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The role of school peer relations, stressful life events and supportive resources in predicting young African-American males' adjustment

McCandies, Terry Thompson, Ph.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1994

THE ROLE OF SCHOOL PEER RELATIONS, STRESSFUL LIFE EVENTS

AND SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES IN PREDICTING

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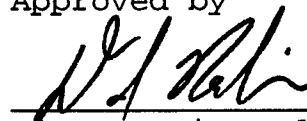
MALES' ADJUSTMENT

by

Terry Thompson McCandies

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
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of the Requirements for the Degree
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1994

Approved by

_____
Dissertation Advisor

MCCANDIES, TERRY T., Ph.D. The Role of School Peer Relations, Stressful Life Events, and Supportive Resources in Predicting Young African-American Males' Adjustment (1994) Directed by Dr. David Rabiner. 106pp.

This study examined the predictive value of school peer relations, stressful life events, and supportive resources on five measures of adjustment for seventy-five African-American males between the ages of 9 and 12.

A series of multiple regression analyses were used. In each regression analysis the potential effects of socio-economic status (SES) and estimates of IQ were controlled by entering these variables first. Then, seven predictor variables (peer nominations measures of social acceptance, aggression, and submission; interpersonal supportive resources; internal supportive resources; and community supportive resources), and six interactions (social acceptance interacting with each of the three support measures; and stressful life events interacting with each of the three support measures) were entered. A forward selection procedure was used for each regression analysis.

None of the variables was a significant predictor of parental reports of internalizing problems. However, peer nominations for aggression was a significant predictor of parental reports of externalizing problems. Boys who were perceived by their peers as frequently starting fights were also perceived by their parents as being aggressive. Stressful life events was a significant predictor of

children's self-reported emotional distress. Boys reporting greater numbers of stressors reported greater affective and anxiety symptoms. Estimates of IQ, and peer nominations of social acceptance and aggression were significant predictors of students' grade point average. Boys who had lower IQ estimates, disliked by school peers, and who started fights made lower grades.

The combination of stressful life events and internal resources were significant when predicting affective feelings and students' grades. The results support a stress-buffering model in which hobbies, musical talents, and other personal interests may be an important resource in promoting positive outcomes for young African-American males.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following

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iii

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Finally, I thank my daughter Camelia, whose resiliency and successful development has been remarkable. This victory truly belongs to her. To Camelia, I dedicate this dissertation, and the years from now.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(continued)

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Young African-American males are considered to be at risk for developing a number of problems (Gibbs, 1988). These problems include poor academic achievement, greater than average rates of school expulsions, early school drop out, social rejection by peers, and higher than average referral rates for mental health services (Gibbs, 1988; Hudley & Graham, 1992; Kupersmidt & Coie, 1990; Patterson, Kupersmidt & Vaden, 1990). Many researchers believe it is a combination of poor economic circumstances, social policy, and racism that is responsible for escalating problems (Gibbs, 1988; McLoyd, 1990; Slaugter, 1988; Spencer, 1990) in this group.

Although impressive advances have been made in our understanding of how African-American males differ from other racial groups, traditional comparative studies discuss African-American males' failures rather than their successes. For example, it is well documented that when comparing African-American males to White males, they are less likely to complete high school (Reed, 1988), more likely to be arrested as a juvenile (Farrington, 1987), more likely to be imprisoned for criminal behavior as a young

adult (Wilson & Herrnstein, 1985), and more likely to engage
in assaultative violence, and die of injuries received from
a gun (Hammond & Yung, 1993). McLoyd (1990) argues that
cross-racial analyses minimize individual differences, and
fosters the view that all African-American males are
aggressive and incompetent.

Taylor (1991) states, after reviewing experiences of
poor adolescent African-American males, "it is remarkable
that the proportion of black male adolescents who survive to
become well-adjusted individuals, responsible husbands and
fathers is so high, or that the percentage who drop out of
school, become addicted to drugs, involved in crime, and end
up in jail is not considerably greater" (p. 156).

The purpose of this study is to gain a better
understanding of factors related to the adaptational
successes and failures of young African-American males.
Designating young African-American males as the focus is not
intended to minimize concern for other ethnic minority
groups or for young African-American females, as these
groups are considered to be at risk as well. However,
African-American males from low income backgrounds are
considered most vulnerable to the development of peer
rejection, academic failure, and aggressive behavior, and
are thus a group deserving special study.

If we are to understand the pathways to successful

development of any minority group, more research that as weaknesses is greatly needed. There is also the need to pay greater attention to individual differences. Researchers interested in studying minority children can do this by avoiding racial and gender comparisons altogether, or by analyzing their data separately by race.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In order to understand the current view of young African-American males, we must first review the progression of research on peer relations. Many researchers have examined various factors affecting early childhood peer relations. Others have discussed the concepts of stress, resiliency, and social support and their relationships to children's adjustment. Important gaps, however, remain in our knowledge of how these factors are related to the development of young African-American males.

Previously, when researchers conducted studies using a sizable number of African-American males, they tended to invoke blame by discussing their deficiencies and weaknesses as problems of the individual (Jensen, 1973). Although researchers have rarely attempted to relate their findings to social influences on the problems of these young men, contextual factors are now being recognized as important determinants of high-risk children's behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1985; Ogbu, 1988; Coie & Jacobs, 1993). For example, being raised in a single female headed household, and living in a racially isolated and economically depressed neighborhood are some environmental factors affecting the adjustment of young African-American

males (Coie & Jacobs, 1993). In order to gain a more complete understanding of African-American males' adjustment, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model is used as a conceptual framework for guiding ideas and formulating several hypotheses. This model is discussed in detail later on.

The Study of Childhood Peer Relations and Later Adjustment

The most often cited work on the study of childhood peer relations and its association to later adjustment is the research by Roff (Roff, 1960; Roff, 1961; Roff, 1963). In Roff's initial study which included men from the military service, 166 men had been seen as children in child-guidance centers. Of the men who were referred to mental health professionals as children, 69% who were disliked by their peers had either dishonorable military discharges or were diagnosed as having a psychotic disorder in adulthood.

In another study, Roff (1963) followed a large number of subjects longitudinally for four successive years. He obtained peer nominations on all children for the categories of the "liked most" child and the "liked least" child. Teachers completed ratings regarding the quality of each child's peer relations, with possible categories ranging from "exceptionally good peer relations" to "entirely rejected by peers." Roff also recorded the socioeconomic levels of the school and of the families.

Among the upper-and middle-class boys, delinquency

rates at follow-up (i.e., seventh to tenth grade) were significantly higher among children in the "liked least" category. Among the lower-class boys, however, both highly accepted and highly rejected subjects had higher rates of delinquent and antisocial behaviors.

These findings surprised Roff, who discussed the results in terms of two distinctive subcultures of delinquency. The author concluded that one group of delinquent boys were rejected by their peers, came from low socio-economic backgrounds, and had destructive, rebellious personality disturbances which often co-existed with highly pathological family situations. Conversely, the other delinquent group, from a similarly low socio-economic background, were well-liked by their peers, truant, and were from fairly stable families. Roff concluded that poor peer relations related to socio-economic status (SES), and the combination of the two related significantly to negative developmental outcomes.

The findings from Roff's work offer significant contributions to the literature. In addition to demonstrating a link between early childhood peer rejection and delinquency, the findings also illuminate the importance of assessing socioeconomic status and other potential stressors as possible contributors in determining the quality of children's peer relationships, and how these relationships are associated with other indices of

adjustment.

SES, Gender, and Ethnic Group Differences

In comparison to other children, boys from low income homes are less competent in school across several domains. They are liked less by their peers, have more behavioral problems, such as fighting and being disruptive in the classrooms, and have lower school grades (Patterson, Kupersmidt, & Vaden, 1990). Boys who are consistently aggressive and hostile are more likely to drop out of school, become delinquent, and engage in criminal behavior (Kupersmidt & Coie, 1990).

African-American males are much more likely to be perceived by teachers as behaving aggressively (Reed, 1988; Hare and Castenell, 1985). While African-American children represent only 25% of the national public school population, African-American males comprise 40% of all school suspensions and expulsions (Reed, 1988).

In a longitudinal study of young African-American males, Coie, Dodge, Terry and Wright (1991) found aggressive preadolescent African-American boys who were identified as socially rejected by peers engaged more frequently in violent behavior than did nonrejected aggressive peers. The authors concluded that children and adolescents who were rejected by peers were more likely to affiliate with deviant subgroups, thereby increasing their general risk for involvement in delinquent activity, substance abuse, and

exposure to situations of potential physical harm.

Stability and Variability Within the Socially Rejected Group

Boys who remain socially rejected over time are considered to be at risk for the development of conduct disorders and antisocial behavior. However, no two children are alike, and many individual differences exist among boys who are rejected by their peers (Cillessen, Ijendoorn, Lieshout & Hartup, 1992). For example, many unpopular boys do not retain their negative peer status, nor do they become involved in criminal activities or develop serious psychopathology. In fact, approximately 30% of rejected children emerge into adolescence and adulthood without psychological or behavioral problems (Sroufe & Rutter, 1984). An even higher percentage of young rejected children are not consistently rejected from year to year, but move in and out of the rejected category over time (Coie & Dodge, 1983). However, these authors did report that the peer-rejected group was the most stable of any of the sociometric status groups.

Boys who are disliked by their peers are often described by their teachers and other observers as being aggressive, off-task, and highly disruptive in the classroom (Coie & Kupersmidt, 1983; Dodge, Coie, & Brakke, 1982; Ladd, 1983). Other reports show some unpopular boys do well in the classroom. For example, when observed, some rejected boys were not being disruptive (Coie & Kupersmidt, 1983) and

some were succeeding academically (Finn, 1985).

In a sample of rejected 8- to 10 year old boys, French (1988) found different clusters of behaviors emerged to define two subgroups within the rejected category. In one subgroup, boys exhibited multiple problems; they were anxious, aggressive, impulsive, and socially withdrawn. Boys in the other subgroup were shy and easily pushed around.

While the difficulties of socially rejected boys cannot be ignored, many of the African-American boys who are rejected by their school peers are not aggressive, failing academically, or disruptive (Witty, 1992). There may be at least two possible explanations for some unpopular boys' invulnerability to academic difficulties. First, unlike other unpopular children, they may become involved in their academic studies as a way of coping with their social difficulties. In Edwards' (1976) study of academically successful high school seniors in a large predominately African-American school, these students rated their elementary and secondary school experiences as generally positive. These positive experiences were indicated by their winning math and spelling contests, receiving awards for good grades, and having solo parts in a school band or play. Secondly, because they presented themselves more positively, at least behaviorally, they were better able to solicit the support they needed from teachers, school

counselors, and others in order to maintain good grades.
Nelson-Le Gall and Jones (1990) found that academically
successful African-American students used skills in getting
and using help from others. Nelson Le-Gall and Jones
considered the ability to seek help from peers and adults as
an important protective mechanism for academic success.

These findings suggest that perhaps when children feel
a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and loyalty from others,
even among difficult children, they may be more successful
in making healthy adaptive responses. In fact, Rabiner and
Coie (1989) found that when socially rejected boys were led
to believe they were liked by others, they were capable of
making favorable impressions on unfamiliar peers.

The Concept of Stress

Until very recently, most people assumed that stress
was most prevalent among adults. We now believe that stress
is also an important issue in the lives of children. Just
as with adults, stress is related to the physical and mental
health of children. According to Cox (1975), stress may be
said to arise when a perceived demand conflicts with the
person's perception of his or her capability to meet the
demand. They state further that the demand can be both
externally and internally generated. Psychological and
physiological needs (and their fulfillment) represent
internally generated demands, whereas external demands are
those rooted in a person's environment.

The relationship between stressful life events and psychological maladjustment among children has been widely studied. Stress can be a predisposing factor in a range of psychological problems, including, but not limited to, depression, academic underachievement, anxiety disorders, drug and alcohol abuse, and aggression (Daniels & Moos, 1990; Compas, 1987; Sterling, Cowen, Weissberg, Lotyczewski and Boike, 1985; Garmezy, Masten & Tellegen, 1984; Compas, Howell, Phares, Williams, & Ledous, 1989).

Studies show that daily stressors and major life events exert their influence on children's adjustment in part by weakening personal and social resources for coping with the stress (Compas, Howell, Phares, Williams, & Ledous, 1989). Children from families experiencing multiple chronic stressors are more likely than other children to be rejected at school (Patterson, Vaden, & Kupersmidt, 1991). Stressful circumstances may: a) adversely affect a child's mood making him irritable, depressed, or oppositional; b) reduce attention span; and c) produce sleep disturbances. Any one of these effects, or a combination of them, may result in lowered academic performance and/or produce an adjustment reaction involving both emotional and behavioral disturbances.

However, a child under stress may not necessarily be symptomatic. Many of the children in the Patterson et al (1991) sample who were experiencing a high number of

stressful events were not rejected, and some rejected children who had a high frequency of stressful life events appeared well-adjusted, both in terms of their school behavior and academic achievement. Clearly, no two children will experience stress exactly the same way, and some remain resilient despite experiencing many difficult life challenges.

The Concept of Resiliency

The term resiliency has been applied to the study of at-risk children, and generally refers to an unusual or marked capacity to recover from, or cope with significant stressors (O'Grady & Metz, 1987; Garmezy, 1987). Resilient children are those who do not develop psychological or behavioral problems when others with similarly negative conditions do (Rutter, 1981).

Rutter approaches the study of resilience from the position of examining risk and protective factors (1979). He suggests attention should not only be given to reducing risk, but should be directed also to examining protective factors that may buffer harmful effects of stressful life events. Protective factors include personal, social, and institutional resources which can promote positive experiences that shield against risk factors that might otherwise compromise healthy development. These protective factors would include children's supportive resources.

Social Support and its Relation to Children's Adjustment

Researchers have only recently started to investigate the relationship between social support and children's adjustment (Reid, Landesman, Treder & Jaccard, 1989). Despite the ubiquitous use of the term social support in the child and adult literature, no single agreed upon definition exists. Social support is generally defined as "the range of significant interpersonal relationships that have an impact on an individual's functioning" (Cauce, Felner, & Primavera, p. 418, 1982), and is primarily measured through the use of self-report inventories.

Barrera (1986) argues that the term social support is too vague to be useful. He suggests using three separate constructs which he believes clarify ways in which social support can be conceptualized. These constructs are social embeddedness, perceived support, and enacted support. They are defined as follows: a) social embeddedness refers to the number of significant members within one's social network; b) perceived support refers to the appraisal of the quality of support received; and c) enacted support refers to the number of supportive behaviors performed by significant others.

Satisfaction with particular relationships (Furman & Buhrmeister, 1985; Patterson, Kupersmidt & Griesler, 1990) and perceived availability of supportive resources (Bryant, 1985), have been most widely studied in the research with

children and adolescents. Generally, researchers have found a positive relationship between social support and psychological functioning. For example, social support has been shown to act as a buffer against stressful situations such as poverty (Compas, 1987), parental divorce (Garmezy & Rutter, 1983; Wolchik, Sandler & Braver, 1987), school transitions (Felner, Ginter & Primavera, 1982; Dunn, Putallaz, Sheppard & Lindstrom, 1987), and teenage pregnancy (Barrera, 1981).

Although support from others seems to play an important protective role, there may be another factor that is also meaningful in determining how well children cope with stress. For example, Werner's (1982) longitudinal study of resilient children and youth, showed stress-resistant adolescents were more adept at striking a balance between needing others for support and being self-reliant. Resilient adolescents were found to be responsible, had internalized values by which they lived, and were more socially mature than the less-resilient adolescents.

These findings prompted Bryant (1985) to broaden earlier views of social support by noting the importance of considering children's need to have help from others as well as their need to have opportunities to be alone, and experience autonomy from others. Bryant (1985) examined the relationship between social support and several measures of psychological well-being in 7 and 10 year olds growing up in

relatively secure homes and living under low-stress
conditions. Bryant's inventory obtained information about
three major categories of support: others as resources
(peers, parents, grandparents, and pets), intrapersonal
sources of support (hobbies, fantasies, skill development),
and environmental resources (places to go to be alone,
formal organizations, unsponsored meeting places).

The results from Bryant's (1985) study revealed that
higher levels of social support were associated with better
social-emotional functioning. Gender and age, however,
served as mediators of the relationship between support and
psychological functioning. For boys, extensive casual
involvement with adults was positively linked to
perspective-taking skills and internal locus of control.
However, for girls, intimate involvement was related to
their perspective-taking skills and internal locus of
control. Findings also showed that availability and using
support to enhance psychological functioning were different
between 10 year old children and 7 year old children.
Children 10 years old unlike those age 7, were more
independent and more mobile which provided greater access to
any supportive resource that was available. The results of
the study suggest that although children may have access to
a wide range of supportive resources, they are partially
dependent on others to provide accessibility to certain
resources.

Furman and Buhrmeister (1985) found children sought different types of social support from different individuals. In a sample of children ranging in age from 11 to 13 years old, mothers and fathers were listed as the most frequent sources of affection, enhancement of self-worth, and instrumental aid. After parents, children turned to their grandparents most often for enhancement of worth and affection, and then turned to their teachers for advice. Friends were considered the greatest source of companionship.

Children who are rejected by their peer group, however, receive less social support from their classmates and teachers (Ladd, 1983; Dodge, Coie, & Brakke, 1982). When compared to popular children, they feel less supported by their peers (East, Hess & Lerner, 1987) and describe themselves as being more lonely (Parkhurst & Asher, 1987). Some rejected children generally see their relationships with other people in a negative fashion (Patterson, Kupersmidt & Griesler, 1990) and expect to be disliked more than non-rejected children (Renshaw & Asher, 1982). They also report receiving less love and affection from their fathers (Patterson, Kupersmidt & Griesler, 1990).

Studies of children in the general population have presented profiles of the non-successful, socially rejected, and drop-out student as being an ethnic male from a low-income, female-headed household (Patterson, Kupersmidt &

Vaden, 1990; Coie, Dodge, & Kupersmidt, 1991). Although young African-American males' acceptance or rejection by school peers may play a role in the development and maintenance of supportive relationships (Coie, 1990), their main source of support may come from outside the school-peer context (Dubois & Hirsch, 1990; Kupersmdit & Coie, 1990).

Although the potential importance of supportive resources outside the school and family context has been acknowledged, studies examining the role of social support in increasing the resiliency of high-risk children have neglected to consider supportive resources that may be available to them within their neighborhoods, churches, and other community settings (Jessor, 1993; McLoyd, 1990; Ogbu, 1981, 1985). As Wertlieb, Weigel, and Feldstein (1987) pointed out, studies focusing primarily on family support and peer or teacher support may not reflect accurately other sources of support that children perceive as available and important to them.

Turning to others outside of the school and home environments for support and/or developing a particular skill or hobby may play important roles in reducing emotional and behavioral problems among minority children. Although being poor and an African-American male increases the risk for school peer rejection, academic, emotional, and behavior difficulties, there is evidence suggesting that some boys are not bothered by their low peer status, and

display positive self-images (Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990; Taylor, 1991).

If some African American males are indeed distressed by their low peer status, they may be more motivated than other unpopular children to seek friendship in non-school settings in an attempt to compensate for their low acceptance inside the school environment (Dubois & Hirsch, 1990; Kupersmidt & Coie, 1990). Establishing supportive relationships outside the school environment may help them cope with the loneliness and helplessness they experience in school. In addition, becoming involved in hobbies, sports, and other activities (e.g., computer games, basketball, and rap music), may help them in coping with feelings of alienation by school peers, and might help avoid less "adaptive" associations, for example, getting involved in gangs.
The fact that some African-American males continue to make healthy adaptations despite being at an increased risk for school failure and behavioral and psychological difficulties demonstrates the importance of investigating the relationship between peer acceptance, and seeking supportive resources outside of the school-peer context.

Summary of Literature Review

For more than thirty years, researchers and clinicians have been interested in studying children who have serious problems forming and maintaining positive relationships with their peers. Children who have difficulty getting along

with their classmates or who have trouble making friends are known to have many concurrent and long-term adjustment problems (Parker & Asher, 1987). For example, poor peer relations have been linked to low academic achievement (Green, Forehand, Beck & Vosk, 1980; Krehbiel, G. G., 1984; Coie,& Krehbiel, G.1984), feelings of loneliness and depression (Asher, Hymel, Renshaw, 1984), delinquency (Roff 1961), and adult psychopathology (Cowen, Babigian, Izzo & Trost, 1973; Kohlberg, LaCrosse & Ricks, 1972).

Many researchers have examined the relationship between SES, race, and gender and early childhood peer relations. Poor African-American males are considered to be at risk for developing a number of problems including, but not limited to, academic difficulties (Reed, 1988), school peer rejection (Patterson, Kupersmidt & Griesler, 1990), behavioral, and emotional difficulties (Kupersmidt, Coie, & Dodge, 1990).

Others researchers have discussed the concept of stress, resiliency, and social support and its relationship to children's adjustment. Stress can be a predisposing factor in a range of psychological problems, including, but not limited to, depression, problems in school, anxiety disorders, drug and alcohol abuse, and aggression (Daniel & Moos, 1990; Compas, 1987; Sterling, Cowen, Weissberg, Lotyczewski and Boike, 1985; Garmezy, Masten & Tellegen, 1984; Compas, Howell, Phares, Williams, & Ledous, 1989).

Studies show that daily stressors and major life events exert their influence on children's adjustment in part by weakening personal and social resources for coping with the stress. However, in research investigating the relationship between social support and children's resiliency, a positive relationship has been found (Dubow & Tisak, 1989; Dubois, Felner, Brand, Adan & Evans, 1992), showing high levels of social support as improving social-emotional functioning (Werner & Smith, 1982; Bryant, 1985). However, important gaps remain in our knowledge of how these factors are related to the development of young African-American males.

Conceptual Framework for Formulating Hypotheses

The mystery of some African-American males' ability to do well academically and remain psychologically healthy is unsolved. The conceptual framework for formulating possible hypotheses regarding African-American males' social, emotional, and academic functioning is grounded in Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979; 1986) ecological perspective is a framework for recognizing the transactional relationship between the developing child and his ecological system. The ecological system is comprised of four levels: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem.

The microsystem is the immediate setting in which individual development occurs, including the family, schools, neighborhoods, and churches. In some cases,

African-American males encounter negative experiences in their family microsystem, and in their school microsystem. Experiencing stressful events within the family and schools may increase extrafamilial transactions which are between the child and other institutions within their neighborhoods.

The mesosystem is the relationship among the microsystems. It represents the relationship between the home and the school. Many researchers have focused on the mismatch between home and school in explaining African-American males' academic failures (Ogbu, 1976; Slaughter-Defoe, Nakagawa, Takanishi & Johnson, 1990). Bronfenbrenner (1986) reported that there are some indications that maintaining close ties between families and children's classroom teachers may positively benefit children's academic achievement. Other researchers consider the ability of African-American males to utilize adults and peers as resources to be important in promoting academic success (Nelson-Le Gall & Jones, 1990).

The exosystem represents other systems in which the individual does not directly participate but which influences the individual's development. Decisions made by school boards, city councils, and other legislators are cases of exosystem influences on development. For example, changes at this level can affect the racial balance of neighborhood schools, the quality of housing within the community, and funding for after school support programs.

In addition to the relationships individuals have within immediate settings (microsystem), the relationships among those settings (mesosystem), and the relationships between individuals and settings in which they do not directly participate (exosystem), another level of influence is also considered. This final level, the macrosystem, operates at the national and international level and involves social influences, economic factors, and legislation at the congressional level. The macrosystem's effects saturate all institutions in society and consequently all relationships. Societal norms regarding the economic structure of society, discrimination, and racism, are examples of macrolevel influences on human development.

To understand children's experiences and competence, Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective emphasizes assessing events in schools, homes, neighborhoods, churches and other community settings. Therefore, possible contributions to the success and resilience of African-American males may be that: a) they experience fewer stressors outside the home and school environment than do unsuccessful African-American males; b) when faced with stressful life events, stress-resistant boys have more supportive resources to turn to; c) they may seek support outside the immediate home and school environment; and/or d) they develop personal skills or hobbies to compensate for their negative life

experiences.

The purpose of the present study was to examine factors contributing to the failure and resilience of young African-American males. Previous studies have failed to examine what kinds of supportive resources are available to them outside of the school and home settings or examine whether or not hobbies and talents in music or sports are related to psychological adjustment and academic achievement. To deepen our understanding of resilient children, researchers will need to examine not only perceived availability of interpersonal sources of social support but also how skill development and other talents help at-risk children cope with negative life circumstances.

Research Questions

Three research questions were asked:

1. What is the relationship between school peer relations, recent stressful life events, social support, and measures of young African-American males'psychological adjustment and academic grades?

2. Do supportive resources moderate the influence of peer rejection on African-American males' psychological adjustment and academic grades?

3. Do supportive resources moderate the influence of stressful life events on young African-American males' psychological adjustment and school grades?

Several predictor variables were used to address these research questions. Peer nominations for social preference, aggression, and submission were used a indices of school

peer relations. Stressful life events, interpersonal supportive resources, internal supportive resources, and community supportive resources were also variables of interest.

Three measures of children's adjustment were used as outcome variables. Parents' reports of internalizing and externalizing symptoms were used as one measure of adjustment; children's report of affective and anxious symptoms as another, and students' grade point average as the third measure of adjustment.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis # 1 was tested to address the first research question. The remaining two questions were addressed by testing hypothesis # 2.

Hypothesis #1: Children's peer relations, reports of
stressful life events, and available
social support will be significantly
associated with levels of internalizing
and externalizing symptoms as reported
by parents, children's own reports of
psychological distress, and their level
of academic achievement.

Hypothesis #2: The impact of peer rejection and stressful
life events on children's adjustment will
depend on the amount of social support
they perceive as available to them.
Specifically, it is hypothesized that high
levels of available support will diminish
the adverse impact of peer rejection and
other stressful life events on children's
adjustment.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Recruitment of Subjects for Screening

Students in the fourth and fifth grades from several public elementary schools in North Carolina participated in the initial screening for subjects. Six schools were located in the city of Greensboro, and two were located in Alamance County. Using two school districts increased the number of potential African-American male participants and ensured that the socioeconomic backgrounds of participants were reasonably diverse. See Table 1 for the racial composition and number of subjects recruited from the various schools.

Although most of the elementary schools served primarily the neighborhoods in which they were located, some busing of white students occurred in the Greensboro schools. The overall resulting racial composition of the schools attended by the sample were as follows: In Greensboro, approximately 64% of the students were African-American, 32% were white, and 4% were of other ethnic backgrounds. In Alamance County, approximately 56% were white, 41% were African-American, and 3% were of other ethnic backgrounds.

Table 1

Racial Balance of Various Schools
and Frequencies

School	Non-White%	White%	Sample n=75
Bluford	58%	42%	8
Erwin	50%	50%	13
Hampton	93%	7%	12
Jones	76%	24%	2
Morehead	53%	47%	9
North Graham*	35%	65%	6
Peasant Grove*	55%	45%	13
Wiley	77%	23%	12

*School located in Alamance County

Sociometric Screening

Students from the fourth and fifth grades were administered a group-wide sociometric survey following a procedure similar to that described by Dodge, Coie, and Coppetilli (1982). Interviewers provided participants with rosters of all the children in their grade and asked them to nominate three classmates they liked most and three classmates they liked least. To identify aggressive and submissive children, interviewers asked children to nominate three classmates who "starts fights" and three classmates who "are easy to push around." In order to maintain confidentiality, they instructed children to use assigned code numbers rather than the actual names.

Selection of Subjects

Only African-American boys, between the ages of 9 and 12, were selected as research participants. The selection of this age group was based on the assumption that children of this age would have an expansive supportive network, be freer of adult supervision, and be more mobile in their neighborhoods (Bryant, 1985). See Table 2 for frequencies of the ages of research participants.

Parents or legal guardians of African-American males who gave consent for their child to participate in the sociometric screening were contacted by telephone to solicit their permission for an in-home visit. A total of 203

African-American males participated in the initial
screening. Of the 203 students who were initially available
as possible participants, 50% of the addresses and phone
numbers that were given by the schools were no longer valid,
and these children could not be contacted. Of the 101
remaining candidates, a total of 75 African-American boys
were recruited as research participants. See Table 2 for
information on the living arrangements of participants.

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of Sample

	Frequency	Percent
Age:		
9 years	11	14.7
10 years	33	44.0
11 years	22	29.3
12 years	9	12.0
Head of Household		
Mother only	26	34.7
Mother & Father	29	38.7
Mother & boyfriend	7	9.3
Grandmother only	2	2.7
Grandparents	2	2.7
Mother/other relative	6	8.0
Father only	1	1.3
Other relatives	2	2.7

Table 2

(continued)

Number in Household

2	1	1.3
3	15	20.0
4	23	30.7
5	19	25.3
6	10	13.3
7	3	4.0
8	4	5.3

Measures

Measures of Peer Relations

Measures of peer relations were based on the nominations each child received for the four sociometric items (see section on sociometric screening). The nominations each child received for the four items were first summed and standardized within each grade and school. Each child received a standardized social preference score that was calculated as the number of "liked most" minus "liked least" nominations; an aggression score, which was the standardized sum of nominations on the "starts fight" item; and a submission score, the standardized sum of the nominations for the "easy to push around" item.

The social preference score is intended to reflect how well a child is liked by peers, with higher scores representing greater acceptance by school peers. Similarly, children who are perceived by school peers as being aggressive and/or submissive will receive high scores on the "starts fights", and "easy to push around" sociometric items.

The Life Events Inventory

The Life Events Inventory (Dise-Lewis, 1988) is a questionnaire used to assess the degree to which a child has experienced recent stressful life events (see Appendix A). This questionnaire consists of 115 items that cover 4 types of events including: 1) events that are considered traumatic such as the death of a parent, being arrested by the police, or having a parent move out of the home; 2) routine, frequently occurring stressful events such as competing in academic and sport activities; 3) changes affecting family, peer, and academic/school roles such as school suspension, arguments with parents and siblings, and 4) internally generated events or worries such as the concern about self-competence and self-worth.

The inventory is based on the assumption that an accumulation of life events or changes produces stress. Given this assumption, and following the precedent set by others, weights were not assigned to quantify the degree of change implied by each event. Therefore, a total life events score was determined for each child by summing the number of stressful events that he reported, with possible scores ranging from 0 to 115. Dise-Lewis (1988) reported on the average subjects experienced 45 life events. Although this number appears large, the size of this number in part reflects the inclusion of stressful life events that are not oriented towards a crisis such as daily hassles and

internally generated concerns or worries.

The original scale was developed for 12 to 14 year-old children, and several minor changes were made to make items more appropriate for 9 to 12 year-old children. Although the scale was changed to include simpler wording, the ordering of the events was presented in the original format. The test-retest reliability of this measure has been reported to be .97 (Dise-Lewis, 1988).

Perceived Sources of Social Support: The Neighborhood Walk

The Neighborhood Walk (Bryant, 1985) measure obtained information concerning the types of supportive resources available to children. This measure yields scores on three major categories of support: others as resources, internal resources, and community resources. A total score is computed for each category (e.g., number of adults and friends the child knows and interacts with; number of hobbies and special talents the child has; number of places available to the child so he or she can get off to be alone, and number of formal and informal organizations the child participates in). On the average, Bryant (1985) reported white middle-class male children as having many interpersonal supportive resources (M = 23.01, SD = 4.05), several hobbies and special talents (M = 3.38, SD = 1.06), and frequently participated in a number of formal as well as informal organizations (M= 4.50, SD = 1.90).

Unlike other social support measures, Bryant's (1985)

inventory appears to be very stable across a two-week period ($r=.90$). Perhaps visual prompts from actually walking around the neighborhood and follow-up questions increase both the reliability and validity of children's responses.

The Children's Depression Inventory

To assess children's level of affective distress, the Children's Depression Inventory was administered (Kovacs, 1981). The Children's Depression Inventory (CDI) is a 27-item, self-report inventory designed for school age children and adolescents. Each CDI item consists of three choices, ordered from 0 to 2, in the direction of increasing depressive symptomatology (see Appendix B).

The child selects the one sentence that best describes how he has felt over the past two weeks. The total score can range from 0 to 54. The reliability of the inventory has been reported to range between .82 to .93. over a two-week interval.

Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale

The Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale (Reynolds & Richmond, 1978) is a 37-item, self-report measure designed to assess the level and nature of anxiety in children and adolescents from 6 to 19 years old. The child responds to each statement by circling a "Yes" or "No" answer. A response of "Yes" indicates that the item is descriptive of the child's feelings or actions, whereas a response of "No" indicates that the item is generally not

descriptive (see Appendix C).

The Total Anxiety score is based on 28 anxiety items. The raw number of "Yes" responses to these items are summed and converted into a scale score with corresponding percentile rankings. For the Total Anxiety subscale, the scaled score has a mean of 10 and a standard deviation of 3. The average reliability was reported to be .85 over a 9-month span for African-American males and .97 for Nigerian boys with a 3-week interval between testings. Separate norms are reported for males, females, whites, and non-white children.

Vocabulary Subtest of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale

To evaluate whether grade differences were solely reflective of intellectual differences, as well as the more general role that intellectual ability may play in children's adjustment, the vocabulary subtest of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-R; Wechsler, 1974) was administered to provide estimates of children's IQ (see Appendix D). The vocabulary subtest has the highest correlation (r=.85) with the overall WISC-R score (Wechsler, 1974), and is considered an adequate estimate of intelligence.

Parent Measures

A demographic questionnaire was developed for parents of the children in the study to gather information on parents' level of education, occupation, and marital status

(see Appendix E). Parent(s) educational level and
occupation were used to determine socioeconomic status using
the Hollingshead's (1975) Four-Factor Index of Socioeconomic
Status (SES). The revised Four-Factor Index allows
estimates of social status of an unmarried individual, a
single head of household (either gender), or a two-parent
family. The occupational categories have been updated based
on the 1970 Census data. Education and occupation are
scored, then weighted and summed to produce a single SES
index.

Marital status determines whose information is utilized
in the calculations; for example, in a dual-wage-earner
family, SES would be calculated for both spouses separately
and then the average score is used for the family. This
indicant of SES was utilized to ensure that mothers who were
single parents were not classified as disproportionately
lower in SES. As can be seen in Table 3, the socio-
economic backgrounds of participants were reasonably
diverse. Although 45% of the sample were from low socio-
economic backgrounds, 39% were from low to middle, and 16%
were from middle to upper middle socioeconomic backgrounds.

Table 3

Parents' Education, Occupation, and Socio-economic Status

	Frequency	Percent
Education of Female Adult:		
Less than 10th grade	--	--
10th - 11th grade	28	38.0
Completed high school	36	50.0
Some college	9	12.0
Occupation of Female Adult:		
Unemployed	6	8.0
Laborer/Menial	23	31.0
Unskilled	19	26.0
Semiskilled	13	17.0
Skilled/Crafts	4	5.0
Clerical/Sales	3	4.0
Tech/Semiprofessional	6	8.0
Mgrs/Minor Professional	1	1.0
Education of Male Adult:		
Less than 10th grade	--	--
10th - 11th grade	8	26.0
Completed high school	20	65.0
Some college	2	6.0
College degree	1	3.0
Occupation of Male Adult:		
Laborer/Menial	7	23.0
Unskilled	8	26.0
Semiskilled	7	23.0
Skilled/Crafts	5	16.0
Clerical/Sales	2	6.0
Tech/Semiprofessional	1	3.0
Administrative	1	3.0

Table 3

(continued)

Socio-economic Status (SES):
Low	34	45.0
Low-Middle	29	39.0
Middle	6	8.0
Middle-High	6	8.0

Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL)

The Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach, 1987; Achenbach & Edlebrock, 1981) was used to assess behavioral problems as perceived by their parent or caregiver. The CBCL includes an array of behavior problems (113 items), as well as sampling of items reflecting social competencies, including participation in various activities, social relationships, and school success. The parent indicates if each behavior problem item is or has been "very true or often true," "sometimes true or somewhat true" or "not true" of his or her child within the last 6 months (see Appendix F).

The CBCL yields a total behavior problem score, and an internalizing and externalizing T-score. Achenbach et al (1982) reported that the internal consistency ranged from .95 to .85 across subscales for samples of 6 to 11 year olds. The externalizing and internalizing scores were used, and scored according to the instructions in the manual, with higher scores indicating greater problems.

Grades

Parents reported the grades of participants using the children's actual report cards. If the parents did not have access to this information, parents were asked for permission to contact the school's secretary to obtain the grades. Most of the school grades were obtained by contacting school secretaries (67%). Only 33% of parent's

had access to their son's school report cards.

The grade-point averages (GPA) were calculated to reflect

the average grades in English, Math, Spelling, Social

Science, and Reading (4=A, 0=F).

<u>Procedure</u>

The initial consent form for the sociometric screening

asked if the parent(s) or guardian would be willing to

receive a telephone contact regarding subsequent research

studies. Parent(s) or caregivers of African-American males

who had indicated interest in further participation were

contacted by telephone (see Appendix G). To enhance

recruitment efforts, home visits were scheduled at the

parent's (s') convenience and each child was offered five

dollars for his participation.

Upon arrival, an introduction of the interviewer and

procedures were made to the parent or legal guardian.

After obtaining written informed consent (see Appendix H), a

parent or legal guardian was asked to complete two

checklists. Instructions for completing the demographic

information and for completing the Child Behavior Checklist

were given orally, and in writing.

After explaining to the parent the procedure to be used

for interviewing their son, written informed consent was

obtained from each child before starting the interviews (see

Appendix J for child consent form). Since many of the boys

shared rooms with siblings or had neighborhood friends who

seemed interested in participating in the study, the Neighborhood Walk measure was always administered first so the interviewer and child could walk around to find a private place to talk. Presumably, this format would place children at ease so that they could be honest and not feel as if they were taking a test. The other four measures were counterbalanced.

At the end of the interviews, each child was thanked for his time and given $5.00. The person completing the parent measures was also thanked. The parent and child were both given an opportunity to ask any questions concerning the study, and their involvement in the project.

During debriefing, families were told that this project was designed to study how friendships in school, and experiences in the neighborhood and at home affect the grades and psychological well-being of African-American boys (see Appendix I). Several parents voiced concern over their son's behavior or school grades. When appropriate, referrals to the school principal or local mental health agencies were provided.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Preliminary analyses:

In preliminary analyses the correlations among the predictor variables were examined to assess the degree of multicollinearity. As can be seen in Table 4, multicollinearity was not a problem, as none of the correlations among the variables (i.e., socio-economic status (SES), estimates of IQ, peer nominations for social acceptance, aggression, and submission, stressful life events, [interpersonal supportive resources, internal supportive resources, and community resources]) exceeded .61.

Because SES and estimates of IQ correlated significantly with several of the other predictor variables, these two variables were statistically controlled in the regression analyses. As shown in Table 4, SES correlated significantly with participant's submission scores, interpersonal supportive resources, and total support score. African-American males from families with higher incomes were more easily pushed around by school peers and had more supportive resources.

Estimates of IQ related significantly to stressful life

events, social support, and aggressive behavior. African-American males who had lower IQ estimates experienced more recent life stressors and were nominated as frequently starting fights by their school peers. Males with higher IQ estimates had more supportive resources. When the social support measure was broken down into three subscales, IQ related significantly only to the subscale measuring internal supportive resources.

Table 4

Correlation Matrix: Covariates and Predictor Variables

Predictor Variables	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Socioeconomic Status (SES)	.11	.08	**.27**	-.02	**.33**	-.07	.07
2. Estimates of IQ	.10	**-.24**	.14	-.22	.15	**.37**	.12
3. Social Preference Z-Score		**-.26**	-.06	**-.26**	.17	.10	.12
4. Fights Z-Score			-.19	**.29**	.16	-.22	.10
5. Push Around Z-Score				-.005	-.05	-.15	-.21
6. Stressful Life Events					0	0	.12
7. Interpersonal Supportive Resources						**.38**	**.61**
8. Internal Supportive Resources							.23
9. Community Supportive Resources							1.00

Bold items are significant at $\underline{p} < .05$

In order to determine whether children's reports on the sources of support measure could be considered as a single score, rather than examining each subscale (e.g., interpersonal, internal, and community supportive resources) separately, the correlation between these scales were also examined. As can be seen in Table 5, the correlations among the three scales were modest. Therefore, three individual subscales were used in the regression analyses.

Table 5

Correlations of Social Support Subscales
and Total Score

Sources of Support	Inter-personal	Internal	Community	Total
Interpersonal		.38***	.61***	.95***
Internal			.23*	.56***
Community				.76***
Total Support				1.00

* $p = <.05$
** $p = <.01$
*** $p = <.001$

<u>Characteristics of Sample</u>

Table 6 presents the mean values on the predictor variables for participating subjects. As seen in Table 6, boys in this sample did not differ substantially from the larger population in regards to either social preference or "push around" standard scores. They were, however, somewhat more aggressive than would be expected. How the boys in the sample compared to the population from which they were drawn in regards to the number of stressful events they experienced, the amount of supportive resources they perceived as available, or their school grades can not be determined, as these measures were not available for the larger group.

Sample means for the different criterion variables are shown in Table 7. As can be seen, the level of internalizing and externalizing problems reported by parents were not substantially different from what is typical in the general population (e.g., a score of 50 is the expected population mean). The level of depressive and anxiety related symptoms that subjects reported were also consistent with normative data that has been reported for this age group. The overall grade point average of participants was around a "C" - whether this is significantly lower than the grade average for the population of youngsters from which they were drawn is not known. Overall, however, aside from the higher than expected level of peer rated aggression,

there is no indication that the sample is deviant on any of the variables considered in this study.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations for Predictor Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev	Min	Max	Range
Social Preference Z-Score	75	-0.17	.96	-3.64	1.79	5.43
Fights Z-Score	75	.88	1.32	-1.00	4.20	5.20
Push Around Z-Score	75	-0.09	.92	-1.01	4.03	5.04
Stressful Life Events Total Score	75	36.64	16.30	10	82	72
Interpersonal Supportive Resources	75	25.89	8.89	8	58	50
Internal Supportive Resources	75	6.60	3.05	0	14	14
Community Supportive Resources	75	10.90	3.82	1	21	20

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations of Outcome Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev	Min	Max	Range
Achenbach Internalizing T-Score	75	53.42	12.25	34	90	56
Achenbach Externalizing Score	75	52.86	11.22	23	82	59
Children's Depression Inventory	75	6.97	7.02	0	29	29
Anxiety Scale	75	46.11	11.85	3	67	64
Grade Point Average	75	1.98	.92	0	4	4

Predicting Young African-American Males' Adjustment

A series of multiple regression analyses were used to examine the predictive value of peer relations, stressful life events, and social support on five measures of young African-American males' adjustment (i.e., parental reports of internalizing and externalizing problems, children's reports of depressive and anxiety symptoms, and children's grades).

In each regression analysis, the potential effects of SES and estimates of IQ were controlled for by entering these variables first. In the second step, seven predictor variables (i.e., social preference, fights, push around, stressful life events, interpersonal supportive resources, internal supportive resources, and community supportive resources) and six interaction terms (i.e.,social preference X interpersonal supportive resources; social preference X internal supportive resources; social preference X community stressful life events; and stressful life events X interpersonal supportive resources; stressful life events X internal supportive resources, and stressful life events X community supportive resources) were entered simultaneously using a forward selection procedure.

In the forward selection procedure SES and IQ estimates were always entered into the regression equation first. Next, all of the main effects and interaction terms were entered simultaneously. However, each effect was evaluated

singularly, and any variable meeting the .05 significance level is then selected. If none of the main effects or interactions have a significance level less than or equal to the .05 value, the procedure stops. If several variables meet the significance level set at .05, the variable accounting for the greatest proportion of the variance in the criterion is selected first, the variable accounting for the second greatest proportion of the variance is then selected, and so on, until none of the remaining variables account for significant variance in the criterion measure (SAS, 1991). This procedure is discussed by Lewis-Beck (1986), and recommended for designs that contain multiple predictor variables, or when intercorrelations exist among the predictor variables. This procedure also reduces any problem that is associated with a low subject to variable ratio by examining the covariates first and selecting main effects and interaction in a stepwise manner.

<u>Parent Measures</u>

The first set of analyses examined the relations between the predictor variables and parents' reports of children's internalizing and externalizing symptoms for the Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist measure. None of the covariates, main effects, or interactions were significant predictors of parents' reports of internalizing distress. The R-square for the model with covariates included was .001. The results are shown in Table 8.

In the second analysis, parents' reports of externalizing symptoms were used as the outcome variable. The results are presented in Table 9. After accounting for the variance attributable to estimates of IQ and SES, children's level of peer determined aggression was a significant predictor, as boys having higher aggression scores were reported by parents to have more externalizing problems. The R-square for this model was .109, $p < .005$.

Table 8

Multiple Regression
With Covariates in the Model
for Parent's Report of
Internalizing Problems

Significant Predictors	Cum R^2	Standardized Estimate	t	p
SES	.20	.024		.85
IQ estimate	.001	.024	.20	.85
None	....	....	...	...

Table 9

Multiple Regression
With Covariates in the Model
for Parent's Report of
Externalizing Problems

Significant Predictors	Cum R^2	Standardized Estimate	t	p
Covariates:				
SES		-.029	-.19	.85
IQ Estimate	.009	.264	.62	.53
Fights	.1090	2.902	2.89	.005

Child Measures

The Child Depression Inventory (CDI) and The Revised-Manifest Anxiety Scale were used to evaluate children's reports of emotional distress. Again, the predictor variables were peer determined social preference, aggression, and submission scores, stressful life events, interpersonal supportive resources, internal supportive resources, and community supportive resources, and the six interactions (social preference interacting with each of the three support measures, and stressful life events interacting with each of the three support measures).

After controlling for the effects of IQ and SES, stressful life events was a significant predictor of young African-American males' report of depressive symptoms. (see Table 10). As the number of stressful life events increased self-reported levels of depression increased.

A significant interaction between internal supportive resources and stressful life events emerged when predicting children's self-reported affective symptoms. To evaluate the nature of the obtained interaction, the distribution of frequencies for the two variables that made up the interaction (i.e., stressful life events and internal supportive resources) were broken down into "high", "medium", and "low" levels of stressful life events, and "high", "medium", and "low" levels of internal supportive resources. Based on the combinations of the variables a 3 X

3 table was constructed from which means on the CDI were computed and then plotted for children in each of the nine categories. The results from these computations are shown in Figure 1. As can be seen, for children who reported high levels of stressful conditions, reporting more internal supportive resources was associated significantly with lower levels of depressive symptoms. At either "low" or "medium" stress levels, however, the amount of internal supportive resources reported had no relation to children's CDI scores. The interaction between internal supportive resources and stressful life events added 5% to the total variance accounted for by the model. The total R-square for this model was .31, p <.03.

In the next analysis, children's reports of anxiety was used as the dependent measure. The results from this analysis are shown in Table 11. After controlling for the effects of IQ and SES, stressful life events again emerged as a significant predictor. Feelings of anxiety increased as the number of stressful life events increased. None of the other main effects or interactions were significant. The R-square for this model was .21, p <.003.

Table 10

Multiple Regression
with Covariates in the Model
for Child Depression Inventory (CDI)

Significant Predictors	Cum R^2	Standardized Estimate	t	p
Covariates:				
SES		-0.072	-.68	.4975
IQ Estimate	.085	-0.104	-.93	.3574
Stressful Life Events	.264	.676	4.53	.0001
Stressful Life Events X Internal Support[a]	.315	-.328	-2.24	.0286

[a]Given the concern that items that fell into the internally generated concerns category of the stressful life events measure would overlap with many of the items on the depression scale, another multiple regression analysis was performed removing these items from the total stressful life events score. The results were essentially identical and therefore are not reported.
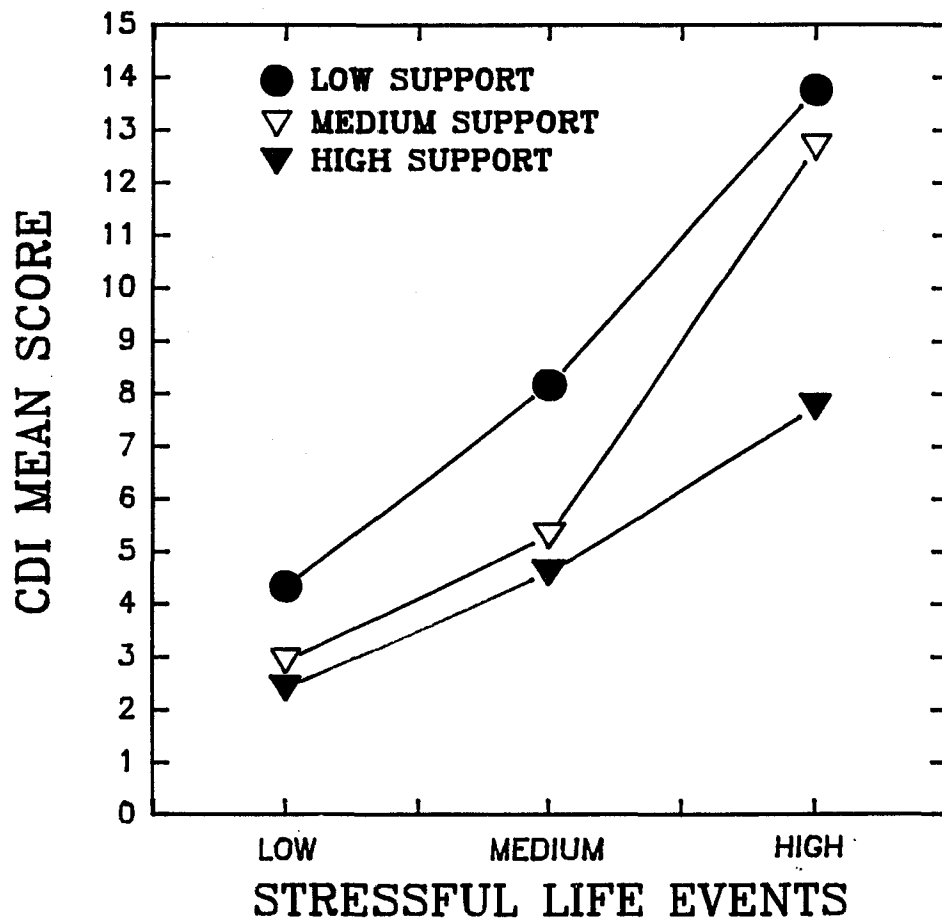
Figure 1. CDI Mean Score as a function of Stress.

Table 11

Multiple Regression
with Covariates in the Model
for Revised-Manifest Anxiety Inventory

Significant Predictors	Cum R^2	Standardized Estimate	t	p
Covariates:				
SES		.227	2.05	.0438
IQ estimate	.102	-.205	-1.81	.0741
Stressful Life Events	.211	.337	3.08	.0030

[a]Given the concern that items that fell into the internally generated concerns category of the stressful life events measure would overlap with many of the items on the anxiety scale, another multiple regression analysis was performed removing these items from the total stressful life events score. The results were essentially identical and therefore are not reported.

Grades

In the final analysis, students' grade point average was used as the outcome variable with the same predictor variables described above. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 12. After controlling for the effects of IQ and SES, social preference scores based on peer nominations were predictive of students' grade point averages. Males who were nominated as being liked by their school peers made better grades.

The interaction between stressful life events X internal supportive resources again emerged as a significant predictor. The same computations described earlier were used to interpret this interaction, and the results are displayed in Figure 2. Once again, for highly stressed children, greater amounts of internal supportive resources protected successful academic achievement.

Peer determined aggression scores was the next best predictor of grades, adding approximately 7% to the total variance accounted for. Males who were perceived by their peers as frequently starting fights made lower grades. The total R-square was .404, $p < .03$.

Table 12

Multiple Regression
with Covariates in the Model
for Student's Grade Point Averages (GPA)

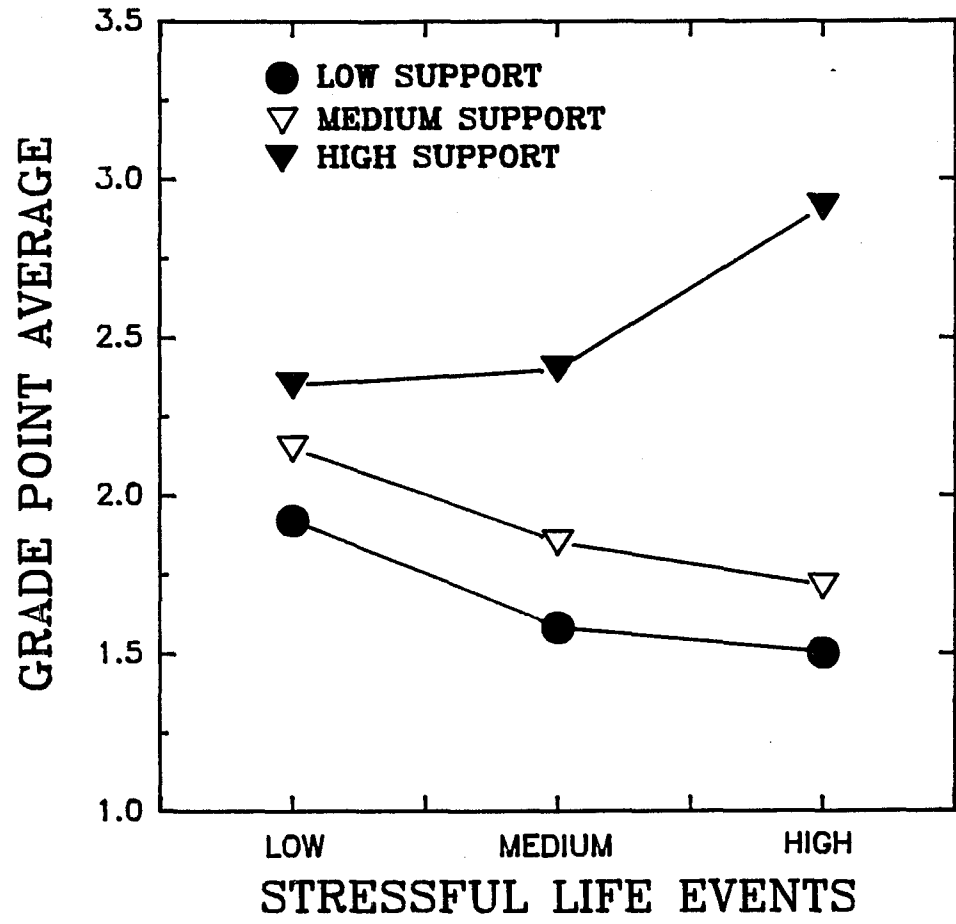| Significant Predictors	Cum R^2	Standardized Estimate	t	p
Covariates:				
SES		.016	1.59	.1163
IQ Estimate	.190	.282	2.78	.0070
Social Preference				
Z-Score	.295	.278	2.83	.0061
Stressful Life Events X Internal				
Support	.362	.270	2.84	.0059
"Starts Fights"				
Z-Score	.404	-.223	-2.19	.0316

Figure 2. Grade Point Average as a function of Stress.

Additional Analyses of Stressful Life Events:

To determine the types of stressful life events that were experienced by this sample, two raters independently assigned each of the stressful life items to the four categories (e.g., traumatic events, daily hassles, changes affecting family, peer, and school roles, and internally generated concerns) described by Dise-Lewis (1988).

Agreement was obtained on 90% of the items; on those items where disagreement occurred, a third rater was used to reach a consensus. Four category scores were computed for each subject by summing the number of "yes" responses to the items within each category. Since each category consisted of a different number of items, the category scores were converted to percentages for comparison purposes. These data are presented in Table 13. As is evident, children more frequently reported stressors associated with family, peers, and school. Daily hassles appear to be the next most important source of stress.

To examine which type of stressors were most closely associated with children's adjustment, correlations between children's scores for each category and the different outcome measures were computed. These correlations are presented in Table 14. All the different types of stressors, with the exception of traumatic events, were related to children's reports of psychological symptoms. However, none of the four stressors were related to

student's GPA .

Most striking is the finding that traumatic events were inversely related to parental reports of internalizing symptoms. In other words, as the number of traumatic events reported by children increased, the number of internalizing symptoms that parents reported for their children decreased.

Table 13

Means and Standard Deviations of Stressful Life Events Categories

Number of Items	Mean %	SD	Category
37	36.613	16.24	School/Peer/Family
23	36.406	17.96	Daily Hassles
26	26.923	15.90	Traumatic
29	26.621	16.12	Internal Worries

Table 14

Correlations Between Stressful Life Events Categories
and Outcome Variables

Life Events Categories	Achenbach Internal	Achenbach External	Depression Inventory	Anxiety Scale	GPA
Peer/School Family (#Items=37)	.10	.23*	.45***	.35***	-.15
Daily Hassles (#Items=23)	-.03	.14	.41***	.36***	-.03
Traumatic Events (#Items=26)	-.32***	-.10	.26*	.16	.07
Internal Worries (#Items=29)	.09	.18	.48***	.40***	.03

*   p = <.05
**   p = <.01
*** p = <.001

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to increase our understanding of the factors contributing to positive outcomes among young African-American males. This was done by examining the role that supportive resources play in mitigating the adverse impact of peer rejection and other stressors on a group known to be at risk for a number of negative outcomes. In particular, this study focused on the role of interpersonal, internal, and community supportive resources in promoting successful development among young African-American males.

Developmental psychopathologists (Achenbach & Edlebrock, 1978) distinguish between externalizing symptoms such as aggressive behaviors and internalizing symptoms such as depression and anxiety. In the first set of analyses, the relations between parents' reports of internalizing and externalizing problems, and the different predictor variables were examined. The results of these analyses showed that none of the variables were significant predictors of parental reports of internalizing symptoms. The total R-square for this model was .001. While there is empirical evidence suggesting that very little agreement

occurs between children's and parents' reports of internalizing symptoms (Romano, 1989), these findings are disturbing, especially in light of the other results which showed a number of boys reporting significant levels of anxious and depressive symptoms.

Peer nominations for the aggression sociometric item was a significant predictor of parental reports of externalizing symptoms. Perhaps when African-American males' reactions to stressful life events is expressed primarily in an externalizing acting out fashion, parents become more aware of their sons' difficulties. These findings may also reflect explicit societal norms regarding how boys should express their emotional reactions and feelings (Maccoby, 1990).

The next set of analyses examined young African-American males' self-reported levels of emotional distress. Stressful life events were a significant predictor of depression and anxiety, as increasing levels of stress were associated with increasing levels of self-reported emotional distress. These findings are consistent with what has been reported in prior research (Dubois, Felner, Brand, Adan & Evans, 1992).

Of particular interest is the significant interaction that was found between internal supportive resources and stressful life events when predicting young African-American males reports of depressive symptoms. At high levels of

stressful life events, boys reported fewer depressive symptoms when they had high levels of internal supportive resources. For boys reporting fewer stressful events, in contrast, their was no association between their CDI scores and the number of internal supportive resources they reported.

There may be several explanations for these findings. One explanation may be that African-American males' hobbies, fantasies, and expression of talents moderated the negative impact of high number of stressful life events. Perhaps high levels of internal resources are specifically useful under high levels of stress by reducing frustration, and by providing opportunities for positive experiences that are readily available. Another plausible explanation, however, is that boys who have the energy , enthusiasm, and self-direction to become involved hobbies, etc. are simply "healthier" children to begin with, and are thus better able to cope with stressful events when they occur. Thus, it may be their better adjustment prior to the occurrence of life stressors, and not their involvement per se in hobbies and other activities that protect them from developing depressive symptoms. Clearly, the issue of directionality and causality can not be untangled by the cross-sectional design of this study. However, these results do identify internal supportive resources as a promising protective variable for a group of children who are known to engage in

an increasing number of negative adaptive behaviors such as suicide and homicide (Daniels & Moos, 1990; Hammond & Yung, 1993).

A stress-buffering effect was not found when predicting children's reports of anxiety. Despite the moderately high correlation between the anxiety and depression scales, which is typically found (Norvell, Brophy & Finch, 1985; Ollendick & Yule, 1990), it is unclear why the internal stress-buffering effect was found for depression and not found for anxiety. It is possible that the situations that evoke anxiety in African-American boys are uncontrollable external events (i.e., violent neighborhoods, family and school demands) whereas circumstances that evoke feelings of depression are internally generated concerns (e.g., I'm a failure"; "nobody likes me"; "bad things are usually my fault"). If this is the case, one would expect that hobbies, musical talents, and sports would be effective in improving self-worth and perceived competency, and less effective in diminishing feelings of anxiety in response to uncontrollable life threatening situations. An alternate possibility is that hobbies, talents, and skills in sports could themselves lead to anxious feelings. Future research assessing specific types of support a child finds helpful in managing anxiety and depression may shed some light on this important issue.

In the last analysis, estimates of IQ was associated

significantly with student's grade point averages (GPA).
After controlling for the effects of IQ, social acceptance
was the best predictor of student's GPA, indicating that as
popularity increased so did students' grades. These
findings are consistent with those reported in other studies
(e.g., Patterson, Kupersmidt, & Vaden, 1990).

Several speculations can be made about these results.
Perhaps, popularity affects how teachers award grades. For
example, students who get along with their peers, and are
easy for teachers to manage, may receive higher grades.
This may be true especially in classrooms with a high
concentration of problematic and disruptive children.

Another possibility is that popular boys are more
successful in soliciting help from peers and teachers when
completing school assignments (Nelson- Le Coll & Jones,
1990). Yet another explanation may be that high academic
achievers, especially in the lower grades, are more popular
with school peers because other students admire their
success and/or because of the positive messages received
about these students from teachers and other school
personnel.

There are however complicated cultural issues related
to this last idea, especially in middle school and high
school where the suggestion has been made that there can be
tremendous peer pressure on African-American males not to
make good grades (Ogbu, 1988). Ogbu, however, states an

effective strategy sometimes used by African-American males in coping with this type of peer pressure is "accommodation without assimilation" (personal communication, November, 15, 1993). When using this strategy, successful African-American males readily accommodate "the dominate" cultural ways of communicating, behaving, and relating in the classrooms, but retain their distinctive cultural language and behavior in other school settings, such as the lunchroom, gymnasium and nonschool settings. This may be particularly relevant for understanding the resiliency of the boys who attended racially balanced schools, but who lived in racially segregated neighborhoods.

The interaction between stressful life events and internal support was also found to account for significant variance in student's GPA. Highly stressed boys made significantly better grades when they had a high number of talents, personal interests, and skills in developing hobbies (i.e., internal supportive resources). The types of activities that the participants of this study engaged in may be related to these findings. The types of hobbies that were frequently cited included bicycle repairing, baseball and basketball card collecting, drawing, playing sports, and writing rap songs. The skills that are needed to initiate a hobby such as writing lyrics to rap songs, drawing, or even bicycle repairing, may be related to the same skills needed to do well in school.

While it may be that high academic achievers have more effective strategies in coping with challenging life circumstances, an alternative explanation may be that some stressors, especially family, school and neighborhood concerns lead some children to make greater investments in their school work. Being successful at school, and developing outside skills and talents may serve to immediately enhance their self-efficacy, and possibly provide a means for improving their life in the future. This may be especially true for disadvantaged families. Again, the use of a cross-sectional design does not allow for a definitive causal conclusion regarding the role of internal supportive resources in moderating the effects of stressful life events on children's grades.

While it would seem that all children have a need for social support, especially when exposed to stressful events, neither support from family and friends, nor community supportive resources were significant predictors of children's depression, anxiety, nor school grades. In contrast to previous research demonstrating that children who believe they are cared for, loved, esteemed, and valued, thrive despite stressful conditions (Garmezy, Mastern, & Tellegen, 1984; Werner & Smith, 1982), social support did not serve as a significant protective resources in this study. Perhaps one of the most important differences between this study and the others, which may in part account

for the discrepancy, lies in the way perceived supportive resources were measured and analyzed. In most of the other studies, the number of interpersonal supportive resources are summed and a total support score is used in the analyses. Participants in these other studies were also asked to rate how helpful they perceived different individuals to be (e.g., parents, teacher, clergy, and friends). In this study, however, participants were only asked who and what was potentially available as supportive resources, and three different types of supportive resources were considered in the analyses. It may be that young African-American males perceive others as being available, but do not turn to these resources because they do not see them as being potentially helpful.

For instance, when asked "Who are the most important people to you?", boys readily listed parents, grandparents, siblings, and friends as some of the most noteworthy people. Following this question were a series of questions asking, "Whom would you go to if you were sad, angry, afraid, really happy, and whom do you share secrets with?", twenty-nine percent of the boys replied "no one" to all five questions. Although this percentage seems high, the degree to which African-American males question other's resourcefulness is limited by the lack of comparative normative data.

The fact that many young African-American males apparently do not seek others out for support or to share

their innermost concerns helps us to better understand why parents were unaware of their sons' difficulties. Clearly, it is easy to see how parents may be oblivious to their son's internalized distress. It is reasonable to believe furthermore, that being unsuspecting of their internalized problems, or dismissing this as a potential area of concern may have impaired parents' ability to provide any kind of support, and certainly the kind that is needed to address their son's concerns and worries.

It is also possible that parents were also affected by the stressful events their sons reported. Research has routinely shown that greater stress is significantly associated with less than optimal parent-child interactions and family functioning (Crnic & Greenberg, 1990). The results showed that for this sample, events concerned with family problems, troubles at school, and with peers were the primary source of stress. Perhaps young African-American males who are stressed by school peer relations, or by the events occurring in their homes and schools, do not see nor expect these interpersonal resources to be potentially helpful.

Dubow and Tisak (1988) and others have argued that a match between the source of support (in this case personal resources) and context in which competence and adjustment is being evaluated (classroom, school, and home settings) is essential when examining the beneficial roles of supportive

resources. If home is the major source of stress, then certainly a child may not turn to his home environment for support. Similarly, if events in schools and neighborhoods are the major source of distress, young African-American males may not perceive school or community resources as potentially supportive. Given that many of the youths that participated in this study were exposed to impoverished neighborhoods, economically depressed conditions may have related to the adequacy and availability of community support in mitigating the effects of stressful life events. It is also true that at this age, children were still somewhat dependent on their parents and others to access extrafamilial and community resources.

Although the findings that interpersonal and community support were not significant predictors of several measures of adjustment contrast with results of prior studies for this age group (Bryant, 1985; DuBois & Hirsch, 1990), neither racial nor gender comparisons were made in the present study. It is likely that the inclusion of African-American females may have yielded the expected--and previously obtained--positive relationship between social support and different measures of adjustment.

Limitations of the study

There are several limitations of the present study. Although the method used in this study followed the precedent set by others (Luthar, 1991; Dise-Lewis, 1988; and

Dubois et al, 1992), the reliance on self-report measures to assess stress complicates the interpretations of the findings. Lacking convergent data to establish that the events reported by each child did in fact occur, and that significant stressors were not denied, the findings are subject to possible biases due to the measurement tools that were used (Rowlison & Felner, 1988). For example, in some instances a youth may have experienced a traumatic event, such as witnessing a parent being shot or taken to jail, and then reported many other stressful life events because they perceived their world as a negative place in which to live.

Although it can be argued that what matters most is the child's perception of his life as highly stressful, as opposed to which events actually occurred and how stressful someone else might think they are, children's reports on similar measures have been found to correlate with reports obtained from parents and other caregivers (Compas, 1987). Given this, future studies should ask children for rankings of stressful life events to indicate whether or not events experienced were seen as stressful. The need for multiple sources of data when assessing experiences of stress is an important one and deserves careful attention in the future.

Another important limitation of this study includes the use of a cross-sectional design. This study was exploratory given the absence of previous empirical evidence on young African-American males's resiliency. Although a cross-

sectional design is appropriate for the initial stages of a research program, a longitudinal design is needed to make more definitive directional conclusions.

Finally, although youths in this sample came from schools with different racial balances, and were from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, all of the participants were from similarly racially isolated neighborhoods which limited the range and scope of their contextual experiences. Lacking information that would allow contrasts between different community contexts, the full impact that ecological conditions play on developmental outcomes could not be addressed. Future research will need to be concerned with differences in economics, as well as racial composition in the schools and neighborhoods in order to get a more complete understanding of the beneficial role of internal and other supportive resources for African-American boys.

Relevance of the Findings

Despite the shortcomings, the findings have relevance in two important areas. First, these data broaden our knowledge base of young African-American males. Second, the findings provide support for using Bronfrenbrenner's (1979) transactional, ecological model when studying minority children. Given the complexity of the issues involved in predicting and explaining the resiliency of children at risk, a broad-based assessment provides a clearer understanding of young African-American males' experiences

and competencies.

Assessing events in the schools, homes, and in the neighborhoods of young African-American males' was important not only for descriptive purposes, but also as a benchmark from which to examine factors contributing to their success and failure. The ability of young African-American males to become involved in hobbies, develop musical and artistic talents, while also using these activities as coping resources, may have been obscured by more traditional research paradigms in which interpersonal and community types of supportive resources were most typically examined. Research which helps clarify theoretical perspectives is vital to continued growth of any field.

Implications for Future Research

Results of the current investigation suggest that examining the relationship between young African-American males' ratings of perceived helpfulness of supportive resources, and the degree to which such resources are utilized in coping with difficult situations should be examined in future research. More explicitly, researchers should ask minority children what kinds of resources they use when coping with stressful life circumstances, and have children rate how helpful they perceive each to be.

Although the results may indicate that better adjusted children simply engage more actively in hobbies, and make greater investments in developing skills and achieving

scholastically, the findings may also underscore the contribution of hobbies, sports, and other talents in facilitating positive developmental outcomes for young African-American males. Few studies have broadened their focus to consider this source of support as influencing psychological and school-related adjustment, and none have done so when examining young African-American males' adjustment, yielding fertile grounds for future work.

Implications for Social Policies

The relationship between negative life experiences and young African-American males' psychological distress have implications for social policies. If these stressful conditions are left unattended, they may very well shape even more problematic adjustment outcomes (e.g., violence, homicide, and suicide) among young African-American males (Kirk, 1988; Hammond and Yung, 1993; Garland and Zigler, 1993). This understanding underscores the importance of social policies to increase funding to change contextual conditions in the lives of many minority and underprivileged children.

Although many young African-American males were resilient, and succeeding academically as well as socially, others were not doing as well. Societal conditions that lead to unequal distributions of wealth may turn hopeful, enthusiastic, and aspiring young boys into hopeless, dispassionate, and uncaring adults. Like all children,

African-American males need support from families, peers, and caring adults, and opportunities to develop hobbies and skills that they value. These supportive networks and opportunities are facilitated and enhanced by social polices that increase economic opportunities for African-American youths and their families, and by policies that provide them with safe neighborhoods, decent housing, education, and community-based programs (Jessor, 1993).As we look to the future, these findings may have some implications for crafting new policies. The results from this study revealed that despite cumulative disadvantages, many African-American males were doing well academically, and many were formulating self-reliant ways of coping with difficult situations. Being knowledgeable about children's deficiencies as well as their competencies provide additional information, and will more likely inspire new and responsive social policies that are effective in meeting the needs of at-risk children.

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Appendix A

Life Events Inventory

Y	N	1.	One of your parents died.
Y	N	2.	A close family member, not a mom or dad died.
Y	N	3.	Your parents decided to get a divorce.
Y	N	4.	Your mom or dad was put in jail.
Y	N	5.	You were picked up by the police.
Y	N	6.	You were suspended from school.
Y	N	7.	Your mom or dad moved out of your home.
Y	N	8.	You got caught stealing something
Y	N	9.	You had to move in with relatives or into a foster home.
Y	N	10.	Someone close to you (like a friend) died.
Y	N	11.	You were kept back in the same grade.
Y	N	12.	You got suspended from school.
Y	N	13.	A member of your family got in serious trouble with the police.
Y	N	14.	You've taken drugs.
Y	N	15.	One of your parents physically hit you.
Y	N	16.	Your family have money problems.
Y	N	17.	Someone in your family was in an accident or got beaten up.
Y	N	18.	You feel rejected by someone important to you.
Y	N	19.	You feel upset or angry.
Y	N	20.	Your parents had a fight or argue with each other.
Y	N	21.	Other kids forced you to do something you didn't want to do.
Y	N	22.	You feel like no one likes you.
Y	N	23.	You moved away from one parent to live with the other parent.
Y	N	24.	You feel rushed or pressured.
Y	N	25.	Your parent accuses you of things you don't do.
Y	N	26.	All of your homework and other work got piled up at once.
Y	N	27.	Your parent lost his/her job.
Y	N	28.	You feel like you're not worth anything.
Y	N	29.	You were sent to the principal's office.
Y	N	30.	You found out you had to go to summer school.
Y	N	31.	You feel alone.
Y	N	32.	You think you are ugly or worry about your looks.
Y	N	33.	You feel frustrated.
Y	N	34.	You worry about hurting your parents.
Y	N	35.	You drank (like beer) too much once.
Y	N	36.	One of your parents got put into the hospital.

Y	N	37.	Kids threaten you or beat you up.
Y	N	38.	You get into trouble at school.
Y	N	39.	You did something wrong or bad.
Y	N	40.	Your mom or dad got remarried.
Y	N	41.	You had a fight with one of your parents.
Y	N	42.	Your parents don't listen when you try to tell him/her something.
Y	N	43.	You were seriously injured or seriously ill.
Y	N	44.	A close family member (not a parent) was put into the hospital.
Y	N	45.	You were put in special services or a special class in school.
Y	N	46.	One of your parents started to be away from home more than usual.
Y	N	47.	Your parents put you down or criticize you.
Y	N	48.	You tried to do something and failed at it.
Y	N	49.	You broke up with a girlfriend.
Y	N	50.	You wanted to do something that you were not allowed to do.
Y	N	51.	You worry over a decision.
Y	N	52.	You smoke cigarettes.
Y	N	53.	Some kids laugh at you, pick on you or call you names.
Y	N	54.	Kids talk about you behind your back or spread rumors about you.
Y	N	55.	Your friend deserted you or don't want to be with you..
Y	N	56.	Your pet died.
Y	N	57.	You had a fight, conflict or argument with a friend.
Y	N	58.	Your parents embarrass you.
Y	N	59.	Another adult moved in to live with your family.
Y	N	60.	Your parents don't seem to understand you when you try to tell them something.
Y	N	61.	You had a sexual experience.
Y	N	62.	You got into trouble with adults.
Y	N	63.	You told someone a lie.
Y	N	64.	You tried out for a team or activity and didn't make it.
Y	N	65.	Your friends criticize you or put you down.
Y	N	66.	Your family members have arguments with one another.
Y	N	67.	Your teacher embarrasses you.
Y	N	68.	Your parents do not support your interests.
Y	N	69.	Your teachers had a conference about you.
Y	N	70.	You got lost somewhere.
Y	N	71.	Your physical development has been slower than other kids.
Y	N	72.	You feel angry with yourself.
Y	N	73.	A close friend got put in the hospital.

Y	N	74.	Your parents hold high expectations of you.
Y	N	75.	You were punished for something that you did.
Y	N	76.	You were grounded.
Y	N	77.	You worry about being good.
Y	N	78.	You weren't invited to a party your friends went to.
Y	N	79.	Your friend had to move away.
Y	N	80.	You had a big test.
Y	N	81.	Your parents come home mad.
Y	N	82.	Your parents didn't give you something which was promised to you.
Y	N	83.	You had to keep a family secret from other people.
Y	N	84.	You have too many chores to do.
Y	N	85.	Some of your personal property (like a bike) was stolen or lost.
Y	N	86.	Your brother or sister bothers or bugs you.
Y	N	87.	Your teacher yells at you.
Y	N	88.	You feel like your brother or sister is better than you at things.
Y	N	89.	You feel like there is nothing enjoyable to do.
Y	N	90.	You feel jealous of a friend for something.
Y	N	91.	Your teacher bugs or nags you.
Y	N	92.	Your friend has a problem that worries you.
Y	N	93.	You feel like you have no money.
Y	N	94.	You have trouble sleeping.
Y	N	95.	You had a sports or play tryout.
Y	N	96.	Your teacher has high expectations of you.
Y	N	97.	You had to study for a big test.
Y	N	98.	You moved into a new home.
Y	N	99.	You had a school report to do.
Y	N	100.	You compete with your brother or sister.
Y	N	101.	Your brother or sister moved out of the house.
Y	N	102.	You feel bored.
Y	N	103.	Something violent happened at your school or in your neighborhood.
Y	N	104.	You compete with other kids in sports.
Y	N	105.	You have bad dreams.
Y	N	106.	You don't like your teacher.
Y	N	107.	You've thought about sex.
Y	N	108.	You were baptized.
Y	N	109.	A new brother or sister was born into your family.
Y	N	110.	You compete with other kids in class work.
Y	N	111.	One of your parents went away for a trip.
Y	N	112.	You compare your grades with other kids.

Y   N   113.   One of your parents got a new job.
Y   N   114.   You got stood up by a date.*
Y   N   115.   You started middle school.*

*Items were omitted.

Appendix B

Children's Depression Inventory

Pick Out The Sentence That Describe Your Feelings and Ideas in The PAST TWO WEEKS.

1. _____ I am sad once in a while
    _____ I am sad many times
    _____ I am sad all the time

2. _____ Nothing will ever work out for me
    _____ I am not sure if things will work out for
    _____ Things will work out for me O.K.

3. _____ I do most things O.K.
    _____ I do many things wrong
    _____ I do everything wrong

4. _____ I have fun in many things
    _____ I have fun in some things
    _____ Nothing is fun at all

5. _____ I am bad all the time
    _____ I am bad many times
    _____ I am bad once in a while

6. _____ I think about bad things happening to me once in a while
    _____ I worry that bad things will happen to me
    _____ I am sure that terrible things will happen to me

7. _____ I hate myself
    _____ I do not like myself
    _____ I like myself

8. _____ All bad things are my fault
    _____ Many bad things are my fault
    _____ Bad things are not usually my fault

9. _____ I do not think about killing myself
    _____ I think about killing myself but I would not do it
    _____ I want to kill myself

Appendix B

(continued)

10.   ____   I feel like crying everyday
          ____   I feel like crying many days

          ____   I feel like crying once in a while

11.   ____   Things bother me all the time
          ____   Things bother me many times
          ____   Things bother me once in a while

12.   ____   I like being with people
          ____   I do not like being with people many times
          ____   I do not want to be with people at all

13.   ____   I cannot make up my mind about things
          ____   It is hard to make up my mind about things
          ____   I make up my mind about things easily

14.   ____   I look O.K.
          ____   There are some bad things about my looks
          ____   I look ugly

15.   ____   I have to push myself all the time to do my schoolwork
          ____   I have to push myself many times to do my schoolwork
          ____   Doing schoolwork is not a big problem

16.   ____   I have trouble sleeping every night
          ____   I have trouble sleeping many nights
          ____   I sleep pretty well

17.   ____   I am tired once in a while
          ____   I am tired many days
          ____   I am tired all the time

18.   ____   Most days I do not feel like eating
          ____   Many days I do not feel like eating
          ____   I eat pretty well

19.   ____   I do not worry about aches and pains
          ____   I worry about aches and pains many times
          ____   I worry about aches and pains all the time

Appendix B

(continued)

20. _____ I do not feel alone
    _____ I feel alone many times
    _____ I feel alone all the time

21. _____ I never have fun at school
    _____ I have fun at school only once in a while
    _____ I have fun at school many times

22. _____ I have plenty of friends
    _____ I have some friends but I wish I had more
    _____ I do not have any friends

23. _____ My school work is alright
    _____ My school work is not as good as before
    _____ I do very badly in subjects I used to be
    good in

24. _____ I can never be as good as other kids
    _____ I can be as good as other kids if I want to
    _____ I am just as good as other kids

25. _____ Nobody really loves me
    _____ I am not sure if anybody loves me
    _____ I am sure that somebody loves me

26. _____ I usually do what I am told
    _____ I do not do what I am told most times
    _____ I never do what I am told

27. _____ I get along with people
    _____ I get into fights many times
    _____ I get into fights all the time

Appendix C

Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale

Instructions: "I am going to read you some sentences that
tell how some people think and feel about
themselves. Tell me "Yes" if you think
it is true about you, or "No" if you think it
is not true about you.

1.	Yes	No	I have trouble making up my mind.
2.	Yes	No	I get nervous when things do not go the right way for me.
3.	Yes	No	Others seem to do things easier than I can.
4.	Yes	No	I like everyone I know.
5.	Yes	No	Often I have trouble getting my breath.
6.	Yes	No	I worry a lot of the time
7.	Yes	No	I am afraid a lot of the time
8.	Yes	No	I am always kind.
9.	Yes	No	I get mad easily.
10.	Yes	No	I worry about what my parents will say to me.
11.	Yes	No	I feel that others do not like the way I do things.
12.	Yes	No	I always have good manners.
13.	Yes	No	It is hard for me to get to sleep at night.
14.	Yes	No	I worry about what other people think about me.
15.	Yes	No	I feel alone even when there are people with me.
16.	Yes	No	I am always good.
17.	Yes	No	Often I feel sick in my stomach.
18.	Yes	No	My feelings get hurt easily.
19.	Yes	No	My hands feel sweaty.
20.	Yes	No	I am always nice to everyone.
21.	Yes	No	I am tired a lot.
22.	Yes	No	I worry about what is going to happen.
23.	Yes	No	Other people are happier than I.
24.	Yes	No	I tell the truth every single time.
25.	Yes	No	I have bad dreams.
26.	Yes	No	My feelings get hurt easily when I am fussed at.
27.	Yes	No	I feel someone will tell me I do things the wrong way.
28.	Yes	No	I never get angry.
29.	Yes	No	I wake up scared some of the time.
30.	Yes	No	I worry when I go to bed at night.

Appendix C

(continued)

31.	Yes	No	It is hard for me to keep my mind on my schoolwork.
32.	Yes	No	I never say things I shouldn't.
33.	Yes	No	I wiggle in my seat a lot.
34.	Yes	No	I am nervous.
35.	Yes	No	A lot of people are against me.
36.	Yes	No	I never lie.
37.	Yes	No	I often worry about something bad happening to me.

Appendix D

Vocabulary Subtest

Instructions: I am going to ask you some meaning of some
words. Tell me the meaning of the word:
(Discontinue after 5 consecutive failures)

1.   Knife
2.   Umbrella
3.   Clock
4.   Hat
5.   Bicycle
6.   Nail
7.   Alphabet
8.   Donkey
9.   Thief
10. Join
11. Brave
12. Diamond
13. Gamble
14. Nonsense
15. Prevent
16. Contagious
17. Nuisance
18. Fable
19. Hazardous
20. Migrate
21. Stanza
22. Seclude
23. Mantis
24. Espionage
25. Belfry
26. Rivalry
27. Amendment
28. Compel
29. Affliction
30. Obliterate
31. Imminent
32. Dilatory

Appendix E

Demographic Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions asking about you and your son's background.

Child's Name:_____

Child's Birthdate:_____

Father's Type
of Work:_____   Highest Grade Completed_____

Mother's Type
of Work:_____   Highest Grade Completed_____

Other - Name & Relationship to child_____

Type of Work:_____   Highest Grade Completed_____

Type of Work:_____   Highest Grade Completed_____

Appendix F

Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist

Below is a list of items that describe children. For each
item that describes your child now or within the past 6
months, please circle the **2** if the item is **very true** or
often true of your child. Circle the **1** if the item is
somewhat or **sometimes true** of your child. If the item is
not true of your child, circle the **0**. Please answer all
items as well as you can, even if some do not seem to apply
to your child.

**O=Not True (as far as you know) 1=Somewhat or Sometimes True
2=Very True of Often True**

0	1	2	1.	Acts too young for his age.
0	1	2	2.	Allergy (describe)_____
0	1	2	3.	Argues a lot
0	1	2	4.	Asthma
0	1	2	5.	Behaves like opposite sex
0	1	2	6.	Bowel movements outside toilet
0	1	2	7.	Bragging, boasting
0	1	2	8.	Can't concentrate, can't pay attention for long
0	1	2	9.	Can't get his mind off certain thoughts; obsessions (describe)_____
0	1	2	10.	Can't sit still, restless, or hyperactive
0	1	2	11.	Clings to adults or too dependent
0	1	2	12.	Complains of loneliness
0	1	2	13.	Confused or seems to be in a fog
0	1	2	14.	Cries a lot
0	1	2	15.	Cruel to animals
0	1	2	16.	Cruelty, bullying, or meanness to others
0	1	2	17.	Day-dreams or gets lost in his thoughts
0	1	2	18.	Deliberately harms self or attempts suicide
0	1	2	19.	Demands a lot of attention
0	1	2	20.	Destroys his own things
0	1	2	21.	Destroys things belonging to his family or other children
0	1	2	22.	Disobedient at home
0	1	2	23.	Disobedient at school
0	1	2	24.	Doesn't eat well
0	1	2	25.	Doesn't get along with other children
0	1	2	26.	Doesn't seem to feel guilty after misbehaving

Appendix F

(continued)

0	1	2	27.	Easily jealous
0	1	2	28.	Eats or drinks things that are not food don't include sweets (describe)_____
0	1	2	29.	Fears certain animals, situations, or places other than school (describe)_____
0	1	2	30.	Fears going to school
0	1	2	31.	Fears he might thing or do something bad
0	1	2	32.	Feels he has to be perfect
0	1	2	33.	Feels or complains that no one love him
0	1	2	34.	Feels others are out to get him
0	1	2	35.	Feels worthless or inferior
0	1	2	36.	Gets hurt a lot, accident-prone
0	1	2	37.	Gets in many fights
0	1	2	38.	Gets teased a lot
0	1	2	39.	Hangs around with children who get in trouble
0	1	2	40.	Hears sounds or voices that aren't there (describe)_____
0	1	2	41.	Impulsive or acts without thinking
0	1	2	42.	Likes to be alone
0	1	2	43.	Lying or cheating
0	1	2	44.	Bites fingernails
0	1	2	45.	Nervous, highstrung, or tense
0	1	2	46.	Nervous movements or twitching (describe)_____
0	1	2	47.	Nightmares
0	1	2	48.	Not liked by other children
0	1	2	49.	Constipated, doesn't move bowels
0	1	2	50.	Too fearful or anxious
0	1	2	51.	Feels dizzy
0	1	2	52.	Feels too guilty
0	1	2	53.	Overeating
0	1	2	54.	Overtired
0	1	2	55.	Overweight
			56.	Physical problems without known medical cause:
0	1	2		a. Aches or pains
0	1	2		b. Headaches
0	1	2		c. Nausea, feel sick
0	1	2		d. Problems with eyes (describe)_____
0	1	2		e. Rashes
0	1	2		f. Stomachaches or cramps
0	1	2		g. Vomiting, throwing up
0	1	2		h. Other (describe)_____
0	1	2	57.	Physically attacks people

Appendix F

(continued)

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0  1  2   58.  Picks nose, skin, or other parts of body
                (describe)_____
0  1  2   59.  Plays with own sex parts in public
0  1  2   60.  Plays with own sex parts too much
0  1  2   61.  Poor school work
0  1  2   62.  Poorly coordinated or clumsy
0  1  2   63.  Prefers playing with older children
0  1  2   64.  Prefers playing with younger children
0  1  2   65.  Refuses to talk
0  1  2   66.  Repeats certain acts over and over;
                compulsions (describe)_____
0  1  2   67.  Runs away from home
0  1  2   68.  Screams a lot
0  1  2   70.  Sees things that aren't there
                (describe)_____
0  1  2   71.  Self-conscious or easily embarrassed
0  1  2   72.  Sets fire
0  1  2   73.  Sexual problems (describe)_____
0  1  2   74.  Showing off or clowning
0  1  2   75.  Shy or timid
0  1  2   76,  Sleeps less than most children
0  1  2   77.  Sleeps more than most children during
                day   and/or night (describe)_____
0  1  2   78.  Smears or plays with bowel movements
0  1  2   79.  Speech problem (describe)_____
0  1  2   80.  Stares blankly
0  1  2   81.  Steals at home
0  1  2   82.  Steals outside the home
0  1  2   83.  Stores up things he doesn't need
                (describe)_____
0  1  2   84.  Strange behavior (describe)_____
0  1  2   85.  Strange ideas (describe)_____
0  1  2   86.  Stubborn, sullen, or irritable
0  1  2   87.  Sudden changes in mood or feelings
0  1  2   88.  Sulks a lot
0  1  2   89.  Suspicious
0  1  2   90.  Swearing or obscene language
0  1  2   91.  Talks about killing self
0  1  2   92.  Talks or walks in sleep (describe)_____
0  1  2   93.  Talks too much
0  1  2   94.  Teases a lot
0  1  2   95.  Temper tantrums or hot temper
0  1  2   96.  Thinks about sex too much
0  1  2   97.  Threatens people
```

Appendix F

(continued)

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0  1  2   98. Thumb-sucking
0  1  2   99. Too concerned with neatness or cleanliness
0  1  2  100. Trouble sleeping (describe)_____
0  1  2  101. Truancy, skips school
0  1  2  102. Underactive, slow moving, or lacks energy
0  1  2  103. Unhappy, sad, or depressed
0  1  2  104. Unusually loud
0  1  2  105. Uses alcohol or drugs for nonmedical
               purposes (describe)
0  1  2  106. Vandalism
0  1  2  107. Wets self during the day
0  1  2  108. Wets the bed
0  1  2  109. Whining
0  1  2  110. Wishes to be the opposite sex
0  1  2  111. Withdrawn, doesn't get involved with others
0  1  2  112. Worrying
```

Appendix G

Outline for Telephone Contact

Hello, my name is Terry McCandies, and I work with the
faculty at UNC-G ("and ACC", for Alamance County students).
Your child participated in a study earlier this year, and I
was calling to see if you would consider letting him
participate in another one. For this study, I will come to
your house to talk to you and your son. Your son will be
asked to complete several questionnaires and to take me on a
tour of his neighborhood. While we're walking around the
neighborhood, you will be asked to complete two forms that
ask questions about your background and about your son's
behavior and his school grades.

The whole thing takes about an hour of your son's time and
about 15 minutes of your time. Your son will receive $5.00
for his participation. He can also stop at any time if he
does not want to finish the interview.

Do you think you would be interested in letting your son
participate in this study? If "Yes", would you tell me a
good time to come visit and how to get to your house? Thank
you.

Appendix H

Parent Informed Consent Form

I _____, give my consent for

my child_____, to participate in Terry
McCandies' study that ask about experiences in the home,
school, neighborhood, and supportive resources. I
understand that I will be asked about my son's school grades
and behavior. If I am not able to answer questions about my
son's grades, I agree that this information can be obtained
from records kept on my child at school. I also understand
that my son will be asked to define words, answer questions
about his feelings, neighborhood, about life at school, and
at home. I also understand that my child will receive $5.00
for his participation.

I realize that the data obtained from this study will be
kept confidential and that my son is free to discontinue his
participation at any time. The only exceptions to the
promise of confidentiality would be a report by my son that
he has been abused or that he was intending to harm someone.
I realize that by law these situations have to be reported
to the Department of Social Services.

Signed: _____

Please print your address if you would like to receive a
summary of the research findings:

Name: _____

Address _____   Phone# _____

_____

Appendix I

Child Informed Consent Form

I _____, understand that my parent (s) have
given me permission to participate in your study. I realize
I will be asked questions about my feelings, my school,
home, neighborhood, and asked the meaning of some words. I
know I can stop at any time if I do not want to answer a
question or do not want to finish the interview. I also
understand that I will receive $5.00 for helping you with
your study.

Signed _____

Appendix J

Debriefing Statement

The research study you have just participated in was designed to study how friendships in school, and experiences in the neighborhood and home affects the well-being of young Black boys. The tour you gave me of your neighborhood will help me understand where boys, like yourself, go to or turn to for support. The questions you answered about your feelings will help me to better understand how Black boys think and feel, and what bothers them. When I asked you to define words, I wanted to make sure you would understand all of the forms that I read to you. All of the questions that I have asked you will help us better understand young Black boys and their special needs.

If you have any questions at a later date, feel free to call me, Terry McCandies, at the UNC-G psychology department (334-5013).

If you have concerns about your son's behavior or school grades, you may call his school principal, the UNC-G Psychology Clinic, or your local Mental Health Center.