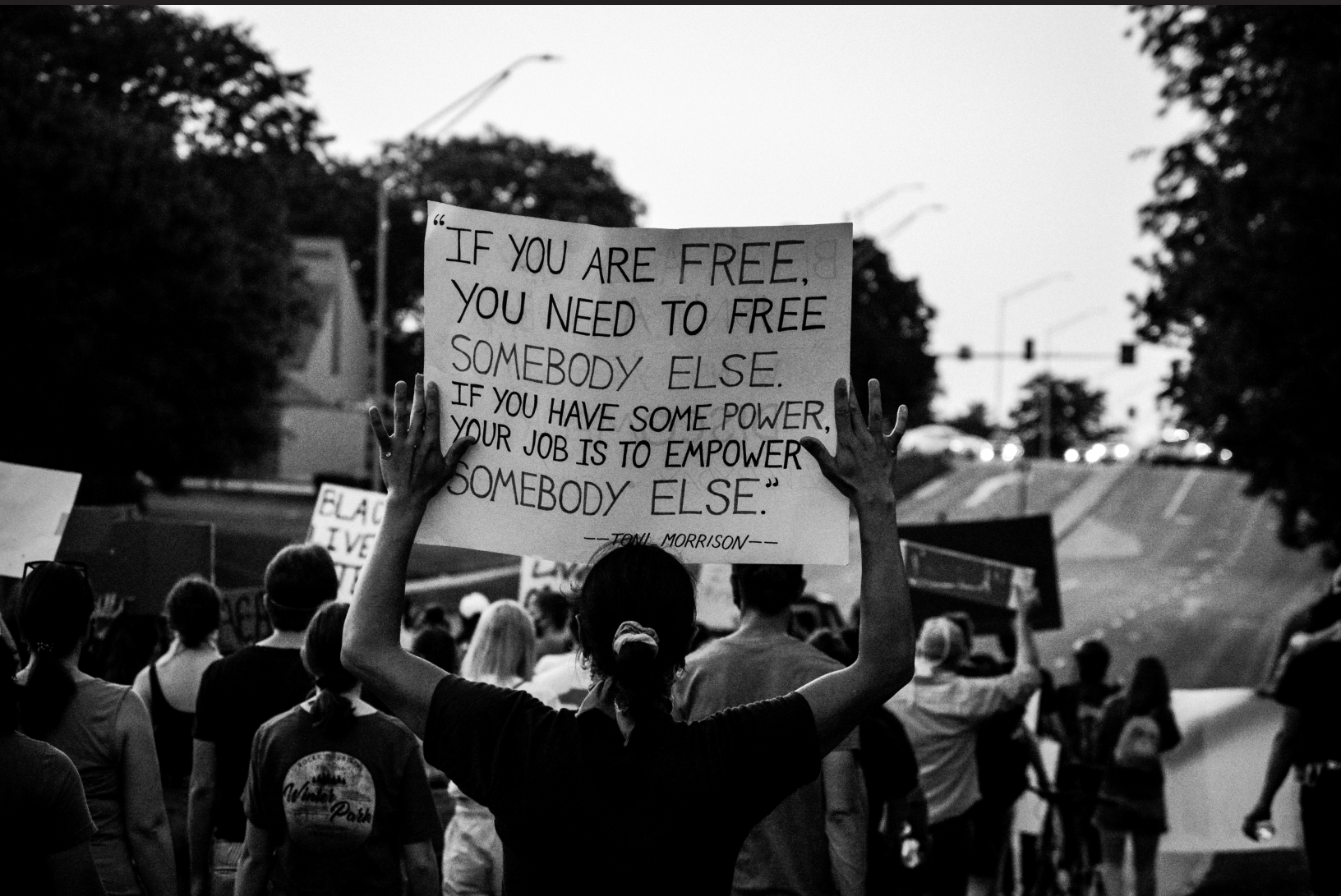


UJDP

Understanding & Dismantling Privilege



Official Journal of The Privilege Institute



ISSN 2152-1875

Volume XIII, Issue 1

Spring 2024

Professional Counselors Working with BIPOC-Identified Males: The Integration of Hip Hop in Counseling Practice

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Abstract

This study used a narrative inquiry to examine how Professional Counselors working with BIPOC-identified male can integrate Hip-Hop in their counseling practices to address issues of privilege and power. The results of the study suggest Hip-Hop offers *modes of communication* and a sense of self useful in counseling practice and in the training of future counselors. Practical implications for the use of Hip-Hop in counselor counseling sessions are explored.

Keywords: Creativity, Hip-Hop, Healing, Privilege

James Norris received his Master of Arts in Existential-Phenomenology Psychology degree in 2009 from Seattle University and PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision from the University of the Cumberland's CACREP accredited doctoral program in 2022. He is an Assistant Professor at the University of the Cumberland. He is a licensed mental health counselor in the state of Washington and has worked in a variety of clinical settings since 2009. Also, he is a licensed professional counselor in the state of Arizona and California. Dr. Norris has served in administration and leadership in the community mental health clinic he developed in 2012 in Seattle, Washington and he has been teaching in higher education for the past two years. Dr. Norris has been in private practice since 2018, where he discovered that most of the traditional counseling approaches lacked the cultural nuance and relevance to connect with communities of color. This has inspired him to pursue and develop a framework specifically designed for effectively working with marginalized groups through Hip Hop and creativity. His primary research interests are in Hip Hop, creativity, and counseling theories. Dr. Norris has published and presented on the integration Hip Hop in Counselor Education for BIPOC identified-males, Hip- Hop and Counseling practice, multicultural cultural issues in counseling.

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Understanding & Dismantling Privilege

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In 2019 the American Counseling Association released a report indicating that 81% of counseling professionals identified as White. This lack of diversity within the counseling profession has symbiotic relationships with professional associations around the treatment of cultural diversity that ultimately impacts services provided to diverse populations (Levine et al., 2022). Also, the lack of representation creates the potential for issues of racism and privilege to continue to be perpetuated within our profession, which will negatively impact marginalized groups seeking services (Levine et al., 2022). Research has shown that the counseling profession has looked to address issues of racism and privilege through the multicultural and social justice counseling competencies (MJCCs; Ratts et al., 2016; CACREP, 2016).

While the one required multicultural course in Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP] is intended to meet the social and cultural diversity standards (Hilert & Tirado, 2018), but that is less effective than integrating multicultural and social justice content the curriculum (Hilert et al., 2022). The lack of understanding of issues of racism and privilege can be detrimental to the therapeutic relationship and the effectiveness of services. Therefore, the counseling profession has to expand the ways they address cultural issues in their practice. One solution is Hip-Hop, which is a creative and culturally relevant way to understand the lived experiences and cultures of underrepresented groups of people.

Levy's (2019) work, Hip-Hop spoken word therapy, provided a process to integrate Hip-Hop culture into the counseling process through writing, recording, and performance of the individual

emotional experience through a Hip-Hop mixtape (p. 2), to make counseling accessible and equitable for BIPOC-identified males. Hip-Hop culture provides a platform for BIPOC-identified males to express their emotional experiences and challenge male gender norms (Levy & Keum, 2014). Hip-Hop spoken word therapy provides individuals with increased self-awareness, coping skills, catharsis, reflectivity, and self-image (Levy, 2019). Levy's (2019) Hip-Hop spoken word therapy study wherein writing, recording, and performing Hip-Hop mixtapes are used to express emotional experiences to decolonize the counseling and education profession.

Scholars have analyzed the integration of Hip-Hop culture into the counseling and educational professions for BIPOC-identified males to express their emotional experiences (Levy, 2019; Levy et al., 2018) or address social justice issues in counseling (Washington, 2018). There are no instances of counselor education scholars discussing the integration of Hip-Hop culture to move BIPOC-identified males to a place of healing. In essence, this type of scholarship embraces the idea of counselors or counselor educators integrating this practice when working with BIPOC-identified males and provides the possibility of moving them from hope to healing in their counseling or educational practices.

Mental Health Disparities and Privilege

The Minority Health and Health Disparity Research and Education Act of 2000 established the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities to respond to growing health disparities in the United States (Snowden, 2012). The goal of the Act was to develop a national health

research agenda across disciplines that could identify potential risk factors for the myriad health outcomes in minority and underserved communities (Snowden, 2012). This initiative noted that the Black population's physical health problems are disproportionately worse than those of other groups, which negatively impacts their mental health (HHS, 2001). The Black community has a greater need for mental health and general health care. The Black population and other minority ethnic groups have a higher chance of having a mental illness-induced disease burden than White Americans (HHS, 2001).

Although the lack of quality mental health services in the Black community creates disease, other factors create mental health disparities. Poverty is one of the most consistent factors that impacts mental health disparity (Maura & Weisman de Mamani, 2017). The economic imbalance in our society contributes to this disparity. Another factor contributing to mental health disparity is sociocultural factors, such as racism and discrimination. Sociocultural factors could influence the lack of engagement and attrition for the severely mentally ill in the Black community (Maura & Weisman de Mamani, 2017). Also, the disengagement in the Black community around mental health includes "stigma, mistrust in the behavioral health system, familial support, religiosity/spirituality, and cultural belief" (Maura & Weisman de Mamani, 2017, p. 198). These issues play a role in the health disparities between predominantly Black and predominantly White communities, but even improving attitudes around mental health will not completely solve the problem. Issues of access, quality of care, improvements in healthcare among racial and ethnic groups (Smedley et al., 2003) has gotten attention from researchers. In the end, mental health disparities in our society

impact the Black community and other communities of color disproportionately.

Impact of Privilege

Privilege is a social advantage that benefits and supports some individuals' status within a society and this privilege exists at the expense of others (Duplan & Cranston, 2023). Therefore, privilege is based on where you are geographically located and spaces you are connected to (Ley, 1995; Mitchell, 1997; Ong, 2006). Therefore, privilege impacts how counseling is offered and how individuals of color are assessed due to their lack of racial privilege. Most of the instruments used to assess individuals of color, were normed on samples of primarily white middle-class individuals (Balkin et al. 2014). The lack of diversity within the instruments used in counseling practice, which leads to misdiagnosis within counseling practice (Balkin et al. 2014; Liang et al., 2016) and further highlights the value of having privilege when looking to get help through counseling.

Mental Health Challenges with BIPOC-Identified Males

Although mental health disparities impact BIPOC communities, it appears that BIPOC-identified males are struggling the most of any racial/gender identity. BIPOC-identified males disproportionately suffer violence and experience increased depression and suicide (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2013; HHS, 2006). Black or other males of color are commonly labeled as violent, disruptive, or angry instead of being seen as having mental health challenges. Researchers have typically framed aggressive behaviors as ways to cope with stressful situations that create frustration or impede goal

achievement (Berkowitz, 1989). For example, “Aggressive ideation might be best understood as cognitions, beliefs, or attitudes related to carrying hostile, injurious, or destructive behaviors with or without the intention to follow through” (Thomas et al., 2015, p. 369). Therefore, one aspect of Black males’ aggressiveness and frustration connects to mental health challenges they have not been able to work through and therefore lack the coping skills to manage. Moreover, there is limited research focusing on the cognitive aspect of Black males’ aggression and its connection with coping strategies (Thomas et al., 2015).

Racial Identity and Trauma

Trauma in Greek means “wounded,” which is an appropriate descriptor of the African-American experience (Webb, 2004). Trauma creates harmful, high-intensity, or severe physical, physiological, or emotional energy that impacts the functioning of people (Bloom & Farragher, 2013). The primary source of the trauma for Black people started in the 16th century with the transatlantic slave trade. Black males’ mental health connects to the original trauma of slavery. Trauma can create unfavorable outcomes, negatively impacting an individual’s functioning in developmental domains: mental, emotional, spiritual, biological, and physical (Wilson & Keane, 2004). Historical and current traumas that Black males experience impact their mental wellness and the other developmental domains, which counselors could overlook if they do not consider this aspect of the Black experience.

Intergenerational trauma in the Black community and the vicious legacy of slavery causes Black males to struggle with racial identity, including masculinity. Trauma shapes the developmental trajectories of

Black males along with their beliefs about themselves and the world (Wilson & Keane, 2004), which highlights the impact of race-based trauma on the mental health of Black males. “Racial identity has been associated with the mental health trajectory and other social outcomes of African Americans” (Thomas et al., 2015, p. 370). Counselors must take a historical standpoint when looking at the effects of trauma on Black males. Eurocentric frameworks can knowingly or unknowingly retraumatize, creating harm and pain for Black males. An example of what Black Americans experience in the country is captured by a participant in a study who explained, “Pain and fear Black Americans live with daily because of feeling ostracized, treated unjustly and traumatized which consequently may not yield the best developmental outcome” (Range et al., 2018, p. 285). For that reason, counseling professionals have to consider racial identity and racial oppression as a source of the mental health challenges of Black males.

Hip-Hop culture (knowledge of self)

The fundamental elements of Hip-Hop are b-girling/boy, emceeing, graffiti, and DJing, but there is a fifth element which is knowledge of self (Love, 2016). Love (2016) stated that knowledge of self through Hip-Hop serves as an anchor of the sophistication and indigenous communal practices, which are foundational to self-determination and resistance within the culture. Therefore, knowledge of self through Hip-Hop is important to the production of Hip-Hop Pedagogy when it comes to helping black and brown youth survive (Love, 2016), but this holds true as well when helping these same youth heal in counseling practices. Although knowledge of self through Hip-Hop can be vital in the development of black and brown youth it is

rarely implemented in counseling and educational practices.

Hip-Hop and Counseling

Hip-Hop culture could be an entry point for counselors and counselor educators to begin their work with Black males; however, counselor education has yet to acknowledge its validity. Part of the resistance to using this approach is the misogyny and lewd language connected to Hip-Hop culture (Rose, 2008), which if moved, reveals the level of vulnerability that the artists display in their lyrics (language). Levy and Keum (2014) suggested that Hip-Hop is an avenue that could help men of color discuss their emotional experiences and challenge gender norms that often suggest men should hide their emotions, preventing their learning of the process of describing their emotional experiences. Levy and Adjapony (2020) claimed that the traditional counseling profession has a colonized nature due to the Eurocentric framework of institutions in the United States. Hip-Hop spoken word therapy has been a framework used to decolonize the counseling profession for BIPOC communities (Levy, 2019).

For these reasons, Hip-Hop approaches have been introduced as naturally aligned with the core humanistic counseling tenants (Levy & Adjapony, 2020). For example, Hip-Hop practices like lyric writing for emotional disclosure are evidenced as helping clients share authentic narratives (Viega, 2018), that allow listeners (i.e. counselors) to empathize with the content shared (Levy & Adjapony, 2020). To support actively listening to clients' stories/rhymes, reflecting lyrics offers counseling professionals an opportunity to process their own biases and prevent judgements about client's expressions (Levy

& Emdin, 2021). When invited to share authentic and emotionally laden narratives, via Hip-Hop, to counselors who are ready to hear them, research suggests that clients are able to form authentic relationships with helping professionals (Kobin & Tyson, 2006; Author, 2020). The current study seeks to add to this body of literature by investigating how counselors may currently utilize Hip-Hop in their practice.

Purpose of the Study

This study is a narrative inquiry to examine how BIPOC-identified male counselor educators integrated Hip-Hop in their counseling practices to promote healing. While researchers have explored the use of Hip-Hop interventions with clients, scholars have not engaged in direct conversation with counselor educators about the potential of Hip-Hop. Thus, the researchers' interviews with counselor educators sought to answer one research question:

How do BIPOC-identified male counselor educators make meaning and understanding of BIPOC-identified males' social-emotional experiences through integration of Hip-Hop?

Methods

Participants

This study's population consisted of six BIPOC-identified male counselor educators from the United States. Participants' ages ranged from 25 to 40 years. The pseudonym names for the participants to protect their identities are Dave East, B Dot the God, Big K.R.I.T., Kendrick Lamar, Dom Kennedy, and Nipsey Hussle. The selected pseudonym names are Hip-Hop artists who have been influential within Hip-Hop culture and were chosen to represent the influence each

counselor educator is making on the field. Inclusion criteria for study participants include holding a doctoral degree in counselor education, identifying as a male who is BIPOC, and having experience integrating Hip-Hop into counselor education and practice or having published on Hip-Hop in the counseling profession.

Procedure

Once IRB approval for this study was ascertained, purposive sampling was used because it facilitated “identification and selections of individuals or groups of individuals that are proficient and well-informed with a phenomenon of interest” (Etikan et al., 2016, p. 2). Once inclusion/exclusion criteria for this study were confirmed, the PI located participants through researching counselor education programs for BIPOC-identified males who integrate Hip-Hop into their practices. This recruitment was done primarily through snowball sampling by asking interested participants to identify other qualified individuals to obtain a nonprobability sample (Handcock & Gile, 2011). The six participants each engaged in 60–75-minute individual interviews with the researcher, the content of which was used in subsequent data analysis.

Data Collection

The data collection sources for this study were interviews, autobiographical writings, and Hip-Hop artifacts. When using narrative inquiry, the data collection process is not linear or procedural but fluid due to the relational aspect of the method and the participants’ stories that direct the research data collection process (Clandinin, 2013). The focus of this study was on BIPOC-identified male counselor educators telling, retelling, and reliving their stories of

experiences in integrating Hip-Hop in their practice and teaching. Additional foci were the potential of Hip-Hop as emotional healing and making meaning for BIPOC males, which required multiple methods (Clandinin, 2013; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006) to expand the researcher’s understanding of the participants (Sheperis et al., 2017).

Interviews

Narrative inquiry uses interviews as a starting point to tell stories (Clandinin & Caine, 2013). In this study, the PI led 60–75-minute semi-structured interviews with BIPOC-identified male counselor educators addressing the integration of Hip-Hop into counseling and counselor education, as well as its contribution to emotional healing for BIPOC-identified males.

Autobiographical Writing

Narrative inquiry uses autobiographical writing, which captures “a story or part of it that refers in one way or another to one’s life history” (Brockmeier, 2001, p. 247). During this study, the participants independently engaged in autobiographical writing about their initial connection with Hip-Hop and their journey of realizing the impact Hip-Hop had on forming their identity and practice as a counselor educator and clinician.

Hip-Hop Artifact

Embedded in the narratives are artifacts, which create meaning and value to the human experience (Venkataraman et al., 2013) and can shape and provide value to human stories (Venkataraman et al., 2013). During the study, participants were asked to submit one Hip-Hop artifact (e.g., syllabus, Hip-Hop content, videos) used in their

practice as an educator or counselor that offered insight into the application of Hip-Hop in their own work, its value to the profession and/or the healing nature of Hip-Hop.

Data Analysis: Narrative Inquiry/Thematic Analysis

After all data sources were collected (i.e., interviews, autobiographical writing, and artifacts), the interview data was transcribed from audio and video Zoom recordings. To support a narrative inquiry, Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis was performed on all data sources: familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, and searching for the themes, reviewing the themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report of the findings. Thematic analysis identifies patterns of meaning throughout the data to formalize into themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). Additionally, the scrutiny technique was used to identify similarities and differences among participant experiences (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Finally, the analytical tools of broadening, burrowing, storying, and re-storying were used to integrate stories among participants (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Research Team

The authors of this paper are two assistant professors and one associate professor of counselor educators, specializing in clinical mental health and school counseling respectively. The first author identifies as a Black man who is intentional about using his research and platform to create change. He pulled from prior scholarship and practice to show how pedagogical practices that integrate Hip-Hop can create healing for BIPOC-identified

males in the counseling profession. The second author is a Black female. Her research focus is on testing the effect of culturally based interventions to improve counseling experience and to increase cultural awareness for counselors in training. Her experience derives from working with marginalized communities for over ten years in mental health settings. The third author identifies as a White, cisnet, man who constantly grapples with his privilege as a researcher. He holds a range of prior experience as an assistant professor, school counselor and emcee, specializing in the use of Hip-Hop and counseling practices to support clients and graduate students. His previous scholarship and practice informed his participation in data analysis and report writing. However, there was effort made to acknowledge bias and exposure due to his requisite knowledge.

Reflexivity & Trustworthiness

In this study, the researchers ensured trustworthiness (Guba, 1981) through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Shenton, 2004). The study promoted credibility through triangulation and member checking. Triangulation involved using multiple and different data collection sources (i.e., interviews, autobiographical writings, and Hip-Hop artifacts) to provide corroborating evidence to highlight themes or perspectives (Creswell, 2013). Member checking occurred through the researchers checking in with the participants to ensure the data reflects their intended meaning after collecting and analyzing data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Through purposeful sampling, a form of nonprobability sampling, which considers the participants' characteristics to connect to the research questions (Devault, 2019), was how transferability came through in this study. Dependability and

confirmability were maintained through an audit trail (Korstjens & Moser, 2018) which in this study was through written notes that demonstrated the process and decisions throughout the analysis in this study. Lastly, researchers reflected and processed their own bias and relationship to the culture and effects of Hip-Hop culture to ensure the participants' voices were true to their experience and not that of the researchers.

Results

The findings of this study are organized by general dimensions and first-order themes in accordance with thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). To elaborate on the first-order themes and general dimension, the authors include quotes of exemplary moments from transcripts that reflect *BIPOC-identified male counselor educators make meaning and understanding of BIPOC-identified males' social-emotional experiences through integration of Hip-Hop*. The first general dimension was modes of communication with the first-order themes that are knowledge and social justice (injustice and trauma). Each of these first-order themes were represented with all data sources (interviews, autobiographical writing, and artifacts) and speaks to how BIPOC-identified males make meaning and understanding of their social-emotional experiences through Hip-Hop. The second general dimension was sense of self with the first-order themes being identity and authenticity.

Modes of Communication

The findings revealed that modes of expression were an overarching theme for BIPOC-identified males who make meaning and understanding of their social-emotional experiences through Hip-Hop. In modes of communication, there were two themes: a)

Knowledge and b) Social Justice (Injustice & Trauma).

Knowledge

Within *modes of communication*, was a first-order theme of *knowledge*. Analysis of interviews, autobiographical writing, and artifacts help define knowledge as the way counselor educators can develop the insight of making meaning and understanding social-emotional experiences of BIPOC-identified males through Hip-Hop. For example, B Dot the God stated in his interview, "Hip-Hop and spoken word can help preserve indigenous knowledge, which includes long-standing practices that help preserve and communicate culturally specific wisdom and teachings." Big K.R.I.T. shared in his Hip-Hop artifact that, "Music is a universal multicultural experience that can serve as a bridge to enhanced cultural humility and cultural opportunity to explore a client's worldviews and community needs." Nipsey Hussle said,

For school counselors, fostering therapeutic relationships with Black boys and other racialized student groups means deeply appreciating how grossly miseducated most are about the experiences of Black people domestically and globally. Having to eventually grapple with the realities of how racism, anti-Blackness, and settler colonialism have altered the trajectory of Black people will certainly constitute a source of anxiety, discomfort, and perhaps anger for many White school counselors; those emotions cannot be allowed to derail conversations that desperately need to occur.

What Nipsey Hussle is alluding to in the quote above is that issues of race, privilege, and anti-blackness can be barriers to gaining a deeper understanding of BIPOC communities and Hip-Hop can be a way to break through the discomfort of race and colonial mindset.

Social Justice (Injustice & Trauma)

Social Justice is the second first-order theme within modes of communication. Across data sources, participants suggested that Hip-Hop offers counselors and counselor educators the insight to make meaning and understand BIPOC client's social-emotional experiences with the racial injustice and trauma they have experienced. For example, Nipsey Hussle stated in the Hip-Hop artifact that "Hip-Hop sensibilities are something that Black boys rely on to work through the American social political and cultural spaces where anti-Blackness is present." B Dot the God stated in his autobiographical writing: "My demonstration is also an act of social justice, as I also show the many ways cultural competency can be manifested." This quote highlights how counselors and counselor educators must be trained to understand that social justice is an action not just a concept. Big K.R.I.T. stated in his interview, "If the counseling profession were to become more culturally competent via understanding Hip-Hop culture, then perhaps counselors would be more proficient in implementing culturally appropriate interventions, cultural development, and meeting the needs of a diverse clientele." The quote above offers how Hip-Hop can be used to break through the cultural barriers that perpetuate stigmatization and marginalization of BIPOC communities.

Sense of Self

The findings revealed that modes of expression were an overarching theme for BIPOC-identified males who make meaning and understanding of their social-emotional experiences through Hip-Hop. On the topic of Sense of Self, there were two themes: a) Identity and b) Authenticity.

Identity

Within *sense of self*, was a first-order theme of *identity*. Analysis of interviews, autobiographical writing, and artifacts help define identity as the way counselor educators can develop the insight of making meaning and understanding social-emotional experiences of BIPOC-identified males through Hip-Hop. Dom Kennedy stated in the autobiographical writing, "This was the first time where I ventured into the realm of not just exploring the self—but actively cultivating the self and my identity as a clinician. The idea of staying true to myself echoed throughout my practices as a clinician and counselor educator. It's a part of the identity." Nipsey Hussle stated in the Hip-Hop artifact, "Rap and Hip-Hop are connected to the Black community, opening access to share their experiences with the entire world. Hip-Hop highlights a breakdown of Black (and Brown) vernacular, styles, dress, political/social views, economic struggles and successes." Therefore, Hip-Hop has always been a vehicle for members of BIPOC communities to vocalize and express their lived experience in the face of racism and anti-Blackness along with understanding one's identity. Big K.R.I.T. stated in the interview, "I realized it once I noticed Hip-Hop was infused in everything about me; the way I dressed, the way I spoke, the materialistic things I bought, and the dancing and environments I wanted to place myself in."

Authenticity

Authenticity is the second first-order theme within the sense of self. Across data sources, participants suggested that Hip-Hop offers counselors and counselor educators the insight that authenticity is a key element to making meaning and understanding BIPOC client's social-emotional experiences. B Dot the God stated in the interview,

So, rather than to try to integrate Hip-Hop, I think, I think by BIPOC counselors and counselor educators should or should be encouraged to be authentically themselves and know that their authenticity, does not dilute their ability to be professionals, serious professionals and counselor educators, or the profession should recognize that authenticity is universal, not just in terms of the client, but also in terms of the counselor educator, which trickles down to the practitioner.

Dom Kennedy stated in his autobiographical writing, "During my time in Mexico this album was on repeat and was heavily influential in my decision to return to America and pursue my education/athletic career. Even looking at the album cover I remember thinking "I can't JUST be an athlete." Big K.R.I.T. stated in the interview, "From the way I dress, the way I talk, the things I enjoy watching and listening to" and added, "It is kind of like a way of life for me."

Discussion

This study sought to explore the experiences of the integration of Hip-Hop into counselors and counselor educators practice among BIPOC-identified male counselor educators to make meaning and understand the social-emotional experiences

of BIPOC-identified males. Two themes answered this research question: modes of communication (containing first-order knowledge and social justice (Injustice and Trauma) and sense of self (containing first-order themes of identity and authenticity) The modes of communication and sense of self through Hip-Hop promoted healing when integrated by BIPOC-identified male Counselor Educator in their practices.

Modes of communication illustrated the potential for Hip-Hop to be used with BIPOC- identified male clients. Specifically, *knowledge* demonstrated that Hip-Hop offers BIPOC-identified males the information or process to communicate their lived experience in counseling. The multicultural and social justice competencies encourage counselors to be aware of how their power and privilege can impact how clients communicate their lived experience (MJCCs; Ratts et al., 2016). This finding supports prior literature that found Hip-Hop helpful in creating an environment for expression along with communicating and challenging gender norms that suggest that males shouldn't express their emotions (Author, 2014). The second first-order theme *social justice* demonstrated that Hip-Hop integrated by BIPOC-identified counselor educators in their practice can address social justice issues that BIPOC-identified males face. The counseling profession stresses the importance of social justice advocacy in counseling practice due to the impact that oppression has on a client's mental health (Daniels et. al, 2011). For example, a counselor educator in his practice can have a client write or record about the injustice he has experienced as a way to communicate his lived experiences. Washington (2018) encourages counselors to develop a working knowledge of Hip-Hop culture and rap music due to its vitality

when integrating social justice practices in your counseling.

Sense of self illustrated that it is a vital piece when BIPOC-identified counselor educators are helping BIPOC-identified males to a place of healing, meaning-making, and understanding of their social-emotional experiences. Incorporating Hip-Hop allows the BIPOC-identified males to connect to their most authentic self. Specifically, *identity* demonstrated how Hip-Hop is a way of being in the world, not just music. The finding supports prior literature that found Hip-Hop helpful when it came to identity development in creating an environment where the use of lyrics and creative expression, allow for exploration and articulation of lived experiences which, leading to a greater sense of self (Jones, 2015). Singh et al. (2020) discussed the need for counselors to utilize Crenshaw's (1989,1991) theory of intersectionality, to offer approaches that support clients in navigating their authentic identities when it comes to the intersection of power and control. The second first-order theme *authentic* revealed that the integration of Hip-Hop in practice allows BIPOC-identified male counselor educators and BIPOC-identified males to be authentic to who they are, which creates healing and meaning in their lives. The concept "Real Recognize Real" in Hip-Hop promotes this authenticity and realness (Author, 2020; Viega, 2018), which creates room for healing and meaning-making for BIPOC-identified males that came through in the study.

In conclusion, the results section highlights how the integration of Hip-Hop in the counseling practice can address and provide a pathway for multicultural and social justice to be present in a counselors practice with clients. Also, the use of Hip-

Hop can balance the inherent power structure and privilege in the counseling relationship, so the client can be seen and respected despite the cultural identity and how they navigate in the world.

Limitations

There are a few notable limitations for this study. It was challenging to find six BIPOC-identified male counselors who had produced scholarship around Hip-Hop or used it in their counseling practice. Due to the limited number of BIPOC counselor educators and a smaller number of them using Hip-Hop in their scholarship or counseling practices, the researcher took a significant amount of time to find participants in the counseling profession to participate in the study. Still, the researcher didn't need to broaden his demographic because enough BIPOC-identified male counselors in the counseling profession were found.

Recommendations for Future Research and Practice

Although there has been growing research around the integration of Hip-Hop into the counseling profession to create emotional expression, bring voice to social justice issues, and use Hip-Hop with conventional theories in BIPOC communities (Elligan, 2000; Author, 2019; Rose, 2008; Tyson, 2002; Washington, 2018), more research is needed examine the use of Hip-Hop Practices while working with clients. More quantitative studies, such as randomized-controlled trials, would be beneficial to evaluate the outcomes of the integration of Hip-Hop in counseling for BIPOC-identified clients as compared to other creative modalities. Similarly, more research is needed to understand how creative modalities, such as Hip-Hop, can

support BIPOC-identified males in their educational journeys to counselors and counselor educators. Lastly, the use of Hip-Hop in research and practice can be used to disrupt privilege and the eurocentric framework of counseling.

Conclusion

There are many ways that counselor educators can create culturally relevant and anti-racist environments in their practice, but we must expand our clinical practice beyond the MSJCC. The MSJCC is a

starting point to create a safe environment for BIPOC-identified males, but the integration of Hop Hip is one way to create a decolonizing environment to change the Eurocentric framework that dominates how counselors view and conduct their clinical practice. Therefore, counselors need to continue to develop creative ways to practice and serve BIPOC-identified male in the counseling setting and Hip-Hop offers a solution to address the privilege embedded in the counseling relationship when working with BIPOC-identified males.

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