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Healing Racial Trauma From Public School Systems

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About the Author(s)

Lisa Y. Collins is an author, Assistant Professor, and racial healing leader. Her scholarship focuses on racial healing through a personal analysis of racialized trauma. Her TEDx Talk chronicles the healing modalities that resulted for herself and others from her research. Her newly released book, *Love of Light: A Guide to Peace and Oneness*, guides consciousness, boosts self-awareness and provides tools for living in peace, and her podcast focuses on positive examples of healing practices in the world. As a playwright, she has had works produced in New York and Portland, and her short film, *Be Careful What You Ask For,* serves as a discussion platform for racial healing discussions.

Keywords

Brown v. Board of Education, settler colonialism, racial trauma, organizational learning, racial healing, civil rights, teachers, Black feminist thought, STAR

Healing Racial Trauma from Public School Systems

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Abstract

Oregon needs Black educators in the K-12 public school system. In 35 school districts throughout the state, the number of students of color has risen by over 40% in recent years (Oregon Chief Education Office, 2019). The number of educators of color in the state is under 10%. The number of Black educators is even lower. Research has shown that Black educators improve all students' academic, cultural, and social aspects, especially Black students. Nationally, Black educators were impacted by the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling. At that time in history, Black communities fought for civil rights as they experienced colonizing systems in employment, education, housing, and safety. When it entered the union, Oregon, a white-only state, had racist threads of settler colonialism embedded in the laws and practices that systematically institutionalized Blacks' mistreatment.

The day-to-day interactions within many places, including the school systems, cause harm, disengagement, and traumatize Black people. This study is autoethnography that reviews the intersectionality of historical and current federal policies' effects on Black educators through a framework of *Black Feminist Thought* (Collins, 1990) by answering the following questions: 1) *What are the experiences of a Black educator in public school settings in Oregon that contribute to or inhibit working in education? 2) How do federal and state policies and practices contribute to a Black educator's professional growth or decline in Oregon?* By examining lived experiences, this study can directly inform day-to-day educational practices and shed light on possible challenges or successes that contribute to or detract from a Black person's likelihood of working in public education in Oregon.

Keywords: Brown v. Board of Education, settler colonialism, racial trauma, organizational learning, racial healing, civil rights, teachers, Black feminist thought, STAR

Everything you hear, smell, see,
All the world is everything,
Everything is you and me,
Hope and peace and love and trust,
All the world is all of us.

-Liz Garton Scanlon, *All the World*, 2009

Background of Research

Bojangles Finds His Way to My Office

Principal: "I had to call and tell you about an amazing lesson I just saw in the Library during Media."

Me Assistant Principal: "Oh, tell me about it."

Principal: "Well, it was Shirley Temple and Bojangles dancing together!"

Me Assistant Principal: "What? That does not sound good."

Principal: "You do not understand Ms. Collins; the lesson was very good. It was Shirley Temple and Bojangles dancing together!"

Me Assistant Principal: "That is not good. Do you mean our 1st and 2nd grade; Black children watched this in media class today?"

Principal: "Yes, it was a great lesson."

Me Assistant Principal: "No, it was not a great lesson; our children should not be watching that it is an archaic representation of a Black man."

Principal: "No, it was good. Shirley Temple and Bojangles danced together. It was teaching the students about tap dancing."

Me Assistant Principal: "Why do the students need to learn about tap dancing? Some modern artists would be more appropriate."

Principal: "Wouldn't they be happy they are on TV?"

Me Assistant Principal: "No. I can't talk about this anymore." (Collins, 2021).

This paper reviews the research of a Black woman educator. The research and findings highlight experiences and structures to help increase awareness of the lived experiences of Black educators in Oregon to provide insight, support, community, and wellness for Black educators.

The low number of Black teachers in K-12 Oregon presents a problem for the academic growth of students of color. This study examines the lived experience of a Black woman educator through an analysis using the qualitative method of autoethnography. Chang (2011) states, "Autoethnography is a qualitative research method that enables researchers to use their autobiographical and contextual data to gain a hermeneutical understanding of the societal context and, in turn, a sociocultural meaning of self" (Chang, 2011, p.13)

Introduction

The low number of Black educators in Oregon presents a problem that reverberates throughout the state and influences the academic growth of students of color. "Research has shown that having a teacher of the same race/ethnicity can have positive impacts on a student's attitudes, motivation, and achievement, and minority teachers may have more positive expectations for minority students' achievement than nonminority teachers" (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). The influence of Black educators could inspire Black students to achieve higher educational growth, which correlates to higher earnings and lower unemployment rates (United States Census Bureau, 2017).

Implementing federal and state policies, like *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), impacted the climate and practices in public education for Black educators and the Black community. These policies and the resulting backlash against them affected the careers of Black educators in the United States (Lutz, 2017; Bell, 2004; Milner & Howard, 2004; Horsford, 2019; Walker, 1996). Black educators and their communities carry a unique lived experience in the United States.

Black people have systematically suffered from the historical trauma of being part of the African Diaspora. The African Diaspora is the mass dispersion of people from Africa during the Transatlantic Slave Trades (the 1500s to the 1800s). This kidnapping took millions of Black people from Western and Central Africa to different regions throughout the Americas and the Caribbean. Like other colonized populations, Black people have continued to be victims of the repercussions of settler colonialism (Khalifa, 2018; DeGruy, 2005; Crenshaw, 1995; Bell, 2004; Walker, 1996; Horsford, 2019). The systemic oppression of settler colonialism is the foundation of controlling identities, race, and gender to maintain unjust systems and control (Khalifa, 2018). Settler colonialism is embedded in the laws and policies in the United States to impose power on

the lives of Black people (Crenshaw, 1995; D. Bell, 2004; Walker, 1996; Horsford, 2019). The historical trauma of the African Diaspora, the kidnapping of Black bodies, the fight for civil rights, and educational desegregation policies live in the organizational memory and institutional practices of public education. Black educators continue to be traumatized within the public education system and embody traumatic systematic harms in their day-to-day practices. This autoethnographic study examines the lived experiences of a Black educator in Oregon.

The current literature does not address the experiences of Black educators in education from the perspective of their personal lived experience. The following books center on black educators' experiences, yet black educators do not share their experiences firsthand. *Black Teachers on Teaching* (Foster, 1997) discusses three generations of Black educators, which center on the importance of Black educators. *Beyond Desegregation: The Politics of Quality in African American Schooling* (Shujaa, 1996) reviews desegregation policies' political and racialized conditions, which centers the issues in education for Black Americans. *Their Highest Potential* (V. S. Walker, 1996) recounted the experiences of Black educators and families in the South again; Black educators do not write the stories. Vanessa Siddle Walker (1996) described high expectations of learning, caring school communities, and Black parental support. *The Lost Education of Horace Tate* (V. S. Walker, 2018) is a historical overview through the eyes of a Black education leader. In this book, Vanessa Siddle Walker uncovers the hidden heroes, Black educators who supported justice for Black children's education. Although the book chronicles the history of educators, it is not written in their voice by them. *All Deliberate Speed: Reflection on the First Half-Century of Brown v. Board of Education* (Ogletree, 2004) and *Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform* (D. Bell, 2004) discussed Black education before and after *Brown* from a civil rights attorney's perspective (Horsford, 2011). Education research focuses little on the voices and lived experiences of Black educators by the educators themselves. Black people may be in educational research, but the research topics are not in the Black educator's personal experience. The literature currently chronicles the struggle of Black lives in education in the United States. What is missing is the actual experiences inside the organizational structures that continue to harm Black communities through the epistemology of the people struggling within the system.

Black people fought tirelessly to achieve freedom and civil and educational rights. Once Black people legally received some form of legal justice, oppressive institutional systems replicated and repeated, stunting success and traumatizing generations. For example, Black educators were systematically pushed out of the education arena through changing teaching requirements, job loss, standardized testing, threats, and loss of life (V. S. Walker, 1996; ESSA, 1965; Horsford, 2019). These forms of terror continue to live and breathe in educational systems today through lived experiences, systematic oppression, and racial and organizational trauma. These challenges are rooted in the back-and-forth interactions that occur in day-to-day life.

K–12 educational institutions, like post-secondary institutions, "remain undisturbed behind the walls of disciplinary convention and colorblind ideology" (Crenshaw et al., 2019, p. 1). The ideology of colorblindness is based on the belief that "our Constitution is colorblind" (p. 30). After the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments and the passing of *Brown v. Board of Education*, a colorblind interpretation of the Constitution justified and preserved Whites' social, economic, and political advantages over other people. These advantages are evident in research and data. "The dominance of colorblindness as the embodiment of racial justice underscored the need for a powerful counternarrative that could convey an alternative vision of racial equity, one tied to the historical and contemporary ways that race worked..." (Crenshaw et al., 2019, p. 1). Educational research needs the counternarratives of Black educators working in education to push the oppressive barriers created by the ideology of colorblindness.

This research study focuses on the lived experience of a Black woman educator, to answer the following questions:

1. *What experiences of a Black educator in public school settings in Oregon contribute to or inhibit working in education?*
2. *How do federal and state policies and practices contribute to the growth or decline of Black educators in Oregon?*

Researcher Positionality Statement

As a Black woman born in the United States and a descendant of the African Diaspora, I hold a particular positionality of experiences within the United States and systems framed in ideologies of dominance. I acknowledge that my gender, race, and culture influence my position as the author of this work. I worked on this research independently, utilizing qualitative software

to analyze the findings. My experience as a Black researcher may not have reciprocity to other Black educators. The experience I share is one set of ideas. The study documents the lived experiences of one Black woman educator. It can assist other researchers in understanding the unique experiences, organizational challenges, and practices experienced by marginalized people to inform future research.

Literature Review

The research literature done for this article explains why there are few Black educators in Oregon and why this is also prevalent nationally. This literature review falls into four areas of scholarship examined through the lens of *Black Feminist Thought* (Collins, 1990). The four areas are trauma, organizational learning, organizational development, and a history of relevant federal policies. These realms were examined as they relate to the experiences perpetuating racist institutional practices in the lives of Black educators.

Black Feminist Thought

The voices of Black people have been silenced for many generations. *Black Feminist Thought* (Collins, 2000) articulates how Black women experience organizational practices and how systems hold the practices to perpetuate power over Black women. Examining race, class, and gender can reveal the subtle experiences that lay unexposed in organizational practices (Hooks, 2015; Perkins, 2015; Jordan et al., 2019; Davis, 1981; K. Springer, 2005). Black women educators work in systems of oppression apparent in organizational practices, policies, and the people within the organizations. Black women educators experience regular oppressive practices and need new organizational practices to heal what Black educators have experienced over many years (Jordan et al., 2019; Perkins, 2015; Loder-Jackson, 2012; McKay, 2008; Bartman,2015; Cook, 2010; Irvine, 1988; Rosette & Livingston, 2012; Wallace et al., 2012).

Black Educators

Black Educators were the backbone of the Black community in the era before the *Brown verses the Board of Education* (1954) decision (V. S. Walker, 1996, 2018; D. Bell, 1980, 2004; Haney, 1978; Milner & Howard, 2004; Green, 2004; Lutz, 2017; Tate et al., 1996; Lynn & Dixson, 2013). They taught Sunday School in churches and were highly respected members of the Black community. The *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision turned the lives of Black educators upside-down (V. S. Walker, 1996, 2018; D. Bell, 2004; Haney, 1978; Milner &

Howard, 2004; Green, 2004; Lutz, 2017; Tate et al., 1996; Lynn & Dixson, 2013; Cole, 1986; Breathett, 1983; Loder-Jackson, 2012). Research highlights that an unintended consequence of the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision included the loss of Black educators, which continues to affect education today (Green, 2004; D. Bell, 1980, 2004; Oakley et al., 2009; Gist, 2018).

Federal Policies

Black educators at individual and community levels have been affected by federal policies (Cole, 1986; Karpenski, 2006; Horsford, 2019; Green, 2004; Milner, 2006). The political agenda of the era influenced educational practices. For example, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 and the Every Child Succeeds Act (ESEA) of 2015 were political educational mandates intended to improve student learning outcomes in the United States. These mandates are built on many aspects of history but are renditions of the ESEA (1965). In April 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson enacted the ESEA (1965). The ESEA's (1965) intention was to focus on poverty and equal access to education. It funded elementary and secondary education by developing high standards and accountability measures. However, the policy produced unintended consequences for the already struggling Black community. The structure of ESEA (1965) was to enhance education, yet it did not center the black community's needs. Instead of making provisions for the racial divide and disrupting the oppressive barriers within education, this federal mandate focused on areas of education that did not center on race. The funds of ESEA (1965) were earmarked for professional development, instructional materials, educational programs, and family engagement without structures to assist Black communities.

The ESEA (1965) implementation took place after the National Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s, in which the federal government began interjecting policies and practices into the field of education. Previously, the federal government had little or no oversight over education (Paige, 2006; Kantor & Lowe, 2006). Johnson's platform on poverty stood on the shoulders of the Civil Rights Movement. At this vital time in history, Johnson focused on poverty, not race. This lack of racial consciousness became the norm of government-funded mandates and improvements for education and equality. The ideology of colorblindness plays a role in educational policies, practices, and federal structures (Crenshaw et al., 2019; Bell, 2004; Horford, 2019; Norguera et al., 2014). Federal policies and practices did not center on racial

relations but instead focused on poverty (Norguera et al., 2014). Without centering on race and the issues of the oppression Blacks suffered, the perpetuation of the oppression and systemic barriers intensified in educational systems (Hudson & Holmes, 1994). In these educational systems, black educators and children are pulled away from their communities and subjected to increased hatred, racial terrorizing, and constant hazing (Anderson, 1988; Cecelski, 2014; Fairclough, 2004; Hudson & Holmes, 1994; Bell, 2004; V. S. Walker, 1996). The inherent belief that Black bodies are subhuman and need to be controlled and civilized lay at the foundation of the conception of the United States and its judicial, governmental, and educational practices (Glenn, 2015; Jackson, 2006). This belief system and dignity-violating practices are the foundation of the bureaucratic institutional way of being that excludes Black educators as part of the national educational framework and harms black children within the system (Horsford, 2019; Khalifa, 2018; Horford, 2019; Norguera et al., 2014; Wong & Nicortera, 2004).

Brown v. Board of Education

The desegregation of public education removed Black educators and leaders from the lives of Black children (Hall, 2005; Lutz, 2017; Winsboro & Bartley, 2014; Echols, 2006; Madkins, 2011). Desegregation and compliance guidelines did not include the continued connection of Black adults to Black students in public school settings. Instead, they infused institutional barriers as White institutions resisted Black educators in public schools. In his book *Silent Covenants* (2004), Derrick Bell covers the scope of the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision, from *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) to the end of the *Brown v. Board of Education* era (Bernstein, 1962). Throughout the book, Bell (2004) describes the brutal consequences endured by Black people because of the poorly enforced federal policies and laws. Blacks suffer socially, economically, and physically unless whites are interested in benefits. Bell states, "Justice for blacks vs. racism = racism Racism vs. obvious perceptions of white self-interest = justice for blacks" (p.59, 2004). After *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), Black students experienced injustice. "Black students lost role models who not only knew them on a personal level, but had a unique understanding of their communities, cultural identities, and individual situations" (Lutz, p. 1, 2017.) The educational community for Blacks was disrupted, "without the principals, the members of the African American community lost their voice in education, and the students also lost role models whom they were able to trust and emulate" (Lash & Ratcliffe,

p. 334, 2014). The education career path was taken away from Black educators who were trained, talented, and available to the black community (Lutz, 2017).

Hudson and Holmes (1994) summarized the loss Black educators experienced after the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision. Before *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), 82,000 Black educators were responsible for teaching over 2 million Black children. During the years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, from 1954–1965, over 38,000 Black educators from the South and nearby states lost their jobs. In the next ten years, from 1965–1975, Black college students majoring in education declined by 66%. By 1984, the reforms for teacher education had begun, and 21,515 Black educator candidates were eliminated from new teacher certifications and educational program admissions from 1984–1989 (Hudson & Holmes, 1994).

In Oregon in 2019, 2,190 teacher candidates enrolled in preliminary licensing programs in public and private institutions. Black educators account for 47 of the 2,190 (Chief Education Office, 2019). Out of the 2,164 educators who completed a teacher licensure program in private and public institutions in 2017–2018, only 19 were Black. Further, once a Black educator endures post-secondary barriers and acquires teaching certification, additional challenges and barriers occur within educational organizations (Fultz, 2004; Roseboro & Ross, 2009; Hooker, 1970; Rusch & Horsford, 2009). For example, many organizations, programs, and curricula have been developed from Eurocentric epistemology, excluding other cultures and practices. As a result, Black people have been marginalized within organizational learning and development (Akbar, 1984; Asante, 1998, 1991; Schiele, 1990, 1996).

Organizational Learning

Organizational learning and organization development reflect the conceptual framework of Western social science (Weber, 1946; Blau, 1956; March 1996; Sewell, 1992; Levin, 1947; Benne et al., 1950; Mann & Likert, 1952). The thoughts and ideas of Western society exclude the experiences of other cultures. Schiele (1990) and Asante (2011) suggested using an Afrocentric Organizational Model. Schiele (1990) suggests that Afrocentric tenets and organizational theory applied together would include as guiding principles:

> …that human beings are conceived collectively (organizational unity); human beings are spiritual (holistic perspective/organizational morality); the affective approach to knowledge is epistemologically

> valid; much of human behavior is nontraditional, and the axiology or highest value lies in interpersonal relations (p. 156).

This model suggests that organizational theorists utilize characteristics from the Afrocentric Paradigm, offering an alternative to the Eurocentric organizational practices (Schiele, 1990; Asante, 2011).

Organizational Trauma

Organizational trauma is the application of trauma to describe processes within organizations. Trauma is the body's response to an event or number of events that produce emotional, physical, or life-threatening harm (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2019; Menakem, 2017; Yoder & Barge, 2001; Lipsky & Burk, 2009; van der Kolk, 2015). Vivian and Hormann (2013) describe organizational trauma as a collective experience that prevents the completion of the organization's mission and or vision. Organizational trauma can interrupt organizational practices, which can occur based on one or more collective events—this kind of dysfunction results in the organization not operating as intended and cannot correct its dysfunction. An examination of organizational health in mission-driven organizations is found in Vivian and Hormann's book *Organizational Trauma and Healing* (2013). Systems of oppression can be found in the day-to-day practices of organizations. The interchange between members of the organization can influence the practices and actions that occur (March, 1996; Sewell, 1996). Actions like decision-making, power dynamics, and misaligning mission and vision can create oppressive, harmful, and unhealthy practices and culture. Vivian and Hormann (2013) call dysfunctional practices Organizational Shadows. These shadows are interlocking organizational characteristics representing an organization's unhealthy aspects. In mission-driven organizations, the misalignment of organizational characteristics results in organizational trauma. Organizational trauma of an organization shows up in various parts of everyday practices. These practices can be foundational in perpetuating continuous harm to the organization's employees, like educators.

Trauma

Trauma is the body's response to an event or number of events that produce emotional, physical, or life-threatening harm (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration,

2019; Menakem, 2017; Yoder & Barge, 2001; Lipsky & Burk, 2009; van der Kolk, 2015). Trauma is not an emotional response but a physical one. Menakem (2017) states:

> The body is where we live. It's where we fear, hope, and react. It's where we constrict and relax. And what the body most cares about are safety and survival. When something happens to the body that is too much, too fast, or too soon, it overwhelms the body and can create trauma. (p. 7)

Trauma has long-lasting adverse effects on mental, physical, social, emotional, and spiritual well-being (Felitti et al., 1998; Yoder & Barge, 2001; van der Kolk, 2015). It occurs in the body when the body is processing physical, emotional, and threatening racialized lived experiences. Unlike other sources of trauma, racial trauma is not a topic that is widely discussed in educational organizations.

Educator Stress

Trends have shown that educators of late have not experienced excellent job satisfaction. According to the MetLife Survey of American Educators: Educators, Parents, and the Economy (MetLife, 2012), today's educators are less satisfied with teaching than in recent years. Black educator wellness has not been a focus of this research, and when wellness for educators is implemented, it does not have a culturally specific lens. Educator stress is associated with Secondary Traumatic Stress and has three significant characteristics: burnout, vicarious trauma, and compassion fatigue. Burnout (Stamm, 1995, 2010, 2016) is a mental or physical breakdown caused by stress and overwork (Stamm, 1995; Larkin et al., 2014). People who work with traumatized populations are often emotionally affected by the painful things they hear and see, called vicarious trauma (Stamm, 1995, 2010, 2016). Compassion fatigue (Stamm, 1995, 2010, 2016) is the physical, emotional, and psychological responses that occur when stress levels are high from helping others. Compassion fatigue leads to job dissatisfaction due to repeatedly helping in stressful situations. These forms of trauma depilate physically, emotionally, and spiritually (Stamm, 1995, 2010, 2016; Menakem, 2017; Yoder & Barge, 2001; Lipsky & Burk, 2009; van der Kolk, 2015).

High Blood Pressure: Addicted to Work

My doctor looked at me sternly.
"Your blood pressure is up, and you will need to take some time off from work," she said.
"Okay," I nodded. "How about in a couple of weeks?" I suggested. I could not let go of work. It was like a drug. I was always competing to do more, as was everyone around me.
"No," she said. "Wednesday of this week your last day."
(Collins, 2021)

Racial Trauma

In 2019, American Psychology published a special issue, *Racial Trauma: Theory, Research, and Healing* (Comas-Díaz et al., 2019). The authors define racial trauma:

> Although similar to post-traumatic stress disorder, racial trauma is unique in involving ongoing individual and collective injuries due to exposure and re-exposure to race-based stress.
> (Comas-Díaz et al., 2019, p. 1).

In this study, the above definition describes racial trauma. As stated, racism is a form of trauma (Carter, 2007). Robert T. Carter first coined Race-Based Traumatic Stress (RBTS) in Racism and Psychological and Emotional Injury: Recognizing and Assessing Race-Based Traumatic Stress *(*2007). In his article, Carter discussed the psychological and emotional toll of racism experienced by people of color. In this article, this racial experience is defined as racial trauma. Racial trauma refers to the stress people of color encounter when danger is perceived during discrimination (Comas-Díaz et al., 2019; Carter, 2007). Experiencing the oppression of racial trauma can result in many physical, emotional, and mental responses (van der Kolk, 2015; Felitti et al., 1998). DeGruy (2005) states that Black people have suffered from multi-generational effects of trauma coupled with oppression, which can result in the absence of opportunities to heal and access resources. Unlike trauma, racial trauma is not a topic that is widely discussed in educational leadership (Collins, 2021).

Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart developed the Historical Trauma Theory (1998). Brave Heart was moved to reduce the suffering of indigenous people. The reality of the past influenced Brave Heart, the shaping of the present, and the unconscious/preconscious thinking that lived in people living in reservation communities named after genocide perpetrators (Brave Heart, 1999). She believed powerful memories lived in the bodies of native people and brought a sense of unhealed grief and trauma to the broader tribal community.

Racism exists because of exclusion, conflict, and disadvantages (Paradies et al., 2015). Racism, whether in the past or present, can be seen in systemic practices within societies that perpetuate avoidable and unfair inequalities of power, resources, and opportunities for people of color—driven by beliefs, stereotypes, discrimination, and prejudice. Racial trauma is the same as any other experience; it is "traumatic" (Finkelhor, 1987, p. 354) and has long-term effects. "Racism persists as a cause of exclusion, conflict, and disadvantage on a global scale, and existing data suggests racism is increasing in many national contexts" (Paradies et al., 2015, p. 24)."

The racial experiences of this study can be described in two categories: covert or overt racism. Covert racism occurs within the organizational culture of systematic practices. "Covert racism may be viewed as racism which is hidden; secret; private; covered; disguised; insidious; or concealed" (Coates, p.1, 2011). Covert racism is as powerful and hurtful as overt racial harm. It is especially harmful because it is experienced and often suffered in isolation. It is hidden in norms and group dynamics to serve as a boundary between the racial majority and racial minority (Coates, 2011). Real-life examples from the study of covert racism can be viewed in Figure 1. Overt racism includes incidents or situations that display direct actions of racial discrimination. Hall (2021) describes overt racism as occasions when arguments and positions are expressed openly to perpetuate racist ideas, policies, or views. A real-life example of overt racism from the study is in Figure 2.

Figure 1

Covert Racial Trauma Lived Experiences (Collins, 2021)

Experience	Description
Not providing the Black researcher, as an administrator, keys to the school building	Control of dark bodies through White supremacy, bureaucratic policies, and procedures
Excluding the Black researcher, as an administrator, from a White House visit by not sharing the information	Control of dark bodies through White supremacy, bureaucratic policies, and procedures
Allowing racist practices toward students by protecting White staff members	Whiteness as superior, organizational control of dark bodies through bureaucratic policies and procedures
Ignoring racist incidents that occur to students (grabbing a student or punishing students for clothing)	Systematic oppression and containment of Whiteness as superior in decision making and the control dark bodies

(Khalifa, 2018; Crenshaw et al., 2019; Lynn & Dixson, 2013; V. S. Walker, 1996)

Figure 2

Overt Racial Trauma Lived Experiences (Collins, 2021)

Experience	Description
Racial name-calling, mocking, yelling, or screaming at the Black researcher	Dark bodies are seen as not human, settler colonialism and White supremacy
Stopping Black researcher, as a Director from providing resources for students	Control of dark bodies through White supremacy, and settler colonialism, bureaucratic policies and procedures
Delaying remuneration of pay to the Black researcher	Organizational control of dark bodies through bureaucratic policies and procedures
Ignoring Black researcher's position and decision making	Systematic oppression and containment of Whiteness as superior in decision making and the control dark bodies
Gaslighting the Black researcher	Settler colonialism, and White supremacy, control of dark bodies

(Lynn & Dixson, 2013; V. S. Walker, 1996; Khalifa, 2018; Crenshaw et al., 2019)

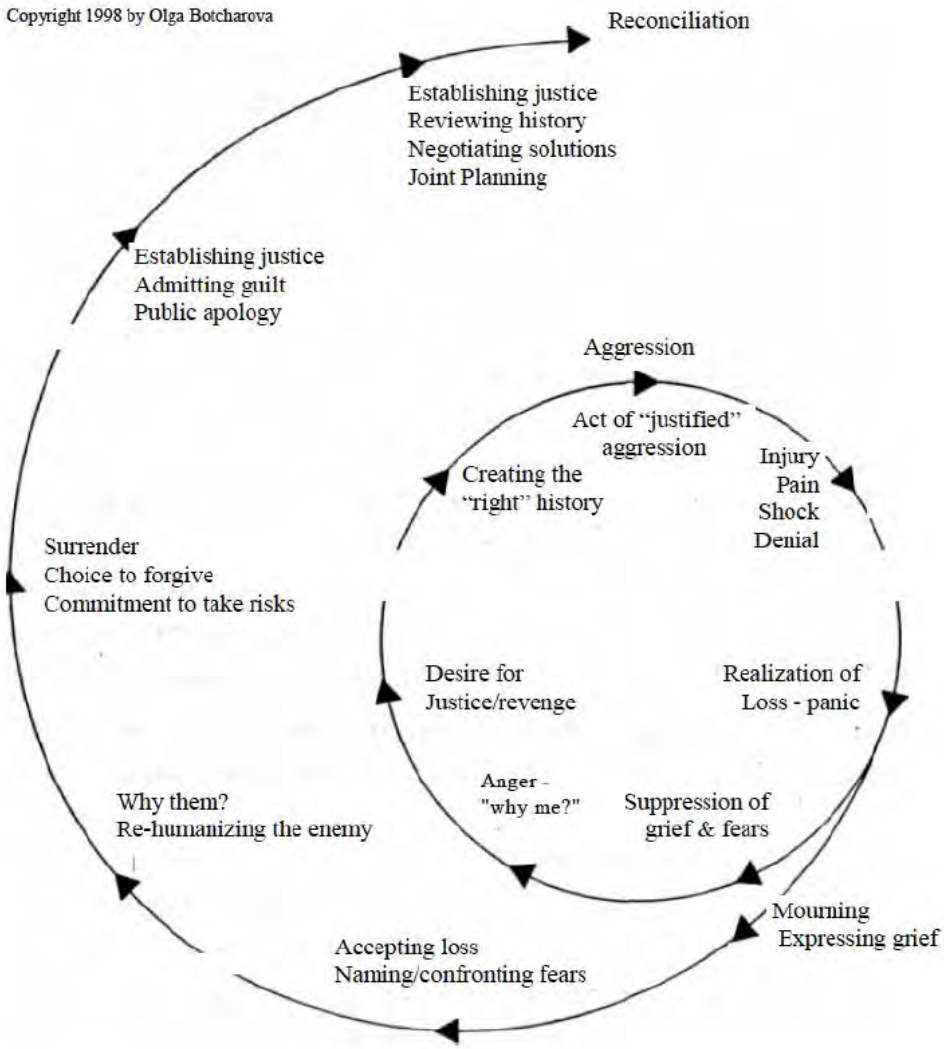
Racial Healing

In the context of this article, the Black researcher defined *racial healing* as racial regulation (Collins, 2021), which is the ability to regulate the body, mind, and spirit within environments of racial trauma practices. (micro- and macro-aggressions). Racial healing occurred by utilizing components of the Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience Model (STAR) (Yoder & Barge, 2001), which originated at the Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) as a peacebuilding response to the incidents of 9/11. STAR provides a multidisciplinary approach to traumatic healing through individual, community- and society-wide processes. Utilizing research in biology, psychology, sociology, and spirituality, STAR teaches trauma awareness, resilience, exploring justice, sensemaking, community building, and conflict transformation. "STAR intentionally engages participants to explore trauma with multiple lenses, placing more emphasis on the lived experience of individuals and groups" (Mansfield, 2017, p.

266). The structure of STAR explores the trauma response individually and collectively with the intent of resilience. The STAR Model uses the work of Olga Botcharova, Implementation of Track Two Diplomacy (2001), as a foundational piece in its development. The STAR snail model is based on Botcharova's (1998) Seven Steps Toward Forgiveness.

Figure 3

The Seven Steps Toward Forgiveness (Botcharova, 1998)

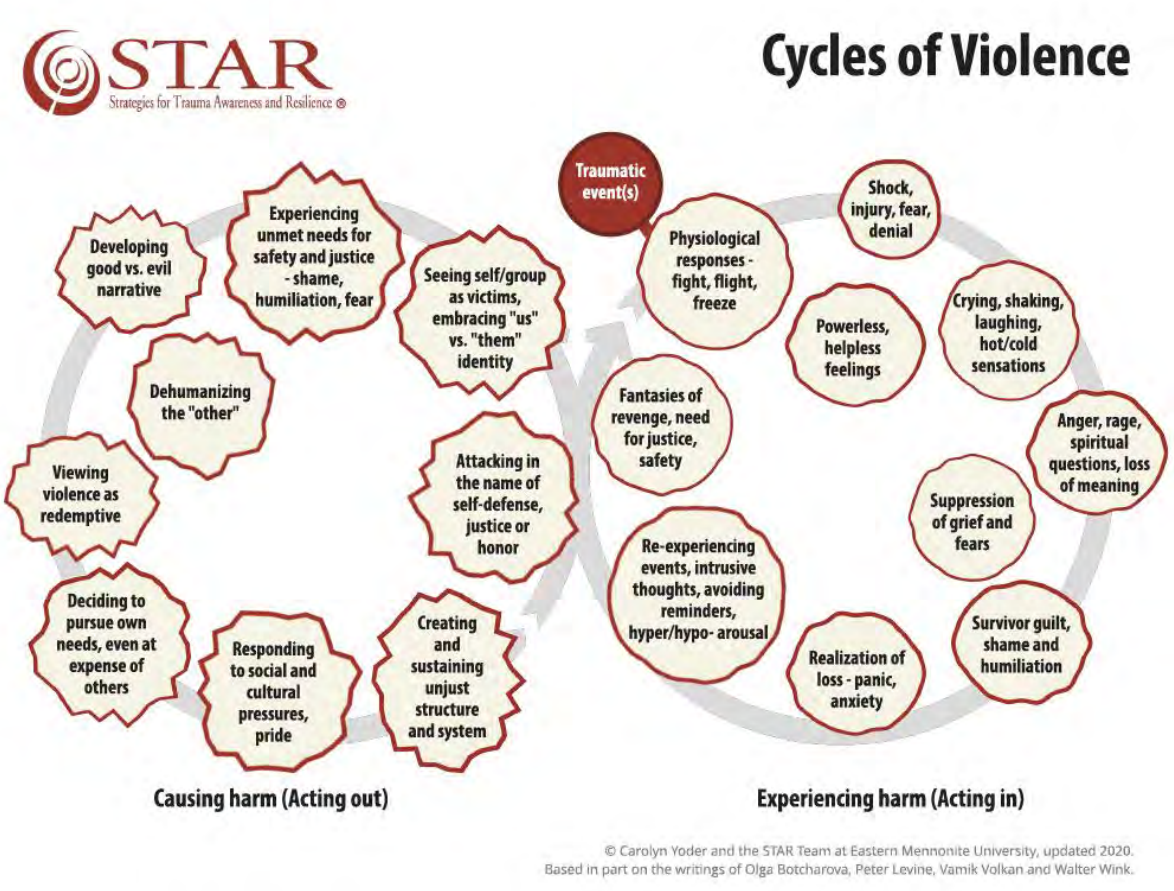


STAR used this model to illustrate how trauma is experienced and interrupted (breaking free), acknowledging the possibility of Reconnection. STAR's Cycle of Violence from Unaddressed Trauma is based on the Seven Steps Toward Forgiveness model that illustrates the Aggression cycle. STAR's Cycles of Violence Model builds on the Seven Steps toward

forgiveness and illustrates understanding the physiological responses, psychological modalities, and transformations of trauma. In Cycles of Violence, a traumatic event occurs, followed by a physical response (Herman, 1992; Levine, 1997; van der Kolk, 2015; Braveheart, 1992; Menachem, 2017; Yoder & Barge, 2001; Mansfield, 2017). STAR defines trauma as a whole-body experience and suggests multiple modalities in education, theater, psychology, and art integration. The Cycles of Violence demonstrates acting in a Victim Cycle, which describes the thoughts and challenges of someone processing the trauma by internalizing it. The Acting Out or Aggressor Cycle describes the thoughts and challenges of someone processing the trauma through an outward projection. The Black researcher used the model in the study to understand

Figure 4

STAR Cycles of Violence

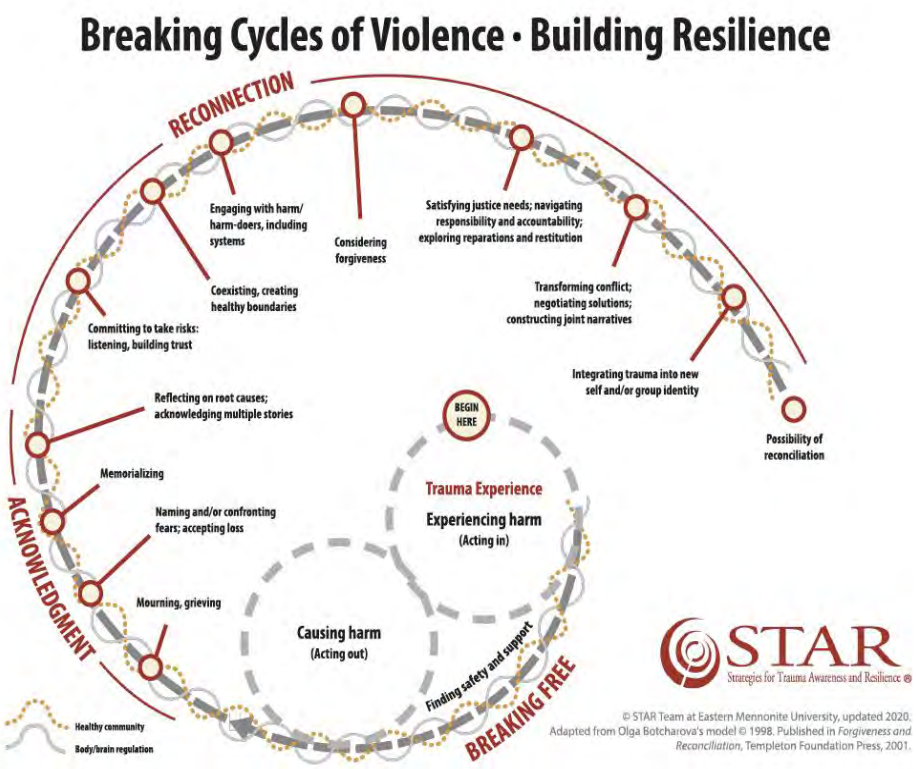


and process her racialized experiences. STAR's (2001) Breaking Cycles of Violence Building Resilience is a pathway for healing from traumatic experiences. STAR (2001) categorized

Resilience as Breaking Free, Acknowledgement, and Reconnection. This model was used to analyze the Black researcher's experiences of these processes. The Black researcher experienced Breaking Free from racial trauma by first seeking safety and support through life coaching to assist her with processing racialized experiences. The Black researcher obtained Acknowledgment by exploring her racial consciousness, aspects of organizational learning, and the truth of settler colonialism in the United States. Acknowledging how organizational systems operated and the foundational underpinnings of settler colonialism assisted the Black researcher in acknowledging that her experiences were neither isolated nor unique. The Black researcher experienced Reconnection when she wrote about her racialized experiences through the autoethnographic process of her dissertation.

Figure 5

Breaking Cycles of Violence Building Resilience



Methodology

Autoethnography is research that “seeks to describe systematically analyze (graph) personal experiences (auto) in order to understand cultural experiences (ethno)” (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 273; Ellis, 2004; Cunningham & Jones, 2005). Autoethnography is the best form of answering deep critical reflections and interpretations (Ellis et al., 2011). Autoethnographic stories are "artistic and analytic demonstrations of how we come to know, name, and interpret personal and cultural experience" (Adams et al., 2015, p. 1). The research questions in this study focus on a Black woman's experiences in public education settings in Oregon (Collins, 2021). "The practices and policies of public schools (including institutions of higher education) have enacted the cultural values, norms, and otherwise privileged White males (e.g., Spring, 2006), males (e.g., Cannela & Perez, 2010), and middle-upper class students (e.g., Gandara, 1995)" (Briscoe & Khalifa, 2015, p. 5). These current practices create a “neoliberal iron cage” that increases the illusion of equity in a “colorblind facade” while continuing to create and replicate oppression to marginalized groups who suffer from the barriers of settler colonialism. The nature of this” neoliberal iron cage of technical rationality” creates the organizational culture of isolation for people of color and privileged for those that benefit (Lipman, 2011; Briscoe & Khalifa, 2015, p. 6)

Autoethnography is a methodology that may uncover the underpinning of educational practices for a Black woman. Current research does not focus on the lived experience of Black women in relation to the iron cage in Oregon's educational system (Briscoe & Khalifa, 2015).

Historically, Black voices and lived experiences are not represented in educational research in their voice by their hand (Collins, 2021). Autoethnography provides credible analysis and interpretation opportunities to address defensible data classification schemes, data elements, and analysis concerns. This research occurs using evidence from narratives. The researcher connects the narratives through triangulation and validation of respondents with an ethical lens (Hughes et al., 2012).

Structure of the Study

Using *Autoethnography: Understanding Qualitative Research* (Adams et al., 2015) as a guide, this autoethnographic project contains six significant components to researching the experience in Oregon school districts. The first was to examine personal experiences through writing. Autoethnography uses the researcher's reasoning for the research and includes

experiences and epiphanies. Second, the research uses sense-making by illustrating the process of understanding the information. Autoethnography shows multiple accounts of sensemaking by showing how and why things are challenging, essential, or transformative. Third, the study aims to "use and show reflexivity" (p. 25). Autoethnography uses reflexivity to examine the relationship between the researcher, self, and others. "Reflexivity consists of turning back on experiences, identities, and relationships to consider how they influence present work" (Adams et al., 2015, p. 26). Fourth, the study aims to "illustrate insider knowledge of a cultural phenomenon/experience" (p. 25). Autoethnography explains the experience so outsiders can see an insider perspective. Fifth, the study aims to "describe and critique cultural norms, experiences, and practices" (p. 25). "Autoethnographies intentionally use personal experience to create nuanced, complex, and comprehensive accounts of cultural norms, experiences, and practices" (Adams et al., 2015, pp. 32–33). Lastly, the study aims to "seek reciprocal responses from audiences" (p. 25). Autoethnographies invite audiences to engage in the experiences. This study utilizes the structures of autoethnography in its analysis of the lived experience of a Black woman educator.

The research results examined the self-narrative data, artifacts, and comments written or gathered by the Black researcher. Self-narrative data in this research study consists of the personal racialized employment experiences within three Oregon public school districts. The Oregon school districts ranged from a large-sized school district with over 40,000 students, a medium-sized school district with over 15,000 students, and a small-sized school district with over 3,000 students.

The artifacts in the study consist of emails, pictures, plays, and poems written or gathered by the Black researcher. The Black researcher wrote narrative comments for each entry in the data set. The qualitative analysis was completed with Atlas.ti qualitative software. The data software analyzed the qualitative information by categorizing, coding, sorting, and grouping the results. The data analysis yielded three main groups: systematic oppression, trauma, and healing.

Systematic Oppression

The group's *systematic oppression* includes the codes from settler colonialism, oppressive practices, and White supremacy. Systematic oppression as a group describes the seen and unseen societal structures rooted in the practice of settler colonialism, bureaucratic political laws, and

policies that remove opportunity, increase barriers, and interfere with the quality of life for Black people in the United States (Degruy, 2005; DeWolf & Gebbes, 2019; Davis, 1981). Systematic oppression as a theme had 102 codes documented from the Black researchers' lived experiences.

Trauma

Trauma includes organizational and racial trauma codes. Trauma describes the immediate physical protective response in the body to potential or future damage from experiences within organizations (Menakem, 2017, p. 7). The Trauma group included 84 narrative entries documented from the Black researcher's lived experiences. The school district with the most prolonged employment yielded 52 trauma-related experiences. In the other two school districts, the mid-sized school district yielded 22, and the small school district yielded three group incidents, accounting for 52 grouped experiences. The group data contained 79 incidents of racial Trauma and 52 incidents of organizational trauma within the three school districts' data set. Organizational Trauma is defined using Vivian and Hormann's (2013) description of "Organizational Trauma Syndrome" (p. 60), which are dynamics that occur in organizations. The authors describe organizational dynamics in the following categories: closed boundaries between organization and external environment; the centrality of insider relationships; stress and anxiety contagion; inadequate worldview and indemnity erosion; and depression expressed through fear or anger and despair.

The code of *racial trauma* (Carter, 2007) describes implicit and explicit micro- and macro-aggressions that a Black person experiences through interactions seen and unseen, rooted in settler colonialism and White supremacy (Davis, 1981; Khalifa, 2018; DeWolf & Geddes, 2019; Carter, 2007). This kind of trauma is experienced at the individual, collective, and historical level by Black people and can be made invisible by organizational dynamics, systematic oppression, and White supremacy (Khalifa, 2018; Vivian & Hormann, 2013; Yoder & Barge, 2001). In turn, predominantly White organizations perpetuate systematic oppressive practices and Cycles of Violence (Yoder & Barge, 2001) for Black people through organizational practices and White epistemology (D. Bell, 2004; Davis, 1981; Crenshaw et al., 2019; Khalifa, 2018; Yoder & Barge, 2001). Out of the 79 coded entries for racial trauma, 16 were listed as single racial trauma. The rest of the entries were coded coupled with a variation of codes:

organizational trauma (26), settler colonialism (15), systematic oppression (13), White supremacy (3), and racial healing (3).

Healing

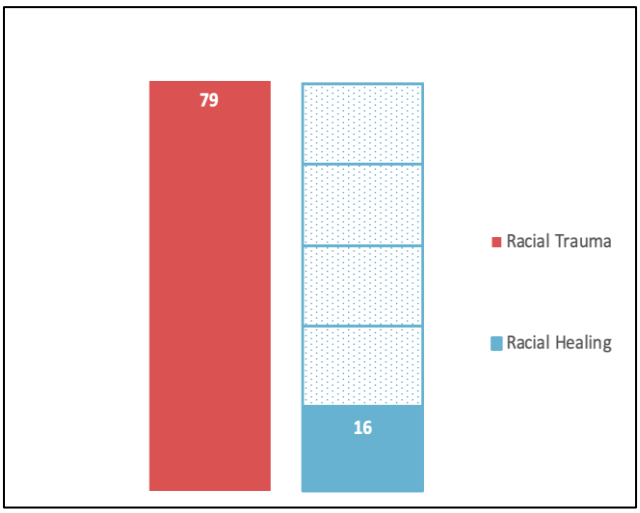
Healing is the last group, consisting of a single racial healing code. Racial healing is the ability to practice self-care to ensure racialized self-regulation by utilizing spirituality, resilience-building communities, racial consciousness awareness, and body and mind reconnection (Davis, 1981; DeGruy, 2005; DeWolf & Gebbes, 2019; Yoder & Barge, 2001). DeGruy (2005) states that racial healing requires a multi-prong approach, including community building, self-efficacy, examining old injuries, racial socialization, self-esteem, faith-building, and storytelling (pp. 157–186). DeGruy (2005) notes:

> We must heal now because our failure to do so will impact the generations to come on multiple levels. First, suppose we continue to allow ourselves to be victimized by the systems and institutions that have affected us in the past. In that case, we will demonstrate and model futility and acceptance of despair (p. 158).

Healing represents the slightest account of experiences from the life of the Black researcher in all three school districts where she worked. One district had eight entries, another one, and the last five entries of racial healing experiences.

Figure 6

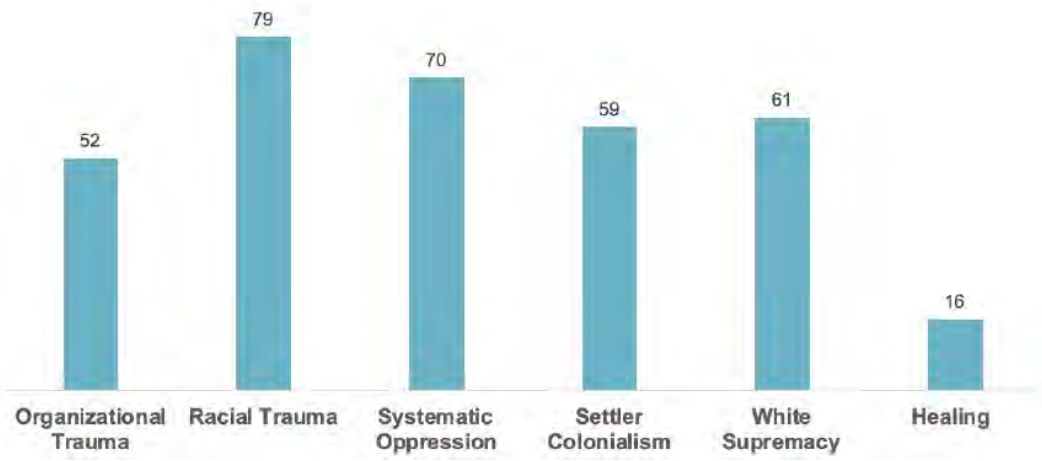
Autoethnographic Coded Results



In summary, the results of this autoethnographic study have shown that the groups of Systematic Oppression, Trauma, and Healing summarized the Black researcher's life experiences. Many of the Black researcher's experiences were challenging, with few positive encounters. The results overall were alarming and called for more research on the organizational experiences of Black voices. Sixty-one documents were part of the data collection of the lived experience of a Black woman educator in Oregon. Of the 61 artifacts, 178 quotes were highlighted and coded; of those quotes, six codes emerged: Racial Trauma (79), Oppressive Practices (70), White Supremacy (61), Settler Colonialism (59), Organizational Trauma (52), and Racial Healing (16). The six codes were grouped into three themes: *Systematic Oppression, Trauma,* and *Healing*. The lived experience of the Black researcher is represented in these themed groups.

Figure 7

Autoethnographic Coded Results



(Collins, 2021)

Autoethnography provided a retrospective of the Black researcher's past racialized experiences that enhanced the wellness of her emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being.

Hope

My ancestors have brought me to this point of understanding the lived experience of this Black researcher through autoethnographic analysis in K-12 settings. Through toil, pain, and suffering emerges

the hope for a new tomorrow in educational practices in the United States (Collins, 2021).

Findings

This study found that the Black researcher experienced systematic oppression, trauma, and healing. The Black researcher experienced systematic oppression through settler colonialism, oppressive practices, and white supremacy. The Black researcher was under the impression that the education system she worked within would provide her with the same opportunities as her white co-workers. The Black researcher did not understand that her ancestry situated her differently. Through this study, the Black researcher learned that her racial consciousness is similar to what W.E.B. DuBois stated in 1903 when he wrote of "twoness" (p. 14) or double consciousness, which is the oppression and disparaging experience of Blacks. DuBois (1903/2009) states:

> The Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil and gifted with second sight in this American world—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (Du Bois, 1903/2009, p. 14).

The Black researcher defined racial consciousness as knowing one's ancestral knowledge (Khalifa, 2018) as a minoritized person and being grounded in or knowing the history of settler colonialism (Khalifa, 2018) in the United States to process and understand oppressive practices. The Black researcher experienced isolation when she sought assistance for racialized discrimination. The Black researcher experienced the same when she witnessed and advocated for the mistreatment of Black students and families. The Black researcher found that

organizational processes of educational organizations value bureaucratic rules and regulations rather than equitable practice in racialized experiences. These organizational processes are grounded in settler colonialism; bureaucratic processes coupled with federal laws and mandates left the Black researcher in racially unhealthy situations. In one instance, as a director, the Black researcher was prohibited from spending department funds to collaborate with colleagues from the more extensive department. Instead, the supervisor insisted that he attend the events. The supervisor needed to approve all spending; therefore, the Black researcher was constrained by bureaucratic rules and regulations. The hierarchy of bureaucratic procedures ensured the Black researcher was stuck between processes. In another example, as an assistant principal, the Black researcher had all her duties removed from the principal without any warning or conversation. Nothing changed at the school site after reporting the incident to the area supervisor. The Black researcher was allowed to move job locations, and the Black researcher became the problem for the school district, not the racist actions of the White principal. Systematic oppression is challenging to navigate, and using the bureaucratic systems to address racialized issues did not suffice results.

Trauma was the second result of the study. Trauma in this study includes organizational and racial trauma. The Black researcher observed organizational trauma in her day-to-day practices that caused some form of dysfunction. Vivian and Hormann (2013) stated that organizational self-esteem and efficacy are intertwined with how well the organization operates. A positive outcome of self-esteem comes from a secure sense of identity, allowing the organization to value what it stands for and take action to accomplish its goals. The Black researcher found levels of dysfunction in the school districts in the study, especially in race relations and acknowledging racial harm. In one instance, the Black researcher was called to a meeting to discuss affinity space for students' well-being and cultural identity. When the Black researcher attended, she heard the racialized traumatic experiences of the students. When she approached school leadership to inquire about these incidents, she was informed that the assistant principal kept a list of the racialized incidents.

The school was tracking the incidents, randomly called some parents but not others, and did not take protective action for the well-being of the students. The organizational and racial trauma of this example was overwhelming for the Black researcher. The physical toll left the

Black researcher in tears, and on one occasion, she went home because she could not function. There were no procedures to protect the students, and nothing changed to remove the oppressive barriers for them. At one point, the Black researcher collaborated with another administrator of color to bring racial issues to the attention of the senior cabinet and superintendent. Senior leadership hired a mediator to meet with parents and school and district staff. Nothing changed after that meeting. After the meeting, a parent stated it was good that the school district organized a meeting. The Black researcher fought organizational dysfunction while witnessing the racialized trauma in others and herself. This form of trauma in organizations is difficult to process and or address. Without the racial consciousness of all involved, many conversations to address organization or racial trauma end up in circles without addressing the underlying issues.

Any traumatic incident is experienced in the body (Menakem, 2017). The Black researcher needed physical, emotional, and spiritual assistance during this study. She sought this support through life coaching and STAR (2001).

Lastly, the Black researcher experienced healing within the same school districts where she experienced traumas. Healing includes healing from racial trauma. The Black researcher experienced caring people who heard her stories and tried to assist her the best way they could. In one incident, the Black researcher sat in a meeting with a neutral district staff person who tried to understand why the Black researcher's duties were removed as the assistant principal of the building. After the meeting, when the principal left the room, the neutral district staff member looked at the Black researcher and said I am so sorry. The Black researcher was heard and seen; someone else saw what she was going through. The district staff member of color became her mentor.

The Black researcher started several healing modalities to support her well-being. She began to see a life coach, participated in a year-long Black practitioner group, mentored and coached other educational leaders of color, and used STAR (2001) to help heal her racialized experiences. In combination, the Black researcher's actions provided healing for her. The healing was that the Black researcher could process and understand racialized experiences without feeling them in her body; she could stand back and be strategic about the next steps, call a mentor, or pause. She was no longer responding to her body's response to harm in her

mind or spirit. She was free of the ups and downs of experiences that left her speechless and disappointed.

The Black researcher learned from studying her own lived experiences. She learned how to examine organizational practices, look for pitfalls, and care for herself within PWO while maintaining her health. The Black researcher had a problematic experience in the school districts where she worked. The few positive healing experiences did assist her in navigating some of the organizational dysfunction of racial relations, but not enough to keep her employed in public school settings in Oregon. The Black researcher was laid off as the director overseeing teaching. In this position, the Black researcher oversaw learning and teaching processes. In this assignment, the researcher received direction to focus on inequitable practices within the school district. This assignment was problematic because the school district's infrastructure needed to support a shift or change in organizational culture and practices. The friction of challenging these systems alone isolated the Black researcher and created a racially unsafe work setting. The Black researcher lacked the knowledge of bureaucracy in organizational systems, settlers colonialism, and organizational development to navigate organizational expectations. During this study, the Black researcher was eventually pushed out of the public school system through bureaucratic systems and discrimination.

Discussion

Black people in the United States have suffered from the systemic and historical trauma of the African Diaspora. Like other colonized populations, Black people have continued to be victims of settler colonialism (Khalifa, 2018; DeGruy, 2005; Crenshaw, 1995; D. Bell, 2004; V. S. Walker, 1996; Horsford, 2019). This systematic oppression is foundational in controlling identities, race, and gender to maintain inequitable systems and control (Khalifa, 2018). Settler colonialism is embedded in the laws and policies in the United States to impose power on the lives of Black people (Crenshaw, 1995; D. Bell, 2004; V. S. Walker, 1996; Horsford, 2019). The continuous, systematic oppression Black people have endured is rooted in organizations and society (Crenshaw, 1996; Collins, 2000; DeGruy, 2005). Black people have suffered immensely from the continual structural crushing of their "unalienable rights" of "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness" (DeGruy, 2005; V. S. Walker, 1996; Gwaltney, 1980; Davis, 1981; DeWolf & Geddes, 2019). Today, descendants of the African Diaspora continue to live and die

within the systems of White supremacy that hold their lives and their children's lives. Void illuminates oppression; it is the unheard voices in the Black intersectionality experience (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1995; C. W. Cooper, 2007; Roseboro & Ross, 2009).

Black people fought tirelessly to achieve freedom and civil and educational rights. Once Black people legally received some form of legal justice, oppressive institutional systems were replicated repeatedly, stunting success and traumatizing generations. Black educators were systematically pushed out of the education arena through changing teaching requirements, job loss, standardized testing, threats, and loss of life (V. S. Walker, 1996; ESSA, 1965; Horsford, 2019). These forms of terror continue to live and breathe in educational systems today through the lived experience of systematic oppression and racial and organizational trauma. These challenges are rooted in the back-and-forth interactions that occur in day-to-day life. K–12 educational institutions, like post-secondary institutions, "remain undisturbed behind the walls of disciplinary convention and colorblind ideology" (Crenshaw et al., 2019, p. 1).

It was found that federal and state policies remain gatekeepers for Oregon's Black educators. First, by the White organizational hierarchy of the power structure in schools, and second, by the organizational practices in school systems. Federal and state policies affected Black educators before national and state teacher testing created further gatekeeping in educational careers. For example, Blacks were prohibited from residing in Oregon for longer than six months. This state law and many other policies and laws reverberate in the state's institutions and practices. This isolation and lack of racial organizational support leaves the Black educator without community, tools, and resources to move forward.

Organizations are challenging to navigate. Predominately White Organizations (PWOs) are unforgiving of cultural differences and discussions of racialized practices. Black educators cannot call attention to themselves, or they will be seen as a problem. The tug-of-war of organizational challenges and micro-and macro-aggressions built on settler colonialism is exhausting. It is often seen as other problems instead of the organizational pressure, the foundation of White supremacy, and the general othering of Black people.

In response to this study, the Black researcher found healing by addressing her racial trauma using Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience (Yoder, 2001), Interpersonal Neurobiology (Siegal, 2012; Badenosh, 2008; Menakem, 2017), and Conscious Freedom Life

Coaching (2008). The Black researcher found healing frameworks that showed progress for herself and other people of color.

Healing resulted from the Black researcher breaking free from racial trauma. As a STAR Practitioner, the Black researcher used the STAR Model to heal and make sense of the racialized trauma she experienced. Her lived experiences provided the Black researcher's steps to assist other Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) educators with valuable tools needed to work in a PWO, begin healing from racial trauma, and build healing BIPOC communities of support. Figure 8 and Figure 9 are the Black researcher's adaptation of the STAR Model, focusing on racial healing trauma.

The Black researcher developed two new racial harm and healing models based on her experiences. Figures 8 and 9 are adaptations of two STAR models. Figure 8 displays the cycles that occur when racial trauma happens. Traumatic experiences result in a physical response: fight, flight, freeze, fawn, or flock (P. Walker, 2005). Racial trauma requires tremendous energy from the person who is experiencing the trauma. The minoritized person must continue functioning while carrying the memory of shame, discrimination, weakness, and vulnerability. While the individual may want to move on, the rational brain does not do this easily (Siegel, 2012; Paradies et al., 2015). The slightest hint of danger interrupts the brain circuits, releasing massive stress hormones (van der Kolk, 2015, p. 2). The reactions to traumatic harm led to the *Cycles of Racial Harm* in Figure 8, adapted from STAR's Cycle of Violence, mainly Unaddressed Trauma. "Contrary to what many believe, trauma is not primarily an emotional response. Trauma always happens in the body. It is a spontaneous protective mechanism used by the body to stop or thwart further (or future) potential damage" (Menakem, 2017, p. 7).
The *Cycles of Racial Harm* circles in Figure 8 represent two categories, Inward and Outward; each illustrates the responses in processing harm. As previously mentioned, the brain and body have a system for protection, and the two categories describe internal and external processing that occurs while managing a racial trauma event.

Breaking Cycles of Racial Harm and Building Healing Resilience is also adapted from STAR. It illustrates progressive themes of obtaining healing based on the Black researcher's lived experience. The first section of the framework is *Breaking Free* from the Racial Trauma

Experience, the Inward or Outward Cycle. These two cycles were ongoing experiences for the Black researcher and were interrupted by finding safety and support.

The model's *Acknowledgement* phase highlights acknowledging the trauma that occurred, affecting the body, mind, and spirit. This phase requires facing the pain of the racialized experiences and processing them to find healing and reconnection with oneself. Self-care, spiritual connection, and memorialization were foundational for the Black researcher. She addressed health needs and concerns that developed when combating discriminatory practices. The Black researcher began to meditate daily, utilizing wellness programming to relieve stress and anxiety, stay in the moment, and look forward to the future with gratitude. Life coaching provided a space to reframe her experiences and move past her racialized experiences' mourning and grieving phase. She was moving toward understanding and acknowledging the systems of oppression (Freire, 1970; Horsford, 2019; Crenshaw, 1995) and its connection to root causes in PWOs. The *Acknowledgement* phase of the model highlights the recognition of racialized events. "People can never get better without knowing what they know and feeling what they feel…For real change to occur, the body needs to learn that the danger has passed and live in the present reality" (van der Kolk, 2015, pp. 21-26). After making sense of her experiences, the Black researcher could reconnect to herself through ongoing self-care, spiritual connection, and a BIPOC-supportive community to move forward.

Figure 8

Cycles of Racial Harm (Collins, 2021)

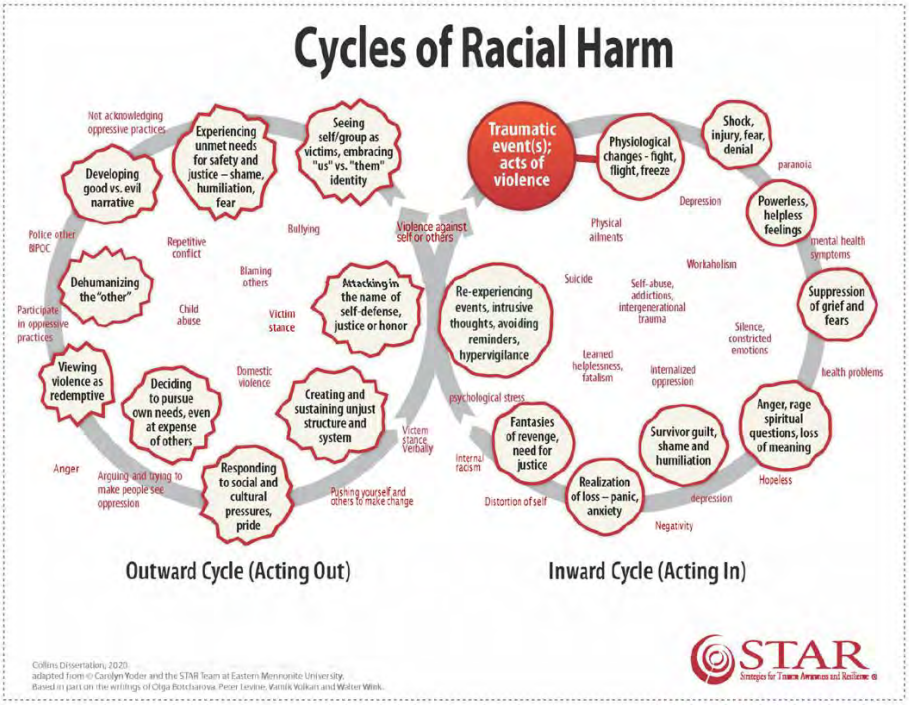
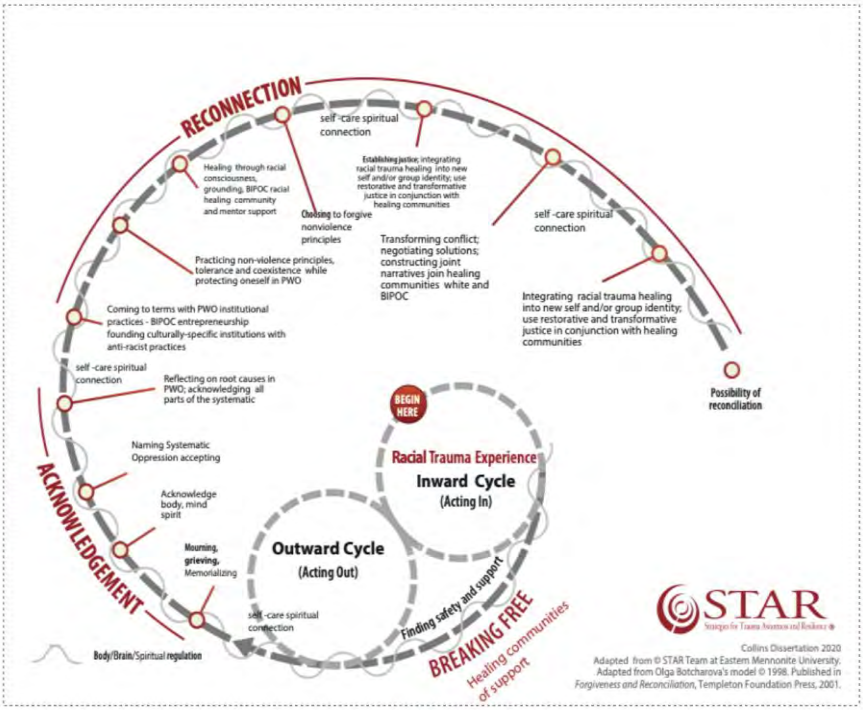


Figure 9

Breaking Cycles of Racial Harm and Building Healing Resilience (Collins, 2021)



Implications

This study calls for additional research on the lived experiences of K–12 Black educators and their racialized experiences. Universal racial healing practices are needed for Black educators to heal from racialized trauma. Healing communities of support for racial trauma are needed and should be supported financially by school districts and city and state institutions. Leadership within PWOs needs to create systems that examine the current bureaucratic practices. Afrocentric tenets and nonviolence principles guide leaders to make changes that welcome and celebrate Black people. Also, organizational leaders need to protect Black educators' physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. When Black educators' well-being is addressed, all educators' well-being is also addressed. Communities of racial healing and practices by Black educators are needed for Black people/educators. Racial healing coaching practices are needed to assist Black educators in combating racialized harm. Also, White educational colleagues need

similar racialized learning to interrupt the systematic oppression of settler colonialism. Collective well-being will be served when changes are made to address these issues.

Conclusion

Black educators continue to be affected by settlers' colonialism and systemic oppressive barriers created in the founding of the United States. Black educators have suffered the effects of federal mandates, laws, and policies. *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) ruling removed Black educators from the lives of Black students. The desegregation of public schools in the United States significantly affected Black educators and the Black community. These effects continue to affect the livelihood of Black educators.

Teacher and educational leadership preparation programs must prepare Black educators to work in oppressive systems. Black educators must understand bureaucracy, organizational learning, and settler colonialism as it pertains to working in educational organizations as a person of color. These programs must include centering racial or critical consciousness (Collins, 2021; Freire, 1965) to support educational candidates in the self-actualization of their role in racial, gender, and other oppressive dynamics in oppressive systems. Preparation programs have the same responsibility to prepare White educational candidates to identify their consciousness and identities as they relate to unjust practices in educational settings.

Educational systems must acknowledge the racialized harm within their organizational systems. Racial wellness tools and strategies should be provided to educators of color grounded in trauma awareness and resilience. The same support is needed for those who do not identify as people of color. The connections of this work should be grounded in community-building tenets of nonviolence written by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (1968). Dr. King taught that nonviolence is courageous, seeks to win friendship and understanding, to defeat injustice, not people, uses suffering to educate and transform, chooses love over hate, and has a deep belief in justice.

Black educators need healing communities of support built on the ideas of racial consciousness and healing. These educators need communities that welcome their racialized experiences and know how to support, empower, and heal them by reducing traumatic experiences. The healing communities need to be for Black people by Black people. These supportive communities are necessary for those not identifying as people of color to support their learning about themselves and their identity related to oppressive barriers.

This study has centered primarily on Black people, but these analyses have implications for all people of color or anyone who experiences harm from systematic oppression.

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