

Racial Encounter Assumptions

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- Society Teaches Us How to Dodge Race
- Racial Encounters > Racial Symbols
- Relationship Change →← Systemic Change
- Legal Remedies Won't Heal Trauma
- Racial Competence > Character
- Change Racial Outcomes in Proximal Spaces

Racial Encounters

Past, present, or anticipated interactions
that tax self-regulation of ***emotions,***
physiology, cognitions and ***voice*** (*Harrell,
2000*)

Encounters occur between and within individuals:

- Face-to-Face (FTF)
- Before, during, and after ITM (in the moment)
- **Racial encounters are stressful & threatening**



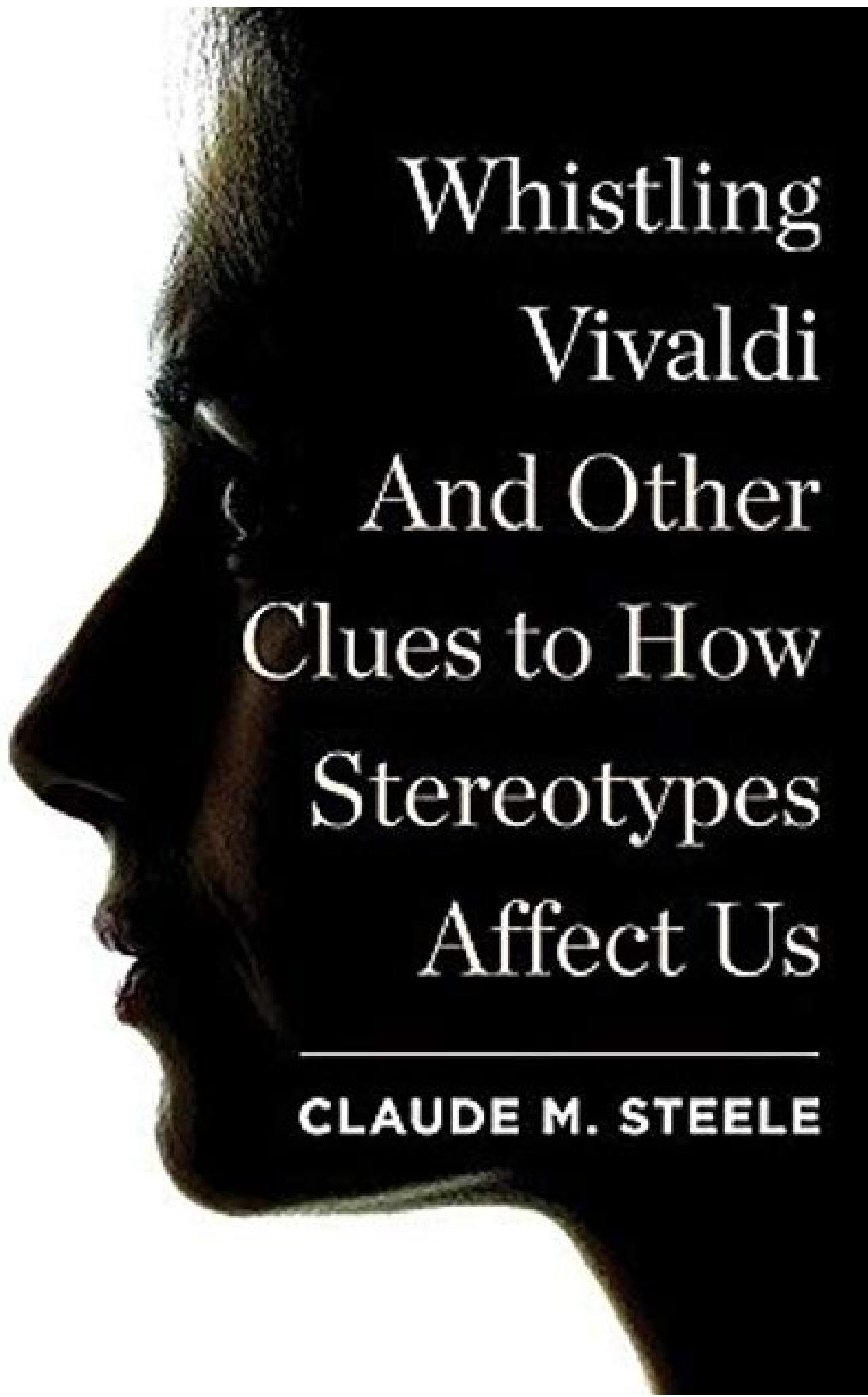
Racial Threat Distorts Our Perceptions

- “A Racing Mind” (Steele, 2011)
- White Rage (Anderson, 2016)
- “Racial Battle Fatigue” (Smith et al, 2020)
- Perseveration of Past Racism (Utsey et al., 2013)
- Vigilance of Future Trauma (Hicken et al., 2019)
- Presumed Dangerous
- Larger & Blacker (Wilson et al, 2017)



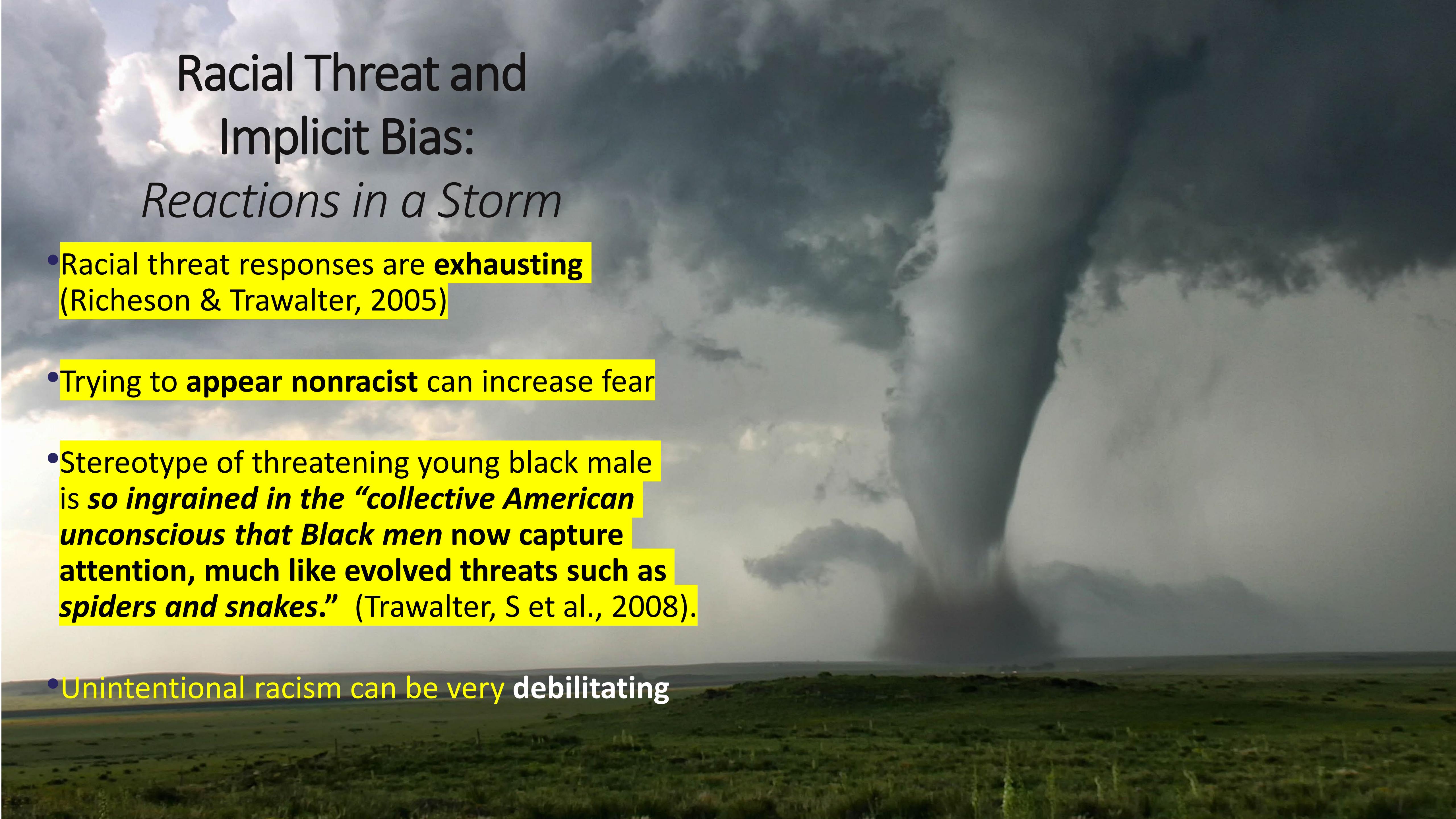
“A Racing Mind”

- Claude Steele in *Whistling Vivaldi* identifies research that shows when threatened by racial matters, our brains work overtime.
- A “**racing mind**” focused on some tasks is not prepared to focus on other mental tasks



Racial Threat and Implicit Bias: *Reactions in a Storm*

- Racial threat responses are **exhausting** (Richeson & Trawalter, 2005)
- Trying to **appear nonracist** can increase fear
- Stereotype of threatening young black male is *so ingrained in the “collective American unconscious that Black men now capture attention, much like evolved threats such as spiders and snakes.”* (Trawalter, S et al., 2008).
- Unintentional racism can be very **debilitating**



“Black boys are viewed as older and less innocent at 10 years old than white boys” Goff et al., 2014

- Black boys seen as less “childlike” than White peers
- Participants (police and white undergrad females) projected Black boys to be **4½ years older** than white boys
- This is exacerbated in contexts where Black males are dehumanized by associating them (implicitly) with **stereotypes**
 - “Black/Ape” predicted racial disparities in police violence toward children
- **Dehumanization**
 - **Goff, Jackson, Di Leone, Culotta & DiTomasso (2014)**



“Faces of black boys as young as 5 evoke negative biases”

Todd, A.R. et al., 2016

- People are more likely to misidentify a toy as a weapon after seeing a Black face than a White face, even when face is that of a five-year-old child.
- "Although young children are typically viewed as harmless and innocent, **seeing faces of five-year-old Black boys appears to trigger thoughts of guns and violence**"



Racially Biased Suspension of Girls of Color

Epstein, Blake & Gonzalez, 2018

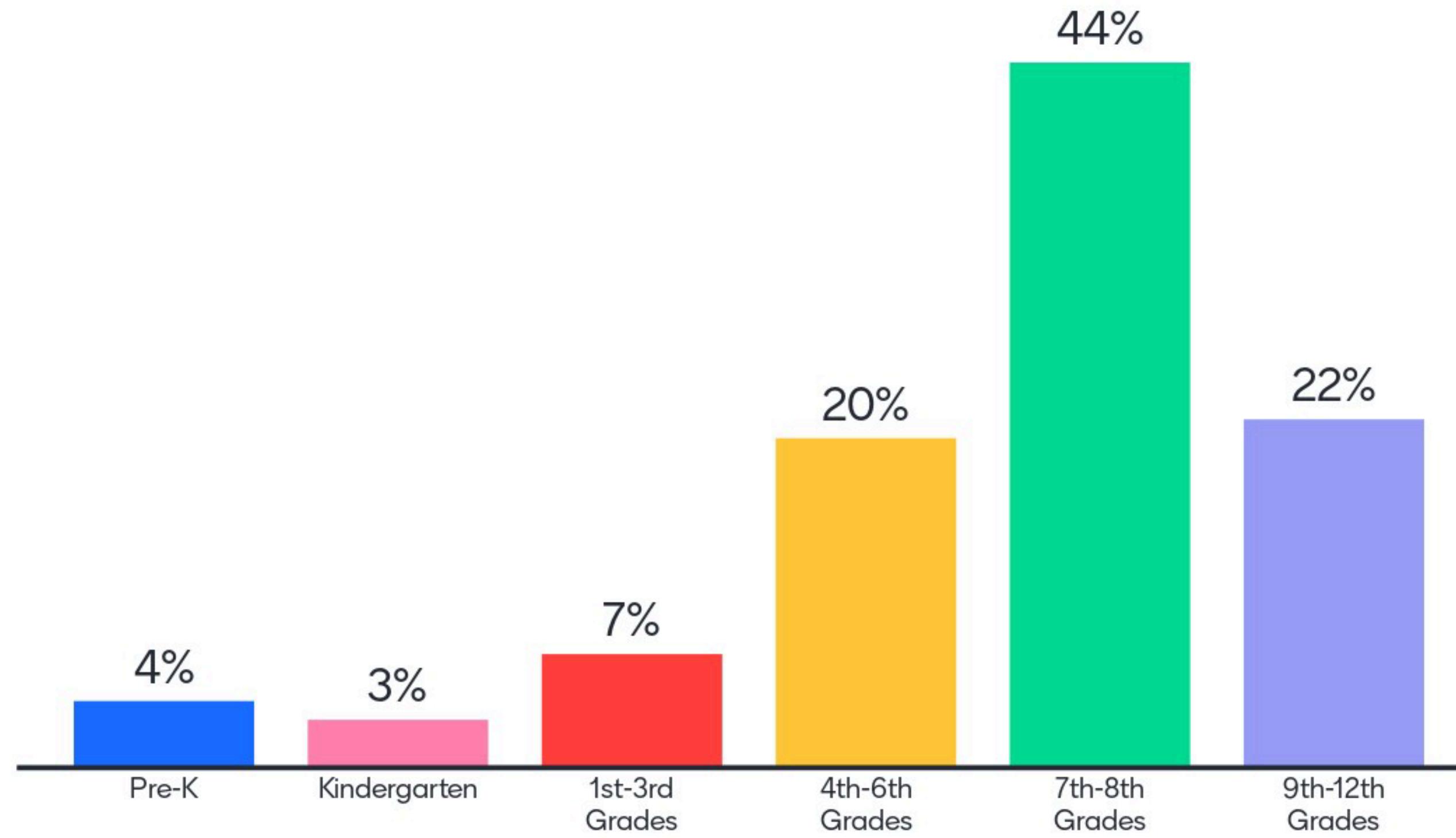
- GOC (5-14 yrs) more likely to be suspended, arrested from school
- Perceived as adult-like
 - more independent;
 - more knowledgeable about adult topics & sex
 - needing less protection, nurturance, support
- “Adultification” affects long-term outcomes

Girlhood Interrupted: The Erasure of Black Girls' Childhood



**Which grade do you think
students of all racial groups
are expelled the most?**

Which grade do you think students of all racial groups are expelled the most?



Pre-K Left Behind – Expulsion Rates in State Pre-K Systems

Gilliam, 2005

- Pre-K students are expelled at a higher rate than K-12 students.
- Expulsion is defined as “complete & permanent removal of a student from an entire education system”
- Based on **3,898 PreK classrooms** (81% response rate) representing all 52 state-funded PreK systems operating across 40 states.
- 10.4% of PreK teachers reported expelling at least 1 preschooler in past 12 months
- 19.9% of those teachers reported expelling more than one.
- **Rate is 3.2 times the rate for K-12 students**

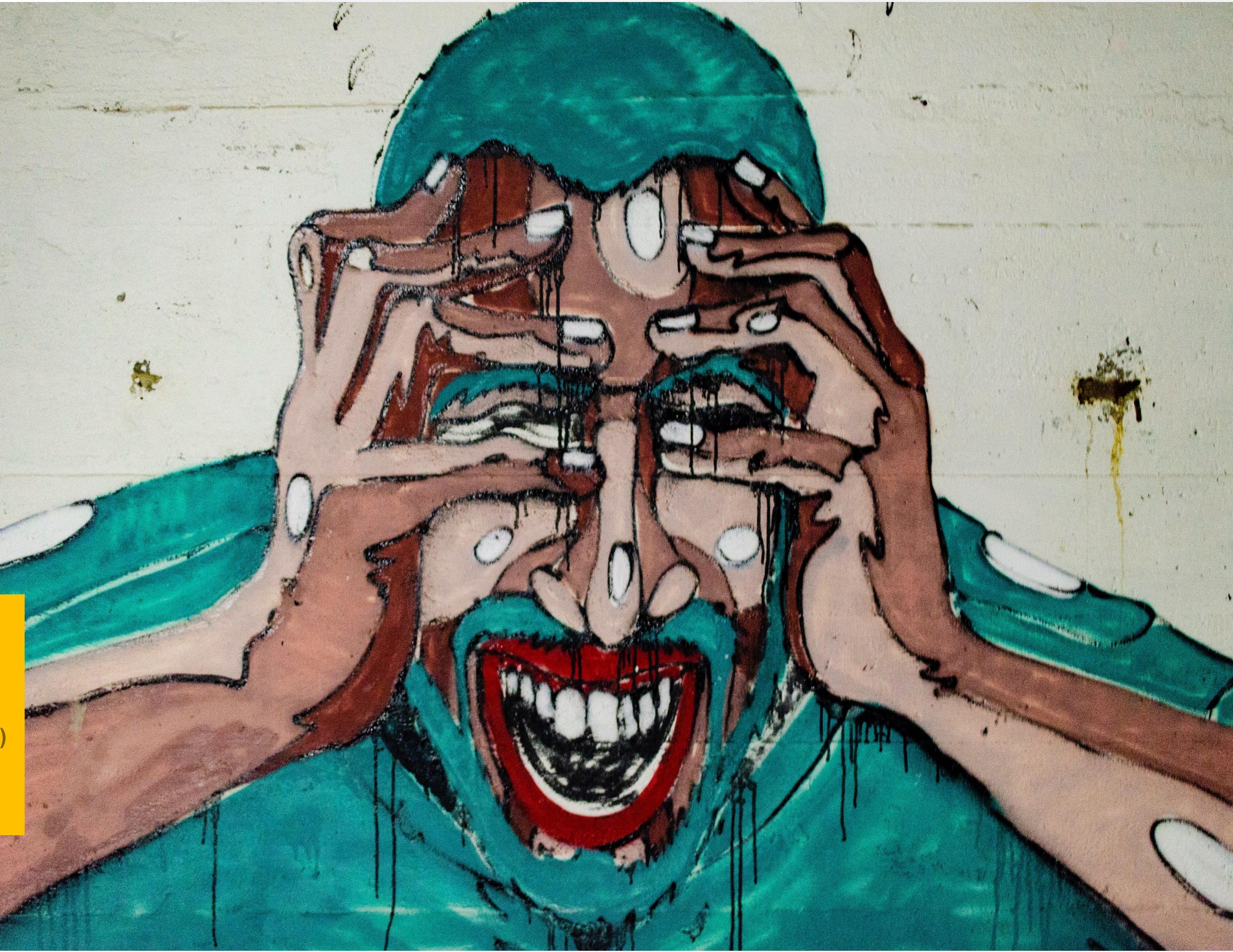
Black Pre-K Left Behind by Stereotype Fears

Gilliam, 2005; Gilliam et al., 2016

- African American preschoolers are 2x likely to be expelled as white or Latino children and 5x as Asian Americans (Dobbs, 2005; Gilliam, 2005; Gilliam et al., 2016)
- Suggests disproportionate control and punitive actions by authority figures -“egregious overreactions driven by their biased expectations and fears of these youth”
- Behavioral consultant in room reduces the disparity

Racial Stress Harms our Health

Weathering & John Henryism (James, 2016)
Cardiovascular Disease (Everson-Rose et al., 2015)
Breast Cancer in Black Women (Taylor et al, 2011)
Poor Sleep Quality in Teens (Ten Brink, et al., 2018)



Racial Stress harms our healing & healers

Racial Encounter Coping Appraisal and Socialization Theory (RECAST)

Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; Stevenson, 2014

↓ RACIAL STRESS → RACIAL CONFIDENCE

Racial socialization -Being prepared for racial hostility improves regulation of racial stress, which improves racial confidence

Why talk to loved ones about race?

1. Affection

1. To affirm their humanity

2. Protection

1. To protect them from harm

3. Correction

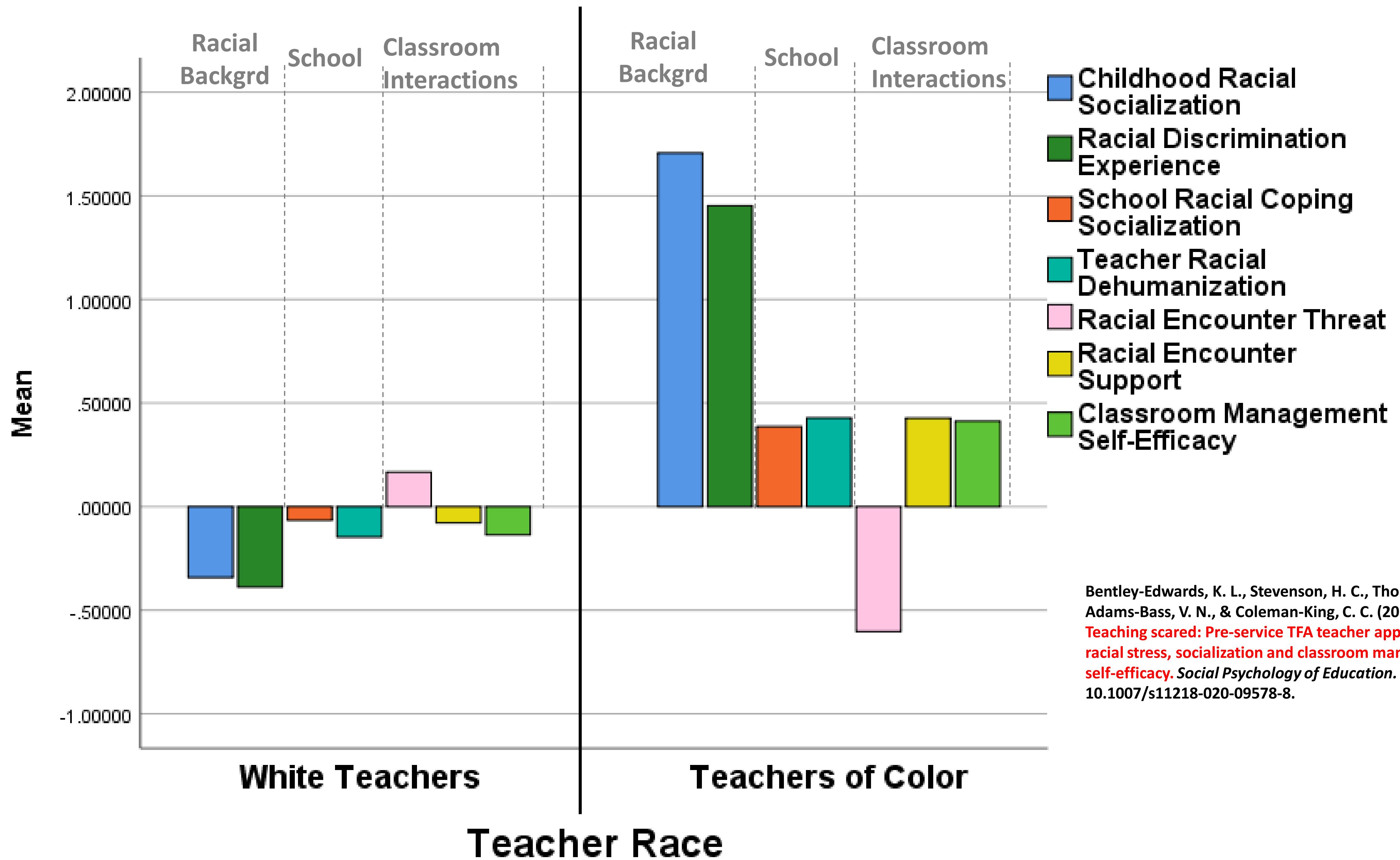
1. To redirect any self-destructive thinking

4. Connection

1. To connect them to thriving relationships

Benefits of Racial Socialization linked to

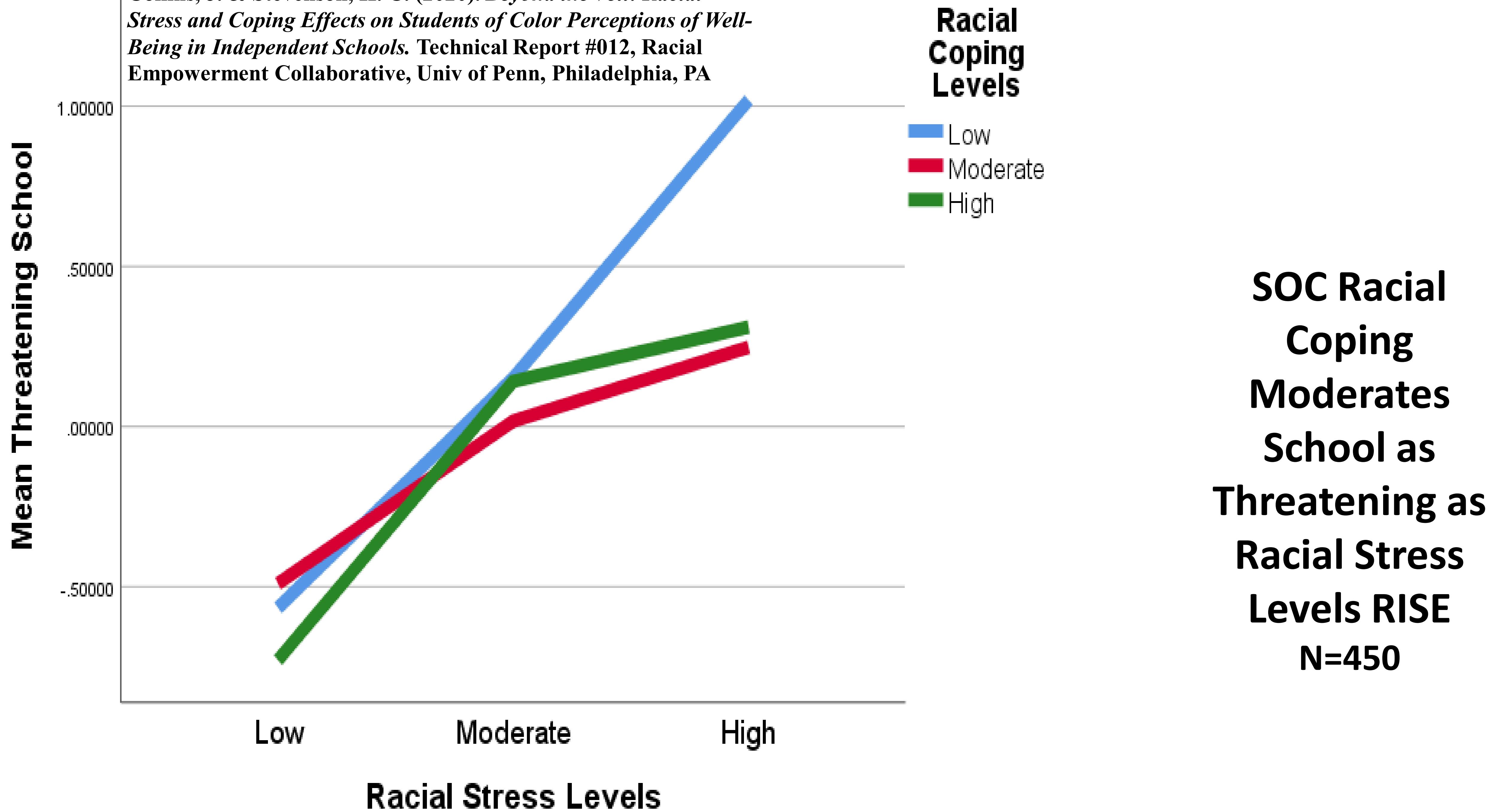
- **Improved Thinking and Behavioral Competence in Preschoolers**
 - Caughy et al., 2002; Caughy, Nettles, & Lima, 2011)
- **Greater Youth Self-Esteem, Anger Management, Racial Identity, & Academic Achievement in Youth & Adults**
 - (McGill, Hughes, Alicea, & Way, 2012; Stevenson, 1995; Stevenson & Arrington, 2009; Bannerjee, Harrell, & Johnson, 2011; Bowman & Howard, 1985; Neblett, Phillips, et al., 2006; Wang & Hughley, 2012; Constantine & Blackmon, 2002; Murry, Berkel, Brody, Miller, & Chen, 2009)
- **Increased Parenting Competence and Reduction in Parental Racial Worries**
 - (Anderson, Jones, & Stevenson, 2021; Coard, et al., 2004; 2007; Fagan & Stevenson, 2002; McKay, et al., 2003)
- **Better Family Racial Communication**
 - (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; Bentley-Edwards et al., 2020; Anderson, McKenny, Stevenson, 2019)

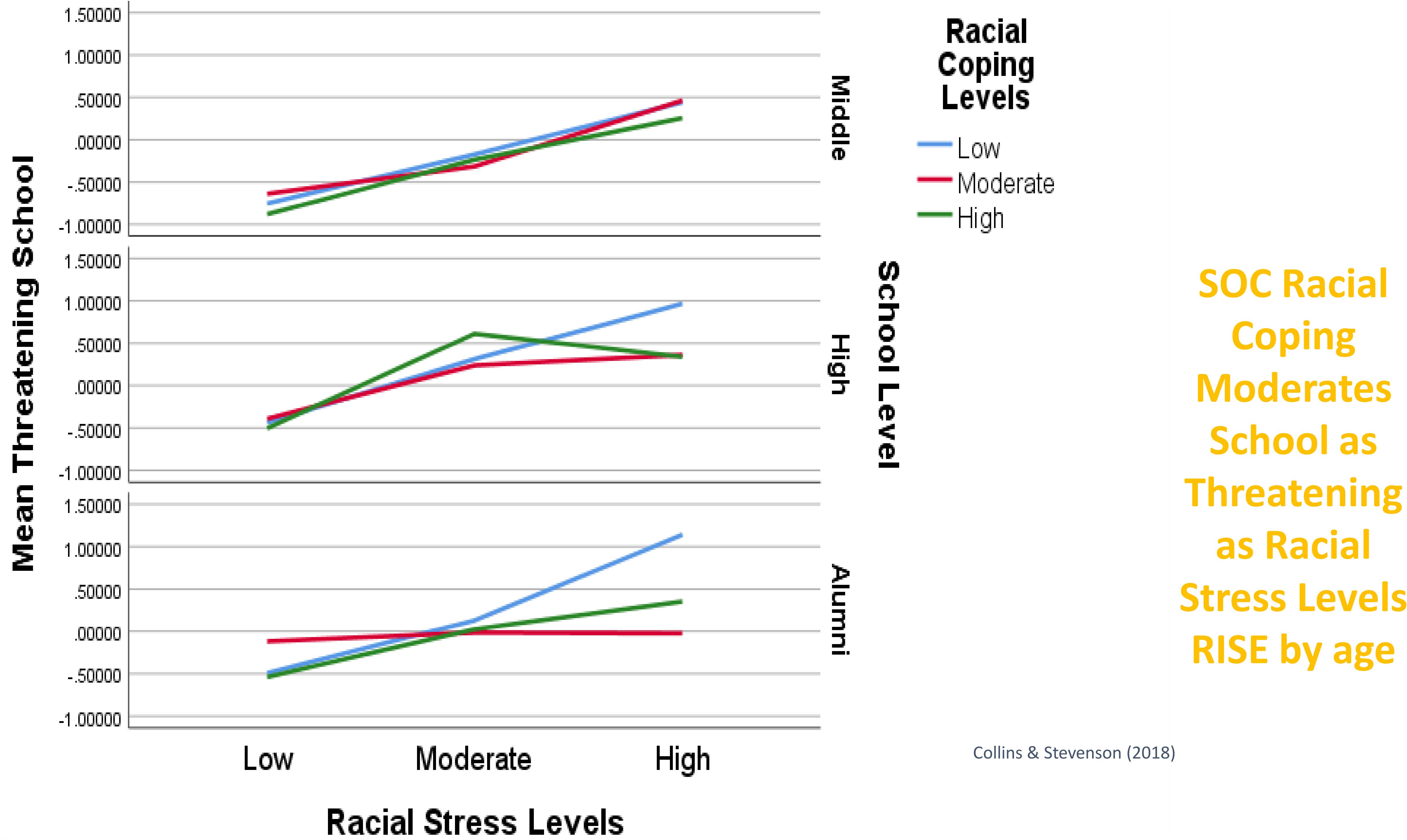


Bentley-Edwards, K. L., Stevenson, H. C., Thomas, D. E., Adams-Bass, V. N., & Coleman-King, C. C. (2020). **Teaching scared: Pre-service TFA teacher appraisals of racial stress, socialization and classroom management self-efficacy.** *Social Psychology of Education*. doi: 10.1007/s11218-020-09578-8.

- Teachers who report having support when they experience classroom racial encounters with BIPOC students and the less they perceive these encounters as threatening, the stronger they believe in their ability to
 - manage the classrooms and the limits-testing of Black and Brown students and
 - motivate Black and Brown students to learn

Collins, J. & Stevenson, H. C. (2020). *Beyond the Veil: Racial Stress and Coping Effects on Students of Color Perceptions of Well-Being in Independent Schools*. Technical Report #012, Racial Empowerment Collaborative, Univ of Penn, Philadelphia, PA





Conclusions:

Racial Stress
for Students
of Color is
Proximal

- Valid and reliable measurement of student of color racial stress and coping
- Stress factors predict belonging and teacher respect
- Stress and racial coping best predict racial climate
- Racial climate, stress, and racial coping best predict feelings about the school
- Racial coping skills moderate the negative affect toward school as threatening

Racial Literacy Skills

Stevenson, H. C. (2014). *Promoting racial literacy in schools: Differences that make a difference*. New York: Teachers College Press

Racial literacy is the ability to *read, recast and resolve* racially stressful encounters (RSE).



Reading



Recasting



Resolving

Reading RSE:

Notice & Appraise

“Reading” racial encounters is the ability to:

- Observe and appraise Racially Stressful Encounters (RSE)
- Decode interpersonal subtexts & scripts
- Accurately interpret
 - meaning of interactions
 - written texts, social discourse
- Before, during, & after RSE



Recasting RSE

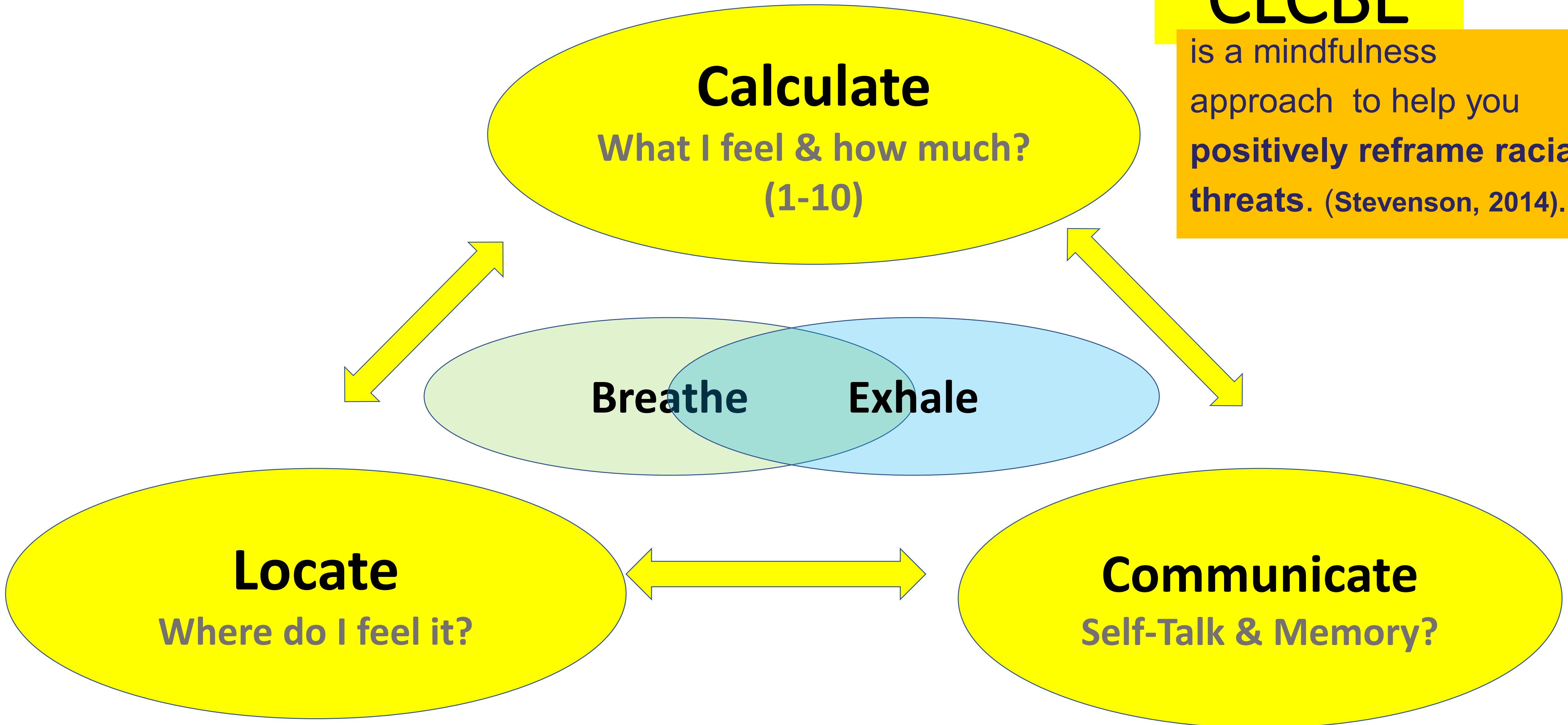
Breathe & Reframe

- The ability to
 - reduce stress using racial mindfulness (CLCBE)
 - positively reframe
 - Rewrite/conceive again
 - Breathe



CLCBE

is a mindfulness approach to help you positively reframe racial threats. (Stevenson, 2014).



Resolving RSE

Engage & Negotiate

“Resolving” racial encounters is the ability

to:

- Engage rather than ignore or run
- Negotiate RSE toward a healthy conclusion
- Use self-control and self-assertion
- Assertively speak up against injustice



Pilot Racial Literacy Studies of High Schoolers

(Stevenson & Aisenbrey, 2021)

- We compared brief racial literacy plus injustice intervention (RL+) to a basic racial literacy intervention (RL) and a control group (civil rights video lesson) and found
 - RLC+ → an increase in **school racial threat** compared to the Civil Rights Video control conditions [$F(77,2) = 3.11, p<.05$] and approached significance ($p<.07$) compared to the RLC only condition
 - (Stevenson & Aisenbrey, 2021)
- Pilot #2, we compared a RL+ to RL without confrontation and found
 - RLC+ → a trending increase in **racial coping preparedness** compared to the RLC only condition [$t(47,1) = 1.96, p<.06$]

Finding Voice: Power of Confronting Prejudice

- Speaking up against racial discrimination
→ improved mental well-being via autonomy
 - (Sanchez et al., 2016)
- Reduces prejudice ruminations
 - (Hyers, 2007; Shelton et al., 2006).
- Confronters of racial prejudice reduce offenders' future racial stereotypes and in other identity arenas (sexism, homophobic)
 - Even if confrontation is low or high threatening
 - (Chaney et al., 2021; Czopp et al., 2006; Dickter et al., 2012; Rattan & Dweck, 2010).

REC Racial Literacy Training Projects

- **Can We Talk Project:**
 - **Prepare Teachers/Students to Resolve School Racial Conflict**
 - (Bentley-Edwards, Stevenson, et al., 2020)
 - **Shape-Up Project:**
 - **Prepare Barbers/Patrons to Restrain Retaliation & Unsafe Sex**
 - (Baker, et al, 2018; Stevenson, Jemmott, et al., 2021)
 - **PLAAY Project:**
 - **Prepare Coaches/Youth to Manage Stress In-The-Moment of Play**
 - Thomas et al., 2009; Cassidy & Stevenson, 2005; Stevenson, 2003; 2014)
 - **EMBRace Project:**
 - **Prepare Parent/Children to Build Racial Communication Skills**
 - Anderson, McKinney, & Stevenson, 2019; Anderson et al., 2018a; 2018b)
- ## **Forward Promise**
- **Culturally Responsive Village-Raising for BYMOC & Their Families**



Sesame Street Racial Justice Initiative

<https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/subtopics/dealing-with-racial-hurt/>



Racial Literacy Take Home Points

- 1. Racial stress affects our bodies, feelings, thoughts**
- 2. Racial threat impairs our perceptions, decisions, behaviors and relationships**
- 3. Feeling threatened (fight, flight, or fright) is HUMAN**
- 4. Avoidance → Unethical and INCOMPETENT**
- 5. Racial stress is observable/resolvable, IF you face it**
- 6. Seeking help, knowledge, & practice is COURAGEOUS**
- 7. Racial literacy is not about BLAME but PREPARATION**

MLK thinking of his children

"letter from a Birmingham jail"

- “you suddenly find your **tongue twisted and your speech stammering** as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and . . .
- “see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see **ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky,**”