

## Great Lakes 2014 Conference Abstract

The relationships with psychological distress, coping, and mental health outcomes such as satisfaction with life within African Americans have garnered some evidence about the positive and negative effects surrounding African Americans within the counseling literature. Africultural coping is derived from an Africentric worldview that guides the values, beliefs, and behavior of individuals of African descent. An Africentric worldview is categorized by the dimensions of spirituality, collectivism, orality where there is a preference to receive information through conversation, balance and harmony with nature, and sensitive to affect and emotional cues of others (Neblett Jr., Seaton, Hammond, & Townsend, 2010). Over the past few years, Africultural coping has acquired evidence in relation with various psychological constructs such as psychological distress and racism (Thomas, Speight, & Witherspoon, 2008).

However, little is known about African Americans in terms of their various coping methods and the magnitude in which those views influence psychological distress and satisfaction with life. This study determined whether Africultural coping (i.e. cognitive/emotional debriefing, spiritual centered coping, collective coping, and ritual centered coping) acts as a moderator between psychological distress and satisfaction with life within an African American community sample. Participants (N = 73) completed a demographic questionnaire, the Africultural Coping Systems Inventory, Satisfaction With Life Scale, and the Hopkins Symptom Checklist-21 and were recruited from a local mental health clinic and social media sites.

A moderated regression analysis suggested that only the ritual-centered coping strategy potentially moderates the relationship between satisfaction with life and psychological distress within this sample of African American adults. The moderation finding for this study is aligned with previous research investigating Africultural coping as a variable which moderates the relationship between race related stress and mental health symptoms within African American women. For example, Greer (2011) reported that ritual centered coping was the only significant interaction between psychological distress and race-related stress. Limitations for this study include the potential presence of confounding variables that could affect the relationship between psychological distress and satisfaction with life and a lack of generalizability to other African Americans from various geographic locations with additional diverse identities.

From a multicultural perspective, counseling aims to incorporate culturally sensitive approaches to helping clients deal with a variety of concerns (APA Multicultural Guidelines, 2009). For example, utilizing a cultural framework for discussing or learning about coping strategies, such as Africultural coping is one way to incorporate multiculturalism within counseling for an African American client. Therefore, the study provides additional evidence for using culturally sensitive approaches in assessing coping, psychological distress, and satisfaction with life with African American adults.