimilation	2.96	1.24
CRIS Pre-encounter Miseducation	3.62	1.46
CRIS Pre-encounter Self-hatred	1.72	1.29
CRIS Immersion-Emersion Anti-White	1.64	1.21
CRIS Internalization Afrocentricity	3.22	.88
CRIS Internalization Multicultural Inclusive	6.08	.44
Piers-Harris Self-concept Total	63.5	4.01
Piers-Harris Self-concept Behavior	60.10	4.75
Piers-Harris Self-concept Intellect	64.10	4.93
Piers-Harris Self-concept Physical Appearance	63.80	4.83
Piers-Harris Self-concept Anxiety	59.40	6.38
Piers-Harris Self-concept Popularity	52.20	4.54
Piers-Harris Self-concept Happiness & Satisfaction	57.90	6.12
A-COPE Ventilating Feelings	2.54	.495
A-COPE Seeking Diversion	2.77	.452
A-COPE Relaxing	3.00	.639
A-COPE Avoiding Problems	1.90	.216
A-COPE Developing Self-reliance	3.39	.758
A-COPE Developing Social Support	3.24	.517
A-COPE Solving Family Problems	2.71	.628
A-COPE Spiritual Support	2.31	1.025
A-COPE Invest in close friends	3.10	.615
A-COPE Professional Support	1.65	.474
A-COPE Demanding Activity	3.37	.609
A-COPE Humor	3.45	.550
A-COPE Avoidant Style Mean	2.55	.335
A-COPE Transformational Style Mean	2.90	.406

Table 2

Results of the bivariate correlation analysis of the variables of the most advanced 3 stages of racial identity and all transformational coping patterns.

	CRIS Imm.-Em. Anti-White		CRIS Internalization Afrocentricity		CRIS Internalization Multicul. Inclusive	
	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
A-COPE Developing Self-reliance	-.335	p= .344	-.207	p=.566	.174	p=.630
A-COPE Developing Social Support	-.769	p= .009	-.488	p= .153	.527	p= .118
A-COPE Solving Family Problems	-.452	p=.189	-.582	p=.078	.204	p=.572
A-COPE Spiritual Support	.278	p=.437	-.052	p=.886	-.451	p=.191
A-COPE Invest in Close Friends	-.740	p=.014	-.520	p=.124	.252	p=.482
A-COPE Professional Supp.	-.380	p=.278	-.436	p=.208	.200	p=.579
A-COPE Demanding Activity	-.161	p=.656	-.506	p=.135	.190	p=.598
A-COPE Humor	-.616	p=.058	-.090	p=.805	.791	p=.006*
A-COPE Transformational Style Mean	-.550	p=.100	-.524	p=.120	.285	p=.424

The second hypothesis of this study was that there would be a positive correlation between scores on the CRIS Pre-encounter *subscales (Assimilation-PA, Miseducation-PM, and Self-Hatred-PSH)* and scores on the A-COPE avoidant coping scales (*ventilating feelings, seeking diversion, relaxing, avoiding problems, and the mean score of all avoidant coping patterns*). Table 3 displays the results of a bivariate analysis of these variables. The second hypothesis was

not supported. However, there were correlations between CRIS PA scores and the A-COPE *avoidant pattern mean, relaxing,* and *ventilating feelings* scores that were approaching significance at the .05 level (r=.588, p=.074; r=.567, p=.088, r=.576, p=.081).

Table 3
Results of the bivariate correlation analysis of the Pre-encounter racial identity and coping pattern variables.

	CRIS Pre-encounter Assimilation		CRIS Pre-encounter Miseducation		CRIS Pre-encounter Self-hatred	
	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
A-COPE Ventilating Feelings	.567	p=.088	.088	p=.809	.145	p=.690
A-COPE Seeking Diversion	.247	p=.492	.169	p=.641	.350	p=.322
A-COPE Relaxing	.576	p=.081	.059	p=.870	.504	p=.138
A-COPE Avoiding Problems	-.116	p=.750	.317	p=.373	.048	p=.896
A-COPE Avoidant Style Mean	.588	p=.074	.158	p=.663	.432	p=.212

A partial correlation analysis controlling for the CRIS IMCI score was also performed on the data for this hypothesis (see Table 4 for results). This was done because the IMCI scores of all of the subjects were high and might therefore account for a significant portion of the variance. With the IMCI score controlled for, additional significant correlations emerged. CRIS Pre-encounter self-hatred scores were positively correlated with the following A-COPE avoidant pattern scores: *relaxing* (r=.8155, p= .007), *avoidant mean score* (r=.688, p= .041) and *seeking diversion* (r= .648, p= .06, approaching significance).

Table 4

Results of the partial correlation analysis of the variables for CRIS Pre-encounter racial identity and the A-COPE avoidant pattern controlling for CRIS Multicultural Inclusive scores.

	CRIS Pre-encounter Assimilation		CRIS Pre-encounter Miseducation		CRIS Pre-encounter Self-hatred	
	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
A-COPE Ventilating Feelings	.583	p=.099	.117	p=.764	.162	p=.678
A-COPE Seeking Diversion	-.044	p=.911	.523	p=.149	.648	p=.059
A-COPE Relaxing	.4531	p=.221	.334	p=.380	.8155	p=.007
A-COPE Avoiding Problems	-.086	p=.825	.304	p=.426	.033	p=.933
A-COPE Avoidant Style Mean	.473	p=.199	.440	p=.236	.688	p=.041

The third hypothesis was that there would be a positive correlation between scores on the CRIS IA and IMCI subscales and the Piers-Harris Self-Concept subscales. This relationship was investigated using bivariate correlation analysis. The hypothesis was not supported (see Table 5 for results).

Table 5

Results of the bivariate correlation analysis of the CRIS Internalization and self-concept variables.

	CRIS Internalization Afrocentricity		CRIS Internalization Multicultural Inclusive	
	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
Piers-Harris Total t-score	-.446	p=.196	-.100	p=.784
Piers-Harris Behavior t-score	-.091	p=.802	-.004	p=.991
Piers-Harris Intellect t-score	-.350	p=.321	.006	p=.987
Piers-Harris Physical Appearance t-score	-.377	p=.283	.153	p=.672
Piers-Harris Anxiety t-score	-.014	p=.970	.183	p=.612
Piers-Harris Popularity t-score	-.308	p=.327	.344	p=.331
Piers-Harris Happiness & Satisfaction t-score	-.609	p=.062	-.258	p=.471

Finally, the relationship between scores on the CRIS Pre-encounter Self-Hatred subscale and self-concept scores was investigated. It was hypothesized that there would be a negative correlation between PSH and self-concept scores. However, this hypothesis was not supported (see Table 6). These data were also analyzed using the partial correlation controlling for CRIS IMCI score, but again there was not significant correlation.

Table 6

Results of the bivariate correlation analysis of the CRIS Pre-encounter Self-hatred & the self-concept variables.

	Piers-Harris Total		Piers-Harris Behavior		Piers-Harris Intellect		Piers-Harris Physical		Piers-Harris Anxiety		Piers-Harris Pop.		Piers-Harris Happi. & Satis.	
	r	Sig.	r	Sig.	r	Sig.	r	Sig.	r	Sig.	r	Sig.	r	Sig.
CRIS Pre-enc. Self-hatred	-.228	p=.527	-.546	p=.102	.260	p=.468	.019	p=.959	-.479	p=.161	-.346	p=.327	.097	p=.789

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The following vignette comes from my work as a psychology extern in a New York City independent school. As part of my work, I counseled students of color, most of whom, including CJ had come to the school from programs like the one from which this study's participants were drawn. Although CJ was not a participant in this investigation, demographically, he is very similar to this sample. This true first hand observation serves as an example of the type of dilemma faced by Black teens and supports the hypotheses and issues underlying this research.

The Case of CJ

Black and Latino teens saunter into the large classroom in a New York City independent school. The room is already populated with a small handful of faculty members of color who chat casually with each other and their arriving students. Language is more relaxed, with "Ebonics" occasionally slipping from the lips of these mostly Ivy educated, young teachers. The bi-weekly multicultural students' committee meeting is rarely formal, serving more as a respite for the "stressed-out" and a forum for the "often-voiceless" who choose to participate. It's almost always just the Black and Latino students and teachers/advisors.

Today, CJ, a 16-year-old junior, looks uncharacteristically anxious. CJ is African American, quite tall, a bit chubby, and almost always ready to greet you with a smile. He is one of the few students in the school who seems to successfully maintain genuine, meaningful relationships across racial, cultural, gender and sexual orientation lines. But today, he is feeling confused and a bit isolated from

some of his closest friends.

CJ tells the small group gathered near him that he was robbed over the weekend in the Village. He was not physically hurt by the two boys who were about his age and naively believed that CJ had anything worth stealing. They had humiliated CJ; he felt less than manly at being punked. But he felt most damaged by the fact that the assailants were Black. He was dismayed that two of his own could violate him. Upon returning to school, CJ found himself irritable and anxious, and feeling a bewildering sense of shame. Consistent with his gregarious nature, CJ felt the need to talk about his experience with those close to him. Among his many friends, two of his closest were White. These were two friends with whom he thought he could share anything. Except he could not share the shame that he felt for his race. CJ could not talk to his White friends about the assault by two boys who were so overtly like him. And in the gathering around him, what he focused on most was his inability to tell his White friends about the mugging.

Amongst his own racial group, CJ could admit that it was race-related shame that he was feeling. All who heard his story admitted that whenever they hear of a crime on the news, their first thought is, "Please don't let him be Black!". As if that individual's actions could prove all the stereotypes true, and they could never walk with pride amongst their White peers again.

CJ was bright and insightful enough to recognize his conflict. His solid connection to the Black community provided him with a safe harbor where he

could return in a time of distress. He maintained positive relationships with both African American peers and faculty and actively participated in the school's multicultural club. CJ was therefore able to begin to articulate his experience and to process it in a safe, supportive setting. He could use transformational coping skills (i.e. seeking social support) to help alleviate his feelings of stress and to attempt to preserve his relationships with his white friends despite the strong urge to simply withdraw from them. Unfortunately, too many other adolescents do not have the inner resources to even begin this process. Others in similar settings do not have the support systems in place to facilitate this. The hypotheses posed in this investigation evolved from observation of the experiences of students like CJ. My observations were made in the context of individual and group treatment and also in non-clinical settings (e.g. faculty advisor to the student multicultural organization).

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between racial identity status, coping style and self-concept in African American adolescents attending private schools that have a majority of White American students. An underlying supposition was that when adolescents are part of such a negatively stereotyped minority group, they will function better psychologically once they can overcome the perceived stigma and fully embrace and appreciate their heritage. Based on clinical observation, it seemed that the students who were struggling with race-related feelings of shame and self-hatred were less likely to use active (or transformational) coping skills. For example, over the course of a school year, I counseled a female African American junior. This dark skinned teen was the only

child of two extremely high achieving, successful Black professional parents. She had been raised in a White upper class neighborhood and educated in this elite private school since kindergarten. During her adolescence, she appropriately began the process of identity formation and her racial identity also began to take shape. As she struggled to find herself in African American culture, she consistently sought out the most delinquent of Black teens with whom to identify. Having accepted the negative stereotypes about Blacks, she believed that to be Black was to be involved with drugs, violence and crime, despite the many positive examples around her. Her primary means of coping consisted of drug use and engaging in risky, self destructive behavior.

The students who were most comfortable with their racial group and identity seemed to use more proactive, effective coping skills. These same students also appeared to be the most confident, overtly presenting with the most positive self-concept. The students who manifested signs of racial self-hatred appeared to have a comparably more negative self-concept. Past research exploring the relationship between racial and ethnic identity and self-esteem supported this last hypothesis (Goodstein & Ponterotto, 1997; Parham & Helms, 1985).

With a few exceptions, the hypotheses of this investigation were not well supported. Teens with an established multicultural identity (Internalization Multicultural-Inclusive) used humor, an advanced coping mechanism, more often. Teens presenting with a more afrocentric perspective (Internalization-Afrocentricity) presented with a nearly significant higher sense of happiness and

satisfaction self-concept score. These were the findings in support of my hypotheses.

The possible reasons for the lack of significant findings are varied. The most obvious factor that is applicable to all of the hypotheses is the small sample size and subsequent low power. Significant relationships between the variables may exist, but could not be detected in such a small sample. There were often correlations in the predicted direction but not at a level of significance (see table 3, CRIS- Pre-encounter assimilation & avoidant coping patterns). Although outreach was made to more than 250 students (for a planned sample size of 30-50) who met at least one of the criteria for participation, overall response from eligible teens was small.

Issues in Sample Selection

One major reason for the poor response is that many of the students, although Black American, did not have a parent who was born or raised here, one of the selection criteria. Some parents who received the initial outreach letter actually called to say that they were very interested in supporting the study, but unfortunately did not meet the criteria due to country of origin. The Black community in New York City is incredibly diverse, representing the full African Diaspora, and the student body from which participants were recruited mirrors this diversity. The 2000 Census data indicates that 35.9% of New York City residents were foreign born (2000, U.S. Census Bureau). Had time and resources permitted, greater outreach could have been made directly to the independent

schools, thus reaching a broader base of African American students. Such outreach might have included phone calls, newspaper advertising, and visits to individual schools.

Another possible reason for the poor response is the lack of a direct, personal relationship between the students and the investigator. Because initial outreach was done by mail, possible participants only had an opportunity to meet or speak with the investigator directly if they replied to the study invitation. Face to face contact or a personal relationship may have engendered more interest in the study and increased the number of participants. Also, the subject of racial identity may be a particularly sensitive subject, especially for those in the midst of struggling with racial identity issues. Some may have chosen not to respond because they were not psychologically ready to delve into such issues with a stranger.

Future investigations may also seek a more heterogeneous sample given the incredible diversity among Black Americans. Although African descendent people from other cultures have a different history in relationship to this country and slavery, they are also affected by the legacy of slavery by virtue of their skin color. However if a heterogeneous sample is used, additional measures must be added to help clearly delineate the influence of racial identity from ethnic identity (e.g. the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992)).

There were of course additional, hypothesis-specific influences on the findings that will be discussed below.

Racial Identity and Coping Style

It was expected that the further along a teen is on the path towards Black racial identity (i.e. higher scores on the CRIS IEAW, IA, & IMCI scales), the higher the scores would be on the A-COPE transformational coping pattern subscales. The data showed a positive correlation between the use of humor as a coping style and the internalization multicultural inclusive racial attitude. This was the only finding that supported the hypothesis. Humor is an active way of coping, a way of transforming a stressful situation into something more bearable and perhaps meaningful. It is a more cognitively advanced means of coping. It is therefore not surprising that these adolescents who have been classified as intellectually gifted are apt to use a more sophisticated defense.

There were no other significant positive correlations between transformational coping patterns and the three most advanced stages of racial identity. In fact, a significant negative correlation was observed between the IEAW scores and the use of social supports as a way of coping ($p=.009$). There was also a nearly significant negative relationship ($p=.058$) between IEAW scores and the A-COPE humor coping pattern.

The tendency towards negative correlations between the IEAW & IA scores and transformational coping was striking. One possible explanation is that individuals who maintain more exclusionary (anti-White) and Afrocentric views might feel the greatest discomfort and anxiety in an environment in which they are the obvious minority. Cross (1991) theorized that an increase in anxiety would be observed in individuals with high Anti-White attitudes. If this is so, then a higher

level of anxiety might interfere with the ability to cope or might drive one to use the coping patterns that bring about the most immediate relief (e.g. avoidance, seeking diversion, venting).

A second prediction of this study was that there would be a positive relationship between the CRIS pre-encounter scores (PA, PM, PSH) and the A-COPE avoidant pattern scores. The findings did not support this hypothesis. However, there was a trend towards a positive correlation between Pre-encounter Assimilation scores and the use of relaxing and ventilating feelings as well as the overall avoidant mean score with correlation approaching significance at the .05 level, which would support my hypothesis and that of Fordham (1988). In other words, it is possible that those students most in favor of assimilation into the dominant culture were more likely to try to avoid conflict and stressful situations.

It was quite notable that all of the subjects scored high on the CRIS IMCI scale, regardless of how they scored on the pre-encounter scales (the equivalent of an opposite position), suggesting a possible bias towards favorable responding. The study participants are gifted students who are used to getting the right answers on tests and being perceived favorably. Despite the directive to answer honestly and the promise of confidentiality, there likely still exists a strong pull to "get it right" and look good to the investigator. Some questions on the CRIS clearly have an answer that appears more desirable for a given identity status (e.g. item 30: "I have a strong feeling of hatred and disdain for all White people."). The multicultural inclusive items included statements such as: #5 "As a multiculturalist, I am connected to many groups (Hispanics, Asian-Americans, Whites, Jews, gays

& lesbians, etc)." and #16 "I believe it is important to have both a Black identity and a multicultural perspective, which is inclusive of everyone (e.g. Asians, Latinos, gays & lesbians, Jews, Whites, etc.)." The wording of the remaining 3 IMCI questions are remarkably similar to the two examples presented here and interpretations of the 5 statements are nearly interchangeable. This creates a possible bias towards positive responding. All of the subjects presented with high multicultural attitude scores, but there was more variance among the other CRIS scores. In addition, because of their educational environment, the participants are virtually forced to become multicultural. It is possible that individuals can maintain feelings of shame and self-hatred while also presenting with the diversity-embracing multicultural attitude. This may especially be so when they are forced into multicultural situations.

Given the above, the data was examined controlling for the possible effect of IMCI attitudes. When the variance contributed by multicultural inclusive attitudes was controlled for, significant and near significant findings emerged. There were significant and near significant positive correlations between PSH scores and a few avoidant coping scores (i.e. seeking diversion, relaxing, overall avoidance mean score), which does lend support to the second hypothesis. With an increase in feelings of Black self-hatred and shame came an increased tendency towards avoiding conflict. The vignette of CJ presented earlier provides an example of this. Although he ultimately did reach out for support, CJ, in the face of "Black shame", suddenly found his usual coping skills being quite challenged.

Racial Identity and Self-Concept

Based on existing research (e.g. Goodstein & Ponterotto, 1997; Parham & Helms, 1985), it was hypothesized that an increase in self-hatred beliefs would be associated with a poorer self-concept (especially as related to appearance, happiness, and anxiety). A related hypothesis was generated that adolescents who presented with a more internalized Black racial identity would feel more positively about themselves overall. Neither hypothesis was supported.

It is notable that all of the subjects presented with very high self-concept scores across all domains. The question may be raised as to whether the scores are valid, especially given the vulnerability of self-report measures to false responding. Research comparing gifted students to non-gifted students has repeatedly shown that gifted kids have significantly higher self-concept scores when compared to average intelligence peers (e.g. Ablard, 1997; Karnes & Wherry, 1981). Because it is not uncommon for gifted adolescents to present with high self-concept scores, it does not seem likely that the participants in this study were "faking" as the Piers-Harris scores might otherwise suggest.

Again, this is an area where the data may be particularly sensitive to the small sample size. At the same time, these findings are consistent with existent data. Given the expectation of high self-concept scores among most of the subjects, a smaller range of scores would be expected, requiring a larger sample size to detect differences. Future research in this area might include peer and teacher assessments of self-concept in order to provide more objective data.

Implications for future research and clinical practice

Although generally speaking most hypotheses were not supported, clinical observation and some of the statistical trends noted in this study indicate that the relationship between adolescent racial identity, self-concept and coping style is an area worthy of further investigation. There were some predicted relationships between racial identity attitude and coping style that were supported by the data. These findings might be replicated and supported in a future study with larger sample size.

In addition, other interesting findings emerged, suggesting related areas of focus for future research. For example, the CRIS scores suggest that the participants in this study have strong positive feelings about being black and feel grounded in their racial identity, but at the same time experience some longing to become assimilated into the dominant cultures of their schools. This may be explained by W.E.B. Dubois' concept of double consciousness (1964). Adolescents under these circumstances may be working towards the integration of their dual perceptions of themselves; their own culturally syntonic self-perception with the view of themselves through white America's lens. A relatively new instrument, the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) (Sellers, et al., 1998), might prove to be a good measure to sort out personal perception vs. believed public perception of race.

Another interesting trend noted was the tendency for more afrocentric teens to present with lower self-concept scores of happiness and satisfaction. Although the self-concept scores were not considered significantly low, the

possible converse relationship is striking and worth further investigation. An unexpected finding in this study was the tendency of the teens who maintained the highest anti-white attitudes to use the least effective coping patterns. This would certainly be an area for further exploration.

Racial identity theories have tended to neglect to attend to children and early adolescents until relatively recently (e.g. Rowley et al., 1998). The earlier studies that did focus on racial issues in children primarily addressed racial preference and/or reference group orientation and did not seem to appreciate the complex and dynamic nature of racial identity (see Cross, 1991 for review). As the field of study evolved, racial identity theories moved beyond simple racial preference. However, it seems that the existing racial identity models are based on the assumption that there will usually not be a catalyst for the formation of racial identity until adulthood or late adolescence. Given a still largely residentially segregated country, it may be hypothesized that some researchers operate with the assumption that most Black Americans will not meaningfully interact with White America until entering the realm of higher education or the workforce. It may be assumed that the majority of Black American children will not begin the racial identity formation process and thus, no theory is needed. However, due a great deal to programs like Prep for Prep, Early Steps and A Better Chance (ABC), many more Black youth are being educated in private schools that had historically been almost completely White, Anglo-Saxon, and upper class. This increase in educational integration does mean that Black youth are being confronted with the issue of racial identity status at younger ages and in greater numbers than they had

before. Gifted African American teens warrant special attention given their precocity in performing cognitive operations such as social comparison at a younger age. This ability may make them more likely to engage in an "adult process".

In order to investigate adolescent racial identity thoroughly, a measure is needed specifically for adolescents. Although Cross' identity statuses do seem applicable to adolescents, the manifestation may be different. Statements on such a scale would have to target beliefs and behaviors that are relevant to adolescents (e.g. targeting music preference, social situations). Also inclusion of an instrument specifically measuring adolescent race-related stress may provide useful data. To this investigator's knowledge, no such instrument exists to date.

Two of the greatest sources of information in formulating the hypotheses of this study were clinical observation as a counselor in a private school and life experience as a an adolescent in a private school. Unfortunately, these invaluable sources of information were not included in this investigation due to limited resources. The measures used here, while valid and reliable, could not capture some of the very complex and deeply nuanced experiences of the teens. The addition of a qualitative component such as interviews or anecdotes might provide further insight into the complicated relationship between racial identity and various areas of psychological functioning. It would also serve the purpose of helping youth find their voices, perhaps the greatest gift that can be given to an adolescent.

There also some implications for those providing clinical services to teens similar to those represented here. In individual treatment, it would be important

for the clinician to be attuned to issues related to racial identity. One of the goals of psychotherapy with adolescents is to improve their coping abilities. The data here does suggest that there is a significant relationship between racial identity and coping. Therefore, in order to best serve these teens, racial identity may need to become a part of the work. This can be as subtle as gently inquiring into statements made about race (e.g. "I hate my hair! I wish I had good hair!" followed by, "What is good hair?"). This may lead to rich, exploratory work or it may simply "plant a seed", challenging the teen to re-evaluated accepted beliefs.

If working within the school setting, it would be important for the clinician to support the establishment and growth of student racial and ethnic organizations. To this end, the clinician may need to support and educate the school staff as such organizations are sometimes feared and sabotaged by faculty and/or other students. The common underlying need in both individual and institutional work is for African American adolescents to find their voices and have their voices heard.

Appendix A

July 14, 2002

Dear Parent,

My name is Donya Rhett and I am an alum of Prep for Prep (VI, Hewitt '90, Yale '94). I am currently a student in the Clinical Psychology doctoral program of the City University of New York-Graduate Center.

I am writing because I am conducting a dissertation research study that might be relevant to the experiences that your child is having in his/her independent school. I am looking for African American students between the ages of 13 and 19 to participate in my study. I am exploring a connection between how adolescents feel about themselves compared to their peers and coping skills in African American adolescents attending private schools in New York. If your child was born in the U.S., attends private school, and has at least one parent who was born and raised in the U.S., he/she may be eligible to participate.

Students choosing to participate will be asked to fill out three questionnaires relating to how they feel about themselves as well as to provide some basic background information. The process will take about 45-60 minutes and can be done by mail. All participants will receive a ticket to a movie of their choice at a major movie theater . There is no risk involved in the process and students may choose to discontinue at any point during it. Students will remain anonymous in the reporting of my results.

I have both attended a New York City private school and worked in one as a counselor. My experience has shown me that students of color benefit enormously from supportive services from knowledgeable staff. I believe that my research may help school counselors better meet the needs of all students of color. Your child's participation in this study may be very helpful in improving the services provided by Prep for Prep and the independent schools. I hope that you will share this letter with your teen and consider allowing him/her to participate. In addition, if you know of another teen who meets the criteria for this study, please share this letter!

Please contact me at Donya@aya.yale.edu or (718) 716-1443 if you wish to participate or if you have any questions. If you leave a message, please leave your number(s) and let me know when would be the best time to contact you.
Sincerely,
Donya Rhett, M.A.

Appendix B

THE GRADUATE CENTER

Participant Consent Form

My name is Donya Rhett, and I am a student in the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. Program at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, and Principal Investigator of this project, entitled ***"AFRICAN AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RACIAL IDENTITY, COPING STYLE AND SELF-CONCEPT."*** This is a research study of how African American adolescents in private schools feel about themselves and cope with stressful situations. I would like permission to ask you a few questions about your background and would like you to complete three questionnaires.

The questionnaires involve questions about how you think of yourself in relationship to your peers and the different ways that you manage stress. Participation will require approximately forty-five minutes of your time. After completion of the questionnaires, you will be entered into a lottery with a 1 in 10 chance of winning $50. All identifiable information will be coded and you will remain anonymous in the reporting of results. Information will be kept in a locked file cabinet, to which only my advisor and I will have access.

There is no risk involved in the process and students may choose to discontinue at any time without any effect on their status at school. This study may benefit other adolescents of color attending private schools in that school supportive services may be improved. I can also provide referrals to counselors and psychological services upon request of participant or parent.

I may publish the results of the study, but names of people, or any identifying characteristics, will not be used in any of the publications.

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me at (718) 716-1443 or donya@aya.yale.edu, or my advisor, Anderson J. Franklin, Ph.D. at (212) 650-5666. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact Hilry Fisher, Sponsored Research, The Graduate Center/City University of New York, (212) 817-7523, hfisher@gc.cuny.edu.

In order to participate in this study, I must have your signed consent on this form. Thank you for your participation in the study. I will give you a copy of this form to take with you.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____ Participant's name (print) _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

02-05-03
7/18/02 7/17/03

Appendix C

Parental Consent Form

My name is Donya Rhett, and I am a student in the Clinical Psychology Ph D. Program at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, and Principal Investigator of this project, entitled ***"AFRICAN AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RACIAL IDENTITY, COPING STYLE AND SELF-CONCEPT."*** This is a research study of how African American adolescents in private schools feel about themselves and cope with stressful situations. I would like permission to ask your child a few questions about his/her background and to have him/her complete three questionnaires.

The questionnaires involve questions about how your child thinks of him/herself in relationship to peers and the different ways that he/she manages stress. Participation will require approximately forty-five minutes of your child's time. To compensate for the time, he/she will be entered into a lottery with a 1 in 10 chance of winning $50. Your child will remain anonymous in the reporting of results. Information will be kept in a locked file cabinet, to which only my advisor and I will have access.

At any time, your child may refuse to answer any questions or end participation without any penalty. There is no risk involved in the process and students may choose to discontinue at any time without any effect on their status at school. This study may benefit other adolescents of color attending private schools in that in-school supportive services may be improved. I can also provide referrals to counselors and psychological services upon request of participant or parent.

I may publish the results of the study, but names of people, or any identifying characteristics, will not be used in any of the publications.

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me at (718) 716-1443 or donya@aya.yale.edu, or my advisor, Anderson J. Franklin, Ph.D. at (212) 650-5666. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact Hilry Fisher, Sponsored Research, The Graduate Center/City University of New York, (212) 817-7523, hfisher@gc.cuny.edu

In order to participate in this study, I must have the signature of the adolescent's parent or guardian. Thank you for your participation in the study. I will give you a copy of this form to take with you.

Adolescent's name   Parent/Guardian's signature   Date

Investigator's signature   Date

02-05-013
7/15/02 7/17/03

Appendix D
Instructions for questionnaires by mail

Dear Student,

Thank you for taking the time to participate in my study. The information you provide may be very helpful in improving the school experience of other adolescents. Please remember that your participation is voluntary. The questionnaires will remain anonymous, so I encourage you to be as truthful in answering all questions as possible. It should take 45 minutes or so to fill out the three questionnaires.

Enclosed you should find:
1) One participant consent form to be signed and returned by the student.
2) Two parental consent forms- one copy to keep, one to be signed and returned.
3) The "Way I Feel About Myself" questionnaire.
4) The "Social Attitudes" questionnaire.
5) The "Adolescent Coping Orientation for Problem Experiences" questionnaire.

Please call me when you receive these materials (718-716-1443) and if you have any questions. Do not put your name on any of the documents besides the consent letters. Once completed, please return the questionnaires and consent forms in the enclosed stamped and addressed envelope. Once I have received your packet, you will be entered into the lottery. If you or your parents wish to know the results of my study, please let me know and I will make sure to contact you when my thesis is completed. Also, if you have any friends who are African American and attend a private school, please pass along my number!

Thank you,
Donya Rhett, M.A.

Appendix E

December 27, 2002

Dear Student,

Thank you again for participating in my study. I hope you enjoyed a movie with the certificate I sent. I am writing again because I have been having a difficult time finding enough students to participate in my study and I am hoping that you can help. Enclosed with this letter is another copy of the letter that explains what my study is about and who qualifies to participate. If you have any friends who you think might want to participate, please share the letter with them. For each friend that you refer who completes and returns the questionnaires, you will receive another movie ticket for one admission. Your friend will also receive a movie ticket. Your help is greatly appreciated.

By the way, have a happy new year!

Sincerely,

Donya Rhett, M.A.

Appendix F

Demographic Information

1a. Date of Birth_____
1b. Age_____ **2. Sex: M F**

3a. Current grade_____ **3b. Years in private school____**

4. With whom do you live?
Mother/Stepmother Y N

Father/Stepfather Y N
Other Guardian Y N (Specify_____)

5. My home neighborhood is mostly:
African American__ White__ Caribbean__ Hispanic__ Asian__
Mixed__ (specify groups_____)

6. Are you involved in any extracurricular activities? Y N

Mother's information (if in residence):

7. Country of birth_____
(If not USA, how many years has she lived in the US? ___)

8. Highest level of education completed:

Elementary school__ College Graduate (BA, BS) __
High School/GED__ Postgraduate degree (e.g. MA, MSW, MS) __
Some College/technical school__ Doctorate/professional degree (e.g. MD, PhD, JD)__

Father's Information (if in residence):

9. Country of birth_____
(If not USA, how many years has he lived in the US? ___)

10. Highest level of education completed:

Elementary school__ College Graduate (BA, BS) __
High School/GED__ Postgraduate degree (e.g. MA, MSW, MS)__

Some College/technical school__ Doctorate/professional degree (e.g. MD, PhD, JD)__

Guardian's Information (if applicable):

11. Country of birth_____
(If not USA, how many years has (s)he lived in the US? ___)

How many years have you lived with this person? ___

12. Highest level of education completed:

Elementary school__ College Graduate (BA, BS) __
High School/GED__ Postgraduate degree (e.g. MA, MSW, MS)
__
Some College/technical school__ Doctorate/professional degree (e.g. MD, PhD, JD)__

13. What is the best estimate of your family's yearly income before taxes?

a. Less than $10,000__
b. Between $10,000 and $20,000__
c. Between $20,000 and $30,000__
d. Between $30,000 and $40,000__
e. Between $40,000 and $60,000__
f. Over $60,000__

14. What do you consider your family's social class to be?

___Poor
___Working Class
___Lower Middle Class
___Middle Class
___Upper Middle Class
___Wealthy

Appendix G

Code: _____

CROSS SOCIAL ATTITUDE SCALE

Beverly J. Vandiver, William E. Cross, Jr., Peony E. Fhagen-Smith, Frank C. Worrell, Janet K. Swim, & Loen D. Caldwell

Section I

1. I. Male ☐ Female ☐

2. How old are you? _____

3. Please indicate your ethnic background **by circling the answer** that applies to you. Choose **only one** category.

a. African	e. Hispanic Black
b. African-American	f. Mixed _____/_____
c. Black	g. Other _____
d. West Indian/Caribbean Black	

4. If you are **currently** a student, are you a high schooler ☐ an undergraduate ☐ or a graduate student ☐?

5. Name of School: _____ 5b. City where school is located: _____

6. What is your semester standing in the school you listed in #5? _____

7. What is the racial composition of the school listed in #5? Mostly Black ☐ Mixed ☐ Mostly White ☐

8. What is your current grade point average?

9. If you are attending college, what is your major? _____

10. If you are **no longer a student**, what is the highest education level obtained? Circle one.

a. Elementary school	d. Business or trade school	g. Bachelor's or four-year degree
b. Some high school	e. Some college	h. Some graduate/professional school
c. High school diploma/equivalent	f. Associate or two-year degree	i. Graduate or professional degree

11. If you are **no longer a student**, what is your current occupation? _____

12. What religious affiliation do you hold? _____

13. How often do you attend religious services? Seldom ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐

14. How important is your religion to you? Not Important ☐ Somewhat Important ☐ Very Important ☐

15. What is the best estimate of your/your family's yearly income before taxes? Circle "Y" for yours and "F" for family.

a. Less than $10,000	Y	F	d. Between $30,000 and $40,000	Y	F
b. Between $10,000 and $20,000	Y	F	e. Between $40,000 and $60,000	Y	F
c. Between $20,000 and $30,000	Y	F	f. Over $60,000	Y	F

16. How would you describe the primary community in which you were raised?

Rural ☐ Suburban ☐ Urban ☐ Other _____

17. What is the racial composition of the community listed in #16? Mostly Black ☐ Mixed ☐ Mostly White ☐

18. Are you a United States citizen ☐ a permanent resident of the US ☐ or Other ☐ _____

19. How many ethnic organizations do you belong to? 1 2 3 4 5 5+

20. What is the highest education level obtained by your mother (or female guardian) and father (or male guardian)? For mother, circle the "M" in the appropriate box; for father, circle the "F."

a. Elementary school	M	F	f. Associate or two-year degree	M	F
b. Some high school	M	F	g. Bachelor's or four-year degree	M	F
c. High school diploma or equivalent	M	F	h. Some graduate or professional school	M	F
d. Business or trade school	M	F	i. Graduate or professional degree	M	F
e. Some college	M	F			

21. How would you describe your family's socioeconomic status?

Poor ☐ Working Class ☐ Middle Class ☐ Upper Middle ☐ Wealthy ☐

22. How would you describe your current physical health?

Very Poor ☐ Poor ☐ Fair ☐ Good ☐ Very Good ☐

23. How would you describe your current mental health?

Very Poor ☐ Poor ☐ Fair ☐ Good ☐ Very Good ☐

Section II

Instructions: Read each item and indicate to what degree it reflects your own thoughts and feelings, using the 7-point scale below. There are no right or wrong answers. Base your responses on your opinion at the present time. **To ensure that your answers can be used, please respond to the statements as written**, and place your numerical response on the line provided to the left of each question.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree	disagree	somewhat disagree	neither agree nor disagree	somewhat agree	agree	strongly agree

_____1. As an African American, life in America is good for me.

_____2. I think of myself primarily as an American, and seldom as a member of a racial group.

_____3. Too many Blacks "glamorize" the drug trade and fail to see opportunities that don't involve crime.

_____4. I go through periods when I am down on myself because I am Black.

_____5. As a multiculturalist, I am connected to many groups (Hispanics, Asian-Americans, Whites, Jews, gays & lesbians, etc.).

_____6. I have a strong feeling of hatred and disdain for all White people.

_____7. I see and think about things from an Afrocentric perspective.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree	disagree	somewhat disagree	neither agree nor disagree	somewhat agree	agree	strongly agree

8. When I walk into a room, I always take note of the racial make-up of the people around me.

9. I am not so much a member of a racial group, as I am an American.

10. I sometimes struggle with negative feelings about being Black.

11. My relationship with God plays an important role in my life.

12. Blacks place more emphasis on having a good time than on hard work.

13. I believe that only those Black people who accept an Afrocentric perspective can truly solve the race problem in America.

14. I hate the White community and all that it represents.

15. When I have a chance to make a new friend, issues of race and ethnicity seldom play a role in who that person might be.

16. I believe it is important to have both a Black identity and a multicultural perspective, which is inclusive of everyone (e.g., Asians, Latinos, gays & lesbians, Jews, Whites, etc.).

17. When I look in the mirror at my Black image, sometimes I do not feel good about what I see.

18. If I had to put a label on my identity, it would be "American," and not African American.

19. When I read the newspaper or a magazine, I always look for articles and stories that deal with race and ethnic issues.

20. Many African Americans are too lazy to see opportunities that are right in front of them.

21. As far as I am concerned, affirmative action will be needed for a long time.

22. Black people cannot truly be free until our daily lives are guided by Afrocentric values and principles.

23. White people should be destroyed.

24. I embrace my own Black identity, but I also respect and celebrate the cultural identities of other groups (e.g., Native Americans, Whites, Latinos, Jews, Asian Americans, gays & lesbians, etc.).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree	disagree	somewhat disagree	neither agree nor disagree	somewhat agree	agree	strongly agree

_____25. Privately, I sometimes have negative feelings about being Black.

_____26. If I had to put myself into categories, first I would say I am an American, and second I am a member of a racial group.

_____27. My feelings and thoughts about God are very important to me.

_____28. African Americans are too quick to turn to crime to solve their problems.

_____29. When I have a chance to decorate a room, I tend to select pictures, posters, or works of art that express strong racial-cultural themes.

_____30. I hate White people.

_____31. I respect the ideas that other Black people hold, but I believe that the best way to solve our problems is to think Afrocentrically

_____32. When I vote in an election, the first thing I think about is the candidate's record on racial and cultural issues.

_____33. I believe it is important to have both a Black identity and a multicultural perspective, because this connects me to other groups (Hispanics, Asian-Americans, Whites, Jews, gays & lesbians, etc.).

_____34. I have developed an identity that stresses my experiences as an American more than my experiences as a member of a racial group.

_____35. During a typical week in my life, I think about racial and cultural issues many, many times

_____36. Blacks place too much importance on racial protest and not enough on hard work and education.

_____37. Black people will never be free until we embrace an Afrocentric perspective.

_____38. My negative feelings toward White people are very intense.

_____39. I sometimes have negative feelings about being Black.

_____40. As a multiculturalist, it is important for me to be connected with individuals from all cultural backgrounds (Latinos, gays & lesbians, Jews, Native Americans, Asian Americans, etc.).

Appendix H

Adolescent Coping Orientation for Problem Experiences (A-COPE)

Circle one of the following responses for each statement:

1 = Never 2 = Hardly ever	3 = Sometimes		4 = Often	5 = Most of the time	
When you face difficulties or feel tense, how often do you					
1. Go along with parents' requests and rules	1	2	3	4	5
2. Read	1	2	3	4	5
3. Try to be funny and make light of it all	1	2	3	4	5
4. Apologize to people	1	2	3	4	5
5. Listen to music- stereo, radio, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Talk to a teacher or counselor at school about what bothers you	1	2	3	4	5
7. Eat food	1	2	3	4	5
8. Try to stay away from home as much as possible	1	2	3	4	5
9. Use drugs prescribed by a doctor	1	2	3	4	5
10. Get more involved in activities at school	1	2	3	4	5
11. Go shopping, buy things you like	1	2	3	4	5
12. Try to reason with parents and Talk things out; compromise	1	2	3	4	5
13. Try to improve yourself (get body in shape, get better grades, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
14. Cry	1	2	3	4	5
15. Try to think of the good things in your life	1	2	3	4	5
16. Be with a boyfriend or girlfriend	1	2	3	4	5

When you face difficulties or feel tense, how often do you	Never	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Often	Most of the time
17. Ride around in the car	1	2	3	4	5
18. Say nice things to others	1	2	3	4	5
19. Get angry and yell at people	1	2	3	4	5
20. Joke and keep a sense of humor	1	2	3	4	5
21. Talk to a minister/priest or rabbi	1	2	3	4	5
22. Let off steam by complaining to family members	1	2	3	4	5
23. Go to church	1	2	3	4	5
24. Use drugs (not prescribed by doctor	1	2	3	4	5
25. Organize your life and what you have to do	1	2	3	4	5
26. Swear (curse)	1	2	3	4	5
27. Work hard on schoolwork or other school projects	1	2	3	4	5
28. Blame others for what's going wrong	1	2	3	4	5
29. Be close with someone you care about	1	2	3	4	5
30. Try to help other people solve their problems	1	2	3	4	5
31. Talk to your mother about what bothers you	1	2	3	4	5
32. Try, on your own, to figure out how to deal with your problems or tension	1	2	3	4	5
33. Work on a hobby you have (sewing, model building, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5

When you face difficulties or feel tense, how often do you	Never	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Often	Most of the time
34. Get professional counseling (not from a school teacher or school counselor)	1	2	3	4	5
35. Try to keep up friendships or make new friends	1	2	3	4	5
36. Tell yourself the problem is not important	1	2	3	4	5
37. Go to a movie	1	2	3	4	5
38.Daydream about how you would like things to be	1	2	3	4	5
39. Talk to a brother or sister about how you feel	1	2	3	4	5
40. Get a job or work harder at one	1	2	3	4	5
41. Smoke	1	2	3	4	5
42. Do things with your family	1	2	3	4	5
43. Watch TV	1	2	3	4	5
44. Pray	1	2	3	4	5
45. Try to see the good things in a difficult situation	1	2	3	4	5
46. Drink beer, wine, liquor	1	2	3	4	5
47. Try to make your own decisions	1	2	3	4	5
48. Sleep	1	2	3	4	5
49. Say mean things to people; be sarcastic	1	2	3	4	5
50. Talk to your father about what bothers you	1	2	3	4	5
51. Let off steam by complaining to your friends	1	2	3	4	5
52. Talk to a friend about how you feel	1	2	3	4	5
53. Play video games, pool, pinball, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
54. Do a strenuous physical activity (jogging, biking, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix I
Piers Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale

ID #

The Way I Feel About Myself

Circle the answer that applies to you.

1. My Classmates make fun of me. yes no
2. I am a happy person. yes no
3. It is hard for me to make friends yes no
4. I am often sad yes no
5. I am smart yes no
6. I am shy yes no
7. I get nervous when the teacher calls on me yes no
8. My looks bother me. yes no
9. When I grow up, I will be an important person yes no
10. I get worried when we have tests in school. yes no
11. I am unpopular. yes no
12. I am well behaved in school yes no
13. It is usually my fault when something goes wrong. yes no
14. I cause trouble to my family yes no
15. I am strong yes no
16. I have good ideas yes no
17. I am an important member of my family yes no
18. I usually want my own way yes no
19. I am good at making things with my hands yes no
20. I give up easily yes no
21. I am no good in my school work yes no
22. I do many things bad. yes no
23. I can draw well yes no
24. I am good in music yes no
25. I behave badly at home yes no
26. I am slow in finishing my school work yes no
27. I am an important member of my class. yes no
28. I am nervous. yes no
29. I have pretty eyes yes no
30. I can give a good report in front of the class yes no
31. In school I am a dreamer yes no
32. I pick on my brother/sister yes no
33. My friends like my ideas yes no
34. I often get into trouble yes no
35. I am disobedient at home yes no
36. I am lucky yes no
37. I worry a lot yes no
38. My parents expect too much of me. yes no
39. I like being the way I am yes no
40. I feel left out of things yes no
41. I have a nice hair yes no
42. I often volunteer in school yes no
43. I wish I were different yes no

ID #

44. I sleep well at night. yes no
45. I hate school. yes no
46. I am among the last to be chosen for games yes no
47. I am sick a lot. yes no
48. I am often mean to other people yes no
49. My classmates in school think I have good ideas. yes no
50. I am unhappy yes no
51. I have many friends yes no
52. I am cheerful yes no
53. I am dumb about most things yes no
54. I am good-looking yes no
55. I have lots of pep yes no
56. I get into a lot of fights yes no
57. I am popular with boys yes no
58. People pick on me yes no
59. My family is disappointed in me yes no
60. I have a pleasant face yes no
61. When I try to make something, everything seems to go wrong yes no
62. I am picked on at home yes no
63. I am a leader in games and sports yes no
64. I am clumsy yes no
65. In games and sports, I watch instead of play yes no
66. I forget what I learn yes no
67. I am easy to get along with yes no
68. I lose my temper easily yes no
69. I am popular with girls yes no
70. I am a good reader yes no
71. I would rather work alone than with a group yes no
72. I like my brother/sister yes no
73. I have a good figure yes no
74. I am often afraid yes no
75. I am always dropping or breaking things. yes no
76. I can be trusted yes no
77. I am different from other people yes no
78. I think bad thoughts yes no
79. I cry easily yes no
80. I am a good person yes no

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