

## African American Males Relationships Among Racial Identity, College Type, and Wellness

By: Shawn L. Spurgeon, [Jane E. Myers](#)

Spurgeon, S. L., & Myers, J. E. (2008). African American males: Relationships among racial identity, college type, and wellness. *Journal of Black Studies*, 40(4), 527-543.

Made available courtesy of Sage Publications: <http://www.sagepub.com/home.nav>

**\*\*\*Reprinted with permission. No further reproduction is authorized without written permission from Sage Publications. This version of the document is not the version of record. Figures and/or pictures may be missing from this format of the document.\*\*\***

### **Abstract:**

A total of 203 African American male junior and senior college students participated in a study to determine the relationships among components of racial identity and wellness. Differences were found between students attending predominantly White institutions (PWIs) and historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) on internalization racial identity attitudes, physical self-wellness, and social self-wellness. No relationships were found between racial identity and wellness. Implications for counseling and research are discussed.

**Keywords:** *African American males; racial identity; wellness; college students*

### **Article:**

Currently, 58% of Black high school graduates attend college (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2003); however, fewer than half graduate (Carey, 2004). These figures obscure significant within-group variation, in that among African Americans, females predominate in college environments, composing 63% of Black enrollments; furthermore, 40% of Black women but only 34% of Black men graduate (NCES, 2003). Wilson (2000) noted a recent unexplained decline in the number of traditional-age Black males completing college, making it possible to describe those who do finish as a unique cadre of successful Black men. Little is known about their strengths or how those strengths may serve as a foundation for counseling.

African American males are among the most stigmatized ethnic groups in the United States (Blake & Darling, 2000; Cokley, 2000; Mizzell, 1999), and they remain one of the least understood populations among the major racial groups (Helms, 1990; Lee & Bailey, 1997). The predominance of existing studies underscores negative behaviors and risk factors such as depression, substance abuse, and violence in this population (A. J. Franklin, 1999; Major, Spencer, Schmader, Wolfe, & Crocker, 1998). Alternately, a few studies have identified coping mechanisms, such as racial identity, that help to mitigate these risk factors (e.g., Cokley, 2000). Racial identity, in turn, has been linked with positive psychological well-being for Black men in general (Pierre & Mahalik, 2005) and specifically for those attending predominantly White universities (PWIs; Pillay, 2005). Well-being, viewed holistically through models of wellness, has been correlated with racial identity development in young Korean Americans (Chang & Myers, 2003) and minority adolescents (Rayle & Myers, 2002), but studies of racial identity and wellness in Black males are lacking.

The present study was designed to identify strengths of successful Black male college students. We defined success as achieving junior or senior status, as these students are more likely to complete college than are those enrolled for only a 1st or 2nd year (NCES, 1995). We included three factors known, individually, to be related to the life experiences of young African American college men: racial identity, type of college attended, and wellness. These three variables had not previously been examined together or in relation to Black upperclassmen. The following brief review of the literature for each variable provides a foundation for the following three research questions: (a) Are there differences in wellness and racial identity between Black male undergraduates based on type of college attended (i.e., historically Black colleges and universities [HBCUs] and PWIs)? (b) How does the wellness and racial identity of successful Black male undergraduates compare to existing norm groups? (c) Is there a relationship between racial identity and wellness for students attending

HBCUs and PWIs? The null hypothesis of no differences was assumed for the first two questions. We hypothesized that there would be a positive relationship between the stages of racial identity and wellness.

### **Young African American Males: A Population at Risk**

Negative stereotypes, overt and covert discrimination, and a history of prejudice have combined to create social and psychological disengagement, substance abuse, depression, suicide, and other forms of violence among young African American males (Major et al., 1998). For example, the leading cause of death for young Black males is homicide: Black males compose only 6% of the total population yet account for 45% of all homicide victims, and they are 10 times more likely to be murdered than are young White males (The Brady Campaign, 2002). Family violence rates are high among Blacks, (Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community, n.d.), and more than one third of Black children live in poverty (Children's Defense Fund, 2004). Education is widely viewed as an avenue to greater quality of life, well-being, and increased longevity and a key to reduction of violence (Alexitch, 2005). Declining college graduation rates mean lower earnings across the lifespan for Black males as a whole (Carey, 2004).

### **Racial Identity**

Cross (1995) defined racial identity as an individual's personal characteristics shared across gender, race, ethnicity, and culture and the cultural norms that connect groups of people. He believed that racial identity development and change occur through socialization. Socialization contributes to identity formation through four linear stages of development: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization. Individuals in the *pre-encounter* stage exhibit low salience attitudes toward race and see it as having a physical and insignificant role in their everyday lives (Cross, 1995). The *encounter* stage is marked by events, circumstances, and small encounters that have a cumulative effect of pushing the individual toward an increased understanding of his or her racial heritage. People in this stage are personally affected in both negative and positive ways by their circumstances, leading to attempts to demolish the "old" perspective while simultaneously trying to construct a new frame of reference, a duality consistent with the *immersion-emersion* stage of racial identity development. This stage includes the demonizing of White people and White culture and immersion into the world of Blackness. During the *internalization* stage, individuals work to achieve dissonance resolution and inner peace through acceptance of and pride in their race.

Racial identity serves as a paradigm through which individuals can, in a positive manner, confront and address negative life circumstances (Cross, 1995). The results of multiple studies reveal that African American males have struggled with understanding and embracing their own racial identity (Adams, 1999; A. J. Franklin, 1999; Morgan, 1996), leading to compromised wellness (Harris, 1996).

### **Wellness**

Wellness refers to a holistic approach in which mind, body, and spirit are integrated in a purposeful manner with a goal of living life more fully (Myers, Sweeney, & Witmer, 2000). More than the absence of disease, wellness incorporates a concern for optimal functioning (Rayle & Myers, 2002).

A variety of wellness models have been proposed, all of which are multidimensional and incorporate factors of mind, body, and spirit as integral components of holistic functioning (Myers & Sweeney, 2005a).

Myers and Sweeney (2005a) presented the indivisible self as an evidence-based model of wellness based on factor analytic studies of a large database gathered during a 15-year period (Hattie, Myers, & Sweeney, 2004). In this model, a single higher-order factor reflects the singularly holistic nature of individual wellness. A series of five second-order factors defines aspects of the self that mitigate for or against well-being: the Creative Self, Coping Self, Social Self, Essential Self, and Physical Self. Within these factors are 17 third-order factors, originally proposed as composing the Wheel of Wellness (Myers et al., 2000).

Differences in wellness among populations have been identified based on factors such as age, gender, and ethnic or cultural background and for persons of different ages (for a review of studies, see Myers & Sweeney,

2005a). Clearly, young Black males compose a population at risk for reduced wellbeing or wellness (Lee, 2003; Leonard, Lee, & Kiselica, 1999). Of particular interest here, differences in wellness have been identified within populations of undergraduate students (Myers & Mobley, 2004), with ethnic minority individuals typically scoring lower on measures of wellness than their Caucasian counterparts (Lee, 2005). Existing studies have not examined possible wellness differences based on type of college attended.

### **HBCUs and PWIs**

Differences in a variety of psychosocial factors have been identified among students attending HBCUs and PWIs. For example, Chism and Satcher (1998) concluded that African American students at PWIs experience barriers to their academic success resulting from a greater sense of isolation and alienation and a perceived lack of support from faculty. Alternately, Allen (1992) and Wells-Lawson (1994) suggested that African American students who attend HBCUs have more positive experiences than those who attend PWIs. MacKay and Kuh (1994) found that when African American male college students experience warmer institutional climates, presumably those at HBCUs, they experience greater satisfaction with college, better adjustment to the college environment, and more willingness to persist through graduation. McDonough and Antonio (1997) used qualitative analysis to show that students who attended HBCUs displayed greater gains in academic achievement, social integration, and occupation aspirations. It is not known if students who attend HBCUs experience greater wellness because of environmental factors or because of their racial identity development.

### **Method**

Participants were volunteers attending two midsized universities in the southeast, a PWI and an HBCU, both public institutions offering a variety of undergraduate and graduate degree programs and located near the downtown metropolitan area of their respective cities. Institutional review board approval was obtained from both institutions. Participants were recruited during intact classes in engineering, cultural studies, and business.

### **Participants**

A total of 400 African American males, 200 from each school, were invited to participate. Although 245 students completed the questionnaires, 42 were excluded because of incomplete or missing data ( $n = 32$ ) or because they were completed by either females or freshmen or sophomores ( $n = 10$ ). The final sample consisted of 203 African American male college juniors and seniors, yielding a response rate of 51%.

Demographic information for the participants is presented in Table 1. Approximately equal numbers attended HBCUs and PWIs. The majority (62.6%) were juniors, and most (88.6%) were between the ages of 20 and 23; the average age was 21.5 ( $SD = 2.22$ ). Most (91.1%) of the participants were single, 8.4% were partnered or married, and 0.5% were divorced. Almost all (89.7%) reported that they worked on at least a part-time basis.

### **Instruments**

Three instruments were used in this study: the Racial Identity Attitude Scale–Long Form (RIAS-L; Cross, 1971), the Five Factor Wel (5F-Wel; Myers & Sweeney, 1999), and a demographic questionnaire.

*RIAS-L.* The RIAS-L (Cross, 1971, 1995) is a 50-item, self-report instrument primarily used with college students. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) and scored on four subscales corresponding to Cross' stages of racial identity development. Preencounter (18 items) includes statements such as "I feel Black people do not have as much to be proud of as White people do." Encounter (6 items) includes statements such as "I am determined to find my Black identity." Immersion-Emersion (12 items) includes statements such as "I believe that everything that is Black is good, and consequently, I limit myself to Black activities." Internalization (14 items) includes statements such as "I feel good about being Black but not limiting myself to Black activities." Scores are calculated by adding together the item responses and dividing by the number of items. Higher scores indicate a stronger endorsement of that status or worldview.

**Table 1**  
**Frequencies for Age, Year in School, Marital Status, and Employment Status for African American Males Attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs)**

Demographic Variable	HBCU <sup>a</sup>		PWI <sup>b</sup>		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Age</b>						
19	7	6.7	3	3.0	10	5.0
20	24	23.1	16	16.0	40	19.7
21	34	33.0	48	48.0	82	40.4
22	16	15.4	20	20.0	36	17.7
23	12	11.5	7	7.0	19	9.4
24 or older	9	10.3	6	6.0	16	7.8
<b>Year in school</b>						
Junior	66	64.1	61	61.0	127	62.6
Senior	37	35.9	39	39.0	76	37.4
<b>Marital status</b>						
Single	97	94.2	88	88.0	185	91.1
Married or partnered	6	5.8	11	11.0	17	8.4
Divorced	0	0.0	1	1.0	1	0.5
<b>Employment status</b>						
Employed full-time	8	7.7	8	8.0	16	7.9
Employed part-time	95	92.3	87	87.0	182	89.7
Not working	0	0.0	5	5.0	5	2.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>51.0</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>49.0</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>100.0</b>

a. *n* = 103.

b. *n* = 100.

Tokar and Fischer (1998), in a study of 293 African American adults aged 17 to 82 (163 females and 130 males, age  $M = 28.3$ ) failed to find support for the four scales and questioned the reported psychometric properties. They identified three factors underlying responses to the RIAS-L, with marginal alphas for the Preencounter, Immersion-Emersion, and Internalization scales being .67, .65, and .71, respectively, and mean scores of 1.65 ( $SD = 0.48$ ), 2.51 ( $SD = 0.69$ ), and 4.25 ( $SD = 0.45$ ). Worrell, Vandiver, Cross, and Fhagen-Smith (2004) found strong support for construct validity of the scales and proposed a six-factor solution. Preliminary examination of the current data using varimax factor matrix rotation and maximum likelihood extraction supported the three-factor solution; 10 items loaded on none of the factors, and 8 items loaded on two factors. Therefore, the Encounter scale was dropped and was not used in data analyses. Corresponding alphas for the three scales in this study were .76, .69, and .80, respectively.

*5F-Wel*. The 5F-Wel (Myers & Sweeney, 1999) was developed to assess 1 higher-order, 5 second-order, and 17 third-order factors of wellness identified in the Indivisible Self, an evidence-based model of wellness (Myers & Sweeney, 2005b). The 5F-Wel includes 73 items that are behavioral and attitudinal statements such as “I believe in the existence of a power greater than myself” and “I am an active person.” Responses are made using a 5-point Likert-type scale, and scores are simple sums of items on each scale. A linear transformation places all scales on a common metric with a possible range of 20 to 100.

Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses supported the first-, second-, and third-order factors (Hattie et al., 2004). The focus of this study was on the first-order factor (Total Wellness) and five second-order factors (the Creative Self, Coping Self, Social Self, Essential Self, and Physical Self). The Creative Self is that combination of attributes that each of us forms to make a unique place among others in our social interactions. The Coping Self involves the ability to manage and experience positive and negative emotions coupled with the minimization of irrational beliefs and effective problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills. The Social Self includes both sexual and nonsexual relationships designed to enhance one’s quality of life and to increase positive mental health over the life span. The Essential Self includes the development of a sense of meaning and purpose in one’s life and the ability to incorporate aspects of gender identity, cultural identity, and self-care as

integral parts of one's self. The Physical Self requires a willingness to monitor nutrition and exercise to enhance physical well-being.

Reliabilities for the scores range from .89 to .96, with an alpha of .98 for Total Wellness (Myers & Sweeney, 2005b). In the present study, the alphas ranged from .62 to .77, with an alpha of .88 for Total Wellness. Myers and Mobley (2004) reported scores for traditional-age undergraduates were used as the norm group for comparisons. The norm groups consisted of 977 traditional-age undergraduate college students and 920 African Americans recruited from university classes, professional workshops, and research projects.

### **Data Analyses**

Descriptive statistics and alphas were computed for all instruments. A series of independent samples *t* tests with Levene's test to examine homogeneity of variance assumptions were computed to compare scores for the participants to existing norm groups for the instruments. Multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs) were used to examine the first question, independent samples *t* tests were used to examine the second question, and Pearson product-moment correlations were calculated to test the third question. An alpha level of .05 was established to determine statistical significance.

### **Results**

Means and standard deviations for the RIAS-L and 5F-Wel for participants attending HBCUs and PWIs are shown in Table 2. The results of MANOVAs computed to examine the first research question, comparing the HBCU and PWI participants, are shown in the far-right columns. For the RIAS-L, PWI students scored statistically significantly higher than did HBCU students on the Internalization scale ( $F = 6.34, p = .01$ ). There were no other statistically significant differences for the RIAS-L scales for the two groups. HBCU participants scored statistically significantly higher on the Social Self factor of the 5F-Wel than did the PWI participants ( $F = 10.01, p = .002$ ). PWI students scored statistically significantly higher on the Physical Self factor ( $F = 9.06, p = .003$ ).

Also shown in Table 2 are the results of a series of independent samples *t* tests computed to determine possible differences between the current participants and the respective norm groups for the RIAS-L and the 5F-Wel. The participants from both universities scored statistically significantly higher than Tokar and Fischer's norm groups on two of the three RIAS-L scales: Preencounter and Immersion-Emersion. However, both sets of participants scored statistically significantly lower than the norm group on internalization.

HBCU students scored statistically significantly higher than did the 5F-Wel norm group of traditional-age undergraduates on the Coping Self and lower on the Physical Self. In contrast, PWI students scored statistically significantly lower than did the 5F-Wel norm group on three factors: Creative Self, Social Self, and Physical Self; PWI students did not score statistically significantly higher than did the norm group on any wellness factors.

The third research question was posed to examine relationships between racial identity and wellness for students attending HBCUs and PWIs. We hypothesized that there would be statistically significant, positive relationships between these two variables. There were no statistically significant relationships for any of the scale comparisons for either group of participants.

**Table 2**  
**Means, Standard Deviations, *F* Statistics, and Effect Sizes for Historically Black College and University (HBCU) and Predominantly White Institution (PWI) Participants for Racial Identity, Self-Esteem, and Wellness Scales**

Scales	HBCU <sup>a</sup>		PWI <sup>b</sup>		<i>F</i> <sup>c</sup>	<i>d</i>	<i>p</i>				
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Racial Identity Attitude Scale–Long								Tokar and Fischer (1998) vs. HBCU <sup>d</sup>		Tokar and Fischer (1998) vs. PWI <sup>e</sup>	
Preencounter	2.39	0.25	2.36	0.28	0.17	.12	.68	12.94	< .001*	12.91	< .001*
Immersion-Emersion	2.84	0.43	2.76	0.45	1.42	.19	.23	4.49	< .001*	3.36	.01*
Internalization	3.69	0.58	3.87	0.54	6.34	.31	< .001	9.98	< .001*	7.29	< .001*
Five Factor Wel (5F-Wel)								5F-Wel vs. HBCU <sup>f</sup>		5F-Wel vs. PWI <sup>g</sup>	
Creative	77.88	8.42	75.21	11.17	3.74	.32	.06	-0.94	.35	3.10	.002*
Coping	74.22	6.86	72.07	10.18	3.13	.31	.08	3.85	< .001*	1.13	.26
Social	85.49	9.22	81.12	10.43	10.01	.47	.002*	1.15	.25	-2.79	.01*
Essential	81.25	8.37	80.32	10.47	0.49	.11	.49	1.91	.06	0.67	.50
Physical	62.27	12.10	67.34	11.85	9.06	.42	.003*	-9.64	< .001*	-5.66	< .001*
Total	76.36	6.47	75.08	8.51	0.55	.20	.46	-0.36	.74	-1.86	.06

a. *n* = 103.

b. *n* = 100.

c. *df* = 1,201.

d. *df* = 394.

e. *df* = 391.

f. *df* = 1,345.

g. *df* = 1,348.

\**p* < .05.

## Discussion

This study was designed to explore the relationships between racial identity and wellness for successful African American male college students, specifically juniors and seniors attending HBCUs and PWIs. Analysis of responses of 103 HBCU and 100 PWI students revealed that the PWI students scored higher than did the HBCU students on the RIAS-L Internalization scale and on the 5F-Wel Physical Self scale; HBCU students scored higher on the Social Self. Both HBCU and PWI participants scored higher on the RIAS-L Preencounter and Immersion scales than any of the original norm group for this instrument and lower on Internalization. For the 5F-Wel, HBCU students scored higher than the norm group on the Coping Self, and PWI students scored lower on the Creative and Social Self. Both groups of participants scored lower than the norm group on the Physical Self. No relationships were found between any of the racial identity and wellness scales for either group. The higher scores on Internalization racial identity attitudes for students who attend PWIs were interesting and unexpected. Our assumption was that HBCU students would be more likely to achieve the higher stages in Cross's model as a consequence of the academic opportunities and social climate in their school settings. Worrell et al. (2004) defined the internalization stage of racial identity as a time when African Americans recognize and embrace the salience of race in American culture. They secure Black identities and engage in actions to maintain that identity, such as forming close friendships with other Black males. It may be that

African American males develop stronger friendships with other minority males, and thus a stronger sense of racial identity, to cope in environments in which they represent a minority portion of the population, such as when attending PWIs.

The lower Internalization scores for the HBCU students seemed to contradict the finding of higher Social Self wellness in this population, in that the Social Self includes friendship and love relationships. The current results are consistent with existing literature that supports the camaraderie and warm academic environments fostered by HBCUs (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000; Berger & Milem, 2000). At the same time, it would be consistent with Cross's theory to find that friendships in HBCU environments contribute to internalization identity, which was not the case based on our results. The current findings merit further examination and verification and exploration of the effects of both HBCU and PWI environments on friendships and racial identity development.

Tokar and Fisher's norm group included both African American students and nonstudent adults. The findings of higher Preencounter and Immersion racial identity scale scores for the current participants in relation to the norm group may reflect a higher level of awareness of racial issues in the college environment regardless of type of institution. Students are frequently exposed to both historical and current events, through curricular and co-curricular activities, and have opportunities for discussion and values clarification that are not as readily available to nonstudent adults. Hence, their higher scores on these scales may be expected. At the same time, the lower internalization scores were surprising. The academic environment seemingly offers experiences to promote the highest levels of racial identity development (Davis, 1998), yet the current participants had not achieved an acceptance of and pride in their race comparable to that of the norm group. Cross did not explain racial identity as having an age-related developmental component; however, if such a relationship were present, it would explain the current findings. Additional studies of racial identity with larger samples across the lifespan, and more studies specifically with African American males, are needed to support or refute the current findings and determine if racial identity is related to age cohorts or age-related developmental issues.

The Coping Self scale of the 5F-Wel includes factors such as leisure, stress management, and sense of worth. It is impossible to determine from the method used in this study why students in HBCU environments would score higher than the norm group on this factor. However, social support is an important factor in managing stress (Myers & Sweeney, 2005a, 2005b); thus, the warmer academic climate in the HBCU may provide opportunities for African American males to use their social networks in a positive manner to increase their wellness in other areas. Similarly, African American males attending PWIs might benefit from additional social support to increase their wellness in relation to their peers at HBCUs and in relation to existing norm samples. Based on the current 5F-Wel results, African American males attending PWIs seem to be at greater risk for impaired wellness in multiple areas than their peers attending HBCUs.

The finding of lower Physical Self wellness in all participants compared to a norm group of undergraduates represents an area of concern for Black males, especially those attending HBCUs, for whom Physical Wellness scores were even lower than those for the PWI participants. Lee (2005) presented data from multiple sources that described the overall health of African Americans as lower than that for the general population. Even in this sample of successful Black men, lower physical wellness is evident. Because wellness in young adulthood can have a significant impact on lifespan wellness, attention to nutrition and exercise seems to be an urgent need for these participants.

The alphas reported for the 5F-Wel scores are marginal and in some cases well below those of the norm group, which limits the reliability of the results. It is not known the rationale for such a finding; however, researchers using these instruments with similar populations should examine alphas and consider the possibility of measurement error. Perhaps a more ethnographic approach is needed to obtain a more accurate measure of wellness among this population. For example, the addition of an open-ended response questionnaire with qualitative analysis of the results along with the 5F-Wel may provide added information about the social implications of wellness for this population.

Finally, the finding of no significant relationship between racial identity and wellness was unexpected and difficult to explain. Cross (1995), C. W. Franklin and Mizzell (1995), and Robertson (2004) have presented racial identity development as a key factor in the positive psychological development of minority individuals. Presumably, greater internalization should lead to a greater sense of well-being or wellness. A confirmatory factor analysis of the underlying factor structure for the data supports the three-factor solution proposed by Tokar and Fischer (1998). Future studies should include instruments that capture the complexity of wellness for African American males.

### **Limitations**

Generalizability of the current findings is limited because of the nature and geographic location of the participants and the measures used. Replication of the current study with college students of all ages is needed to further explore the relationships among the variables. Additional studies examining characteristics of successful Black males in graduate school and professional careers could further explain the nature of wellness in this population. Perhaps with a larger sample, the factor structure of the RIAS-L could be reexamined and the current results strengthened if the three-factor solution rather than the six-factor solution were again supported.

### **Implications**

The results of this study have implications for counseling practice and can be used to guide both student development and counseling services for African American male college students. With the focus on characteristics of successful Black males, school counselors also may find the results useful in relation to high school and even middle school students who aspire to higher education. Younger students can be encouraged to view successful Black males as role models for their own development. The identified strengths of the current participants in areas such as social networking (the Social Self) and stress management (the Coping Self among HBCU students) can be emphasized. Programs that pair older Black males with younger students have proven successful (e.g., Big Brothers); perhaps intentional selection of successful Black males as mentors can further enhance the success of these programs.

The current findings underscore the need for college campuses to develop effective programs that promote positive relationship development for African American males, especially in PWIs, and greater physical wellness. Examples include group counseling programs that focus on relationship skills and the development and maintenance of friendships (Bradley, 2001) and programs that promote regular exercise and better nutrition. Outreach will be a necessary part of such programs (Spradley, 2001). Hermon (2005) recommended that campus wellness programs include screening of all students and targeted programs for students at risk. It seems that even successful Black males have identified risk areas, and these risk areas are well within the purview of services that can be provided by professional counselors operating from a wellness orientation (Myers & Sweeney, 2005a). Because of the broad scope of needs, counselors may find it useful to collaborate with nutritionists, exercise physiologists, personal trainers, and other professionals in order to develop programs that incorporate current research and evidence-based practice.

Consistent with the need to develop aspects of the social self, Magolda (1997) advocated for a welcome week program implemented one week prior to the official start of classes that would allow African American students to build and develop a community of relationships. Based on the current findings, entering students are not the only ones who might benefit from special programs. Annual start-of-year or end-of-year programs for upperclassmen could easily incorporate activities to help students identify and develop components of their racial identity. Enlisting the aid of African American male faculty could be especially useful and would provide positive role models for juniors and seniors. African American male juniors and seniors could also be role models for entering students, particularly when their strengths (e.g., Coping Self) become a focus of mentoring efforts.

Special programs for Black male juniors and seniors may be different based on the type of institution, reflecting differences between the HBCU and PWI students found in this study and other studies cited earlier. For example, PWI students may benefit most from interventions that help them develop friendships, whereas HBCU



students may find other types of programs more useful. Needs assessment is always a useful precursor to program planning, and the instruments used in this study may compose a valuable set of tools for assessing needs across campuses.

The results of this study reveal that even successful Black males are challenged to reach their optimum potential or optimum wellness. Counselors can assist them through wellness-oriented programs on college campuses and through interventions that help them examine and develop their sense of racial identity (Bethea-Whitfield, 2002). Additional studies are needed to determine the types of interventions and programs that may be most needed and studies that replicate and further explain the current findings and the possible relationship, which we were unable to verify, between racial identity and wellness.

## References

- Adams, V. H., III. (1999). Predictors of African American well-being. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 25, 78-104.
- Alexitch, L. R. (2005). Applying social psychology to education. In J. A. Gruman & F. W. Schneider (Eds.), *Applied social psychology: Understanding and addressing social and practical problems* (pp. 205-228). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Allen, W. R. (1992). The color of success: African American college student outcomes at predominantly White and historically Black public colleges and universities. *Harvard Educational Review*, 62, 26-44.
- Ancis, J. R., Sedlacek, W. E., & Mohr, J. J. (2000). Student perceptions of campus cultural climate by race. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 78, 180-185.
- Berger, J. B., & Milem, J. F. (2000). Exploring the impact of historically Black colleges in promoting the development of undergraduates' self-concept. *Journal of College Student Development*, 41, 381-394.
- Bethea-Whitfield, P. (2002). *African American males in counseling: Who's pulling the trigger now?* ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED472511
- Blake, W. M., & Darling, C. A. (2000). Quality of life: Perceptions of African Americans. *Journal of Black Studies*, 30, 411-428.
- Bradley, C. (2001). A counseling group for African American adolescent males. *Professional School Counseling*, 4, 370-373.
- The Brady Campaign. (2002). *Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence*. Retrieved March 5, 2005, from <http://www.bradycampaign.org/>
- Carey, K. (2004). *A matter of degrees: Improving graduation rates in four-year colleges and universities*. Washington, DC: The Education Trust. Retrieved March 19, 2005, from <http://www2.edtrust.org/NR/rdonlyres/11B4283F-104E-4511-B0CA1D3023231157/0/highered.pdf/>
- Chang, C. Y., & Myers, J. E. (2003). Cultural adaptation of the wellness evaluation of lifestyle: An assessment challenge. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, 35, 239-250.
- Children's Defense Fund. (2004). *2003 facts on child poverty in American*. Retrieved March 19, 2005, from <http://www.childrensdefense.org/familyincome/childpoverty/basicfacts.asp/>
- Chism, M., & Satcher, J. (1998). African American students' perceptions toward faculty at historically Black colleges. *College Student Journal*, 32, 315-320.
- Cokley, K. (2000). An investigation of academic self-concept and its relationship to academic achievement in African American college students. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 26, 148-164.
- Cross, W. E. (1971). The Negro-to-Black conversion experience: Toward a psychology of Black liberation. *Black World*, 20, 13-27.
- Cross, W. E. (1995). The psychology of nigrescence: Revising the Cross model. In J. G. Ponterotto, J. M. Casas, L. A. Suzuki, & C. M. Alexander (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural counseling* (pp. 93-122). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Davis, W. M. (1998). Toward civility: Assessment as a means toward improving campus climate. *College Student Affairs Journal*, 18, 72-83.
- Franklin, A. J. (1999). Invisibility syndrome and racial identity development in psychotherapy and counseling African American men. *Counseling Psychologist*, 27, 761-793.
- Franklin, C. W., & Mizzell, C. A. (1995). Some factors influencing success among African American men: A preliminary study. *Journal of Men's Studies*, 3, 191-204.

- Harris, W. G. (1996). African American males in higher education: Reframing the issue. *Black Issues in Higher Education, 16*, 92-93.
- Hattie, J. A., Myers, J. E., & Sweeney, T. J. (2004). A factor structure of wellness: Theory, assessment, analysis, and practice. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 82*(3), 354-365.
- Helms, J. E. (Ed.). (1990). *Black and White racial identity: Theory, research, and practice*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.
- Hermon, D. A. (2005). Wellness counseling in colleges and universities. In J. E. Myers & T. J. Sweeney (Eds.), *Counseling for wellness: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 245-257). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
- Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community. (n.d.). *About us*. Retrieved March 15, 2005, from [http://www.dvinstitute.org/About\\_Us.htm/](http://www.dvinstitute.org/About_Us.htm/)
- Lee, C. C. (2003). *Empowering Young Black Males—III: A systematic modular training program for Black male children and adolescents*. Austin, TX: ProEd.
- Lee, C. C. (2005). Ethnicity and wellness. In J. E. Myers & T. J. Sweeney (Eds.), *Counseling for wellness: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 100-107). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
- Lee, C. C., & Bailey, D. F. (1997). Counseling African American male youth and men. In C. C. Lee (Ed.), *Multicultural issues in counseling: New approaches to diversity* (pp. 123-154). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
- Leonard, S., Lee, C., & Kiselica, M. S. (1999). Counseling African American male youth. In A. M. Horne & M. S. Kiselica (Eds.), *Handbook of counseling boys and adolescent males: A practitioner's guide* (pp. 75-86). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- MacKay, K. A., & Kuh, G. D. (1994). A comparison of student effort and educational gains of Caucasian and African-American students at predominantly White colleges and universities. *Journal of College Student Development, 35*, 217-223.
- Magolda, P. (1997). New student disorientation: Becoming a member of an academic community. *Journal of the Freshman Year Experience, 9*, 43-104.
- Major, B., Spencer, S., Schmader, T., Wolfe, C., & Crocker, J. (1998). Coping with negative stereotypes about intellectual performance: The role of psychological disengagement. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 24*(1), 34-51.
- McDonough, P. M., & Antonio, A. L. (1997). Black students, Black colleges: An African American college choice model. *Journal for a Just and Caring Education, 3*, 9-37.
- Mizzell, C. A. (1999). African American men's personal sense of mastery: The consequences of the adolescent environment, self-concept, and adult achievement. *Journal of Black Psychology, 25*, 210-231.
- Morgan, J. (1996). Reaching out to young Black men. *Black Issues in Higher Education, 13*, 16-19.
- Myers, J. E., & Mobley, K. A. (2004). Foundations of wellness promotion for undergraduate students: Lesson from between and within groups comparisons. *Journal of College Counseling, 7*, 40-59.
- Myers, J. E., & Sweeney, T. J. (1999). *The Five Factor Wel*. Greensboro, NC: Authors. Myers, J. E., & Sweeney, T. J. (Eds.). (2005a). *Counseling for wellness: Theory, research, and practice*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
- Myers, J. E., & Sweeney, T. J. (2005b). The indivisible self: An evidence-based model of wellness. *Journal of Individual Psychology, 60*, 234-244.
- Myers, J. E., Sweeney, T. J., & Witmer, J. M. (2000). The wheel of wellness counseling for wellness: A holistic model for treatment planning. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 78*, 251-266.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (1995). *The educational progress of Black students*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2003). *Status and trends in the education of Blacks*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved March 5, 2005, from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2003/2003034.pdf/>
- Pierre, M. R., & Mahalik, J. R. (2005). Examining African self-consciousness and Black racial identity as predictors of Black men's psychological well-being. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 11*, 28-40.
- Pillay, Y. (2005). Racial identity as a predictor of psychological health of African American students at a predominantly White university. *Journal of Black Psychology, 31*, 46-66.

- Rayle, A. D., & Myers, J. E. (2002). Counseling adolescents toward wellness: The roles of ethnic identity, acculturation, and mattering. *Professional School Counseling, 8*, 81-90.
- Robertson, J. T. (2004). An investigation of the role of racial socialization and racial identity development in the academic achievement and psychological well-being of African American youth. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering, 64*(12-B), 6340.
- Spradley, P. (2001). *Strategies for educating the adult Black male in college*. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED464524
- Tokar, D. M., & Fischer, A. R. (1998). Psychometric analysis of the Racial Identity Attitude Scale–Long Form. *Measurement & Evaluation in Counseling and Development, 31*, 138-149.
- Wells-Lawson, M. I. (1994, April). *The effects of race and type of institution on the college experiences of Black and White undergraduates attending 30 predominately Black and predominantly White colleges and universities*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.
- Wilson, M. (2000). Reversing the plight of African American male college students. *Black Issues in Higher Education, 17*, 175-176.
- Worrell, F. C., Vandiver, B. J., Cross, W. E., & Fhagen-Smith, P. (2004). Reliability and structural validity of cross racial identity scale scores in a sample of African American adults. *Journal of Black Psychology, 30*(4), 489-505.