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Exploring Black Women Student Affairs Professionals and Identity-Conscious Supervision

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Exploring Black Women Student Affairs Professionals and Identity-Conscious Supervision

by

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Abstract

The purpose of my study is to understand Black women entry-level student affairs professionals' experiences with their supervisors through an identity-conscious framework. I used Critical Authentic Leadership (Brown et al., 2019) and Black Feminist Thought (Collins, 2000), as the framework of my study to highlight the impact of identity on supervisory relationships. To provide a consistent analysis I interviewed Black women who work at predominately white institutions (PWIs).

PWIs can be a challenging environment for Black women to thrive in given their historical background. Today Black women can still expect to experience gendered racism and discrimination at PWIs, (Gardner et al., 2014; marbley et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2020; Winkle-Wagner et al., 2019). They also have the additional challenge of navigating PWIs as places of work where professionalism is defined by white supremacist ideals (Davis, 2016; Gray, 2019). This white washing of professional spaces can make identities, emotions, and personal values secondary or non-existent in comparison to the daily work associated with their positions.

To focus more attention on the people who make up professional positions, I considered the identities of both supervisors and supervisees. Identity is essential given the dynamics of power and privilege that exist with supervisory relationships. Ultimately, a supervisor holds more power and positional authority than a supervisee. Relationships with supervisors can also impact how new professionals feel about their personal and professional experiences at their current institutions.

Key Words: Black, Critical Authentic Leadership (CAL), Black Feminist Thought (BFT), New Student Affairs Professionals, Predominately White Institutions, Supervisory Relationships, Identity-conscious Supervision

Dedication

I would like to dedicate my dissertation to my husband Jose Herrera. Jose has been my cheerleader throughout my entire doctoral journey. He has always encouraged me to do tough things, and because of that I have been blessed with so many amazing opportunities. While working towards my degree Jose told everyone he could about my successes and that I would soon be Dr. Herrera. I feel humbled when he tells me how I inspire him because he has always been an inspiration to me. I can't imagine doing this journey without such a supportive life partner. He took on extra household responsibilities and brought me late night snacks (and sometimes cocktails) when I was studying which made this journey that much sweeter.

This dissertation is also dedicated to Black women. There are many Black women across the nation who are activists, educators, leaders, scholars, and researchers that are often overlooked. Black women need love, compassion, and support so that they can start to become something more than the strong and resilient individuals they have to be to survive in a reality that oppresses them. My message to Black women is to remember that there is no one way to be Black. How you celebrate and express your Blackness is entirely your choice. Your Blackness makes you beautiful. Don't let anyone exploit your Blackness or make you feel lesser because of it. I say this as a reminder to myself and to all other Black women.

Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to student affairs professionals of all identities and backgrounds. You are called upon during crisis. You are asked to build community and bring people together. You work outside of the Monday through Friday 9-5 schedule because crisis and community building happen at all hours. You often work overtime with no additional compensation. You are over worked and underappreciated, but you are so needed and important. You are leaders and educators influencing the future. Colleges and universities would not

succeed without you. Surround yourself with people who support and value you. Take time to celebrate and reflect on the value you contribute to your institutions. Put your mental and physical health first because no job will ever love you back, but you can certainly show others what you are made of and what values you stand behind.

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Dr. Brittany M. Williams served as my committee chair, academic advisor, and professor for several courses at St Cloud State University. Dr. Williams taught me how to think deeply and made me a better writer, researcher, and scholar. She also invited me to write and research with her and I obtained my first publications because of her care as an educator.

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Chapter One

Introduction

"What does it mean to be Black, and do I fit that definition?" is a question I have asked myself for a long time. It was not until studying intercultural communication and women's studies during my undergraduate education that I began to think of this question differently. My courses gave me the language to define my experience and a space where I could learn about my identity and those different from me. As I explored my identities in the classroom, I learned there are multiple ways to *be* Black, and only I could define that for myself. The opportunity to have a dialogue about identity in a classroom setting aligned with my expectations about college; I expected college to be a time of self-discovery where I could be my true authentic self. Although I now had the power to define my Blackness for myself, I still had to contend with my Blackness as a subordinated identity.

Given my multiethnic and racial background I constantly encountered questions outside the classroom like, "What are you?" or "Where are you from?" I came to understand these to be microaggressions toward my race, ethnicity, and physical appearance. These microaggressions made me feel out of place, othered, and misunderstood. My journey to understand and navigate my identities and my Blackness did not end with my undergraduate education. I continued to learn about myself and the harsh realities of racism through adulthood and my career in higher education.

Early in my career, I thought anything personal, whether it be your identity or feelings, needed to be left at home and not brought to the workplace. I tried to compartmentalize different types of relationships (i.e., personal and professional) which made building genuine relationships with co-workers difficult. Throughout my current research and experience in the student affairs

field, I discovered my expectations of workplace culture were rooted in white supremacy (Davis, 2016; Gray, 2019). I struggled early on in my career to find my own way to lead and supervise that felt genuine to who I am. My values did not align with white supremacist ideals that made getting the job done the priority and relationships secondary. Furthermore, as I observed the actions of other supervisors, they did not always align with my values, and I was constantly searching for the "*right way*" to supervise. My search for the "right way" to supervise was akin to me only seeing the higher education setting as a place of work. When in fact the higher education setting was also a place, I called home as a live-on professional. In addition to being a workplace, colleges and universities were places where I found community and became immersed in academia.

Seeing the higher education setting from multiple lenses is indicative of my approach to supervision. I found the topic of supervision to be the most interesting because supervisors are expected to guide and support new professionals. In addition, I was interested in the intersection of personal and professional worlds in supervisory relationships. On the surface, this relationship involves two people coming together to accomplish daily tasks and organizational goals. But I was more interested in the personal elements that made these relationships stronger and more complex. My interest in this intersection was inspired by synergistic supervision which emphasizes the need for reciprocal and communicative relationship between supervisors and supervisees. This supervision practice removes some of the hierarchical barriers of supervision by placing ownership on both people (Tull, 2006). Although synergistic supervision may attempt to remove organizational hierarchy, it does not account for social hierarchies. The supervisor and supervisee bring their own unique social identities and experiences of privilege and/or marginalization to the relationship.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to understand Black women entry-level student affairs professionals' experiences with their supervisors through an identity-conscious framework. My motivation for studying new professionals who identify as Black women came from my own identities and passion for mentorship and supervision. I identify as a woman of color in student affairs, and I have a passion for mentoring new professionals. I was compelled to highlight new student affairs professionals and Black women to show the value of Black women as leaders in higher education and the importance of student affairs professionals as front-line staff who support students.

My study focused on Black women at predominately white institutions (PWIs). PWIs were initially created for white, upper-class, men, and excluded marginalized populations like Black women and participated in racist practices (Thelin, 2016). Even today, Black women can expect to experience gendered racism and discrimination at PWIs (Gardner et al., 2014; marbley et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2020; Winkle-Wagner et al., 2019). Black women working at PWIs have the additional challenge of navigating workplaces that have been structured around white supremacist ideals that define professionalism through specific behaviors and cultural norms (Davis, 2016; Gray, 2019). Such norms value western, white culture, and devalue other identities or ways of being. Further, this white washing of workplaces prioritizes the responsibilities of various positions over the people serving in those roles.

To reject white supremacist culture that defines professionalism, I prioritized identities when considering the realities of supervisors and supervisees. Identity is important given the dynamics of power and privilege within supervisory relationships. In the end, a supervisor holds more power and positional authority than a supervisee. Relationships with supervisors could also

impact how new professionals feel about their personal and professional experiences at their current institutions. For consistent analysis across different experiences, I only included new student affairs professionals who self-identify as Black women at predominately white institutions. I used critical authentic leadership (Brown et al., 2019) and Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000), as the framework of my study to address identity in supervisory relationships and to highlight the experiences of Black women in student affairs.

Research Questions

This study was guided by two research questions. The first focused on identity negotiation and supervisory relationships, and the second addressed how Black women perceive identity-consciousness through supervisory relationships. The research questions were: 1) How do Black women navigate social identities in their relationships with direct supervisor(s)?, and 2) How do Black women entry-level student affairs professionals at PWIs perceive identity-conscious supervision?

Research Questions in Significance

The sector of higher education is experiencing poor attrition rates for new student affairs professionals (ACPA Presidential Task Force, 2022; Marshall et al., 2016). Poor attrition rates show up as money lost in recruitment and training (Tull et al., 2009). Colleges and universities also lose the institutional knowledge and resources of professionals leaving the field (Davis & Cooper, 2017). Furthermore, there is a lack of diversity among staff and senior leadership at higher education institutions (ACE, 2017). Therefore, I wanted to better understand current issues impacting the pipeline to leadership by looking at the experiences of new professionals entering the field of student affairs. In researching new professionals in student affairs, I found low attrition rates for several reasons, including stress, burnout, salary, and lack of work-life

balance (Marhsall et al., 2016). Other factors include poor institutional fit (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008) and misalignment with expectations of the field (Marshall et al., 2016; Perez, 2016). Effective supervision has been identified as a strategy to increase attrition and satisfaction of employees (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Tull, 2006).

Taking an identity-conscious was critical to my study because the experiences of Black women at PWIs is greatly shaped by their minoritized identities of race and gender and their challenges with racism and sexism on college campuses (Byrd et al., 2019; Gardner et al., 2014; West, 2015; Wilson et al., 2016). Both supervisors and supervisees bring their social identities with them to the workplace, and they influence their perceptions and relationships with others. Supervisors have a great responsibility over the experiences of new professionals (Perez & Haley, 2021). They play a critical role in staff attrition given their positional authority and impact on workplace culture (Brown et al., 2019; Perez, 2016).

Furthermore, identity and supervisory relationships can only be explained with understanding the effect of power and privilege. Just as different identities come with their own levels of power and privilege, so do the positions of supervisor and supervisee. Supervisors hold more power due to their positional authority, and their social identities determine how much additional power and privilege they have in workplaces (Brown et al., 2019).

Focusing on identity in the workplace should not come as a surprise for professionals who are familiar with the NASPA/ACPA competencies. These competencies were developed from research regarding the student affairs practice (NASPA & ACPA, 2016). Viewing institutional practices like supervision from a social justice perspective is in line with the NASPA/ACPA social justice competency area. This competency area is defined as “a process and a goal which includes the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to create learning

environments that foster equitable participation of all groups while seeking to address and acknowledge issues of oppression, privilege, and power" (NASPA & ACPA, 2016). The 2016 NASPA/ACPA rubric outlines different competency levels based on actions and explains how it can be used as a tool for leaders in higher education. The rubric identifies supervisors and hiring managers as personnel who should use competency areas in job description creation, performance reviews, and self-assessments (NASPA & ACPA, 2016). The social justice competency area says higher education professionals should be knowledgeable about power and privilege, be able to assess for institutional inequities, able to incorporate social justice into daily practices, act as advocates, and understand student development theory (NASPA & ACPA, 2016). If this competency area suggests that practitioners incorporate social justice into daily practices, that would include the practice of supervision. This study aims to help student affairs professionals think differently about supervision by redefining it as a person-centered practice grounded in identity-consciousness. The study uses critical authentic leadership (CAL) to define identity-conscious supervision. Although CAL is a newly defined type of leadership its social justice focus is worth studying.

Synopsis of Existing Literature

My pursuit of higher education was rooted in the belief that I needed a college degree to be successful. What I did not realize is this road map to success is not guaranteed and ignores how systematic oppression and white supremacy control who receives an education and a prosperous career. Accordingly, to fully understand the realities of supervision from the perspective of Black women in student affairs, we have to consider the structural and historical context that shapes education from the K-12 sector and beyond. A historical review is necessary to reveal social inequities and anti-blackness still present in the education system today.

In chapter two, I provide an overview of social inequities in education, the history of PWIs, and the experiences of Black women in academic and student affairs. This overview is important because Black women working in higher education have unique needs shaped by their institutional environments. The culture, diversity, and socialization that takes place at PWIs will ultimately influence how they make meaning of their experience in student affairs.

Study Overview

My study focused specifically on Black women who were new student affairs professionals. Before deciding to narrow my study to supervision, I gathered information about the experiences of new student affairs professionals, organizational practices, and the impact of campus climate. The research I found about new student affairs professionals included career barriers (Gardner et al., 2014), retention (Marshall et al., 2016; Mullen et al., 2018), and professional identity development (Harris, 2013; Hirschy et al., 2015; Pittman & Foubert, 2016). Unfortunately, none of the studies focused specifically on Black women in student affairs. When researching organizational practices, I found information about doctoral socialization (Blockett, et al., 2016; Collier 2017), professional socialization (Hirschy et al., 2015; Perez, 2016), leadership (Ayman & Korabik, 2010), career preparation (Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Renn & Jessup, 2008), and supervision (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Williams & Davis, 2021; Garvis & Pendergast, 2012; Tull, 2006; Winston & Creamer, 1998). Again, many of these studies spoke in generic terms and did not highlight or center Black women with the exception of a few (Blockett, et al., 2016; Collier 2017).

Why Identity and Diversity Matter

I wanted to incorporate an identity-conscious lens in my study because my research informed me that identity was an important factor in campus climate (Ancis et al., 2000; Harper

& Hurtado, 2007; Smith, 2009). By considering supervision practice as a sphere of influence for supervisors, I thought it was important to uncover how identity could impact Black women navigating unique campus climates at PWIs. Therefore, my study highlights how small organizational practices, like supervision practice, can impact how people feel in their work environments. I hope to inspire student affairs professionals to make small changes to support inclusive practices that could inspire larger systemic change towards equity for all higher education personnel.

Cultural and systemic change cannot occur on college and university campuses without buy-in and support from leadership (Kezar, 2018; Manning, 2018). Unfortunately, there is a lack of Black women in senior-level administrative roles (ACE, 2017). Poor attrition rates of people of color in student affairs positions and graduate level education programs are signs of problems in the leadership pipeline (Blockett et al., 2016). This is concerning because the growing diversity of students is surpassing that of staff and faculty (Pritchard & McChesney, 2018).

Smith (2009) explained how necessary diversifying faculty and staff populations is to the success of higher education institutions. When it comes to the student body, having a diverse faculty can communicate institutional values of diversity and leadership, and give hope to students when they see people who look like them thriving in the career they aspire to be in after college (Hannon et al., 2016; Harper, 2013; Smith, 2009). Smith (2009) also mentioned how diversifying the faculty and staff can lead to better decision making, improved academic pedagogy, and "relationship development with diverse communities outside the campus," (p. 151) by having diverse perspectives represented and considered. Working towards diversity in faculty and staff can also "address power inequities on campuses" (Smith, 2009, p. 152) by sharing power in leadership positions with people of minoritized backgrounds.

There are a number of obstacles for faculty and staff when diversity is lacking. For one, being a token faculty or staff member places pressure to be one of the few supporting underrepresented students on campus (Gardner et al., 2014; Smith, 2009). Expecting a few people to support underrepresented students shows that is not an institutional value accepted by the majority. Similar to the student experience, a presence of other faculty and staff who look like you can also create a positive institutional image supporting diverse populations' work and development (Gardner et al., 2014; Smith, 2009). Faculty and staff who find mentors who look like them, may also find someone who understands how their institutional experience is impacted by their identities (Blockett et al., 2016; Collier, 2017; Gardner et al., 2014). This is also evident in the effectiveness of sista circles that allows Black women to share space and communicate with other Black women who share similar experiences and challenges due to their identity (Collier, 2017; Dorsey, 2001; Johnson, 2015; Williams & Collier, 2022).

Identity-conscious Supervision

Although more diversity in faculty and staff identities could certainly improve recruitment practices, support and guidance also needs to be provided to novice professionals along their journeys towards greater leadership positions. Support for new professionals often comes from their supervisors through onboarding and training. More importantly, support and trust can be developed through relationship building. Brown et al. (2019) recommended developing trusting supervisory relationships where vulnerability is accepted. How supervisors role model behavior through ethical decision making and care will only aid in developing a sense of trust among their supervisees. Trust is needed because supervisors hold positional authority that gives them power to create change and advocate on behalf of their team members.

A trusting relationship with a supervisor can positively impact how someone feels about their professional environment, and play a large role in attrition rates. Bad supervisors are one of the reasons new professionals leave the field (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Williams & Davis, 2021; Marshall et al., 2016). Therefore, improvement in supervisory practice is warranted to support Black women who aspire to be student affairs leaders. Synergistic supervision and the ability to work autonomously are recommendations given to supervisors to better support new professionals and Black staff (Garnder et al., 2014; Tull, 2006).

For the purposes of this study, "good" or "effective" supervision were defined as supervision that takes an identity-conscious approach. Identity-conscious supervision has not been defined by current research, but the study's framework of critical authentic leadership outline's identity-conscious practices from a supervision and leadership perspective. Therefore, I use identity-conscious supervision and critical authentic leadership synonymously. Meaning that identity-conscious supervisors are those who incorporate components of critical authentic leadership into their practice.

Methodology and Methods Overview

The specific methodology of this qualitative study was narrative inquiry. A qualitative method was used for this study because the research questions focused on how participants felt and made meaning of their experiences (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). My research on Black feminist thought (BFT) informed my decision to use this type of methodology. Black feminist thought uses storytelling and narrative to center the voices of Black women by allowing them to create their own identities and self-definitions (Collins, 2000). I chose narrative inquiry because my study was centered on the lived experiences of Black women in student

affairs at PWIs. Narrative inquiry acknowledges that meaning making is socially constructed and lived experiences are contextual and change over time (Clandinin, 2007).

Furthermore, narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) gives the participants agency over how their experiences are described. Providing agency is especially important given the sometimes-powerless experiences Black women at PWIs face when confronted with racism and discrimination. Narrative inquiry also recognizes an intimate relationship between the researcher and the participants (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Methods

The use of narrative inquiry as the specific methodology, made semi-structured, in-depth interviews the appropriate method to collect data (Creswell, 2014). Through three, semi-structured, in-depth interviews, I asked six participants questions about their personal and professional experiences with their supervisors and current institutions. The interview process was in-depth by collecting information about each person's personal background, current supervisory relationship, and how they experienced identity-consciousness. The interview topics, open-ended question format, and amount of time spent with each participant led to saturation of data amongst the six participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Through purposive sampling, I identified potential participants who met the following criteria: 1) currently working full-time in a student affairs role, 2) have 0-5 years of experience in the field of student affairs, 3) currently employed at a predominately white institution (PWI), and 4) self-identify as a Black woman.

All three interviews took place over Zoom in a one-hour time frame. The interviews captured the personal and professional experiences of participants. All interview questions were formed using concepts from the framework of critical authentic leadership (CAL) to help

determine if supervisees experience identity-conscious supervision. Interviews were semi-structured to create a conversational tone that allowed for unexpected themes and follow-up questions.

The entire data collection process focused on meaning making and common themes. To uncover themes from the interviews, I used pre-coding, open coding, and axial coding (Chase, 2005; McCormack, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The pre-coding process allowed me to view transcripts through multiple lenses (McCormack, 2000) and consider cultural and social contexts (Chase, 2005). I chose open coding because the codes should be created based on participant words, stories, and meanings. Axial coding used thematic analysis to determine the themes that exist amongst the codes (Chase, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Finally, participants had the option to review the information collected to ensure it accurately represented their experiences. The data collection and analysis process were greatly informed by my conceptual framework.

Conceptual Frameworks

The conceptual framework of my study included critical authentic leadership (Brown et al., 2016) and Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000). Critical authentic leadership was presented in Brown et al.'s (2019) text entitled "Identity-conscious Supervision in Student Affairs." Brown et al. (2019) introduced critical authentic leadership (CAL) as a framework and best practice in supervision. Critical authentic leadership is defined using tenants from authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), and racial battle fatigue (Smith, 2004). Principles from these theories include self-awareness, rational transparency, multipartial balanced processing, and a commitment to social justice values. Critical authentic leadership asks leaders to be aware of power, privilege, and identities different from their own. It also asks supervisors to put attention and effort on relationship building while

committing to courageous acts grounded in social justice (Brown et al., 2019). Finally, it encourages supervisors to consider differing ideas and points of view to make well-rounded decisions (Brown et al., 2019). Critical authentic leadership informed my decision to use identity, supervision, and student affairs practitioners as the focus of my study.

The theory of Black feminist thought (BFT) was used to better understand the participants in the study. Black feminist thought explains how systematic oppression has created negative stereotypes that define what it means to be a Black woman in society (Collins, 2000). For this reason, Black feminist thought demands Black women are able to tell their own stories, create their own narratives, and self-definitions (Collins, 2000). Black feminist thought was also included as part of the framework in observance of the participants' gender and racial identities. In addition, it was important to me as the researcher to remember how the labor, knowledge, and leadership of Black women has historically been oppressed, silenced, and taken for granted. This framework suggests knowledge is not only considered scholarly when degrees are attached. Instead, BFT recognizes the lives and voices of Black women as knowledgeable, scholarly, and influential. If we are to consider Black women as experts and leaders in the formation of knowledge, then they should be the ones to voice and define their experiences. Through this study and the frameworks of CAL and BFT, I hope to learn more about the experience of Black leaders who are capable of changing the lives of students in college and university settings for the better.

Research Terms and Definitions

The following terms are used throughout this study. These terms refer to the study's framework and prospective participants.

Black: This term is used to identify the racial and ethnic identities for participants in this study. The participants included in this study are those who self-identify as Black.

Critical Authentic Leadership (CAL): A new form of leadership that is also recognized as a best practice in identity-conscious supervision (Brown et al., 2019). This type of leadership combines tenets of authentic leadership, critical race theory, and racial battle fatigue. CAL will be used as part of the theoretical framework because of the study's focus on identity and supervision.

Black Feminist Thought (BFT): Black feminist thought is a theory that centers the voices and lived experiences of Black women by empowering them to create their own self-definitions and meanings (Collins, 2000). This theory is part of the theoretical framework to honor the voices of the participants.

New Student Affairs Professionals: This is used as a criterion for participants. Anyone participating in this study was currently employed as a full-time student affairs professional and had 0-5 years of experience in the field.

Predominately White Institutions: Institutions whose demographics show over 50% representation by white students.

Supervisory Relationships: These will be defined as the personal and professional relationships *between the participants and the person(s) they consider to be their direct supervisor(s).*

Identity-conscious Supervision: A supervision practice presented by Brown et al. (2019) that encourages supervisors to act as Critical Authentic Leaders that practice identity-conscious self-

awareness by building trusting relationships with supervisees through dialogue and vulnerability in the workplace. Identity-conscious supervisors also lead with racialized relational transparency by recognizing how race, racism, and white supremacy influence individual perspectives (Brown et al., 2019). Finally identity-conscious supervisors make decisions and lead with an internalized moral perspective and multipartial balanced processing (Brown et al., 2019). Meaning supervisor consider multiple perspectives and prioritize social justice through advocacy.

Chapter Summary

Supervisors are expected to be resources and systems of support to new professionals in student affairs as they are introduced to their full-time positions and campus communities (Collins, 2009; Davis & Cooper, 2017). As student populations continue to change and evolve so too should the demographics of faculty and staff. To create a culture of belonging on college and university campuses, there needs to be an appreciation and acknowledgement of different perspectives and identities (Ahmed, 2012; Brown et al., 2019; Smith, 2009). The theory of critical authentic leadership encourages supervisors to be vulnerable and have difficult conversations about power and privilege in the workplace (Brown et al., 2019). Through these conversations and self-reflection of their own identities, supervisors can learn more about the impact of identity on the relationships with their team members and the work they do every day. Including identity-conscious supervision practices in the relationship development of new student affairs professionals is a first step in creating higher education leaders who consider and advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts for their collegial communities.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Black women are the experts in understanding their lived experiences within the realm of higher education. Practitioners that hold identities different from Black women can begin to understand their realities within the realm of higher education by reviewing the history of higher education through a social justice perspective. In the following sections I outline the historical inequities that have formed the higher education system to what it is today and how it continues to perpetuate systemic oppression for marginalized groups including Black women. Following this historical review, I present information about attrition rates of new student affairs professionals, lack of diversity in faculty and staff positions, professional identity development, Black identity development, and the impact of power and privilege within identity and supervisory relationships.

Social Inequities in K-12 and Higher Education

Although higher education is part of the problem, a change in higher education will not solve all the existing inequities. People of marginalized identities can expect to confront these disparities even before the college application process (Dancy et al., 2018). The K-12 experience students receive is decided by the neighborhoods they inhabit, because funding for K-12 schools is dependent on taxes (Dancy et al., 2018; Loeb & Socias, 2004). Social processes like gentrification have segregated neighborhoods and thus make it more challenging for Black people to gain access to well-funded K-12 schools (Dancy et al., 2018). As Black communities are forced into poorer neighborhoods, wealthier communities with fewer people of color benefit from being in an area with a higher tax bracket and schools equipped with more academic resources (Dancy et al., 2018; Loeb & Socias, 2004). Access to academic resources is especially

important for prospective college students who are preparing for the college admission process, like taking placement exams, writing personal statements, and searching for an institution that is the right fit for them.

These systemic inequities follow Black students to the higher education setting. Black students are the least likely to graduate college when compared to students of other ethnicities (Meschede et al., 2017). The Black students who do graduate are also less likely to pursue postgraduate education due to barriers created by sexism and racism (Li et al., 2021). These findings are important because they help us understand how someone's privilege and social identities can determine their education and future aspirations. In addition to grappling with minoritized identities, Black women are reminded of the historical injustices that created PWIs originally and how they continue on today.

History of PWIs

A history of PWIs reveals a hierarchical value system within higher education which places white serving institutions above others (Bon et al., 2019). Evidence of white supremacist ideologies can be found in the justice system and the resulting creation of a separate but equal education system. Cases that evaluated separate but equal education systems include *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), and the Morrill Act II (1890; Bon et al., 2019).

The Morrill Act II (1890) was disguised as a way to educate African Americans but in reality, it allowed states to "engage in racial segregation within PWIs," (Bon et al., 2019, p. 544). *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), found there was no "merit in the argument that racial classifications were a societal barrier to a civilized society" (Bon et al., 2019, p. 535). Both *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and the Morrill Act II (1890) reinforced the idea that separate but equal was not a form of

systematic oppression. Fortunately, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) determined segregated schools created unequal systems and violated the 14th amendment. When entire systems like education are built around socially constructed ideas like race, we cannot expect every person to receive the same experience. For this reason, Black women, and other people with minoritized identities will experience additional challenges unique to their social identities in comparison to the white community.

Higher Education's History of Anti-Blackness

By distorting values and controlling the higher education system, white supremacy has kept Black people in a lesser position. U.S. history is steeped in anti-Blackness, wherein Black people are seen as property and less than human (Dancy et al., 2018; Dumas & Ross, 2016). This culture of anti-Blackness has led to the continued persecution and killing of Black people since the induction of slavery (Edwards et al., 2019). This struggle is intensified for Black women who are challenged by misogynoir due to the intersection of their identities of both race and gender (Bailey & Trudy, 2018).

Racism and discrimination are present in larger systems like education and the workplace (Dancy et al., 2018; Davis, 2016; Dumas & Ross, 2016; Gray, 2019; Tatum, 2003). This can be seen in the ways Black people are shown in limited roles in the higher education sector. Often, the work of Black scholars is dismissed, and Black women are held to unequal expectations in academia (Dancy et al., 2018). Unfortunately, ideologies like the American dream make the experiences of Black people seem like a fault of their own and not the reality of being with or without privilege and social capital due to ascribed identities (Okello & White, 2019).

In fact, only a small group of people hold the majority of wealth (Schwalbe, 2014). The inequities that exist among wealth, privilege, and broader social capital refutes the idea that the

American dream can only be accomplished through hard work and access to higher education. Instead, the true reality involves disparities that consider Black people as less than human and not worthy of the same privilege as white people (Dancy et al., 2018; Dumas & Ross, 2016; Martin, 2019). As long as higher education continues to perpetuate systematic oppression, the American dream will continue to be a myth and Black people will be stuck in limited roles.

Academia and Anti-Blackness

It is imperative that higher education leaders accept the value and essential perspectives Black scholars bring to the collegiate setting. Unfortunately, Black faculty face a number of challenges when trying to develop scholarly reputations that could lead to tenure and promotions (Frazier, 2011). For example, if Black faculty decide to study marginalized groups they face the challenges of their content not being understood (marbley et al., 2015). This lack of understanding exists because the knowledge Black scholars bring to the academic setting is often not spread by folks of other identities (Collins, 2000). This is a prime example of the cyclical nature of anti-Blackness and systematic oppression. Black scholars are in a position of lesser power and privilege in society but are motivated to create societal change by studying minoritized identities. Unfortunately, scholars of privileged identities do not share values of equitable practices and choose to ignore the experiences of marginalized people. Therefore, Black scholars who study minoritized identities are seen as less valuable and credible (Frazier, 2011). Furthermore, these same Black scholars are held to a different standard and are expected to publish at a higher quantity and quality, making tenure hard for Black faculty to obtain (Griffin et al., 2013).

Higher education leaders have to examine the cultural and structural changes needed to retain Black scholars and practitioners. I also believe this to be true because my own educational

experience has been richer because I have had the privilege to study with several Black faculty. Unfortunately, this was not the case for many of my peers. The classroom experiences I had are supported by the research presented because a majority of my undergraduate coursework focused on studying marginalized identities. Black staff and faculty are often the ones who are being tapped to take on diversity related work (Gardner et al., 2014; Smith, 2009), even though this type of labor is seen as lacking in value and credibility (Frazier, 2011).

Given the challenges Black scholars face in their attempts to gain credibility and respect from others, they often need to find ways to support one another to survive. Relationships are sometimes built through social media, other digital platforms, and sista circles (Robinson & Williams, 2021; Williams & Collier, 2022). These support systems often happen organically and are created by the Black scholars who have not found a welcoming place in academia. Higher learning settings were not designed for Black people and therefore systems of support are almost non-existent. Finding social support within their current institutions may be much more challenging for Black staff.

Black Women in Student Affairs

Student affairs personnel are invaluable resources to the experience's students have inside and outside of the classroom. Organizations like the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) exist to further the professional development of student affairs staff so they can better serve students. Although the roles and work of student affairs personnel are meant to support students in a higher education setting, there is "little research on the staff experiences related to campus climate" (Byrd et al., 2019, p. 182). The nature of an institution's campus climate is likely to impact the workplace experiences of staff. Personnel that develop negative perceptions of their

institutions due to the campus climate may decide to leave their positions, which makes climate an important area of study.

Staff of color are less likely to feel a sense of belonging at PWIs (Byrd et al., 2019). This lack of belonging comes from the fact that staff of color are often recognized for their race first and their professional capabilities second (Byrd et al., 2019; Catalyst, 2004). This tends to occur because staff of color are often called upon to do diversity-related work simply because of the racial and ethnic identities they hold, and not because of their capabilities to develop programs or presentations related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (Byrd et al., 2019; Gardner et al., 2014). Institutions show they do not value diversity, equity, and inclusion when they put diversity work on a minoritized few. Although it is common to find values of diversity, equity, and inclusion listed in mission and vision statements, institutions do not always allow those values to guide their practices and shape the culture of the institution (Smith, 2009).

Personal and ascribed identities influence our entire world, including how we lead and approach the workplace (Byrd et al., 2019). Staff of color should have agency over how they lead and experience the higher education setting without others deciding that diversity work should be a part of their professional experience and identity (Byrd et al., 2019). This is especially important for Black women in student affairs. Providing Black women with the agency over how they identify and define their experiences is critical for their development and empowerment (Collins, 2000).

Few Black women hold higher-education leadership positions (ACE, 2017; Chavez, 2009). One study by Wilson et al. (2016), regarding mid-level managers in student affairs, looked at the impact of community connection on staff attrition. Wilson et al. (2016) defined community connection as “a strong commitment to current institution and/or geographical area,”

(p. 568). The study found each person's connection to the community is unique and largely based on personal factors like race, family, culture, and identity (Wilson et al., 2016). The results of the study revealed white professionals had higher levels of community connection (Wilson et al., 2016). Whether Black staff see an institutional culture and surrounding community where they feel accepted and valued for their culture and identities could have a large impact on their sense of community connection. Other personal factors like staying connected to friends, family, and colleagues also influence someone's community connection (Wilson et al., 2016). This is another example of how personal factors like identity cannot be ignored when studying topics like supervision and staff attrition.

Personal factors can also be seen in how Black women define marginalization, personal well-being, and success. As previously mentioned, we could expect Black women to feel marginalized at PWIs since they are lacking in numbers. However, West (2015) found that the Black women in their study described marginalization based on their feelings. The Black women in the study described feelings of marginalization as "having your ideas, experiences, beliefs, and contributions devalued, dismissed, and relegated to the periphery of the group's conversations, decisions, and actions" (p. 10). In essence, feeling marginalized comes from not feeling valued, which is synonymous with having a sense of belonging (Strayhorn, 2018). Whether or not someone feels like they belong depends on whether they feel valued and have the opportunity to add value.

Being able to add value to an institution is also how the Black women in the same study defined success and personal well-being. The participants in West's (2015) study described personal well-being as "inner peace and spiritual and interpersonal wellness" (p. 10). Personal sentiments also defined success as "feeling fulfilled, staying true to oneself, and mentoring other

African American colleagues and students" (p. 10). These feelings and motivations regarding well-being and success come from a very personal place and are dependent on someone's identity. Supervisors need to understand the personal stories of Black women in entry-level student affairs positions to know their motivations to stay in their current positions/institutions and progress in their careers.

When it comes to career progression, institutions can review their promotion and hiring practices to assess whether the pipeline towards leadership is equitable and inclusive of Black women. Student affairs professionals often receive promotions because of their professional networks and ability to play the political game (Byrd, 2019) instead of considering credibility and qualifications equitably. Equity is important in recruitment processes because Black women have historically been looked over for leadership positions. Black women need to work harder to prove their credibility; when overlooked, they may also face imposter syndrome (Clance, 1985; Fields, 2021; Muldrow, 2016). Experiences of imposter syndrome (Clance, 1985; Fields, 2021; Muldrow, 2016) can also negatively impact their ability to advance in their careers as Black women by questioning their knowledge and ability on college campuses that do not value them as people or scholars.

Attrition of New Professionals

Lack of value, support, and advancement opportunities are reasons new professionals leave the field (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Frank, 2013; Marshall et al., 2016). It is necessary for higher education leaders to find ways to support the wellbeing of entry-level professionals because their positions often involve helping others. They can only be successful helpers if their well-being is considered. Entry-level professionals often have a lot of direct contact with college and university students and serve as important support systems through advising, mentorship,

supervision, and resource referrals (Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017). Practitioners who continue in the field of student affairs could become the next generation of leaders, but more than a third will leave within their first six years (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Tull et al., 2009; Ward, 1995).

Turnover of professionals should be a major concern for institutions because resources and finances are negatively impacted (Tull et al., 2009). When new professionals leave, their institutions and student populations are negatively impacted because they lose invested resources, institutional knowledge, and the innovations they could have contributed to their community (Davis & Cooper, 2017). When staff do not persist, more resources are needed to hire and train the person who takes their place. The loss of resources from turnover is especially concerning when higher education practitioners consider the talent lost in the pipeline to senior-level leadership (Blockett et al., 2016; Gildersleeve et al., 2011; Weidman et al., 2001). Institutions need to consider how to retain these leaders to avoid a loss of resources and student support.

To better support new professionals, institutions must understand their reasons for leaving. One study found new professionals were leaving due to “job dissatisfaction, work overload, lack of career advancement opportunities, lack of mentoring, inadequate supervision, and poor vocational fit” (Davis & Cooper, 2017, p. 55). Another study found similar themes: "burnout, salary issues, career alternatives, work/family conflict, limited advancement, supervisor issues and institutional fit, and loss of passion” (Marshall et al., 2016, p. 146). These studies represent similar and different reasons professionals leave the field of higher education. It’s telling that supervisors are mentioned in both cases because the supervisor's role is to support the people they oversee. They can impact things like workload, salary, promotion, and job satisfaction (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Kadushin & Harkness, 2002).

Supervision

Supervisory relationships are one part of the higher education environment that is universal in many professional settings. New professionals in all fields can expect some form of training and onboarding to prepare them for their current roles, and to have a direct point of contact (or supervisor). Kadushin and Harkness (2002) explained three major functions of supervisors: evaluating the work of others, acting as an advocate, and serving as a change agent. As leaders with positional authority and power, supervisors can transform the culture of the work environment for others, and their influence can be either positive or negative.

Marshall et al. (2016) found a majority of new practitioners did not utilize their supervisors as mentors due to poor leadership and role modeling. Knowing some new professionals see their supervisors as poor leaders is a compelling finding, because novice practitioners often look to their supervisors for advice, feedback, and role modeling to succeed in their positions and the field of higher education (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Marshall et al., 2016; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). If a supervisor is not seen as a role model or leader by the people they supervise, they may not be trusted by their supervisees to advocate on their behalf. A key finding from this study was that supervisors need to build trust and understand the needs of their team members (Marshall et al., 2016).

Development of personal relationships with supervisees is often considered a best practice in supervision. For example, synergistic supervision focuses on the personal and professional aspects of an employee's experience. Synergistic supervision is relationship-based and requires effort and time from both the supervisor and supervisee (Shupp & Armino, 2012; Tull, 2009; Winston & Creamer, 1998). Within synergistic supervision, relationships are based on open communication about goals and feedback, meaning the supervisor shares goals from the

organization with their supervisees and they also help their team members accomplish individual goals. Feedback happens in a similar way, where the supervisor gives constructive feedback about the supervisees performance but also creates a safe space for the supervisee to provide feedback about their performance as a supervisor. This two-way communication style creates a well-being culture where supervisees feel valued (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Shupp & Armino, 2012; Tull, 2009; Winston & Creamer, 1998).

The needs of each supervisee will vary based on their position, institution, personality, and identities (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Marshall et al., 2016; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). Supervisors need to balance these complexities to support team members individually. Interviews with 13 supervisors found, "challenges, oftentimes, arose when the supervisor and supervisee differed with respect to areas like identity, personality traits, life circumstances (e.g., married/single, children, and distance from family), and work styles" (Davis & Cooper, 2017, p. 59). We can better understand why these challenges exist by critically examining power, privilege, and identity development. Knowledge of identity development can help supervisors understand how life experiences have shaped individuals and their perspectives inside and outside of the workplace.

How Identity Shapes Perspectives and Individual Needs

In support of knowledge acquisition to identify unjust systems, I explain how identity shapes individual needs and perspectives. As people enter the workforce, they are continuing to grow and develop through the identities they hold (Weick, 1995). More importantly, their perspectives are further influenced by how professional settings support, celebrate, or ignore their identities. Ignorance of identity can lead to poor attrition of personnel. After all, new professionals will decide whether they have found the right cultural fit based on alignment with

their personal morals and values (Hirschy et al., 2015; Perez & Haley, 2021; Pittman & Foubert, 2016; Williams & Davis, 2021). When student affairs professionals ignore the context of identity amongst their peers, they also fail to recognize the diverse perspectives individuals bring to professional team settings leading folks to feel less valued and appreciated. For this reason, higher education professionals need to acknowledge the identities of supervisors and supervisees to better understand the essence of their relationship (Williams & Davis, 2021; Elliott et al., 2021). When supervisors know their team members beyond the positions they hold, they will be more successful in motivating each individual.

Professional Identity Development

As people enter the workforce, they are continuing to grow and develop through the identities they hold (Weick, 1995). More importantly, their perspectives are further influenced by how professional settings support, celebrate, or ignore their identities. Ignorance of identity can lead to poor attrition of personnel. After all, new professionals will decide whether they have found the right cultural fit based on alignment with their personal morals and values (Hirschy et al., 2015; Perez & Haley, 2021; Pittman & Foubert, 2016; Williams & Davis, 2021). When student affairs professionals ignore the context of identity amongst their peers, they also fail to recognize the diverse perspectives individuals bring to professional team settings leading folks to feel less valued and appreciated.

Higher education practitioners often rely on student development theory to understand the collegiate experience of students (Abes et al., 2019; Patton et al., 2016). More attention should be given to the ways student affairs professionals develop personal and professional identities. Student development theories can help student affairs professionals recognize the

contextual importance one's identities and life experiences have on their perceptions of themselves and others (Abes et al., 2019; Patton et al., 2016).

Navigating a higher education institution as a new professional can be a challenging experience (Marshall et al., 2016; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Tull et al., 2009; Ward, 1995). New professionals face multiple obstacles like learning the scope of their position, how they fit into the campus culture, the dynamics of institutional politics, and how to build relationships with their coworkers and supervisor (Tull, 2006; Tull et al., 2009). Coping with all this newness can be especially challenging for Black women who hold double minoritized identities of race and gender.

Although researchers have looked at the experiences of Black women as undergraduate students, we can use the findings from these studies to better understand the personal and professional experiences of Black women in student affair roles. Studies that have focused solely on Black undergraduate women have explored the influence of different factors on identity development which include socialization (Porter, 2017), oppression (Porter, 2017; Winkle-Wagner, 2009), identity negotiation (Jones et al., 2001; Williams et al., 2020; Winkle Wagner et al., 2019), assimilation (Williams & Lewis, 2021), and coping mechanisms (Williams et al., 2020). These factors influence identity development through adulthood.

As new professionals enter their chosen career fields, they will continue to explore their ascribed identities through the social setting of the workplace. Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008) examined the challenges new professionals face, including professional identity development, adjusting to a new cultural environment, cultivating a learning mentality, and seeking advice from more experienced practitioners in the field. Professional identity development involves learning about your current professional role, building confidence within that role, and finding a

balance between personal and professional life (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). Supervisors and mentors play a critical role in professional identity development (Pittman & Foubert, 2016). Supervisors spend a lot of time with new professionals and have the potential to be a positive influence and support system in navigating their work environment (Pittman & Foubert, 2016).

As new professionals adjust to their new work environment, they will sometimes seek a learning orientation and sage advice to overcome such challenges. A learning orientation positions new professionals to approach every challenge as an opportunity to learn and grow. Professional growth can be achieved through feedback from mentors and supervisors and other professional development opportunities to learn about the role/field (Hirschy et al., 2015; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). Establishing connections with supervisors and mentors can lead to sage advice important for professional identity development. Professionals can also learn more about themselves and the profession by engaging with professional organizations and socializing with other practitioners (Trede et al., 2012).

What new professionals learn about their roles and the higher education field will help them decide whether they found the right institutional and career fit. Determining institutional fit requires understanding and evaluating their new work environment based on organizational culture, political relationships, and cultural norms (Collins, 2009; Gansemer-Topf & Ryder 2017; Marshall et al., 2016; Perez, 2016; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2004). Further self-reflection on personal morals and values will aid professionals in this decision-making process and their professional identity development (Hirschy et al., 2015; Pittman & Fourbert, 2016). Whether institutional practices align with their personal values may tell student affairs professionals if they found the right institutional fit (Marshall et al., 2016; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). For

example, institutional fit could depend on values of diversity, equity, and inclusion being embedded into training, hiring, retention, and other programmatic efforts.

Finding the right institutional fit also means adjusting and evaluating a new location and place of community (Collins, 2009; Gansemer-Topf & Ryder, 2017; Perez, 2006; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). How new professionals cope with this change depends on their identities (Dickens & Chavez, 2017). Navigating a new place could prove to be more stressful if they are one of a few people with a particular identity (Dickens & Chavez, 2017). Therefore, they may find comfort in familiarizing themselves with a new institution and surrounding community with someone of similar identities.

In summary, the professional identities of new student affairs practitioners are influenced by their current workplaces, past experiences, and ascribed identities (Weick, 1995). Figure 1 below depicts the relationships between the different factors that influence someone's professional identity development. Student affairs practitioners can apply what they have learned about student development and ascribed identities to understand the professional identity development process. For one, we cannot understand any form of identity development without considering the impact of racism and white supremacy (Abes et al., 2019; Delgado & Stefanic, 2012).

Figure 1

Professional Identity Development

For example, a professional's understanding of what it means to be a Black woman has been formed over time through socialization and prior experiences with friends, family, schools, and workplaces (Hannon et al., 2016; Patton, 2016; Sullivan & Esmail, 2012; Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017; Tatum, 2003; Williams & Lewis, 2021; Williams et al., 2020). That is why you see the circles encompassing ascribed identities and past experiences intersect. A new student affairs professional's current perception of their workplace and field is impacted by past experiences in the collegial setting as a place of work, education, and self-discovery (Perez, 2016).

Past experiences could include graduate programs, engagement with faculty, and relationships with other student affairs professionals. These past experiences of new professionals will inform their expectations of the student affairs field. Perez (2016) used a conceptual model to explain this socialization process. Perez's (2016) model explains how the expectations new professionals have; do not always align with the realities they experience when entering the field of higher education. When this happens, new practitioners need to decide whether to follow the guidance and knowledge of others or move forward based on their own values and intuition (Perez, 2016). Figure 1 shows past experiences and workplace overlapping for this reason.

All three circles in Figure 1 are connected because someone's ascribed identities and past experiences will influence their perspectives of their current workplaces. A professional's current institution will further impact their professional identity development through their interactions with colleagues, organizational culture, and supervisor(s). Supervisors need to know about the professional identity development process and the challenges new professionals face to provide holistic support. Supervisors who show appreciation and support for personal and professional needs can contribute to a sense of belonging. The actions of supervisors can tell supervisees whether they are valued as a person and/or an employee.

Sense of Belonging

Feeling valued is tied to a sense of belonging which has been defined as a basic human need (Maslow, 1962). In addition to feeling valued, a sense of belonging is also linked to mattering (Rosenberg & McClough, 1981). When someone matters, they feel they are recognized for positive contributions, are cared about, feel needed, and appreciated (Rosenberg

& McClough, 1981). The need to belong is heightened for groups of people who are in the minority and therefore is an important consideration for Black women in student affairs.

Another reason belonging should be an important consideration for supervisors and higher education leaders is because feelings of belonging can lead to "other positive outcomes like achievement, engagement, wellbeing, happiness, and optimal functioning in particular context or domain" (Strayhorn, 2018, p. 39). These outcomes are especially important when supervisors consider the attrition of new student affairs professionals. Supervisors have the positional authority to positively influence workplace culture, including fostering a culture of belonging.

Weiss (2021) provided some examples of how students find a sense of belonging on college campuses which can also be applied to student affairs staff. For one, institutions need to offer space where people can come together to exchange ideas and build personal relationships. In addition, support should be individualized because belonging is also affected by the intersection of social identities (Strayhorn, 2018; Weiss, 2021). Finally, everyone (students, faculty, and staff) should be actively involved in creating inclusive environments on their campuses (Wiess, 2021). Making belonging a priority for everyone is necessary if institutions want to create changes that address some of the systemic issues minoritized groups face on their campuses.

A commitment to belonging should also include continued education and training. I say this because belonging is "satisfied on a contextual basis and likely changes as circumstance, conditions, and contexts change" (Strayhorn, 2018, p. 39). When considering student affairs professionals, some contexts higher education leaders should consider are institution type,

location, and culture. In addition, the identities and motivations of each staff member will influence their perspectives on belonging.

Diversity in Black Identity Development

Identity development is an individual and social process that also relies heavily on context (Patton et al., 2016; Porter, 2017; Seaton et al., 2012; Sullivan & Esmail, 2012; Tatum, 2003; Williams et al., 2020; Williams & Lewis, 2021). Although models have been created to understand Black identity development, it would be inappropriate to think one pedagogical method could describe all the diversity that exists within the identity development of Black people. Development of a Black identity is influenced by internal factors and external factors related to a person's identity.

Internal factors include social interactions (Cross, 1991; Patton et al., 2016) and relationships with parents and family (Cross, 1991; Patton et al., 2016; Porter, 2017; Seaton et al., 2012; Tatum, 2003; Williams & Lewis, 2021). How people build relationships and experience the world around them are influenced by ascribed identities like gender (Hymon, 2020; Porter, 2017; Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017; Williams et al., 2020; Williams & Lewis, 2021), sexuality (Evans & Dyson, 2015), and socio-economic status (Cross, 1991; Patton et al., 2016; Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017; Tatum, 2003). Even someone's physical appearance that is connected to their race and ethnicity can impact how others see them, and how they make sense of their identities (Tatum, 2003; Williams et al., 2020).

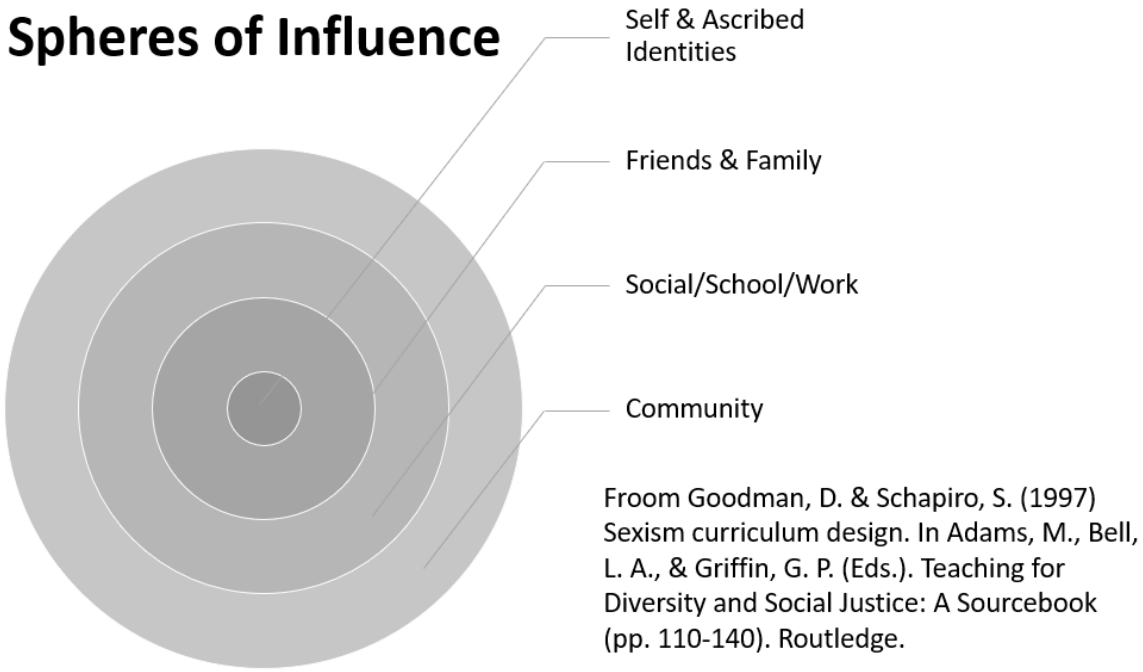
In addition to internal factors, external elements like the media (Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017), environment (Cross, 1991; Hymon, 2020; Patton et al., 2016), and organized religion (Porter, 2017) also contribute to the diverse factors that impact Black identity development. This developmental process starts prior to collegiate education, continues into adulthood, and is

largely influenced by the messages people receive about race and gender that are often normalized through stereotypes (Tatum, 2003). Institutions like schools, peer groups, families, and the media are, then, products of the environment that reinforce messages about race.

The image below in Figure 2 is known as “spheres of influence” and was created by Goodman and Schapiro (1997). This illustration is meant to depict the external factors that further influence a person’s perspective and daily experiences. This image also helps synthesize some of the research that describes the diversity in Black womanhood and Black identity development. The spheres of influence help others understand how identity, socialization with others, and societal structures shape our daily lives and perspectives. As Collins (2000) also explained, there is more to Black women than race and gender. Black women come with a plethora of other identities and experiences that shape who they are and how they view the world around them. Furthermore, how someone forms a Black identity will vary depending on who and what is within their spheres of influence. Each Black person will have a unique group of friends, family, values, and community that will influence how they make meaning of their Blackness (Hannon et al., 2016; Patton, 2016; Sullivan & Esmail, 2012; Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017; Tatum, 2003; Williams & Lewis, 2021; Williams et al., 2020).

Figure 2

Spheres of Influence



Note: For license cover sheet (see Appendix E)

Intersectionality and Identity Development

Contextual knowledge about race is provided in Black identity development models, but only a few have depicted the unique experiences of Black women. Those who have focused on Black women consider the intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) of race and gender. Black women often describe their experiences by talking about both identities (Thomas et al., 2011). Levels of awareness from these identities happen at an early age through experiences with racism and negative stereotypes. Some of these experiences occur through interaction with others (Stalnaker- Shofner, 2020), the media (Jacobs, 2016), and Black information (Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017).

Black women learn about their identities inside and outside Black communities (Cross, 1991; Hannon et al., 2016; Porter, 2007; Tatum, 2003; Williams et al., 2020). Williams et al. (2020) found that the identity development of Black, first-generation college women on a predominantly white campus also depends on outside factors like environmental circumstances. How the Black women in this study presented themselves to others and understood their identity changed when they went from their hometowns of predominantly Black environments to the collegiate setting of a predominately white environment.

White supremacist ideals exist in both predominately Black and white environments. Black women learn what it means to be feminine and beautiful and often these characteristics are defined by white standards (Jacobs, 2016; Thomas et al., 2011). Beauty standards defined by a dominant race is a form of colorism where those with darker skin are discriminated against, and those with lighter skin receive better treatment (Banks, 2000; Russel et al., 2013). United States beauty standards like light skin, light eyes, and straight hair do not describe Black women (Brown et al., 2016). Therefore, Black women need to develop an oppositional gaze (hooks, 1992) where they question the messages they receive from informal and formal settings regarding race, gender, and beauty. Through self-determination, self-definition, and positive associations, Black women can feel free to be their authentic selves (Collins, 2000; Jacobs, 2016).

The freedom to be your authentic self means you are able to embrace every part of you; or every identity you hold. Winkle-Wagner et al. (2019) stressed the importance for research to, "focus on within group differences and allow black women to define their identities" (p. 436). These within-group differences are important because it offers a holistic view of each person and the identities they hold outside of race and gender like socioeconomic status, sexuality,

spirituality, ability, etc. Therefore, it is important to have Black women define their identities for themselves and situate them as the experts of their experiences without generalizing the experiences of all Black women. The degree to which a Black woman can show up as their authentic self somewhat depends on how they negotiate their identity in the workplace.

Identity Negotiation

Identity negotiation is a coping mechanism and common theme among various studies of Black identity development models (Cross, 1991; Seaton et al., 2012; Sullivan & Esmail, 2012; Vandiver et al., 2001; Vandiver et al., 2002; Williams et al., 2020; Williams & Lewis, 2021). Identity negotiation includes, but is not limited to, understanding your racial identity depending on the context (e.g., environment, peer groups, family, etc.). Negotiating identity is a necessary coping mechanism because many environments like professional settings and PWIs have not been designed for Black people (Dickens & Chavez, 2017). In these settings, interactions with others reinforce what behaviors are accepted or not accepted based on racial stereotypes (Gray, 2019). The salient identities of someone could influence whether or not they decide to change their behaviors to assimilate into a place that does not include them (Seaton et al., 2012; Sullivan, & Esmail, 2012; Williams & Lewis, 2021). These decisions are forced upon them and do not give them the freedom to develop their own self-definitions of what it means to be a Black woman. Systematic oppression is upheld by forcing marginalized populations to assimilate through informal socialization and societal structures.

The identity negotiation process and its motivations are described differently by scholars (Cross, 1991; Porter, 2017; Reinert, 2016; Seaton et al., 2012; Sullivan & Esmail, 2012; Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017; Tatum, 2003; Williams et al., 2020; Williams & Lewis, 2021). What is important to remember is that identity negotiation is not always a conscious process (Dickens &

Chavez, 2017) and can occur on a spectrum (Seaton et al., 2012; Sullivan, & Esmail, 2012; Williams & Lewis, 2021). Those who self-identify as Black may feel pressure to prove their Black identity to others (Tatum, 2003), or decide to reject parts of their racial identity to assimilate into the dominant culture (Williams & Lewis, 2021).

A Black person may also develop an oppositional identity where they embrace their race and culture but reject the dominant culture (Cross, 1991; Tatum, 2003; Vandiver et al., 2001; Vandiver et al., 2002). There are different degrees to which this identity negotiation happens and it is not to say that someone either rejects or accepts their racial identity. Instead, it is a fluid process that can change throughout a person's lifetime and is impacted by factors like family, hometowns, peers, education level, and workplaces. These social and environmental factors will ultimately determine how salient race is to someone's identity and whether they should embrace it or reject it for the comfort of others (Seaton et al., 2012; Sullivan, & Esmail, 2012; Williams & Lewis, 2021).

One study on Black women's gender and racial identity development explained a phase known as hyperawareness, where "shared experiences of gendered racial microaggressions cause hyperawareness of identity and how others negatively perceived them, causing them to be 'cautious' about what 'image' they portrayed of themselves in public" (Williams & Lewis, 2021, p. 7). This hyperawareness causes folks to adjust their behaviors to avoid stereotype threat (Hymon, 2020; Tatum, 2003). Sadly, many negative stereotypes can create a very limited perspective of what it means to be Black. Educators can make space for greater diversity of the Black experience by considering how environments like collegiate settings, hometowns, and workplaces impact how Black women negotiate their identities.

Navigating the PWI Environment

I wanted to learn more about the challenges Black student affairs practitioners faced but most of the research I found was about Black students. The disparity of research between Black students and Black administrators suggests a culture of anti-Blackness and racism, because Black people are defined in lesser roles and not seen in leadership positions (Bell et al., 2021). Given the little literature that exists about Black administrators, I focused on parallels between the experiences of Black students and Black faculty at PWIs. One challenge many Black students faced was learning to navigate multiple worlds; their new collegiate environment and their home communities (Hannon et al., 2016). For example, some Black students represented the racial majority in their hometowns and learned what it meant to be Black from people of the same race. In college, however, these same students had to readjust to a new environment with fewer people who shared similar life experiences as them (Williams et al., 2020). In essence, their ascribed identities and environments influenced how they socialized and found a sense of belonging (Hannon et al., 2016; Williams et al., 2020; Winkle-Wagner, 2009).

Constant experience with discrimination and racism certainly affected Black student's ability to feel a sense of belonging (Rankin & Reason, 2005; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2003). How they navigated the racist environments of PWIs differed by the individual and occurred on a spectrum. On one end of the spectrum, Black students could decide to assimilate to the culture of their institution and mask their identities. Or at the complete opposite end of the spectrum, they could find strength and pride in their identities (Williams & Lewis, 2021; Winkle-Wagner, 2009). Neither end of the spectrum is defined as being the correct way, but can instead be understood as multiple pathways. Porter et al. (2020) highlighted how this kind of diversity exists among Black women. Black women, as individuals, have unique upbringings, college

experiences, values, and salient identities. Therefore, how Black women explain their experiences and needs for support will differ.

Black women working at predominately white institutions can expect to be in the minority and to experience cruelty and ignorance in the form of racism (Harlow, 2003; marbely, et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2020) and discrimination (Frazier, 2011; Gargner et al., 2014; Griffin et al., 2013; Williams et al., 2020). Black men can also expect to find these kinds of experiences but unique to Black women are additional obstacles like gendered racism (Williams et al., 2020; Williams et al., 2021; Williams & Lewis, 2021) and sexism (marbely, et al., 2015). In addition to these overt exclusionary practices, Black women are also othered in sometimes indirect and subtle ways through negative stereotyping (Hannon et al., 2016; Harlow, 2003; Williams & Lewis, 2021; Winkle-Wagner et al., 2019) and microaggressions (marbely et al., 2015; William et al., 2020; Williams & Lewis, 2021).

Although microaggressions and stereotypes can sometimes be described as small, indirect, subtle, and unintentional, that does not mean they do not cause real, lasting damage to a person's sense of self, wellbeing, and confidence (Smith, 2004; West, 2015). In fact, studies have found daily experiences with discrimination can be more harmful than major life experiences associated with discrimination and high stress (Ayalon & Gum, 2011; Earnshaw et al., 2016; Gaston et al., 2007; Williams, 2020). Furthermore, microaggressions and stereotypes can lead to self-doubt where Black women no longer strive for goals that seem out of reach even if they are completely capable (West, 2015). It is no wonder Black women feel marginalized (Blockett et al., 2016; Harris, 2013) and must find ways to protect themselves when navigating spaces like higher education. Being their true, authentic selves is not always an option. Instead, many Black women journey through higher education using self-protective strategies (Williams et al., 2020),

such as downplaying ones' race and trying to talk, dress, and act less "Black" to defy negative stereotypes and conform to the dominant culture (Cross, 199l; Gray, 2019; Patton et al., 2016; Reinert, 2016; Tatum, 2003; Williams et al., 2020; Williams & Lewis, 2021). As much as Black women try to mask their subordinated identities, they will still be judged because of their race and gender.

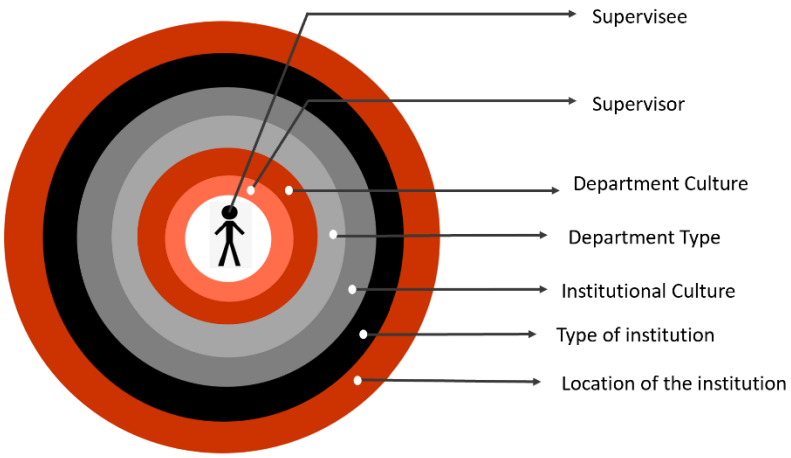
Race and gender are identities others can sometimes identify through physical appearance and behaviors based on stereotypes. Folks can alter their physical looks and behavior to a certain point to assimilate, but no matter how much they change for the appeasement of others, Black folks will always be seen as "less than" because US society is steeped in anti-Blackness (Pasque et al., 2022). Blackness is not something that can be performed. Instead, Blackness is a way of being or identifying oneself and can take many different forms.

Campus Environment and Identity

Through my study, I worked to better understand how Black women make meaning of their identities and negotiate their identities through their campus environments at PWIs. How individuals are impacted by their institutional environments is contextual (Avery et al., 2018; Campbell et al., 2019; Mitchell, 2018). Their daily experiences are influenced by the location of their institution, type of institution, the department they work in, the person who supervises them, and the cultural nuances of each. I created the image below in Figure 3 to illustrate the unique spaces Black women in student affairs are navigating within their institutions. The concept for the image I created comes from Goodman and Shapiro's (1997) spheres of influence. Goodman and Shapiro (1997) created "spheres of influence" to identify the different contexts influencing each individual's daily experiences. Similarly, I have identified the various contexts that student affairs professionals can expect to experience at individual institutions.

Figure 3

Spaces Black Women in Student Affairs Navigate



The stick figure at the center of Figure 3 depicts Black women working in students' affairs in the position of a supervisee. They are positioned in the center because the elements in the surrounding circles impact their personal and professional experiences. How Black women make meaning of their experiences are dependent on the location, type, and culture of their institutions. In addition, their professional positions within student affairs also places them with a specific supervisor, in a unique department, with its own culture. Since this study focuses on a specific institution type (PWIs) I thought it was important to explain how the cultural climate of PWIs may impact Black women.

Research comparing PWIs and Historically Blacks Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) underscore how the experiences of Black women are impacted by institutional environments (Blackshear & Hollins, 2021; Campbell et al., 2019; Mitchell, 2018). I chose to take a closer look at how these institutional settings compared when Black women were in the minority versus the majority of the population. As previously mentioned, few studies discuss the dynamics of

Black staff and campus climate (Byrd et al., 2019), so my research included resources that analyzed the experiences of Black students, faculty, and staff at PWIs.

Historically, Black students have been challenged by PWI settings, because they are forced to navigate their identity in a different way (Ancis et al., 2000; Bentley-Edwards & Chapman-Hilliard, 2015; Payne & Suddler, 2014). Students of color collectively view their campus climates as more racist and less accepting than white students (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Rankin & Reason, 2005). One study found Black students are also more likely to leave their current institution due to a lack of social connections in comparison to white students (Chavous, 2002). This study is significant because of the focus on Black students and sense of belonging. Studies focused on belonging and social connections have not always considered how a Black racial identity has further implications for persistence in college (Gopalan & Brady, 2020; Haussman et al., 2007; Silverwolf et al., 2017). The comparisons between Black and white students discussed by Chavous (2002) are not surprising because they reflect white students' privileges to navigate an environment designed for them. However, the experiences of Black students on college and university campuses are still unique from other students of color who lack privilege. Black students report more experiences with racism and differential treatment causing them to conform to the environment around them (Ancis et al., 2000; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2003).

In contrast, Black students at HBCUs have "reported lower levels of social climate stress and lower levels of interracial stress than their counterparts at PWIs" (Mitchell, 2018, p. 62). These negative experiences also translated to the classroom where Black students felt they had less support from faculty at PWIs than HBCUs (Mitchell, 2018). Identity development can help practitioners understand these differences in environment. At HBCUs, Black students are more

likely to be introduced to positive self-images regarding their race, allowing them to develop and thrive in social and academic settings (Campbell et al., 2019). This suggests a relationship between the demographics of an environment and identity development. The impact of someone's environment can be understood in multiple settings including the workplace. How Black faculty and staff make meaning on their Blackness can also be understood by the demographics of their institutions as places of work and community.

Where Black students struggle to thrive inside and outside the classroom, Black faculty and staff face barriers to succeed professionally at PWIs and HBCUs. Blackshear and Hollis (2021) compared Black women faculty at PWIs and HBCUs, and found Black women faculty experienced racism and sexism in both environments. The stark contrast between the two settings however was the value of Black bodies. The labor of Black women faculty working to support diversity efforts and Black students was not valued at PWIs and their efforts were not considered scholarly and often dismissed in progress towards tenure (Blackshear & Hollis, 2021).

Similarly described in a study by Webster and Brown (2019), Black staff at PWIs were also tasked with doing diversity work. Both studies highlight the ways Black women are expected to take on the burden of educating others about diversity all while trying to navigate racist and sexist environments. Another similarity that exists are the additional barriers Black women face in advancing within their careers. Poor hiring practices that do not consider the importance of diversity and inclusion lead to a lack of Black representation in mid- and upper-level positions (Webster & Brown, 2019).

Although the previously mentioned studies discuss the experiences of Black people at PWIs and HBCUs, they ignore the systemic issues that create hostile workplace environments. Another study that compared PWIs and HBCUs found very few differences in the workplace

experiences of Black faculty and administrators. DeCuir-Gunby et al. (2020) found because of racism and microaggressions, the use of adaptative and maladaptive coping strategies were necessary for survival in both institution types. These findings suggest a need for practitioners to consider things beyond demographics and institution type. Although these factors are essential, much more can be understood in learning how institutions can make cultural changes to create more inclusive spaces in academia.

Cultural theories of changes suggest, “people are not consciously aware of their underlying values and beliefs,” (Kezar, 2018, p. 197) so it is important to bring realities like anti-Blackness and white supremacy to the surface. Until a change in culture can become a reality for Black people in higher education, they will need to navigate racist climates. How Black folks navigate their identities in higher education environments differs for everyone. For example, the perception of campus climates amongst Black people will vary depending on their hometown communities (Radloff & Evans, 2003).

Negotiating Identity Between Hometowns and PWIs

The adjustment of Black students at PWIs is different when comparing Black students who grew up in white communities to those who grew up in more diverse areas. Studies have shown students who grew up in white neighborhoods had less experience with racism in comparison to those who grew up in non-white neighborhoods (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Randloff & Evans, 2003). Black students who had more experience with predominately white environments may have an easier time adjusting than those who did not (Denton & Massey, 1993; Woldoff et al., 2011). Black students from Black environments may need to renegotiate their identity at PWIs where they are now the minority (Williams et al., 2020). This is not to say that Black folks thrive in white environments. Instead, Black students who grew up in

predominately white environments have had more experience learning to negotiate their identity through different levels of assimilation.

Black students who move from Black neighborhoods to predominately white institutions must learn to negotiate their identity in different ways through assimilation and adjustments to new cultural norms (Williams et al., 2020). Black peers may question someone's Blackness depending on physical appearance, privileges, and access to a higher education (Williams et al., 2020). Questioning someone's Blackness is synonymous with stereotypes that define Blackness in negative and limited ways to uphold white supremacy (Green, n.d.; Feagin, 2013; National Museum of African American History & Culture, 2018). If, for example, someone came from a predominately Black neighborhood and went to a predominantly white institution (PWI) they may experience stereotype threat and questions of racial inauthenticity from peers in their hometown *and* their current institution. The reason their Black peers may question their Blackness is because they have grown up in an environment that does not consider Black people to be scholarly or capable of academic achievement (Collins, 2000; Smith, 2009; Tatum, 2003). Ultimately, white supremacy has led many Black folks to develop a self-fulling prophecy where being a part of higher learning is in essence "not Black" (Collins, 2000; Tatum, 2003).

Faculty and Identity Negotiation

Examples of identity negotiation can be found in the interactions with Black faculty and their students. Many Black faculty utilize coping strategies when navigating relationships with students. Systematic oppression creates limited space for Black people in faculty roles. They often experience a lack of respect from students in the classroom by questioning their credentials and credibility (Blackshear & Hollis, 2021; Chancellor, 2019). To cope with these classroom experiences, Black faculty may set clear boundaries in their relationships with students by setting

expectations such as only having students refer to them by their appropriate title of doctor (Harlow, 2003; Harris, 2013).

This expectation is vastly different from their white colleagues who may not expect their students to call them doctor to reduce power differentials and be more approachable. When Black, women in faculty roles create these expectations they are also challenged by their gender in coming off as the "angry Black woman," when they are more serious in their approach (Harlow, 2003; Reinert, 2016). Students often expect them to be more nurturing which reinforces the image of the mammy and/or matriarch that Collins (2000) described.

In addition to making clear expectations for how they are addressed, Black faculty also cite their credentials, overprepare for class sessions, and even downplay the impact of race in the classroom to survive the racial battle fatigue they are experiencing (Harlow, 2003). Black faculty do not expect to automatically have the respect of their students when they call them doctor; instead they feel pressured to earn their respect. This is troubling because the students who are questioning their credibility on the basis of their race are also evaluating their performance in the classroom. Unfortunately, leaders and even other Black faculty downplay the impact of bias. Instead of recognizing that Black faculty are othered by their students due to societal stereotypes, white colleagues question their level of resiliency and capability (Harlow, 2003).

Telling Black women in faculty roles, they are not being resilient enough to withstand the lack of respect they are experiencing in the classroom ignores a reality they have faced long before entering the classroom. Even through adolescence, Black women have learned that being a high achieving student is not something Black students are expected to accomplish (Tatum, 2003). In addition, the structure of K-12 schools reinforces this idea with more Black students

showing up in lower level courses (Tatum, 2003). Unfortunately, K-12 schools are not the only environments where Black folks struggle to negotiate their identities.

Identity Suppression and the Workplace

The workplace is another example of an environmental factor that influences how someone makes meaning of their salient identities. Black women in professional staff roles at colleges and universities, will also be navigating their workplace, home environments, and their role in Black communities simultaneously (Bell, 1990; Dickens & Chavez, 2017). How Black women adjust to their workplace environment has both positive and negative implications. Black women who perceive their workplaces as racist or discriminatory are more likely to suppress their identities (Madera et al., 2012). Experiences with racism and sexism compels Black women to suppress their identities so they may present an image that will be more socially accepted by co-workers who do not share the same identities (Dickens & Chavez, 2017; Dickens et al., 2019; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2004). Identity suppression is seen as a necessary form of career survival for Black women because white colleagues will often question their credibility (Catalyst, 2004; Dickens & Chavez, 2017). This form of assimilation is therefore necessary to protect the career trajectories of Black women (Dickens & Chavez, 2017; Dickens et al., 2019).

There are also social pressures to assimilate to the workplace. For one, Black women may feel pressure to adjust their behaviors to meet workplace standards regarding professionalism in an effort to be a positive representation for their race as a way to honor their Black communities and families (Dickens & Chavez, 2017). This is problematic because many behaviors around professionalism are rooted in white supremacy (Davis, 2016; Gray, 2019). Despite this fact, Black women are forced to suppress their identities to interact with co-workers different from them (Dickens & Chavez, 2017; Dickens et al., 2019). Unfortunately, when Black women

suppress their identities in the workplace, they may be more likely to experience discriminatory behaviors. This is because people may feel more comfortable to talk and behave in negative and discriminatory ways towards people of certain racial and ethnic groups when they believe a member of that group is not present (Madera et al., 2012). The concept of anti-Blackness can help us understand why Black women experience these kinds of discriminatory behaviors at colleges and universities.

Anti-Blackness

While critical race theory (CRT) can unpack how society is structured to uphold systematic oppression, anti-Blackness can help us understand how society feels towards Black people to normalize oppression and racism. A major critique of CRT is that it describes the Black experience only through race and does not offer a more complex analyses that includes history and lived experiences (Dumas & Ross, 2016). There are, however, key concepts from CRT that relate to anti-Blackness. These core components include whiteness as property and Black bodies as fungible (Dancy et al., 2018; Dumas & Ross, 2016). Scholars have used whiteness as property to analyze the education system as a form of oppression by highlighting disproportions in various areas, including exposure to a culturally relevant academic curriculum (Dumas & Ross, 2016; Harris, 1993; Tatum, 2003). Refusing to acknowledge culture or people of color in curriculum is one of many ways the education system upholds systematic oppression.

Racism within college and universities today can be seen in various ways including the exploitations of Black people in sports as sources of income and entertainment, dismissing the value of Black scholars, and unequal labor expectations are placed on Black women in academia (Dancy et al., 2018). These examples underscore the dangerous ways higher education perpetuates systematic oppression and keeps privilege in the hands of a few. Since higher

education perpetuates systematic oppression (Dancy et al., 2018; Dumas & Ross, 2016), supervisors need to think of how institutional, cultural, and supervisory relationships can impact the experiences of Black women who are new to the student affairs profession. They are not new to these spaces and may have already become familiar with these unjust systems as students (Hannon et al., 2016; Tatum, 2003; Williams et al., 2020). The acknowledgement of unjust systems could be the motivation they need to develop inclusive supervision practices. After all, Black feminist thought asks for action behind knowledge acquisition, because knowledge that is not used as a tool for change is fruitless (Collins, 2000).

Black Feminist Thought

Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) values the diversity of Black women's experiences by empowering individuals to self-define their experience through meaning making. Black feminist thought is grounded in meaning making because it is based on the collective knowledge from Black women intellectuals who represent diverse backgrounds (Collins, 2000). According to Collins (2000), self-empowerment is fostered when Black women are able to create and share their own meanings, identities, and self-definitions based on their lived experiences.

Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) explains that we can expect to find differences in the ways Black women make meaning of their experiences, but it also acknowledges that Black women experience similar struggles with racism and oppression. Dialogue that furthers the production of Black feminist thought can empower Black women and lead to coalition building and activism (Collins, 2000). This is necessary for real societal change to occur. Critical race theory explains the need for this kind of change by focusing on how race is socially constructed and how the structures in place disadvantage those with minoritized identities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Collins (2000) described how many of these stereotypes are often created to reinforce the systematic oppression of Black women by controlling the images and messaging that describe what it means to be a Black woman. Collins (2000) named some of these controlling images as mammies, matriarchs, welfare recipients, and hot mamas. The image of the mammy dates back to slavery and segregation that positions Black women as domestic servants. The image of the matriarch is used to normalize the idea that most families are led by single, Black mothers who are plagued by poverty and other disadvantages (Collins, 2000). The welfare mother is a troubling stereotype that describes Black mothers as sexually irresponsible and living on welfare to support their families. And finally, the hot mama image is characterized as Black women being sexually active and fertile.

Each of these images is negative, racist, and used to control the perceptions of Black women. Categorizing Black women in ways that refer to them only as domestic, poor, sexual, and a burden on society are efforts to normalize different isms like racism, classism, genderism, and sexism. None of these images describe Black women outside of their marginalized identities. Defining Black women solely by negative roles ignores the fullness of Black womanhood. More effort needs to be made to empower and support the true identities of Black women as accomplished scholars, leaders, and educators. Unfortunately, Black women are often recognized for their ability to endure challenges of racism, discrimination, and oppression.

Self-Protective Strategies and Support

Constant experiences with racism and discrimination forces Black women to develop coping mechanisms. Black women may need to retreat from situations where they are the only Black woman present. In addition to removing themselves physically, they may also mentally check out of certain situations (Dickens & Chavez, 2017). Being in environments where they are

the token person and are struggling to adjust to a predominately white environment that is pervasive in racism, sexism, and discrimination will only exacerbate the need to mentally check out to preserve their physical and mental well-being (Madera et al., 2012). This is not surprising because stereotype threat and experiences with racism, sexism, and discrimination can impact how someone feels about their own group membership. The messages someone receives about their race and ethnicity can impact their self-esteem and how they see themselves (Avery et al., 2008; Dickens et al., 2019; Vorauer, 2006). The outcomes of identity negotiation describe a very sad and unfulfilling reality for Black women. Identity negotiation is both a coping mechanism and an obstacle Black women are forced to navigate in environments grounded in anti-Blackness and exclusionary practices.

The decision to reject or downplay racial identity is one of many self-protective strategies used by Black people to cope with exclusionary environments and constant experiences with microaggressions, racism, and discrimination (Cross, 1991; Patton et al., 2016; Seaton et al., 2012; Sullivan & Esmail, 2012; Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017; Tatum, 2003; Williams et al., 2020; Williams & Lewis, 2021). Some of those self-protective strategies include code switching (Cross, 199l; Patton et al., 2016; Williams et al., 2012), self-policing (Williams et al., 2022), working to defy negative stereotypes (Hymon, 2020; Tatum, 2003; Williams & Lewis, 2021) and conforming to the dominant culture (Cross, 1991; Tatum, 2003; Williams & Lewis, 2021). One study called the use of these protection strategies the navigation phase of the gender and racial identity development of Black women (Williams & Lewis, 2021).

Code Switching as a Self-Protective Strategy

Code-switching is a self-protective strategy using speech to downplay racial identity and assimilate into the dominant culture and work environment (Gray, 2019; McCluney et al., 2021).

Code switching reinforces the need to be mindful of word choice, avoid showing emotion in speech, and to speak what is considered white standard English (Gray, 2019). Code switching can be traced back to slavery and the divide of Black slaves who worked in the fields and in the homes of their masters. Those who worked in the homes of the masters assimilated to a white culture which included speech (Frazier, 1997). Code switching is also synonymous with "Black respectability" (Frazier, 1997) which is a phrase that describes the ways Black people change their behaviors to be considered "more respectable" by whites. Black people are pitted against one another to appease whites by downplaying their race and what makes them authentic in order to be considered a respectable member of society. The need to adopt code switching as a self-protective strategy is indicative of white supremacist culture that defines success in education and professional settings (Daniels, 2018). Code switching is a form of identity negotiation in social and workplace settings other than higher education.

Black people are taught how to code switch from a very early age and some learn it from teachers in K-12 schools (Daniels, 2018). This focus on code switching is confusing because it suggests a person will not be stereotyped by their race if they speak *proper* English. Modifying one's speech does not eliminate racism because how someone speaks is inextricably linked to their race, culture, and upbringing (Daniels, 2018). One study that interviewed teachers found, that teachers often made exceptions to school rules and policies, but consistently enforced code switching and formal English (Daniels, 2018). When teachers encourage students to code switch, they reinforce anti-Blackness ideals by assuming what students of color need to succeed.

That is because code-switching is, in essence, an effort to sound more *white* and less *Black.* Black people are positioned to appease the white people around them by masking their racial identities through speech (Williams et al., 2020). By sounding more *white*, Black people

are also attempting to avoid stereotype threat of sounding uneducated, uncultured, or unprofessional. These ideas surrounding speech uphold systematic oppression and positions white supremacist culture as superior to others. It also reinforces racist images of Black people where they can never be considered scholarly or worthy of leadership (Collins, 2000; Williams et al., 2020).

Sista Circles as a Support System

Support is crucial for new professionals who are engaging with dominant cultural ideals through socialization with new collegiate environments that present unfamiliar challenges. Supervisors can show appreciation for the people who make up their teams by prioritizing their identity development as much as they do their job responsibilities. Renn and Jessup (2008) explained the transition of new professionals from graduate school to their first professional positions. They wrote, “Students must transition from a more dependent, student role to an independent, professional peer role where responsibility for job performance is primary and individual development is secondary” (Renn & Jessup, 2008, p. 329). An identity-conscious approach to supervision pushes against this way of supervising and instead suggests that someone’s personal development is just as important, if not more important, than their job responsibilities. This prioritization is especially important on campuses where new professionals may not find others with similar identities. However, supervisors can still support Black women in finding support systems with people of similar identities outside of their campuses by becoming familiar with professional networks that highlight identity.

Having support systems with people of similar identities is important so the success of Black people is not limited to what society expects of them (Dorsey, 2001). Individuals can explore parts of their identity that may go beyond what is considered stereotypical behavior of

Black identifying people (Dorsey, 2001; Johnson 2015; Hymon, 2020). They can also console with others who may be impacted by discrimination, microaggressions, and racism due to their racial identity (Gaston et al., 2007; Johnson, 2015). Being surrounded by others who share similar experiences and perspectives can be helpful through the identity development process (Collier, 2017).

There is a need to seek out those of the same race, because their white peers often do not understand or know how to support them through experiences with microaggressions or racism (Seaton et al., 2012; Tatum, 2003; Williams & Lewis, 2021; Williams et al., 2020). It is through a sense of community that some are able to feel a sense of strength and pride in their Black identity (Hymon, 2020; Porter 2017; Williams & Lewis, 2021). When Black women come together, they can share stories about their struggles and feel validated by the similar realities they share with others. Sense of belonging can be created by knowing you are not alone in the challenges you face due to your identities. Not only can this create a feeling of community but Black women who come together may also find other ways to support one another.

For many Black women, sista circles have been systems of support to cope with personal and professional stressors (Neal-Barnett et al., 2010; Neal-Barnett, 2011; Robinson & Williams, 2021). Sista circles are defined as support groups for Black women from similar communities whose relationships are built from already existing connections (Neal-Barnett et al., 2011). While scholars have named, defined, and studied the impact of sista circles, they are often a natural part of Black women's lives that provide supportive and positive experiences (Neal-Bartnett et al., 2010). This system of support can serve as an interventive strategy for Black women who may be experiencing stress and anxiety from things like oppression, discrimination, tokenism, and microaggressions (Gaston et al., 2007; Neal-Bartnett et al., 2010).

One study recognized sista circles as an "innovative, theory-driven, curriculum-based support group that was used as an intervention for mid-life African-American women" (Gaston et al., 2007, p. 435). Sista circles have been significant in improving the well-being of Black women in terms of anxiety management, stress management, and physical health (Gaston et al., 2007; Neal Barnett et al., 2011). These are important findings because Black women who suffer from common oppressions like racism, sexism, tokenism, stereotyping, and microaggressions experience negative impacts to their physical and mental health (Gaston et al., 2007). Another significant finding from these studies are the mentions of self-efficacy and coalition building. Sharing spaces and stories with other Black women is a first step to coalition building. Hearing stories from others with similar obstacles can lead to a greater sense of self-efficacy where one can speak openly and honestly as their authentic selves (Collier, 2017; Dorsey, 2000; Gaston et al., 2007; Neal-Bartnett, et al., 2010).

Although sista circles prove to be an effective way to support Black women, separating people by identity will not fix all issues associated with belonging and support. Cross' (1991) theory of Nigrescense discusses how Black people need to manage two cultural contexts (their own culture and the dominant culture) for Black oppression to be the norm. Disparities still exist within systems like healthcare, education, and high-paying occupations (Dancy et al., 2018; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). It is also unfair to say that all Black people would prefer to only interact with people who share common identities. Research suggests that the Black experience is diverse and has contextual importance and meaning (Patton et al., 2016; Porter, 2017; Sullivan & Esmail, 2012; Seaton et al., 2012; Tatum, 2003; Williams et al., 2020; Williams & Lewis, 2021). Phinney et al. (1992) also found many high school and college students preferred being able to maintain their cultural identities while being immersed in mainstream culture and

socializing with people different from themselves. It is from experiences with diversity that those with minoritized identities were able to gain a more positive sense of self-esteem (Phinney et al., 1992). Diverse experiences can teach us how to use power and privilege in ways to create inclusive and equitable spaces.

Power and Privilege in Supervisory Relationships

Since this power structure defines supervisory relationships, it is important for supervisors to think about the ways they approach relationship building with supervisees. To create safe spaces built on trust, supervisors should find ways to break down these power structures (Brown et al., 2019), and use their power to support team members. The power dynamics in supervisory relationships are significant because supervisors can use their power differently. Brown et al. (2019) described this dynamic when they explained that "power is a choice; it is conferred based on a title, but it depends on the individual on how to utilize it effectively and positively" (p. 67).

Supervisors can choose how much they use their power to distance themselves from supervisees (Hofstede, 2001). Hofstede (2001) defined the degree of power use as "power distance orientation." Supervisors with high power distance do not value criticism from others, whereas those with low power distance include the ideas from others to improve practices (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede et al., 2010). High power distance orientation is akin to what one can expect in an organizational hierarchy where the leader makes decisions and others follow suit. In contrast, low power distance orientation is similar to a more communal setting where everyone has an equal voice and ability to contribute to organizational practices.

Supervisory relationships can be positively and negatively impacted by power distance orientation and cultural values (Peyton et al., 2019; Richard et al., 2021). The degree to which

supervisors use their power, and how supervisees respond to that power distance, coupled with individual values, makes supervisory relationships very complex. Therefore, to manage power and use it effectively, Brown et al. (2019) recommended consistent dialogue for the supervisor to better understand the people they support.

Supervisors should ask their team members about their adjustment to the workplace and what kind of support they need, because it can look different for each individual (Davis & Cooper, 2017). Because workplace culture is often defined by white supremist ideals, people with minoritized identities will often perceive their workplace experiences negatively. The study by Avery et al. (2018) illuminated this point. Avery et al. (2018) found women employees were more likely to perceive sex-based discrimination and Black employees were more likely to perceived race-based discrimination. In contrast, Black and white employees were less likely to perceive of race-based discrimination when they shared similar racial/ethnic identities with their supervisor (Avery et al., 2018). When identities amongst supervisors were different Ayman and Korabik (2010) found, "a poor leader–member relationship appears to be more detrimental for men leaders with women subordinates than for women leaders with men subordinates" (p. 166). This study affirmed that when a supervisor holds privileged identities, it exacerbates the existing power dynamics in supervisory relationships (Brown et al., 2019).

This can be an especially challenging aspect of supervision for supervisors to navigate and they need to understand how power and privilege may impact their relationships with supervisees. To better understand the specific needs of supervisees with minoritized identities, supervisors can work to develop cultural competency by learning about their own identities and those different from them. Exploring and studying various identities can further a supervisor's awareness of the impact of power and privilege on supervisory relationships (Shupp et al., 2019).

In addition to furthering one's cultural competency, there are other ways supervisors can improve inclusive practices.

For example, supervisors can create safe spaces (Brown et al., 2019; Shupp et al., 2018) for dialogue that welcomes vulnerability. To create safe spaces, supervisors can break down power structures by encouraging constructive criticism of themselves and challenges in the workplace (Shupp et al., 2018). By inviting constructive criticism of themselves, supervisors are removing the organizational hierarchy and placing themselves in the same position as their supervisee which allows for open dialogue.

Developing cultural competency and making space for dialogue and vulnerability, are some ways supervisors can create open-minded perspectives rooted in social justice. It is through these perspectives that supervisors can begin to understand the realities of Black women. These practices represent the foundation for building trusting relationships which are crucial to effective supervision (Brown et al., 2019; Shupp & Armino, 2012; Tull, 2009; Winston & Creamer, 1998).

Diversity of Student Affairs Professionals

Power and privilege are also reflected in the demographics of professional staff present at each institution. The number of people representing privileged and marginalized identities at an institution can largely affect the campus climate (Harper & Hurtado, 2007, as cited in Gardner et al., 2014). If folks with minoritized identities see few students, faculty, and staff who look like them, they may think the institution does not value them and therefore they may struggle to find a sense of belonging (Hannon et al., 2016; Harper, 2013). When institutions find ways to increase the diversity of their campuses and make efforts to include equitable practices, we can have a culture of belonging for people of all identities.

Changing the culture of an institution is a slow process and requires collective effort and buy-in from everyone to redesign an entire system (Ahmed, 2012; Brown et al., 2019; Kezar, 2018; Smith, 2009). A change in culture could mean deciding on new institutional missions and values that must be communicated across the entire campus through training, onboarding, and other initiatives (Kezar, 2018). This institutional-wide effort is needed for colleges and universities that wish to challenge white supremacy by developing policies and practices based on values of diversity, equity, and inclusion (Ahmed, 2012; Brown et al., 2019; Smith, 2009). This is certainly needed as we see the landscape of higher education changing with increasing racial and gender diversity of professionals in the field (Pritchard & McChesney, 2018). Unfortunately, the diversity in student bodies is surpassing that of student affairs professionals (Pritchard & McChesney, 2018). This is significant as higher education professionals can expect their increasingly diverse student bodies to notice the lack of diversity in its administration.

Chapter Summary

How Black women perceive their workplace environment based on gender and racial representation is something I explore through supervisory relationships. Unfortunately, some very sad realities exist for women of color in higher education. Across the research presented in this study, it is clear Black women often face unsupportive and devaluing campus climates, and can expect to be confronted by gender and racial bias, tokenism, stereotyping, and suspicion of credibility (Ayman & Korabik, 2010; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Martin, 2011). The unwelcoming experiences Black women face on college campuses comes from years of systematic oppression based on a higher education system designed for wealthy, white men, that exclude folks with minoritized identities.

Retaining Black women who are new student affairs professionals should be a priority for institutions if they plan to support the ever-diversifying student body and professionals entering the higher education setting (Pritchard & McChesney, 2018). For student affairs practitioners, higher education institutions can serve as both a workplace and a community. Research has shown supervisors and institutional fit are causes of poor attrition rates of people of color in student affairs (Blackett et al., 2016). Attrition of Black women will largely be mitigated by meeting their needs, which can start with supervisors. Black feminist thought and critical authentic leadership can help supervisors understand how Black women navigate their identities, supervisory relationships, professional positions, and institutional culture.

Chapter Three

Methodology

In this chapter, I describe my research design and methods. The purpose of this study was to better understand the supervisory relationships and professional experiences of Black women who were new student affairs professionals at predominately white institutions (PWIs). The research questions address how identity influences supervisory relationships and how those relationships affect how participants feel about their workplaces. The following sections outline the epistemology, conceptual framework, and my position as the researcher. After describing how my research is framed, I explain the specific research design, recruitment and selection process, data collection, analysis, and authenticity and trust worthiness.

Epistemology

Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) is my epistemological reference that reveals what is commonly known as scholarly knowledge is formed by white supremacist ideals. This change in perspective illuminates how Black women have not been recognized as transformative leaders in feminist qualitative research. Instead, white men have been identified as the creators of qualitative research and white women have been revered for practicing feminist qualitative research (Evans-Winters, 2019). Both qualitative research and feminism ignore the experiences and intersecting identities of Black women. Black feminist thought challenges these viewpoints by considering the way knowledge is defined and how academia includes Black women as scholars.

Knowledge comes from more than academic degrees, objective scholarship, books, and formal schooling. Instead, knowledge can also be found in stories, narratives, and personal experiences that are qualitative and subjective in nature (Collins, 2000; Delgado, 1992; Delgado

& Stefanic, 2017). The subjectivity of personal narratives does not make them less worthy of further study and analysis of researchers. Black feminist thought protests systematic oppression by presenting multiple forms of subjective knowledge such as narrative and storytelling. In alignment with Black feminist thought, my study features the life experiences of Black women in student affairs through the narratives provided by study participants. More specifically, my study analyzed the personal and professional experiences of Black women at PWIs.

Conceptual Framework

Identity is central to this study. Therefore, I used critical authentic leadership (CAL; Brown et al., 2019) and Black feminist thought (BFT; Collins, 2000) as the conceptual framework. I chose CAL to address the study's question about identity and supervisory relationships. I included BFT to honor the identities of the participants in the study and how their identities influenced their perspectives. By considering participants' unique identities and perspectives, I explain how supervisees feel about their relationship with their supervisors. Critical authentic leadership and BFT advocate for dialogue across differences to acknowledge different perspectives and advance social justice issues for individuals with minoritized identities. The inclusion of both theories offers a more holistic lens to examine supervisory relationships of Black women in student affairs.

Critical Authentic Leadership (CAL)

Critical authentic leadership (CAL) is a leadership theory developed by Brown et al. (2019). This practice encompasses several theories including authentic leadership theory (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), and racial battle fatigue (Smith, 2004). The CAL framework inspired me to focus on the identities of the supervisor and

supervisee. Several elements from various leadership theories make up the core components of CAL:

> 1) identity-conscious self-awareness in relation to the intercentricity of race and racism, 2) racialized relational transparency, which foregrounds experiential knowledge of self and others, 3) multipartial balanced processing, holding a rejection of dominant ideology, and 4) internalized moral perspective rooted in a commitment to social justice views. (Brown et al., 2019, p. 122)

These core components go against dominant ideologies that define supervisory relationships by organizational hierarchies (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002). Instead, supervisors and supervisees must allow space to be vulnerable and discuss difficult topics like power, privilege, and identity (Brown et al., 2019). Leading with authenticity is a part of this process.

Self-awareness and relational transparency are characteristics of authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). There are different levels of self-awareness and development occurs through different experiences and interactions with others. It is not a stagnant process and there is no clear end point. Instead, leaders can continue to develop better self-awareness to improve their communication and relationship building skills (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Supervisors can increase their self-awareness levels as they better understand their strengths, values, and purpose (Avolio & Garner, 2005). Brown et al. (2019) recommended supervisors develop identity-conscious self-awareness by recognizing how race, racism, and white supremacy influence the way they see themselves and others. Authentic leader's self-images are shaped by the interactions they have with other people, which are influenced by societal norms and structures (Avolio & Garner, 2005). How society is structured is largely dependent on race to keep systematic oppression in place (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). This same argument is made by

Brown et al. (2019) in their critique of authentic leadership. They argued that understanding critical race theory is necessary in order for supervisors to understand every facet that make up themselves and others. If identity and race are ignored, systematic oppression can stay in place and realities of racism and discrimination can continue in areas like education and the workplace.

When supervisors lead with a social justice lens, they can be more effective in building trust and relationships with minoritized staff (Brown et al., 2019). For example, recognizing how racism and systemic oppression plays out in our daily lives, can help supervisors articulate how their identities hold power and/or privilege. This recognition is important as authentic leaders learn how their self-image and perspectives are shaped by social constructs.

Trusting supervisory relationships can be developed when supervisors role model vulnerability by talking about the power and privilege they hold (Brown et al., 2019). This trust is developed because supervisors act as their authentic selves by discussing personal dynamics that impact professional spaces. Dialogue about power and privilege is an example of how authentic leaders can use self-awareness to regulate their behaviors to achieve goals. Behaviors are regulated by an internalized moral perspective that prioritizes the well-being of others over individual needs (Avolio & Garner, 2005; Luthans & Avolio, 2003). This moral perspective correlates with what is expected of supervisors; to be a support and advocate for supervisees. Supervisors can practice advocacy for others through multipartial balance processing.

Multipartiality comes from intergroup dialogue facilitation practices (Gurin et al., 2013). The premise of mutltipartiality is that people do not view the world through a completely objective lens. Instead, people come to understand the world around them through a dominant culture (Gurin et al., 2013). By processing information with multipartiality, supervisors are able to make decisions by considering multiple perspectives before acting (Brown et al., 2019). In

addition, leaders can consider multiple perspectives that go against the dominant culture and resist systematic racism and oppression. Values of multipartiality align with critical race theory by going against dominant ideologies through a commitment to social justice by centering race and racism around other forms of oppression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Table 1 below provides a brief overview summarizing this section related to critical authentic leadership by identifying the various components, grounding theories, and behaviors of supervisors who are considered critical authentic leaders.

Table 1

Critical Authentic Leadership and Supervisors

Components of CAL	Grounding Theories	Behaviors
Identity-conscious self-awareness	Authentic Leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) & Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017)	Building trusting relationships through dialogue and vulnerability.
Racialized relational transparency	Authentic Leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) & Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017)	Recognize how race, racism, and white supremacy influences their perspectives
Multipartial balance processing	Intergroup Dialogue Facilitation (Gurin et al., 2013)	Considering multiple perspectives.
Internalized moral perspective	Racial Battle Fatigue (Smith, 2004)	Act as advocates by prioritizing social justice and inclusion.

As seen in Table 1 above, Brown et al. (2019) described critical authentic leaders as those who possess identity-conscious self-awareness, racialized relational transparency, multipartial

balanced processing, and an internalized moral perspective. Each component of critical authentic leadership comes from a grounding theory coined by other scholars. The meaning of identity-conscious self-awareness, for example, comes from both authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) and critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Critical race theory accounts for the intersections of multiple identities but examines the world with race and racism as the focal point (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). By pairing this theory with authentic leadership, Brown et al. (2019) have said supervisors need to recognize how their perspectives are shaped by things like race, racism, and white supremacy. Through this critical lens, supervisors are able to make a more critical analysis of their own meaning-making and the perspectives of others who do not share the same identities. To put this into practice, supervisors can create spaces that welcome vulnerability where they share their strengths and weaknesses.

Racialized relational transparency is also formed from authentic leadership and critical race theory. Although authentic leadership recognizes the importance of relational transparency, it does not consider people of minoritized identities (Dugan, 2017). Therefore, Brown et al. (2019) have included critical race theory to redefine relational transparency as *racialized* relational transparency to recognize the realities of people of color by highlighting the ways in which our social world and history is shaped by race and racism. When put into practice, supervisors "acknowledge how our power or marginalization influences our lens and lived experiences" (Brown et al., 2019, p. 125).

Similar to the other components already presented, multipartial balanced processing rejects dominant ideologies by not only considering objectivity when analyzing information. This is because it is impossible to be objective in decision-making when considering things like power, privilege, race, and racism (Gurin et al., 2013). In order to consider the social realities

that stem from systematic oppression, multipartial balanced processing seeks to understand the perspective of others through open dialogue. Supervisors who practice mutltipartial balanced processing consider multiple perspectives before making decisions around policies and processes.

Finally, an internalized moral perspective comes from the concept of racial battle fatigue (Smith, 2004). Racial battle fatigue recognizes the mental and emotional damage experienced by people of color who are often left to do diversity, equity, and inclusion work on their own. Having an internalized moral perspective pushes against this practice of placing diversity work on the minoritized few by encouraging everyone to "articulate their values for social justice and infuse accountability measures for consistency and congruence" (Brown et al., 2019, p. 127). By putting this into practice, supervisors can ground themselves in their values of social justice when making decisions (Brown et al., 2019).

Identity-consciousness Supervision & Critical Authentic Leadership

For the purpose of this study, the components of Critical Authentic Leadership are used to define identity-conscious supervision. Meaning, identity-conscious supervisors include folks who reflect on the power and privilege they hold. In addition, they make attempts to learn about themselves and identities different from their own. Along their journeys of further education, supervisors should invite supervisees and other colleagues to have dialogue about the impact of identity in the workplace. Such conversations will require trust, relationship building, and space for vulnerability (Brown et al., 2019). It is through these conversations that supervisors will learn the needs of their team members and discover ways to create more inclusive spaces.

Having vulnerable and personal discussions maybe more akin to relationships with mentors and coaches than with supervisors. This is due to the power differentials that exist

within supervisory relationships. Since supervisors oversee the performance of supervisees it is harder from them to provide the privacy, confidentiality, and a non-judgmental environment to discuss things of a personal nature (Jones et al., 2016). However, supervisors also have the power to influence a supervisee's attitude towards their workplace (Maertz et al. 2007) and their intent to stay in their positions (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Marshall et al., 2016; Raabe, & Beehr, 2003). Identity-conscious supervisors can develop self awareness by evaluating "their strengths and weaknesses related to advising, coaching, and inclusion (Brown et al., 2019, p. 124). If supervisors are able to adapt coaching and mentoring strategies they could become more effective in their abilities to transform organizations and retain new professionals.

For supervisors to be effective at incorporating mentoring and coaching strategies into their practice there is a need to redefine supervisory relationships and dismantle power differentials (Brown et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2016). Traditionally supervisors have been defined as individuals who occupy positions within an organization hierarchy that work to improve employee performance and productivity to meet institution goals (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002). Higher education leaders can redefine supervisors as individuals who act as critical authentic leaders by fostering trusting relationships through racialized relational transparency, considering multiple perspectives, and acting as social justice advocates (Brown et al., 2019).

Then, supervisors can act on what they have learned to create policies and practices that are inclusive and equitable. Supervisors that make these kinds of contributions can help retain new professionals by fostering a sense of belonging by showing how their identities matter. If supervisors are not learning about identity, power, and privilege, they can never understand the Black women they work with and how their experiences often include racism and discrimination in higher education settings (Cross, 1991; Patton et al., 2016; Seaton et al., 2012; Sullivan &

Esmail, 2012; Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017; Tatum, 2003; Williams et al., 2020; Williams & Lewis, 2021). Supervisors that learn about identities different from their own, can gain greater sense of self-awareness that recognizes how positional authority and privilege can impact the relationships they have with others.

By reflecting more on the personal elements present in the workplace, supervisors can challenge some of the white supremacist ideals that exist in professional settings. This is important because white supremacist ideals that define professionalism place more value in the final product and less consideration for employees who make up an organization (Davis, 2016; Gray, 2019). This value prioritization is concerning because best practices in supervision have considered relationship building as key to understanding how to motivate and encourage others (Brown et al., 2019; Davis & Cooper, 2017; Marshall et al., 2016; Tull, 2006, 2009). The people who serve others cannot be secondary to what they do. Instead, identity and people should be considered the priorities in workplaces. After all, white supremacy has defined how we should dress, speak, interact with others, and even style our hair in the most professional way (Davis, 2016; Gray, 2019; Williams, in press; Williams et al., 2021). The policing of human behavior in the workplace by removing any sense of individuality is an avenue to include some and exclude others (Williams, in press). Supervisors and higher education leaders need to consider how systems and practices must change to include identity in the workplace.

In summary, practicing critical authentic leadership is a way for supervisors to learn more about themselves by reflecting on how their power, privilege, and/or marginalization influences their perspectives and daily lives. Through open dialogue and vulnerability, supervisors can create opportunities to learn more about the people they supervise. Identity-conscious

supervision cannot occur without considering multiple perspectives and making decisions grounded in social justice values for the betterment of others.

Black Feminist Thought

Black feminist thought explains how the voices of Black women in the US have been silenced and how their images have been controlled (Collins, 2000). Although there is a history of Black women contributing as scholars and activists, their stories are often repressed. Overlooking activists' work helps keep power and privilege away from Black women. Minoritized people are often pitted against one another to uphold white supremacy; therefore, coalition building has been recognized as an effective way to fight against systematic oppression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Coalition-building among Black women is critical because intergroup differences suggest the need to change and expand our knowledge base. Black feminist thought suggests a change in narrative and coalition-building are necessary to improve the lives of Black women (Collins, 2000). In addition, coalition-building should include communities that share minoritized identities other than a Black, woman identity.

Collins (2000) provided numerous examples of scholars and change agents who are Black women. Acknowledging the knowledge and leadership of Black women can empower more Black women to unite as activists dedicated to their advancement as a group. Dismissing the voices of Black women can also lead to feelings of self-doubt (West, 2015). Since racism is embedded into every part of society, it can be difficult for folks to recognize when racism is the cause of daily realities like having your scholarly contributions or voice dismissed (Delgado & Stefanic, 2017; West, 2015). Therefore, feelings of self-doubt can also lead to self-fulfilling prophecies where Black women no longer feel worthy of being in academic settings or places of

leadership (West, 2015). These self-fulfilling prophecies are also the cause of the stereotypical positions Black women are often assigned.

Black women are often associated with societal problems instead of knowledge and community empowerment (Collins, 2000; Scott, 1985). This happens by depicting Black women with certain images that are attached to negative stereotypes. The limited images ascribed to Black women according to Collins (2000) are that of mammies, matriarchs, welfare recipients, and hot mamas. None of these images connect Black women to education, independence, or leadership. Instead, it connects Black women to societal problems of poverty, promiscuity, and occupations of domestic labor and child rearing.

Black feminist thought highlights these inequities and realities for Black women and provides an empowering perspective that positions Black women as the creators of their own self-definitions. Collins (2000) explained how the history of Black people as slaves and then free people who lived in segregated areas led to these self-definitions. Black women gained a greater understanding of their life circumstances through their positions as outsiders in white communities and common experiences with other Black women (Collins, 2000). Black women also acknowledged their lack of opportunities and the societal contradictions of gender stereotypes. For example, women were expected to be at home taking care of their children, but Black women needed to work outside the home to support their families and thus were labeled unfit mothers (Collins, 2000).

Through these realities and contradictions, Black women realized their unique place in society. Black feminist thought positions Black women as scholars who are the only experts justified in explaining their experience. Their perspectives are unique because of other intersecting identities like race and socioeconomic status. While we can expect Black women to

have similar experiences with racism and oppression due to their race and gender, BFT does not define Black women by only these two identities. Black feminist thought focuses on within-group differences and honors their individuality by not limiting the stories of Black women to only be explained by race and gender. Instead, BFT considers how other identities contribute to their authenticity and self-definitions (Collins, 2000).

Black feminist thought intends to share the knowledge that Black women can contribute to society and challenges common ideologies regarding knowledge (Collins, 2000). Often, knowledge is only considered scholarly when it is attached to someone with an academic degree or the appropriate credentials. Black feminist thought acknowledges that the system of higher education was designed for wealthy, white men, and therefore many Black women were excluded from these academic spaces. For this reason, BFT does not only consider knowledge gained in a classroom, but BFT also says knowledge can be found in the stories of Black women like bell hooks who should be considered scholars for the important contributions their narratives bring to society. A similar connection can be made to supervisory relationships. A

Black Feminist Thought and Supervision

Although supervisors are expected to have the appropriate experience, training, and credentials, that does not mean they have nothing to learn from the Black women they supervise. Instead, both supervisors and supervisees can learn from one another. Controlling images of Black women have become a societal norm (Collins, 2000), and therefore it makes sense to provide Black women a space to discuss their experiences in personal and professional settings. This type of dialogue could help institutions address current inequities on their campuses, such inequitable and inaccessible pathways towards leadership for Black women (Blockett et al., 2016). When leaders in higher education acknowledge Black women have rarely been able to tell

their stories from their perspectives, they may also learn there is more scholarly knowledge to be gained by creating spaces for necessary conversations around identity.

Qualitative Design

My study is qualitative in nature because it focuses on the lived experiences (Punch & Oancea, 2014) of Black women in student affairs roles at PWIs. My analysis of supervisory relationships takes a different approach by considering identity. Including personal attributes like identity provides a more holistic view of supervisory relationships, acknowledges the social justice focus of the study's framework, and is synonymous with a qualitative design (Punch & Oancea, 2014). Akin to a narrative inquiry approach, the goal of my research questions was to find meaning and themes from the stories shared from participants (Punch & Oancea, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Narrative Inquiry

I considered narrative inquiry to be the best method for this study because both research questions ask participants how they experience and make meaning in their relationships with supervisor(s). Through narrative inquiry, their perceptions are "articulated in their life experiences in the structure of a story" (Bhattacharya, 2017, p. 27) gathered through interviews. Using personal stories as a part of data analysis is characteristic of narrative inquiry (Bhattacharya, 2017; Chase, 2005). The structure of the story then becomes the point of analysis for this narrative inquiry driven qualitative study (Bhattacharya, 2017, p. 27).

In addition to the structure of the story, the social and organizational contexts each individual is experiencing are important factors for narrative inquiry studies because they influence the meaning making process (Chase, 2005). Participants' identities and past experiences will affect how they come to understand and make meaning from their realities in

the workplace. A narrative inquiry approach can also uncover participant similarities and differences (Chase, 2005). Finding similarities and differences among a group of Black women aligns with BFT because the theory asserts that while Black women may have similar experiences with racism, sexism, and discrimination, their realities will differ based on identities other than race and gender (Collins, 2000).

I chose this research methodology because of the unique relationship with the participants, the focus on meaning making, and how the expansion of knowledge on a specific topic could impact supervision. A common practice of narrative inquiry involves a unique relationship between the researcher and participants, learning and engaging with one another (Chase, 2005; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). My relationship with the participants was focused on meaning making and co-authorship of the study's findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The study's focus on participant's experiences made narrative inquiry the most appropriate methodology (Bhattacharya, 2017; Chase 2005; Jones et al., 2014). The specific focus in this case is identity and how it impacts Black women and their relationships with supervisors. This identity-conscious approach allows us to view supervisory relationships and a particular population in a different way. It also supports the epistemological view of BFT which maintains that knowledge cannot be static and should continue to expand and change (Collins, 2000). The framework of Black feminist thought (BFT) also positions participants as content experts and leaders of the meaning-making process.

This expansion of knowledge is also important in organizational practices. Narrative and storytelling can be ways for organizations to learn from past mistakes (Clandinin, 2006). The framework of CAL encourages dialogue and consideration of identity to avoid bad

organizational habits and poor supervision practices (Brown et al., 2019). By gathering the stories and narratives of supervisees, practitioners can learn more about the pitfalls in supervisory relationships. As we begin to unpack those stories, we could learn how supervisors can adjust their perspectives and improve self-awareness to better meet the needs of the people they support.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

I conducted three separate interviews with six participants. Having three interviews from a small number of participants still led to a saturation of information (Seidman, 2019). Since participants were considered the content experts, the individuals chosen to participate in the study had to meet certain criteria (Jones et al., 2014; Patton, 2015; Seidman, 2019). Participant criteria is related to the study's purpose, research questions, and conceptual framework. All participants met the following criteria: 1) currently working full time in a student affairs role, 2) have 0-5 years of experiences in the field of student affairs, 3) currently employed at a predominately white institution (PWI), and 4) self-identify as a Black woman. I used purposive sampling and my own social and professional networks to gather potential participants who met the participant criteria. I gathered participants by circulating a flyer via email and social media.

Data Collection

After recruiting prospective participants, I sent an introductory email and a Qualtrics form to each person interested in participating. Qualtrics is a learning experience management software that allows individuals to create, distribute, and analyze data through electronic surveys. The Qualtrics form (see Appendix B) I designed gathered personal and professional background information from participants and introduced them to the study. In addition, the Qualtrics form explained my background as the researcher, the purpose of the study, criteria for potential

participants, an informed consent form, and instructions to set up an interview. The informed consent form explained that participants can withdraw from the study at any time. The participants represented a diverse experience for Black women in student affairs. That diversity could be seen in the race and gender of their supervisors, type of student affairs positions, location of their institution, and hometowns. Characteristics like the setting, organization membership, and cultural nuances shaped the narratives of each participant (Chase, 2005; McCormack, 2000; Patton, 2015).

I invited participants to complete three semi-structured, 60-minute interviews over Zoom. Zoom is a videotelephony software that allows users to conduct meetings and interviews virtually. Users can conduct audio and visual recordings of interviews and request written transcripts after the interview has been conducted. The Zoom interviews were semi-structured because the questions focused on key parts of participants experiences. Additionally, in-depth interviews align with the method of narrative inquiry (Chase, 2011). Seidman (2013) recommended three interviews to build trust with participants, better understand the context of their experiences, gather in-depth details, and allow participants to reflect on the meaning of their experiences.

All three interviews included personal background questions like hometowns, communities, education background, and path towards a higher education career. The questions I included about participants' upbringing were meant to highlight the diversity among Black women, an important principle of BFT. I also asked participants to describe the relationship with their supervisor(s), and how they navigate social identities within that relationship. Finally, participants were asked how they experienced identity-conscious supervision. Further details about the interview process can be found in the attached interview protocol (see Appendix D).

My research questions and elements of CAL (e.g., identity, self-awareness, relational transparency, etc.) informed my interview guide. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), shaping the relationship with participants includes the ways interview questions are asked. I asked broad interview questions and determined what was significant from the stories being told (Chase, 2011). I also ordered questions intentionally to allow for a conversational tone with goals of learning and understanding in mind. The in-depth interviews aligned with the method of narrative inquiry (Chase, 2011) and helped to uncover the deeper meaning about navigating identity and feelings towards their supervisor and institution. To be consistent with semi-structured interviewing practices, I designed interview questions around specific areas of interest (e.g., identity and supervision), but flexibility was provided to allow for follow-up questions (Bhattacharya, 2017; Jones et al., 2014). The follow-up questions allowed me to gather enough details to meet the expectations of an in-depth interview.

Data Analysis

After each completed interview, I received a written transcript from the Zoom platform. To ensure the transcripts were accurate, I saved an editable version of the transcript, watch the recorded interviews, and made edits based on the recordings. I conducted a pre-coding process of the Zoom recordings. This pre-coding process included viewing the interview through multiple lenses. As explained by McCormack (2000), viewing through multiple lenses requires active listening and paying close attention to language, context of the interview, cultural context, and identifying significant moments and stories.

When it came to language, I listened for repeated words, common understandings, pauses, type of voice (active or passive), tone of voice, pronouns, and imagery (McCormack, 2000). In thinking about the context of the interview, I reflected on non-verbal ques from

participants, how I was feeling during the interview, number of questions asked, and how questions were ordered. Questions about the participants' personal background and upbringing provided the cultural context I needed to understand other parts of their story provided in each interview (McCormack, 2000). The contextual knowledge of their stories was important because it is a reminder that stories are both "enabled and constrained by a range of social resources and circumstances" (Chase, 2005, p. 657). I coded the data based on my understanding that stories and context are not separate from one another.

Data Coding and Member Checking

My approach towards knowledge and meaning making also guided my data coding process. Since participants are considered the content experts in the narrative process, I needed to look for significant moments and stories told by each individual. An open coding method made sense for my study's data analysis process because I could not predict the patterns and themes of the study without first hearing participants stories (Chase, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

I used track changes in Microsoft Word to code the transcripts. I completed open coding of the interview transcripts by adding comments that summarized important points or stories throughout each interview. The comments I provided used the participants own words to "honor the participant's voice" (Miles et al., 2020, p. 65). Honoring the voices of participants aligns with the framework of BFT because it allows participants to form their own self-definitions and stories from their perspectives. After I coded all transcripts I used my frameworks of CAL and BFT for axial coding. This type of coding is grounded in thematic analysis and used frequently in narrative inquiry where participants are part of the analysis process (Chase, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The components of CAL that were present in my participants stories included identity-conscious self-awareness and internalized moral perspective. Brown et al. (2019) suggests that supervisors that wish to develop identity-conscious self-awareness should build trusting relationships with their supervisees through dialogue and vulnerability. I found that several participants experienced vulnerability in the workplace through personal discussion with their supervisors. Finally, the theory of BFT explores the diversity among Black women and how they resist controlling images. I also found this to be true for my participants in the diversity I found among identity suppression and authenticity. The degree of each participants authenticity and identity suppression was based on workplace experiences and prior socialization.

The final step in the data analysis process included member checking to ensure the themes I uncovered were a true representation of the participant's voices and experiences (McCormack, 2000). Through the member checking process, I asked participants if they wanted any part of the transcripts changed or omitted. When providing direct quotes from participants in the writing process I omitted words such as um and like to provide clarity in their responses. Finally, to maintain the authenticity of participant stories, I asked all individuals if the themes gathered represented their experiences and truths accurately.

Throughout the member checking process, I considered conducting a group interview. A group interview could have led to coalition building and validation among participants who share similar identities and experiences with racism, sexism, and oppression. Coalition building is further support by my framework of Black feminist thought. I decided to forego this kind of data collection because of existing relationships amongst participants and myself. Since there were already existing relationships, I was not able to create a space where participants could be vulnerable about their workplace experiences in a group setting. However, the benefit of the

preexisting relationships was that participants felt comfortable discussing their stories with me in a one-on-one setting and were very responsive throughout the member checking process.

Gathering authentic stories and truths is a difficult task and requires participants to be vulnerable. Therefore, it was important for me to reflect on my position as the researcher and how my identities shape my perspectives and interpretations of the data. McCormack (2000) suggested using active listening to recognize individual assumptions that may affect how the researcher interprets the participants story. A researcher can learn about themselves and how they interpret the world around them by practicing self-reflection (Chase, 2005). Even when I believed my interpretations were grounded in previous literature, I needed to keep an open mind throughout the process so that the only voices and stories that are heard were those from the participants.

Researcher Positionality Statement

When I began my journey towards a doctoral degree, I knew I wanted to study *something* about student affairs professionals. Over the years, I have seen how my work colleagues and I have worked diligently to support students and the mission of our institutions. Something that has always troubled me is that we leave ourselves out of the conversation. I have constantly been encouraged to seek out professional development opportunities where I can learn about best practices in supporting students or how to get to the next step of my career. What always seemed to be missing was a personal and individual component. This curiosity was no surprise to me because I have always wanted to learn more about people and what shapes their experience. It was this curiously that led me to declare intercultural communication as my major as an undergraduate student. And it is this curiosity and my career in student affairs that led me to design this study. As a previous live-on residential life professional, I have been there to support

students through programs and crisis. I have always felt the work done in student affairs to support students is crucial to their success as both people and scholars. I wanted my study to honor the important work and the people who fill student affairs roles.

As a researcher, it was important that I considered my own identities throughout this study. Meaning, it was important for me to recognize the privilege I hold and how that could show up in conversations with participants. One thing I had in common with the participants was my minoritized identities of gender and race. However, as a bi-racial (Black and white) woman, I have a somewhat privileged racial identity due to my whiteness. I also occupy a lot of other privileged identities as I am also Christian, middle-class, heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied, and college-educated. This makes my experience unique from the participants in my study.

My bi-racial identity, for example, allows me to move in and out of Black and white spaces with less conflict. It was important for me to own my privilege by affirming that the lightness of my skin allows me to have these experiences and can contribute to feelings surrounding colorism. There were times where I could not fully relate to the experiences of the participants, so I needed to listen for themes of otherness. Whether participants felt like outsiders may have been greatly impacted by their institutional environments. In addition, their professional environments often showed sharp contrast to their hometowns and previous work environments which could have influenced their feelings of belonging or isolation.

The identities I hold also impacted the way I interpreted participant stories. Knowing I could not completely eliminate my own bias, it was important for me to remember the stories I was writing were co-authored. The co-authorship process involved collecting stories from participants and making meaning from that information (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The meaning making process involved using the participant's voices and perspectives in the data analysis

process. Since individual participants created their own meaning, there was diversity among their stories. I needed to ask participants follow-up questions to better understand what things have shaped their experiences and perspectives.

Diversity amongst participants is also present in their years of experience which range from zero to five. This is yet another way I am different from the participants. I currently have over eight years of experience in student affairs. The knowledge I have gained over the years also impacted my bias as researcher. To account for this power differential, I tried to approach my interviews with participants with a learning perspective. Therefore, I asked participants follow-up questions to better understand or clarify their stories, and avoided questions related to my own bias and perspective.

All interviews were focused on the participant and were not used for my own self-work. To center the interviews around the participants I asked opened-ended questions that allowed each individual to share their perspectives. In addition, the framework of BFT was a reminder to not discount the knowledge of others based on elitist credentials like years of professional experience or formal education. Instead, BFT states, “Black women intellectuals come from all walks of life,” (Collins, 2000, p. 36). This study represents all of the professionals involved as intellectual scholars within the higher education sector.

Before beginning my study, I knew it was important for me to gain the trust of my participants. I helped build trusting relationships by discussing my intentions for the study and by having informal conversations to build rapport before asking direct interview questions. The way interview questions were organized was another important factor. To help create an informal setting, the first interview included questions to get to know them as people. More direct questions like what they found challenging about their supervisors came much later. After all,

some of the questions I asked could put participants in a vulnerable position. Protection of participant data was crucial to the research process as participants may reveal information about their supervisors and/or institutions that could affect their professional reputations and/or current employment.

The frameworks of CAL and BFT helped me understand my findings and what can be done with the new information I received to better the experiences of Black, women in student affairs. Telling the story of Black, women as scholars and leaders within professional and educational settings was the priority. The stories of participants represent their realities whether I will be able to fully relate to them or not. Their stories are their truth and that is what I tried to honor throughout the research process.

Trustworthiness and Authenticity

To avoid white supremacist ideals of professionalism, I wanted my approach to be humanistic and mindful of the people filling student affairs roles. In order to accomplish this, I considered identities, feelings, and personal narratives in the research process. I want readers to see the person beyond the roles they were hired to fill.

To hold myself accountable to the standards I explained, I had my work reviewed by professional colleagues. Inviting scholars and researchers who have extensive knowledge on Black women in higher education review my work helped me account for the complexities that exist within their personal and professional experiences. Inviting constructive criticism and feedback also helped raise my own level of self-awareness (Chase, 2005; Oancea & Punch, 2014).

I expected to learn more about the writing process and other pieces of literature from more experienced scholars to strengthen my study (Booth et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2014).

Keeping a research journal and having my work reviewed by others also helped me account for my own biases (Chase, 2005; Oancea & Punch, 2014). In my research journal, I wrote down my first impressions and initial thoughts related to my findings. After recording my thoughts, I asked myself whether my initial reactions to the data were due to my privileged or minoritized identities. Reflecting on how my reactions may relate to my unique perspective helped me limit bias and allowed my findings to be true to my participants' stories.

Through these practices and continued dialogue, my goal was to become more self-aware and knowledgeable about social justice. Knowledge about social justice and identity is continuing to change and evolve. For this reason, I have sought out social justice education opportunities throughout all of my educational and professional experiences. In an effort to continue learning about social justice topics, I gathered more information about my own identities and ones that are less familiar to me.

This required me to reflect on my privileged identities and the social groups I interact with continuously. Having social interactions with a diverse group of people was also an important part of broadening my understanding of social justice. Fostering relationships with people of other identities can lead to better coalition building (Collins, 2000; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). I have learned that disrupting systems of oppression should be the priority of everyone; especially those with privileged identities who have the power to create change. I hoped to gain the trust of my participants (Jones et al., 2014; Rossman & Rallis, 2017) by presenting myself as a knowledgeable person on social justice topics.

To help build trust with participants, I discussed my intentions for the study and had informal conversations to build rapport before asking interview questions. The intentions for the study were outlined in the initial email I sent to potential participants. All participants had the

opportunity to complete an informed consent form that explained the purpose, procedures, benefits, and risks associated with the study.

Rapport and trust building were an important part of the research process given the sensitive nature of what was discussed during individual interviews. Participants were asked very specific questions about their supervisors. Some of their answers may have included things they would not openly share in their workplace. I also recognized that participants may not want to share their answers with their current and/or past supervisors.

Therefore, some additional parameters were put into place to create a safer space for participants. I kept all information on a password protected, private computer, in a locked office that was connected to Dropbox. Dropbox is file hosting service where users can save and share files over the web. I saved all data related to my study on a personal Dropbox account. These safety measures ensured the participants and I were the only ones with access to the data.

To protect the identity of participants, each person was given the option to choose a pseudonym to replace their names during the Zoom call before the interview began. In addition, participants were informed of the Zoom interview being recorded prior to it beginning. I also allowed the participants to turn their cameras off before the Zoom recording began. The zoom platform transcribed all interviews, and the transcripts from the Zoom recordings were reviewed accuracy. Once all transcripts were edited, the recordings and transcripts were sent to each participant. Each participant had the option to make edits or didact any information from the zoom recordings and transcripts.

Limitations

There were several limitations found within my study including recruiting participants, interview strategies, length of supervisory relationships, relationships with participants and their supervisors, the number of participants who solely identified as Black and no other racial identity, and having one participant leave the study. Recruiting participants proved to be a challenging task while I completed my study. When I initially posted my recruitment flyer to various platforms, I had a spelling mistake in the title of my dissertation. This error could have deterred people from participating in my study. Furthermore, I did not space out my social media announcements, instead I shared my recruitment flyer on various social media outlets all at once.

After reflecting on my recruitment experience, I realized I would have done several things differently. For one, I would have researched various social media platforms to know their target audience, and peak times for posting content. My knowledge of different social media platforms was restricted to how I personally use each social network. I could have made more intentional decisions in the recruitment process, by learning what social media platforms were most utilized by individuals who met my participant criteria. After gathering this information, I could have also found more student affairs groups on various social media platforms.

If I had utilized these social media strategies, I may have been successful in finding more participants. Furthermore, I would have been less impacted by participants who decided to leave the study. During the data collection process, I had one participant leave the study after their first interview. Their story could have provided a much-needed perspective on supervisory relationships and the experience of Black woman in student affairs roles at PWIs, but it was in the participant's best interest not to continue. Their choice to leave the study stemmed from their

relationship with a difficult supervisor and was a reminder of each participant's challenging and vulnerable position in my study.

Doris, Samantha, Brianna, and Didine were all supervised by their current supervisor for less than a year at the time of their interviews. In addition, Doris, Samantha, and Didine were new to their roles and their institutions at the time of this study. Therefore, some interview questions were difficult for participants to answer, and others lacked in-depth responses. For example, some participants could provide examples of their supervisor's advocacy and understanding of social justice, and others had not seen these examples but did not necessarily feel that their supervisor would not advocate for them or be supportive of social justice education.

I also knew some participants and their supervisors. Based on my relationships, it is possible that participants adjusted what they shared in their interviews. These relationships also put the participants and I in vulnerable positions when discussing supervisory relationships. I may have avoided these limitations if I had taken a different approach to the recruitment process. Unfortunately, I was challenged to find participants and decided to move forward with the participants I initially recruited. I considered my relationships with participants and their supervisors while journaling and completing the membership checking process. While journaling, I wrote down my reactions to participant responses to questions and made note of biases I saw showing up in those reactions. I also kept open lines of communication with participants throughout the entire process, including data collection, analysis, and writing. Participants had multiple opportunities to review my work and provide feedback to ensure their stories were accurately represented. This included reviewing interview transcripts, participant descriptions, themes, tables, and findings. Authentically articulating participants narratives was

important because they represented unique identities and professional experiences of individual Black women.

Although each participant identified as a Black woman, only Victoria classified herself as one racial identity—Black. This provided a diversity of Black womanhood, but also deviated from common experiences and challenges Black women face. Silvia, for example, had more privilege than other participants due to the whiteness of her bi-racial identity. Doris and Brianna also represented a unique Black experience because they immigrated to the U.S. Their nationalities gave them a unique perspective of what it was like to be a Black woman in the U.S. Their socialization process was quite different as it took place in two countries with distinct cultural histories regarding Black people. Finally, Samantha and Didine's ethnicities made their meaning of Black womanhood different from the other participants. Samantha came from an Afro-Latina background and Didine came from a Haitian background. I believe my study would have benefited from more participants like Victoria who only identified as Black in terms of race and ethnicity.

To gather more participants I would recommend using incentives and a different approach to social media. For example, the inclusion of other social media platforms could have resulted in reaching more novice student affairs professionals. I also could have written the social media announcements with greater intention to appeal to more new student affairs professionals by speaking to current challenges or positive experiences they may be facing with their supervisors at PWIs.

Chapter Summary

Black feminist thought served as the epistemological approach to my qualitative narrative inquiry study. This epistemological approach recognized story telling as a form of knowledge worthy of scholarly research (Collins, 2000). The narratives of participants were collected through three, 60-minute semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Critical authentic leadership and BFT informed every aspect of the research process including interview questions and data analysis. My study focused on the impact of identity on supervisory relationships and the professional experiences for Black women as new student affairs professionals at PWIs. Data analysis and findings were conducted through pre-coding, open coding, and axial coding. Journaling and member checking were also part of the data analysis process to ensure the authenticity of participant stories (McCormack, 2000). I also maintained a trusting and close working relationship with the participants to support the meaning making process (Jones et al., 2014; Rossman & Rallis, 2017). Ultimately, the stories of participants illuminated best practices for supervision and the experiences of Black women in student affairs. The knowledge of participants is honored by presenting the stories and voices of these Black women as scholars, professionals, and educational leaders (Collins, 2000).

Chapter Four

Findings

The purpose of this study was to understand Black women entry-level student affairs professionals' experiences with their supervisors through an identity-conscious framework. In this chapter, I reveal the findings related to the two research questions necessitating the present study: (1) How do Black women navigate social identities in their relationships with direct supervisor(s)?, and (2) How do Black women entry-level student affairs professionals at PWIs perceive identity-conscious supervision? To answer my research questions, I interviewed six Black women student affairs practitioners working at PWIs to discuss their personal and professional lenses on their supervisory relationships and careers. Four themes emerged from participants' stories in my coding process: (1) vulnerability through personal discussions, (2) identity suppression and authenticity, (3) reflection and comparisons, and (4) advocacy. In the following sections, I present participant descriptions, detailed explanations and examples of each theme and sub-theme along with a final summary.

Participant Descriptions

Participants that were included in my study needed to self-identify as Black. I did not account for Black diaspora representing an "array of different historical, cultural, national, ethnic, religious, and ancestral origins, and influences" (Wright, 2004, p. 2). When asking participants questions about their upbringing they did talk about identities like class, religion, and immigration status. However, these identities did not show up in their discussions about their workplace experiences. Instead, participants talked more about their race and gender when navigating their institutional environments.

Doris

Doris came from a rural area in the Bahamas known as Grenada. She described her hometown as a small island with a lot of island pride. Like many young people from the island, Doris decided to leave Grenada in search of a better opportunity in the U.S. She described this brain drain effect and the area's poor economy and politics. Despite these challenges, she spoke very fondly of her experience growing up as a diligent student with a passion for business. Doris grew up with her grandmother and followed her dad to the U.S. where she got to experience a small private university in the south and a large, state college in the Midwest. At the time of this study, Doris worked at a medium-sized, private university in the northeast and had a white man (named Ben) as a supervisor. At the time of her interview, Doris had been at her current institution and been supervised by Ben for less than a year.

Victoria

Victoria came from an urban area in the southern region of the U.S. Victoria described growing up in two worlds; she had family residing in low-income areas, and family living in working class communities. Victoria also said she saw a different world through her parent's occupations. Since her father was college-educated and her mother worked in the medical field, she was often around doctors and people with higher incomes. As the only girl in the family, Victoria was always pressured to do well inside and outside of school. This pressure also came from the area she lived in, and education was seen as her ticket out and a way for her avoid some of the challenges associated with her community. Victoria went to a large public university in the south to pursue a marketing degree and went onto her masters at her current institution (a large, private university in the south). Victoria was supervised by a Black man (named Daniel) whom she has reported to for over four years at the time of this study.

Samantha

Samantha identified as pansexual, Black, and Hispanic. She came from an urban area in the northeast region of the U.S. Samantha grew up in an inner-city environment with a very protective mother. Therefore, most of Samantha's social interactions were at school. Samantha initially struggled to find friends at school. She started her K-12 education as the only brown girl at a Catholic school. When she moved schools, she found herself trying to perform different behaviors to be liked by others. As she matured, she began surrounding herself with more Black friends who shared similar values. She was a very dedicated student because her academic performance bought her some freedom from her overprotective mother. She also saw education as an avenue to leave home and a path towards more opportunity. Although Samantha went to different institutions for her undergraduate and graduate education, both were medium-sized state colleges in the northeast. At the time of this study, Samantha worked at a large, private university in the south. During her interview, Samantha explained her transitions through three different supervisors; two Hispanic men (named Rick and Jerry) and one white man name Morty. Her experience with each supervisor was less than a year at the time of her interview.

Brianna

Brianna grew up on an island in St Lucia and came to the U.S. while she was still in high school. Brianna grew up in a low-income, single-parent household, amongst a close-knit island community. Throughout her interview, Brianna spoke very highly of her mother and recounted her challenges in her hometown and the U.S. As a Jamaican in a Bahamian community, Brianna experienced xenophobia and was challenged with having less social capital and access to resources because of her Jamaican background. She experienced a very competitive academic environment and was known for performing at the top of her class. Unfortunately, her move to

the U.S. was interrupted when she was forced to return to her hometown for two years without her mom.

Upon returning to the U.S., she struggled to navigate a new environment with her Black identity. She received a lot of coaching from others on how she could change her behaviors to be more approachable. Her transition to an online school made this easier but lonely. Through all these experiences, she remained focused on academics and pursuing a college education. Although Brianna went to different institutions for her undergraduate and graduate education, both were large, public universities in the Midwest. At the time of this study, Brianna worked at the same institution where she earned her master's degree. During her interview, we discussed her current supervisor (named Tyler) an Asian man, and her previous supervisor (named Trisha) a Black woman. Brianna was supervised by Trisha for two years as a graduate student and had been supervised by Tyler for less than a year as a student affairs professional.

Didine

Didine was between 45 and 54 years old and grew up in an urban area in the northeast region of the U.S. Didine also identified as Haitian and a Jehovah's witness. Didine grew up with a family of six in a low-income household in an inner-city environment. She described her life as very sheltered but heavily involved in community service through her faith. Most of her time was spent in church or in minoritized communities where she provided various services through her church. Although Didine did not like school, her parents always encouraged her to do well academically. The focus on education was synonymous with her religion where she was encouraged to be productive and helpful in society. Didine went to a medium-sized public university in the northeast to pursue her bachelors and master's degree. At the time of the study,

Didine worked at a small state college in the south and had been supervised by a white woman (named Kay Kay) for less than one year.

Silvia

Silvia identified as queer and had a bi-racial identity. Her upbringing was quite unique in that she often moved due to her mom struggling to find work. She grew up in a single parent household in the Midwest and the southern region of the U.S. Her constant moving made it hard for her to make friends and develop lasting connections. Silvia was also challenged to develop a racial and ethnic identity because she spent most of her life surrounded by white people. Through her education and friend groups, she began to learn more about herself and her Black identity. Silvia loved school and learning and knew she wanted to pursue a college education like her mom to obtain a good job. Silvia went to a small, private, liberal arts college in the Midwest. She continued working at the same institution after graduating. During our interview, Silvia discussed three different supervisors (Martha, Amy, and Janet). All three supervisors were white women, but Silvia had the closest personal connection to Janet.

Theme #1: Vulnerability Through Personal Discussions

I asked participants to describe their relationships with their supervisors and what topics they typically discussed in a one-on-one setting. I learned that participants would sometimes discuss their personal lives as well as day-to-day tasks associated with their positions. While it was common for participants to discuss their jobs with their supervisors, it was only sometimes typical for participants to talk about their personal lives. Participants mirrored their supervisor's approach towards vulnerability and personal discussions in the workplace. Brianna, Samantha, Victoria, and Silvia's stories best offer insights related to this theme.

Brianna discussed the nature of her one-on-one conversations with her previous supervisor Trisha. She recalled the meetings often reflected:

> Mostly … updates on the different programs I was managing. She [Brianna's supervisor Trisha] spoke about her family and stuff so that kind of made me feel like I can speak about like my family and stuff, so sometimes it did get personal. She spoke a lot about … how I want to see myself grow and so … there was … professional development conversations. We talked about … my resume or different experiences that I would want to have … that I wasn't currently having, or was being offered but yeah for the most part they were pretty productive.

Brianna's one-on-one meetings with Trish included discussions about work responsibilities and her personal life. Brianna explained that having Trisha discuss her family made her feel like she could also discuss more personal topics. This role modeling by Trisha was important for Brianna because vulnerability was not something she was accustomed with experiencing. In fact, being vulnerable with people outside of close friends and family was only something she experienced when she moved to the U.S. Brianna described the vulnerability culture shock she experienced during classroom discussions in graduate school.

> I feel like I wasn't used to that much vulnerability, transparency in an open space like that, and so, at times, it felt like a lot to handle just because I thought … I don't know … it was something about them being so comfortable with sharing, like so many personal and … traumatic experiences, that they went through. I wasn't used to people just sharing that out in the open. Because from … my background being West Indian you know being from the Caribbean that's not something that is common. If you are sharing, it's someone that you know and are close to and it's like "okay this stays here." Or the even moving to

> this country, I never really experienced that either, so it was very new especially being online and I was living alone. I'm like "oh dang, this is a lot." It became heavy really fast for me.

Brianna described the classroom discussion as really heavy and new. Her views of vulnerability reflected cultural differences from her and her classmates. Her Caribbean upbringing did not normalize vulnerability in public spaces like a classroom, and Brianna was not the only one who was surprised by vulnerability in public settings like the workplace and the classroom.

Samantha also had personal conversations with her supervisor Rick. Samantha recalled how her one-on-one conversations with Rick made her feel.

> I would say, one-on-ones with Rick [Samantha's supervisor] felt like therapy. Like, I at first was very hesitant to do them, because … Being a first-time professional I was like "These are stupid like I'm here to do my job and I don't want to talk to you." Like I don't want to … it just didn't feel like something that when I thought about my career as a professional like there would be time for … and I'm sure that … with other supervisors, it may not be like that. Like one-on-ones might be very transactional might be like, "How are you doing? What do you need help with? Okay, nothing? Awesome." But I feel like Rick really tried to make our one-on-ones a safe space and kind of like just let me talk about whatever. We really got to just understand each other and how similar we were through those spaces and I'm really appreciative of that because I think that I didn't realize that I needed that from a supervisor.

Samantha's story revealed she did not expect to discuss personal topics in a one-on-one conversation with a supervisor but later realized she needed that dialogue. Samantha felt comfortable being vulnerable with Rick because he created a safe space by also sharing stories

about his background and upbringing and she came to find out that they had a lot in common. When asked if many their similarities were cultural Samantha replied:

> I would say, a significant amount, because even though, when we [Samantha and Rick] weren't technically the same culture like we didn't come from the same islands like we were Hispanic people. Like both my parents were Hispanic. Like me, being Black and like them [her supervisor Rick] being very immersed in Black culture, and what that means, and … really understanding … what it means to be Black, even though they [Rick] could admit like they're white-passing and that they understand that. But still, being aware of like what it means to be a Black person and working with Black students and being passionate about DEI [diversity, equity, and inclusion], I think that all of that, like made it really significant.

Not only did Samantha and Rick discuss their upbringings, but they also talked about their identities. It was clear from Samantha's story that she appreciated Rick having a familiarity with Black culture and what it means to be Black. Victoria also found comfort in having a supervisor who shares similar identities.

Victoria shared similar identities with her supervisor named Daniel. Victoria and Daniel were both Black, Christian, and grew up in urban environments. Similar to Samantha, Victoria did not initially realize the value in having personal conversations with a supervisor. Over time Victoria felt more comfortable being vulnerable with Daniel due to their similar identities, which allowed them to bond. Victoria described the discussions she had with Daniel during their one-on-one meetings.

> We [Victoria and Daniel] have a lot of one-on-ones. At least once a week. And sometimes it's in between random chats and I'm able to not only talk about like things

> going on at work, but things going on in my personal life and I typically don't share much of my personal life in a work environment. I tried to like keep that bottled away and separated. And so I think this is the most vulnerable I've ever been in my life with a supervisor. I normally wouldn't … Like work is work, and I would leave work at work and leave home at home. And like, for example, my dad's been really sick I've been taking care of him. Typically, prior to now … I wouldn't even share that. Like that wouldn't be a factor that people would know about me. They would just know what I do at work. So, me being able to share like what's going on, on an almost daily, weekly basis has made me vulnerable.

Victoria explained, here, that prior to her supervisor Daniel, she had never been vulnerable or comfortable sharing personal information in the workplace. Since Victoria felt comfortable enough to be vulnerable with Daniel, she could tell him about the challenges she was having in caring for her dad. These personal conversations and the support she received from Daniel ended up being an important factor to her staying in her position.

Silvia also mentioned being vulnerable and having personal discussions with her previous supervisor Janet.

> In the way that Janet [Silvia's previous supervisor] was person-centered and the way that she went about it, I feel like I had developed that relationship a lot quicker. And so, I was able to be vulnerable about more than just work with her [Janet], I was actually able to talk about the things that were going on in my life, both with my family and also with like my life in general. And she [Janet] like cared to sit and talk to me and … have an actual conversation rather than sitting and listening to me. And she [Janet] … asked questions and she would bring it up again too and … she would instigate those

> conversations and then like re-instigate those conversations. If I would have talked about like wanting to do something she [Janet] would remember that and then remember to ask me later after.

Silvia recalled being comfortable with vulnerable discussions with Janet because of the way Janet centered her as a person. Silvia also mentioned she valued the way Janet listened *and* engaged in personal discussions. More importantly, Janet initiated personal conversations. Space was made for personal discussions because Janet was the one initiating these conversations. As the supervisor holding positional authority, Janet showed Silvia that personal discussions are acceptable topics in the workplace and within their professional working relationship. Although Silvia has grown comfortable with Janet, developing relationships did not always come easy to her, which is very reflective of her past experiences. She moved often throughout her childhood so developing close relationships was always challenging for her because time was often limited.

In summary, participants experienced vulnerability and became accustomed to personal conversations in the workplace through role modeling, reciprocal discussions, feeling centered as a person by their supervisor, and from having similar identities. Trisha role-modeled vulnerability in the workplace by sharing personal information about herself first. This encouraged Brianna to also share personal stories with Trisha. Samantha also developed a close relationship with her supervisor Rick because he reciprocated in personal discussions. Rick *and* Samantha shared personal information about their backgrounds and families. In addition to Victoria and Daniel, they were able to bond and develop a sense of trust from having similar identities and backgrounds. Finally, Silvia felt comfortable with Janet because she saw how her supervisor prioritized her as a person. Each participant was influenced by their upbringing and environments in the way they behaved and interacted in the workplace. Their supervisors showed

them new ways of being in professional settings. This socialization process also impacted how much they could show up to work as their authentic selves.

Theme #2: Identity Suppression and Authenticity

Participants' upbringing and socialization impacted how they navigated their social identities in the workplace. Participants learned early on how others viewed their identities through their experiences with coaching, stereotypes, and interactions with people from privileged backgrounds. At work, participants also observed the behaviors of supervisors and coworkers to understand what was accepted in professional settings. This socialization process influenced their personal preferences about vulnerability in workplace, and to what degree they suppressed their identities in professional settings.

Brianna described the coaching she received when she immigrated to the U.S. and how she viewed authenticity in the workplace from two different supervisors. Brianna recalled what it was like to join a new high school outside of her hometown.

> When I first got here [the U.S.] I went to like a small Christian school. This was my first time being away from like the people I grew up with from second grade to 12th grade. It was different. I had never been the only Black person before. And suddenly I was the only black person, and I was getting a lot of coaching from people like "You have to make sure you smile. You have to make sure that you don't come off as mean or unapproachable because then they won't talk to you, and you want to make friends." And I'm like "But what if I don't want to smile?" And they're like pushing you and pushing you to kind of like be accepted and so like the message that I was getting was like "So if I'm myself, I won't be accepted? Is that what I'm hearing?" And so that made it difficult to kind of adjust or to feel like I had a place at that school. And then there was also the

> way how people would talk to you and treat you. Like I was on a basketball team and the coach just thought I could dunk. Like he thought I could get up and dunk. I'm like "Actually, this is my first-time playing basketball I don't know how to do that." I barely know how to dribble but the assumption is "Oh she's Black, she knows how to play basketball. She can do it." And they [basketball team and coach] would get so upset when I couldn't and I'm like "Relax I just don't know how." And then there was like skin tones stuff like "Oh, there was this other Black girl she had pretty dark skin not like yours, though." I'm like I don't think that was a compliment to me or her. So, it was just like … didn't have the best experience there [Catholic school], it was hard.

Brianna was coached to smile more and act approachable to make friends. The message she received from all this coaching, was that if she acted as her authentic self she would not be accepted. In addition to having to change her behaviors, Brianna was also met with stereotypes like being good at basketball and microaggressions about her skin color. These experiences taught Brianna what it is like to be in a Black body in the U.S. Brianna had a lot of negative experiences with assimilation and identity suppression. Therefore, she reported feeling shocked when she saw how her supervisor Trisha (who is a Black woman) was unapologetically herself in the workplace. Brianna described Trisha's authenticity when she said,

> She's [Trisha] very authentic like it doesn't matter where you meet her you'll experience the same version of her which I aspired to be that way. Because sometimes I don't know I feel like I'm trying to like adjust constantly. To be around someone [Trisha] who's always themselves and always approaches the work with the same level of like authenticity. I think that's great.

Although Brianna was constantly told to adjust her behavior to assimilate and be accepted, she was beginning to see her supervisor role model the opposite behavior. She even admired this quality about her supervisor and was learning how she too can be her authentic self in the workplace.

Once Brianna entered a new supervisory relationship with Tyler, she saw a different type of workplace behavior. She described Tyler's behavior as "accommodating whoever is in the room." When I asked Brianna how she could be her authentic self around Tyler she said,

> I don't have an answer for that right now. But … I will say Tyler seems more adaptable. Not adaptable … What's the word? Tyler tends to assimilate to like … or accommodates whoever's in the room. I feel like in certain situations, the expectation would also be that I like kind of lean into the way that he's behaving. Think there's that kind of like … when you kind of like … you have you overly respect authority in a way. And so, the expectation might be like … Okay, if the provost walked in, then I should behave differently or I should say something differently. Or if I had an opinion, maybe I should like not say all of it right there and then be more tactful. That's the impression that I'm getting right now early on.

Brianna described different levels of authenticity from her supervisors. In addition, what is unique about each supervisory relationship is that Brianna was a graduate student while supervised by Trisha and had entered her first professional position when supervised by Tyler. The differences in these relationships also reflect common experiences of new professionals where they receive more personal development as students and more professional development as practitioners (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). Reading these stories, you might also think that these differences exist because of institutional or departmental culture. Brianna described Tyler

as accommodating whoever is in the room, and Trisha as always showing up as her authentic self no matter who is present, but both worked at the same institution. This was intriguing to know because Brianna also described the department that she and Trisha worked in as high profile and rigorous. Although both of Brianna's supervisors could have felt extra pressure to perform because of the culture of the office or who was in the room, only Trisha was described as behaving as her true self no matter what space she was in or who she encountered.

Like Brianna, Samantha also discussed the differences between supervisors and how she would adjust her behavior in the workplace. Samantha described her experience adjusting her communication style to appear more professional.

> I feel like the language that I used and how I speak was very different when I was with Rick and Jerry than when I was with Morty. So, I feel like with Morty like, there was more of a … I guess it's called code switching … Like it was more of that like professional like cleaned up speech, when we were speaking as opposed to like … With Rick and Jerry like I'm just going to say things how I'm going to say them like how I would naturally say them. Like … I wouldn't have to like pre-plan what I would say. Whereas with Morty I think I was more intentional about the language that I was using, the word choice that I was using, how I was saying things.

Samantha discussed how she would speak among three different supervisors. Her supervisors Rick and Jerry were both Hispanic men and they shared that racial identity with Samantha. Her supervisor Morty was a white man. Samantha later explained that Morty was in a higher position than Rick and Jerry and had developed a positive reputation within the department. Therefore, Samantha felt pressure to impress Morty and would prove her professionalism through code switching by using "cleaned up professional speech."

In addition to using "professional speech," Samantha was also cognizant of *how* she relayed messages in professional settings. She always had to be mindful of how others would perceive her identities depending on the way she spoke and advocated for others.

> I have to be very intentional about how I communicate things. We have [Samantha's department] another coworker who was a white-identifying woman. And I feel like she had the ability to like be in a meeting, in a room full of people, and just like get loud and like say things however she wanted. And just say like, "This is wrong, and we shouldn't be doing this. And, like this is how we should approach this, and we're not thinking about this, and we're not thinking about that." Whereas, I feel like I do not have that same luxury. I have to be very careful about not just what I say, but how I say it. The words that I use, the tone that I'm using, how loud I'm being, if I'm projecting too much … Like all of these things because I just don't have that same luxury like … I feel like you [Samantha's coworker], as a white woman … you can get upset and you can be emotional and … you can say what you want, in this space [the workplace] and like it doesn't affect how people view you. Like it might make people not like you, but like it doesn't affect … your ability to exist in this space [the workplace]. Whereas, I feel like if I do that immediately it's like "Oh she's just like this angry loud like Black woman. So, we have to like be careful what meetings we include her on, like what information we're giving to her, because we know that she's going to have this [emotional] reaction and she's going to approach the situation this way." Which is something that I feel like is unfair. Because … if something is an emotional topic or something evokes emotion in me like it doesn't necessarily mean anything about me as a person or like nor should it put me in a in a category or in a box. But like I feel like that's the case. So, I feel like I'm very

> intentional about … how I choose to advocate for certain things and how I approach these conversations and like sometimes choosing not to respond, because I feel like I cannot respond to this in a way that is professional. And I feel like responding to it professionally would not be in alignment with who, I am as a person. Like if I responded to it professionally that means that, … I'm not really saying how I feel. Like I'm just going to eat what you said and I'm going to apologize or … I'm just gonna be accommodating … Like I'm not willing to do that.

There is a lot to unpack regarding how Samantha communicates in a professional setting. For one, she compares the amount of privilege she has in communicating to her white woman coworker. While her coworker can be loud and opinionated in meetings, Samantha does not have the same luxury and needs to think through *everything*; tone, volume, and word choice. Without this intentionality in her communication, Samantha fears being labeled as the "angry Black woman." The last point Samantha made was about emotions when communicating and how it can be easy to pass judgement on someone because of their emotional response. Samantha explained how this is unfair and how she may choose to not respond to certain things to avoid having to package a statement in professional speech to accommodate others. Samantha avoids this kind of code switching when she is passionate about something to be true to who she is as a person. Although Samantha thought it was important to adjust her behaviors, she had her limits on how much she was willing to change who was she is in a professional setting.

Silvia also found it very challenging to bring her entire self to the workplace. When I asked Silvia how she navigates the relationship with her supervisor as a Black woman she said she does so by showing up as white as possible.

> I attempt to appear as white as possible. A lot of my life has been making other people feel comfortable with me and feel comfortable with my presence in their lives because white people do not interact with Black people as often as they should nor often at all because white people surround themselves with other white people and that's just how society works. So it happens, naturally. And so, I've moved through a lot of my life understanding that like I might be the only interaction with other people that someone might have [with another Black person] and so therefore I need to make sure that they feel comfortable with me, because I have no idea how they're going to respond to me, being in this space. So yeah, I would say that I adapt to myself a lot to make other people comfortable.

Silvia felt the need to suppress her identities for the comfort of others. Silvia grew up in white environments and spent a lot of her life making sure the white people around her felt comfortable. What is interesting about the point that Silvia made is that she was very aware of the fact that she may be someone else's only interaction with another Black person. Instead of calling out other white folks for their unwillingness to be present around Black people and understand the Black experience, she suppresses her Blackness to make them comfortable.

Silvia's identity suppression is an act of self-preservation and illuminates the lack of power and privilege she has in comparison to white people. Silvia went on to explain that while she was adjusting to make others comfortable, she was also taking on the burden of managing other people's feelings.

> We [Black people] have the burden of managing other people's feelings. And so not only do we manage people's feelings in our interactions with other people, but they noticed that, and so, then we end up being pinned with the burden of other people's feelings and

> so … Like some of my coworkers would come to me when they didn't feel like they were able to go to anybody else because I was managing their feelings and therefore they utilize that because they thought that I cared about their feelings when really I care about making sure that I am safe in this situation. And so, then I hear a lot about my coworkers and like end up developing relationships with coworkers I don't necessarily want to have a relationship with.

Silvia explained she and other Black people take on the burden of managing other people's emotions. Meaning she was careful in how she shows up in various spaces and tries to comfort others so they walk away having a positive experience with a Black person, even though the interaction was inauthentic for Silvia. Unfortunately for Silvia, this means other coworkers are confiding in her when she has no desire to develop personal relationships. Developing vulnerable and/or personal relationships is certainly a personal preference shaped by prior socialization.

Didine also described her preferences on relationships with coworkers and how she makes others comfortable through humor. When I asked Didine to describe her relationship with her supervisor Kay Kay she said she likes to keep it strictly business. She used that same approach with other coworkers and appreciated the separation between work and her personal life.

> I try to keep it business but so does she [Kay Kay, Didine's supervisor]. Meaning when we formally sit down together and meet, it's just business. But you know, sometimes I pass by and I want to tell her a joke, or like something happened and I just want to mention it to her. So that's different. It's just a working relationship. It's not bad. I would say it's good, but I wouldn't go further than that. I think it's how it should be in the workplace. I'm not into... You know how people say "workplace husband" or whatever

> that means? Like “yeah no.” I see you [coworkers] “Hello” it's time to go “Goodbye.” Don't think about you [coworkers] again. Like you know. No one's really asked me to hang out, but I wouldn’t anyway. I’m so busy after work so … Would I want to hang out? Not really.

Unlike the other participants described in this section, Didine did not include personal discussions and vulnerability in her professional relationships. This was both a personal preference for Didine and the way her supervisor approached their relationship. Throughout my interview with Didine, she also mentioned how Kay Kay pays little attention to her at work, so she also has not given Didine reason to pour into a personal relationship.

In addition to discussing Didine’s relationship with her supervisor, we also talked about workplace dynamics. Didine shared how she introduces herself and uses humor to put her white colleagues at ease.

> I'm so quick to tell people where I’m from because we’re very cool there. You don't have to be scared of me. They’re [white coworkers] so narrow minded. They only know certain things so it's like I want to let them know “Yea I’m Haitian. My dad’s Jamaican. I’m from the inner-city.” It's like the first things out my mouth. Why? Because it jolts. It shocks. They see it’s okay. You know? “You don’t sound like you come from the inner-city,” [a statement made by others including coworkers]. “What does an inner-city person sound like?” [Didine’s response] I know what they mean. So, depending on who the person I’ll say “I could go there.” [Meaning she could provide an honest response to their statement]. They [white coworkers] tip toe around me. I feel like they’re tip toeing. I feel that they're uncomfortable. Because I feel like they're uncomfortable I try to put them at ease by making jokes.

Didine is quick to share her ethnicity and where she is from before her coworkers can pass judgement. Her comments also suggest her coworkers have a negative association of where she is from so she shocks them when she says that is her hometown. Didine also said her coworkers tip toe around her and she later suggested this cautious behavior comes from people who are not around Black people often and therefore do not know how to act in her presence.

In addition to using humor to put others at ease, Didine has learned other behaviors from her family. Although Didine identified as Black, her ethnicity is Haitian. While Didine can resonate with the challenges of Black people, there are parts of Black culture where she does not feel connected. Didine's family made sure to preserve their Haitian culture and sometimes that meant distancing themselves from Black culture. Didine described how her mother quickly corrected her speech in the household.

> I came home, one day, and I said "Oh, she be acting like …" My mother said, "Excuse me? No, we don't speak like that here." So, we weren't allowed to speak ebonics we weren't allowed to speak "street" we weren't allowed to do the "neck roll" [non-verbal behavior involving movement of the neck to portray emotions]. You know? It was associated with Black Americans and then even in the Spanish culture, there were some things that they did that, if we brought it home my mom was like "No."

Even though Didine was immersed in Black and Spanish cultures from living in an inner-city environment, she was forbidden from displaying those cultures in speech and non-verbal behaviors.

These examples of socialization and identity suppression represent the degree each participant felt they could bring their authentic selves to the workplace. Participants learned to suppress their identities from families, coworkers, and coaching from peers. They also

suppressed their identities by maintaining clear separation from their personal and professional lives and through coping mechanisms like code switching. Identity suppression felt like a necessary way of being in professional spaces for participants appear approachable, preserve a sense of self, avoid stereotype threat, and be seen as a model member of their racial group. Although self-preservation and an approachable personality may sound like positive outcomes from identity suppression, they result from systemic oppression and anti-Blackness. Supervisors can help new professionals either learn or unlearn behaviors associated with identity suppression.

Theme #3: Reflection and Comparisons

In trying to understand the relationship with their current supervisors, I found participants spent time reflecting and making comparisons. Participants compared the behaviors of current supervisors to past supervisors, and they made comparisons between the behaviors of current supervisors and coworkers. Past supervisors and coworkers represent two subthemes under reflections and comparisons.

Subtheme #1: Current and Past Supervisors

The differences participants mentioned between current and past supervisors included one-on-one discussions, personalities, identities, and the ability to work in diverse environments. Some supervisors used one-on-one meetings as opportunities to get to know their supervisees on a personal level, while others did not. Supervisors also approached discussions about professional development differently in one-on-one conversations. Some participants found it challenging to work with a supervisor whose personality was in direct contrast from their own. In a similar vein, some participants found comfort in having a supervisor with similar identities.

Brianna had already begun to describe the differences she saw with her current supervisor Tyler and her past supervisor Trisha. Briana discussed professional development and her

personal life with Trisha, but not with Tyler. The other difference is that Brianna's relationship with Tyler was still very new. When I interviewed Brianna, she had recently started her position and was supervised by Tyler for less than a year. Brianna was left with some lasting impressions after reflecting on both relationships despite this short time.

> Like right now I can pretty much see that I can see that I'm not getting the supervision that I would have wanted or the supervision that I think is best for me [from her current supervisor Tyler]. I can see that showing up. I'm not worried, but a little disappointed to think that maybe my growth might be stunted in some way, just because I don't have the support or the supervision that made me feel like I was growing every day or that I … was constantly like reaching new levels under a certain supervision. And now I'm thinking like does that [professional and personal growth] stop? Will that stop? Because I didn't realize how important it was until I started talking about it. Like "Wow Trisha [previous supervisor] really did like … I knew she meant a lot to me. But to realize how often I'm using her as an example, now …" I'm like "Okay, so I can't use an example of someone [Trisha] who's no longer there anymore." Like I would want to keep growing and have someone to like share ideas and get constructive feedback or criticism from in return because that's also how I grew. Because I had someone [Trisha] who is like "Okay, you did great at this level, but let's see how you can get to this level." So … Someone [a supervisor] who is intentional about wanting me to grow. And not just like "Oh, this is great, you're doing fine." Like that's not gonna work, because I'm also interested in being better every single day and so … I don't want to become complacent and feel like "Okay, this is the level I stopped at even though there's so many more levels, I could have reached." So that's what I've been thinking about like "Wow hopefully that doesn't

> happen." [Meaning hopefully my personal and professional growth doesn't stop]. But the thought is there now.

Brianna recalled her disappointment after reflecting on her relationship with Tyler. She realized most of the positive examples she shared were about her previous supervisor Trisha who was no longer present. Brianna realized the kind of personal and professional support she received from Trisha as graduate student was what she still needed. Brianna specifically stated she wished she had more constructive feedback and someone who was more intentional about helping her grow professionally. Brianna ended our final interview saying she planned to talk to Tyler more about her supervision needs to take their relationship in a new direction.

Victoria also found differences between her relationship with her current supervisor, Daniel, and her previous supervisor, George. She recalled her interactions with George and how they made her feel.

> The interactions with them [George] was for me very tense, I feel like they didn't understand me at all, and I also felt like at times they felt like I was beneath them. Yeah, they felt like I was beneath them and with Daniel I don't really feel like I'm beneath him, even though I know like he has a say on everything. Yeah … The previous supervisor [George], I felt was very like demeaning.

Although each supervisor came from a different career field and work culture, she attributed the tensions that existed between her and George to his lack of exposure to diverse environments.

> Because of their [George's] upbringing. Where they were from, what they were used to … and coming into an environment like [my current institution] and dealing with diverse backgrounds … I don't think they [George] were able to successfully like navigate that themselves and understand it at all. Here you have white people, Black people, you have

> Asians, you have … different languages, different food, different … You know … everything … This person [George] was like born and raised, in I think Alabama? Mississippi? I don't know. They [George] end up going to like Mississippi or something like that. I feel like something like strictly white, male, dominated environment.

Although Victoria cannot pinpoint exactly where her former supervisor was from, she was still left feeling like he did not understand her Blackness and how to navigate in diverse environments. Unlike how she described George, Victoria grew up learning how to navigate different environments. She had family living in low-income communities *and* in working class communities. In addition, her dad was college-educated and her mom worked in the medical field, so she was around doctors and people with higher incomes.

One thing Victoria had in common with her supervisor Daniel was knowing how to navigate different communities. Victoria and Daniel grew up in diverse, urban environments. Victoria described Daniel as someone who was good at socializing in diverse environments. "They're [Daniel] relatable. It's very easy for them to mold and navigate with diverse people. They can walk into a room and have a conversation with anyone." Victoria was impressed by how Daniel could navigate different environments and converse with almost anyone. Victoria described herself as an introvert and often found it difficult to do the same. Their personalities were certainly one way in which they differed, but Victoria learned how to foster new relationships and step outside of her introverted comfort zone through Daniel.

Doris also found some differences in the personality between her current and past supervisor. Doris' current supervisor Ben is a white man and had been supervising Doris for less than a year at the time of the interview. Doris said she did not discuss anything personal in nature with her current supervisor, Ben. Doris also described their relationship as new and under-

developed due to operating in a virtual environment. All their one-on-one meetings took place virtually and they were hardly in the office on the same days due to physical distance restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic. Doris said she did not believe the relationship with her supervisor Ben would be different if they were of another race or gender identity. Instead of focusing on Ben's racial or gender identities, she spoke more about his personality.

> I just think it's a matter of just like … He's [Ben] just very reserved. He's not one for people seeing what he's like outside of work or you know other parts of his personality and I think for anyone that would probably just be very hard to deal with.

To explain how a supervisor's personality traits can impact supervisory relationships, Doris used her previous supervisor Caitlyn as an example.

> I think back to my previous supervisor [Caitlyn]. She had a very bubbly personality. Very like just open and wanting to talk about other things [besides work], and also … kind of always checking in with me to see how I'm doing. I love that about her, and I really loved her personality. And she was a white woman and I think, kind of comparing those two [Ben and Caitlyn] … They are drastically different. And I think I love that personality [Caitlyn's personality]. I think I got along with that, because I'm also reserved person too. But I will definitely … open up and kind of be vulnerable. I think her personality definitely encouraged me to be vulnerable and she understood that. And she was the same with me, so I think we got along very well because of that.

Doris described Ben and Caitlyn very differently. Ben was someone who was very reserved and did not share who they are outside of work. In contrast, she described Caitlyn as bubbly, caring, and willing to discuss things other than work in conversation. All of Caitlyn's personality traits

encouraged Doris to be vulnerable at work. When I asked Doris to describe the personality traits of an ideal supervisor, they were often more in line with Caitlyn's personality.

> I'm a believer in opposites attract. Like I mentioned before, with the other supervisor [Caitlyn]. I think being that very energetic person because I'm more of an introvert. I have my extroverted moments … And being able to talk about things that are not work related or … I don't know. Just kind of a very upbeat and energetic person. It's always very encouraging when someone takes time to realize that you're a person, and you have a life outside of work; allowing for that flexibility and so forth. Yeah that would probably be that ideal person as a supervisor.

Doris says she would appreciate a supervisor who recognizes that you are a person who has a life outside of work. How supervisors approached one-on-one conversations was one way participants compared their current and past supervisors.

While some participants discussed their personal lives with supervisors, others did not. These differences existed due to personal preference, prior socialization, and how supervisors approached relationship building at work. Didine, for example, had never been accustomed to building personal relationships with supervisors or coworkers. In contrast, Doris mentioned how she did discuss her personal life with her previous supervisor but not her current supervisor. Through these comparisons, she learned she appreciated having a supervisor who acknowledged her as a person.

Participants also shared how they differed from their current and past supervisors regarding identity and personality. Victoria shared how she enjoyed having similar identities and personality traits to her current supervisor Daniel. Daniel also spent time getting to know Victoria on a personal level. In contrast, Doris' supervisor, Ben, had a more reserved personality

than Doris and did not try to get to know her personally. In comparing Ben to her previous supervisor, Doris learned having a supervisor who took an interest in her personally was important but found a supervisor's identities were not as important.

Finally, participants shared how their current and past supervisors were able to operate in diverse environments. Victoria saw how her current supervisor successfully navigated diverse environments, and how her previous supervisor struggled. Brianna and Samantha also saw differences in the way their supervisors navigated diverse environments. More detailed explanations regarding these differences show up in the way supervisors advocated for social justice. Ultimately, participants were beginning to understand what they needed from a supervisor through reflection and comparisons of current and past supervisory relationships.

Subtheme #2: Current Supervisors and Coworkers

Several participants discussed their comfort level and ability to be their authentic selves in the workplace through comparisons between their supervisors and co-workers. Some participants found a sense of community, understanding, and acknowledgment of their identities from coworkers. Others found relationship-building with coworkers to be challenging. In either case, developing close connections or discussing things personal in nature in the workplace were important to several participants.

Brianna spoke very positively about her current office, especially her coworkers. Brianna stated that she could be her authentic self in front of her supervisor and coworkers, but she only provided specific examples when discussing her coworkers.

> They really show up for me. The second week we were just talking about … how we navigate the space, as people of color at a PWI. And I remember … one in particular. He said that it doesn't matter … how they show up in the office because they're always going

> to show up as themselves and like he might start speaking Spanish sometimes and that's fine or … Another person was like I'm gonna bring my food that I like because I want to. And, just like knowing that they [coworkers] already have that sense of like, "yeah this is, who I am and I bring it here anyway," that was really comforting to me. "I'm like okay. Yeah me too then." So … them [coworkers] asking me about like what kind of foods or whatever it is like unique to my hometown … I have a flower in my office, and they ask about it and … that's a flower, that's usually like where I grew up. And then, just … opening the conversations to things that mean something to me that I wouldn't really share. But … it was natural and I know that they [coworkers] know who I am even more than just being a Black woman. They know me like as a Caribbean woman or as like … intersectionally. I feel like they've gotten a chance to know me beyond just who you see me as, and I think … that's really commendable. Like I really admire the people that I work with because of who they are, and how they show up.

Brianna felt her coworker's ability to be authentic in the workplace was an admirable quality. Having them show up as their authentic selves made it more comfortable for Brianna to do the same. Her coworkers also seemed genuinely interested in her culture and they would initiate conversations by asking questions to get to know Brianna. Their interest allowed them to know who she was intersectionally and beyond her visible identities as a Black woman. In contrast, Brianna could not provide examples of how Tyler recognized her identities in the workplace.

Like Brianna, Samantha could not recall a time when her supervisor recognized her identities in the workplace. Instead, she shared a story of her coworker's ability to have an identity-conscious perspective. Her coworker acknowledged what it would be like to be Black woman in a new city taking public transportation.

> I think that the only time that I have ever felt like my identity was really highlighted in a workplace was by my coworker. And they [coworker] stopped by my office to pick something up and we were having a really casual conversation. And they were just like oh like "Well if you ever need to go and xyz … like you can always take the train." And they kind of stopped and they kind of looked at me and they were like well "You being … You being a Black woman that would most likely be traveling by herself probably wouldn't want to take the train so like … If I'm ever going out I'll reach out to you, so that we can go together so that way, you can be more comfortable." And I think that that's the only time where I ever had someone at work like fully acknowledge like the extent of not only my Blackness but, like me, being a woman, a single woman who exists in like this big city. And I feel like this was something that … Rick [previous supervisor] thought about but he just never really said in such a clear blatant way of like. "I can understand how your identity might affect your ability to be able to do this basic thing that I get to do without really giving it a lot of thought."

Samantha was new to the area of her current institution and was without a car so her coworker told her she could take the train to get around the city. Immediately, her coworker recognized the issue with his statement and retracted it, because he recognized how a Black woman may not be comfortable on public transit and offered to drive her instead. Although Samantha has never had an experience like this with her supervisor Rick, she did say she believed this was something Rick considers. Meaning, he did think about what it is like for Samantha to exist in spaces as an Afro-Latina woman but never had the opportunity to validate her experiences through identity-consciousness fully.

After sharing this story, Samantha explained how the validation from her coworker made her feel.

> It made me feel really good. It made me feel really seen. If I say like “I don't like taking the train,” in a regular conversation without any of this context, I feel like someone would just assume like “Oh, she doesn't like public transportation like she's kind of boujee. She doesn't really like to take public transportation.” Because that's the assumption like that's what first comes to mind if someone doesn't take public transportation. Like they're used to driving, they're used to being driven … Whatever the case may be, but that was the first time that it was really like “No that's exactly why I don't like to take public transportation. Like being a woman alone on public transport is very scary.” Like what if something happens to me? How would someone know that I was on the train? Like how would someone be able to find me? Like all of these “what ifs” that run through your mind. So that was a super validating experience, where it kind of made me feel like, “Oh I’m not insane for having these thoughts. Like someone else who is a man can recognize that. Like it’s normal that I feel this way.” So, I don't need to be like embarrassed or I don't need to like play along with someone else's narrative. And just be like “Yep that's me that's why I don't like to do it.” I felt like I was like seen. Like literally seen.

Samantha’s story repeatedly underscored how this experience made her feel seen because her experience and concerns were validated through identity-consciousness. It was also refreshing for Samantha to have someone recognize how her identities impacted the way she viewed public transportation without passing judgement or dismissing her reality. The what if questions that ran through Samantha’s mind depict how unsafe she would feel taking public transportation. She

also mentioned gender, race, and socioeconomic identities in her description. She explained her preference to avoid taking public transportation has nothing to do with her being “boujee.” In this context, the term boujee refers to a person from high socioeconomic status who has high maintenance tendencies and avoids lower-class experiences like public transportation. This is the stereotype that is assumed when she says she does not want to take public transportation when the reality is that she is concerned for her own safety.

Unlike Samantha and Brianna, Doris provided few examples of identity-consciousness from her supervisor or her coworkers. Instead, Doris described how the relationship with her supervisor, Ben, was very different from that of her coworker. She explained that she did not have a close relationship with Ben but did with her administrative assistant Lisa. In describing Ben, Doris compared her relationship with him and Lisa.

> I've never had a white male as a supervisor. So I think that dynamic for me … I wasn't sure how it would be, but when I met them [Ben] in an interview they seemed like a very nice person and someone I can get along with and definitely it's been like that. Personality wise, he [Ben] can be very reserved and be very closed off. But I think like it's more like they [Ben] allow you to see the work version of them, but they don't really allow you to see another side of them, which I think is different from the relationship that I have with our office admin [Lisa] who, I will say I’m pretty close with. I know her [Lisa] during work and like outside of work, but with him [Ben] I just see the work person and that's it. They don't really tend to open up a lot.

Doris said Ben is very reserved and she had not gotten to know him as a person. The structure of their one-on-one meetings also made this challenging because they met virtually and Ben was often multitasking during their conversations. Doris had gotten to know her coworker Lisa on a

more personal level and even said she could be vulnerable with her. The kind of trusting relationship Doris had with her coworker was not something all participants experienced.

It was not until Silvia was preparing to leave her current institution that she realized how her coworkers were treating her unfairly. Silvia remembered how interactions with her coworkers made her feel.

> At the end of my time working at my institution was when I started to notice the way in which I'm treated or seen by my coworkers isn't necessarily right. I feel like I'm being shoved aside or my ideas are being shoved aside.

Silvia felt unheard and unseen by her coworkers and she decided to talk to a former coworker she trusted about her experience.

> "You [Silvia's former coworker] are someone that I feel like will tell me the truth and will tell me if I'm crazy or not." But this is what I think I am seeing [with my coworkers]. "Is this real?" And I remember him [former coworker] looking me dead in the face and being like "Yes, this has happened since you started and I am amazed that you haven't processed that it's happening until now."

It was clear Silvia needed this moment to process and have her feelings validated. She even began the conversation by saying I know you "will tell me truth and will tell me if I'm crazy of not." Silvia's former coworker validated her feelings and said this dismissive behavior from her coworkers has been occurring since she started her position. Her former coworker was also amazed Silvia had not processed through her thoughts and feelings about her coworkers alienating behavior until then. After sharing this story, Silvia started to wonder why she had not processed her feelings or recognized her coworker's behavior as problematic until that moment.

Victoria also had a difficult time with her workers. Although Victoria never described dismissive or alienating behavior, she still felt misunderstood. Victoria described herself as an introvert who spends a lot of time observing others to understand how to interact with them. When I asked Victoria to describe her comfort level with her supervisor Daniel, she provided me with a rating of nine out of ten, but gave a much lower score for her coworkers.

> That is more like a … 4. When I first started here, I did kind of like get to know a few people. People tried to kind of help guide me in the position and in navigating the department and the university. Those interactions like declined over the past two years, but that's natural for most people because of COVID and the pandemic.

Victoria explained, as a new staff member, she had more interaction from coworkers who were helping her navigate a new position, university, and department. Unfortunately, her interactions with coworkers decreased overtime and became more challenging throughout the pandemic. She also shared she could relate more to her supervisor because of what they have in common.

> Not only is he a Black male, but he grew up in a city setting similar to me. And also went to college got a degree [similar to Victoria]. When I talked previously about understanding different worlds in different settings and how to navigate in different times. He can relate to that. Which I feel like most of my coworkers won't be able to relate.

Victoria noted she can relate to her supervisor more than her coworkers because they share similar identities and upbringings. She said they both needed to navigate different settings with their identities and that is an experience she did not think her coworkers could understand.

Victoria was also very cautious in how she approached new work relationships. Victoria's strategy was to observe people to figure out how to interact with them.

> Being an introvert, I naturally am an observer. I observe people. I see how they act, and how they interact with other people. That kind of shows me, "Okay, how do I need to interact with this person?" Like figuring out what level of trust I can have in a person is important too. You can easily kind of tell that just based off of observing and seeing how people act and behave and the things they do. Like "what is their work ethic?" Which is important to me as well because I feel like I have a very strong work ethic. And you can you can see that [work ethic] based off of things that people put out or what they do in their work, settings outside of like interactions with me personally.

Victoria commented on being introverted several times throughout her interview. Her introverted personality effected how she developed personal relationships inside and outside of the work setting. Within the work setting she is considering how to interact with people based on levels of trust and work ethic.

Most participants had a desire to develop personal relationships with their coworkers and get to know them as people. Several participants also mentioned how important it was to have their experiences validated with identity-consciousness. Brianna felt her coworkers understood her identities intersectionally because they showed a genuine interest in who she was and initiated discussions about identity and culture. Samantha and Silvia also had their experiences validated with identity-consciousness from current and former coworkers. Samantha summarized her feelings about validation by saying it is nice to be seen, understood, and believed without judgment. Unfortunately, not all participants had personal relationships and validating experiences with coworkers. Participants like Victoria remained cautious. Many participants also took a cautious approach with their supervisors, often observing before acting or evaluating.

Theme #4: Advocacy

Participants learned about their supervisors' values, behaviors, and actions in the workplace through observation. These observations resulted in two sub-themes regarding supervisor advocacy; 1) social justice and 2) personal and professional development. Supervisors who were seen as social justice advocates supported social justice efforts and had an understanding of social justice topics. Participants also shared how supervisors advocated for them in the workplace through personal and professional development. Workplace dynamics also influenced the behaviors of both supervisors and supervisees. Some participants learned how to act based on their supervisor's behaviors within the institutional culture.

Sub-theme #1: Social Justice

Understanding and support of social justice came in many forms and at different degrees from participants supervisors. Some participants were able to provide examples of how their supervisors were committed to social justice and others could not. Supervisor commitment to social justice came in the form of professional development, ongoing education, conversations, and acknowledgement.

Unfortunately, very few participants had conversations with their supervisors about how current social injustices impacted them as people. Silvia, however, was very lucky to have a supervisor like Janet who supported her identities in the workplace by having these kinds of discussions. It is important to note that Janet knew Silvia as an undergraduate student and then supervised her in her first professional position. Therefore, some of the personal development she experienced as a student carried over in her relationship with Janet as a student affairs practitioner. Silvia explained why she was able to be more authentic with Janet in comparison to other supervisory relationships.

> She [Janet] had worked with a lot of female students of color. She would a lot of times initiate conversations about like being a student of color and like being a person of color in America and how it was a shitty time to be a person of color. And because she [Janet] was initiating those conversations so frequently, and it was beyond … when bad things would happen in the news. Because of that, I felt a lot more comfortable showing up as myself, and like saw her as someone who understood what I was going through in some respects, and understood what it was like to live and operate in America in a brown body … And so I felt like I could be more real with her [Janet].

Silvia said that because her supervisor-initiated conversations, she felt comfortable showing up to work as herself. In addition, she said Janet would bring up social justice outside of times when bad things were occurring in the news. This suggests these conversations were more commonplace and not reactionary in nature. Silvia said Janet understood what it means to operate in America in a brown body. Janet also articulated this understanding in the way she supported Silvia's professional development.

> Yeah so Janet will send me professional opportunities. So, an example is there was a group that was specifically for professionals of color. And she [Janet] found this group after I'd already switched jobs and she was still connected with me. And she was constantly telling me that I needed to ask my supervisor Martha about getting funding, so I can join this group, so that I could be connected to other people of color because she recognized the importance of being connected to people of color and like what impact that has for a working professional.

Silvia said her boss understood the importance of people of color having a sense of community as working professionals, and therefore tried to connect her to a group specifically for

professionals of color. Janet shared this professional development opportunity with Silvia even when she was no longer supervising her and Silvia had moved onto a different job. This kind of attention from Janet shows a level of care in her practice as a supervisor.

Daniel also encouraged Victoria's professional development with identity-consciousness. Victoria described how her institution can be a challenging environment for women and why it is important to network with others.

> The environment of the university can be very … It was political, but a lot of it is about who you know and understanding how they navigate it. And believe it or not being a woman on that campus has its pros and cons. I think I might have also expressed that like in previous employment I've kind of dealt with like the quote unquote "boys club." To the fact, where I might have been way more qualified for promotion or anything, but because of this like boys club I may have been looked over. And so Daniel [Victoria's supervisor] was kind of pushing me to understand how to be more vocal and fight for myself more. And with that sometimes it takes kind of understanding how other women have done the same.

Victoria described her university as political in nature and therefore it is important to make connections and learn how to navigate politics. Daniel encouraged her to network with other women to learn how they have been successful in navigating a political environment. This was certainly an important skill for Victoria to learn since she had already seen how challenging it can be to operate in work environments dominated by men. Victoria also saw how Daniel supported social justice through his interactions with students.

> We've had several incidents and issues during the past couple semesters that had a heavy impact on our students. And by them [Daniel] simply acknowledging what was going on

> in the world and acknowledging what was going on our campus, and how it's impacting our staff … I think kind of show their [Daniel's] support. Not to say that they were on the front lines like fighting for … social justice issues. But like being able to express … "Hey we see this going on, we know this impacts you, here are some resources." As a team let's all make an effort to educate ourselves on things.

Victoria said Daniel supports students through injustices occurring in the nation and on their campus through acknowledgement, listening, and encouraging others to educate themselves on social justice issues. This type of acknowledgement is important given the challenges that exist within the institutional culture Victoria described.

> One of the biggest challenges [at my institution] would be that I'm like one of very few Black people. Me and my coworker sometimes look at pictures or around the room we're in and we're like "Oh it's like just me and you." You can physically see it. Even within the faculty you can see it. It's everywhere. I say that is a huge challenge because this is an institution that strives on wanting to be a global partner. We have a lot of international students. That's great. But with those international students there's not many Black students unless they're athletes. You can see how based on the leadership, the faculty we have, the students we have, the staff we have … And I think it has had an impact on policies or things that are set in place within the university that do not cater to Black individuals.

Victoria described the lack of Black people at her institution in terms of students, faculty, and staff. Furthermore, she said the Black students who are represented are typically athletes and the institution does a poor job of supporting Black individuals in policy and practice.

Samantha described a similar dynamic at her institution and attributed the problems as being systemic to PWI structures.

> I think that PWIs innately structure everything about themselves to a specific type of student, especially at my institution. At my institution everything that we do we have a policy, we have a procedure. But it's not uncommon for … me to talk to a parent and like enforce our policy and procedure exactly … as I'm told that I should, and then that parent to call someone above me and then that person above me to kind of accommodate them. … that's something that I wouldn't have been able to do, but they can do it. That's how it works in any structure right? … people above me have more power, so they can do something that maybe I'm not aware. But I think that, because my institution caters to a specific type of student that often means that the students who don't fit that specific checklist are "shit out of luck" for lack of better words. Like if you don't make X amount of money then … I don't know. And if you can't … afford to … live in this building, then … I don't really know what to tell you. … there's all these things that are barriers for certain students who don't fit this … clear cut mold of who the university is trying to serve.

Samantha said her institution caters to a specific type of student. The institutional culture she described sounds classist in the way she mentioned money and affordability. Despite the exclusionary environment of her institution, Samantha did recognize social justice awareness from her supervisor Rick.

> With Rick [Samantha's supervisor] like it was something [social justice] that we talked about like, a lot. I'm the type of person who cannot … ignore what's happening in the world. Like it really affects me. It really takes a toll on me, especially the things that feel

> super relevant to my experiences … in navigating the world. So, there were times, where … if something were happening on the news or something really … tough was just happening in general that … they could easily read that … I wasn't necessarily like super high energy or … feeling really good. And I feel like they [Rick] did their best to acknowledge that something was different. Maybe not necessarily asked … "Oh … are you in a bad mood because … the police have shot yet another Black man on the streets of … this (insert city)?" But kind of like being attuned to the fact that because … I'm very vulnerable and I wear my heart on my sleeve, … energy shifts are really noticeable and just being aware of that, asking leading questions, asking me what I need.

Samantha first said social justice is a topic she discussed with Rick a lot. She also shared she is deeply affected by social injustices that occur and they can cause a change in her energy. Samantha made it a point to say that Rick did not necessarily check-in on Samantha because of current social injustice in the news but would do so when he saw a change in her behavior or energy. Their close relationship made it possible for Rick to see changes in Samantha's behavior.

Didine also shared how her supervisor would check in with her, but it was not what she was looking for or needed. Didine explained how her supervisor Kay Kay would approach her to address what she thought were racist comments or microaggressions in the workplace.

> She [Kay Kay] overheard a conversation that a Caucasian staff had with me and it was really a stupid conversation. And she [coworker] was just telling me that "A lot of Black people are mad at Kim Kardashian because you know …." I don't even remember what she said … And I think I said, "Oh is it she only dates Black people?" She was like "Didine you don't know who she is?" I was like "I've heard of her …" But I haven't seen TV in 11 years. I don't watch TV. And so she's explaining to me "Yea you know she

> [Kim Kardashian] got gold teeth and that's a part of the Black culture." I said "It is?" Kay Kay [Didine's supervisor] said, "Were you offended?" And I was like, "No I just thought it was funny." She [Kay Kay] says, "You know she [coworker] can get in trouble for that." And I was like "No I'm good. I'm good." And I just laugh and it's happened before. It happened about three times that she'll say to me, "If you're uncomfortable let me know." I was like, "Girl this don't mean nothing to me. It's just ignorance. It's okay." And it's not even ignorance in a bad, mean way. And she'll [coworker] say, "Oh you don't sound like you come from the inner city." And I'm like, "Oh, I could go there." I dealt with people like that all my life. I'm always around people that are not either in my culture, or they're not brown or dark and they never went through anything. The comments that come out their mouth are just … it's so sad.

In this instance, Didine's boss Kay Kay overheard a conversation she had with a white co-worker. The co-worker commented on Kim Kardashian being judged for wearing gold teeth because they are a part of Black culture. Didine questioned whether gold teeth were in fact a part of Black culture. Didine also mentioned a microaggression she received from the same coworker about her style of speech when they said, "You don't sound like you come from the inner city." Kay Kay was checking in with Didine to see if she was offended and to let her know the staff member could get in trouble for what they said. Didine, however, was not concerned about the comments and saw no poor intentions. She also made it clear that she was not interested in documenting the situation or having someone suffer consequences for their ignorant statements. Kay Kay's acknowledgment of the microaggressions was one of few examples Didine could provide about her understanding of social justice. The only other example she offered was Kay Kay being very knowledgeable about laws and policies that impacted students with disabilities.

Didine never shared where Kay Kay gained her social justice knowledge but made it clear that she did not always like how Kay Kay handled things like microaggressions.

Unlike Didine, Doris did share how her boss Ben kept abreast of social justice topics. Ben was engaging in conversations about social justice through a professional development organization.

> Through one of our committees for DEI [diversity, equity, and inclusion] and he [Ben] was on there. He's been very involved with that group. There are a lot of people that are committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, especially in student conduct with Black and brown conduct officers. I feel like him [Ben] being in that space definitely gave me the indication this is something that he's committed to.

Doris noticed her supervisor's commitment to a committee that focuses on diversity, equity, and inclusion through the student conduct process. She later explained that Ben has been a part of this committee for several years and even ran for president. It was refreshing to know this about Doris' supervisor because she described the culture of her institution as exclusionary. Doris explained her emails to campus partners sometimes went unanswered just because she was a new staff member.

> It happens [emails being ignored] to a lot of folks that are new but it also happens to people if they're not in a certain position. They don't get that kind of response. My admin [Lisa] who's been here for 12 years even says sometimes people don't respond to her emails and she had to get used to that. This is the way the institution works and that's kind of sad to hear from a person who's been here so long. Because she's [Lisa] not taken seriously, because she is just an admin assistant. Like that doesn't make any sense. She

> [Lisa] calls it the alphabet mafia. But she just means … if you don't have like PhD or whatever at the end of your name, nobody takes you seriously here.

In this story, Doris recounted the experience she and Lisa had with emailing campus partners. Campus partners at Doris' institution interact with folks differently based on their years of experience, position, and education background. New folks, lower-level positions, and those without a graduate degree can expect a lack of response from campus partners when they try to communicate via email. Lisa called the campus partners the "alphabet mafia" referring to the way they are exclusionary towards people who do not have the abbreviated academic credentials after their names.

Although it is impossible to predict the level of social justice competency from each supervisor, I could certainly discern which participants felt the most supported in this area of their professional lives. Participants like Silvia and Samantha, who had an ongoing dialogue about social justice, were able to provide examples of their supervisor's identity-consciousness related to current social justice issues. The supervisors of Silvia and Victoria also encouraged them to join identity-based organizations. Other forms of social justice advocacy shared were not directly related to participants. Instead, they came in the form of education, acknowledgment, and student support. The following subtheme focuses solely on the advocacy participants received from their supervisors.

Subtheme # 2: Personal and Professional Development

Advocacy from supervisors came in the form of professional development, career advancement, compassion, and flexibility. Sometimes participants saw evidence of their supervisors advocating for them firsthand and other times the advocacy occurred without them present. Having a supervisor advocate for them in their absence only seemed to further the trust

they had in their supervisors as leaders and people. Brianna described this kind of advocacy with her supervisor Trisha.

> She [Trisha] challenged me in a way that I've never been challenged before. Like I really do look up to her still. I even asked her to be my mentor last week, just because I don't want to lose contact with her. Like in certain ways … she will see I'm good at this and then she'll be like, "Okay, but here's how we can get you to be at this next level." Then we'll have those conversations. And she's always advocating for me, no matter where I am or who she's with. I'll meet people and they'll be like, "Yeah Trisha just told me about you." So even at the university, I feel like she's done a good job of kind of advocating for me and just pushing me. Appropriately pushing me and not … too much. At times, it was hard, because when someone is challenging you that can be like, "Okay I'm ready to relax, no." But honestly … after getting this job, … I honestly am so thankful for her because … it was all good push, a good challenge. … even the projects and the amount of … things that I was overseeing as a grad student. I remember telling her, "I really want to walk away from this [this position] feeling confident that I can be in higher ed," and she really took that to heart. She made sure that she set all that up for me. I think that speaks to her as a supervisor. She pays attention to the needs and wants.

Brianna shared how her supervisor Trisha advocated for her professional development by focusing on ways to improve her strengths. Brianna also provided an example of how she knew Trisha was advocating in her absence by speaking highly of her to other professional colleagues. Trisha was also intentional in her approach to supervision by paying attention to Brianna's wants and needs. Brianna's decision to ask Trisha to be her mentor is a great example of the trust, advocacy, and support that existed within their professional relationship.

Samantha also spoke of how her supervisor Rick advocated in her absence. Rick stepped in to advocate for Samantha when she was asked to be on-call despite needing the proper training.

> It was clear to me that Rick was going to advocate for me in any space, regardless if I was there, or not. And I think that I really saw that in a time where I felt like I was being pressured by Rick's superiors to take on a day of duty before I was ready to be on call. Before I had even been like fully trained on … our policies and procedures to serve on-call. Rick was like "No, like you're totally right to say that you're not ready. You haven't been given the training that you needed and, if you have a bad experience on call for your very first time on call it's going to affect your confidence indefinitely in the position."

Not only was Rick advocating for Samantha in her absence, but he also supported Samantha even when his supervisor was pressuring her to take on a duty shift. Rick's supervisor could have had the final say given their positional authority, but Rick did not want Samantha's confidence in crisis responses to be impacted by taking on a duty shift without the proper training.

Both examples from Brianna and Samantha were closely related to their professional positions. It was refreshing to hear Victoria received Daniel's support on a personal level. In a previous example, Victoria described how she had been able to be vulnerable with Daniel by sharing her personal struggles with her dad's illness. Knowing Victoria was experiencing such a daunting personal challenge, Daniel provided Victoria with the flexibility she needed.

> Throughout my time with the university I've had a lot of ups and downs, in my personal life. And if I didn't have a supervisor that was open enough to understand those things and be a little bit compassionate in that aspect and be a little more flexible … For example, I don't have a normal work schedule. And if my supervisor didn't advocate for

> that and say like, “You know I trust her, she can get these things done on an alternative schedule,” I wouldn't have felt as supported.

Victoria was able to receive a flexible work schedule to allow her to care for her dad because of Daniel’s advocacy. Victoria even shared that if she could not be vulnerable regarding her personal struggles, she did not think she would have lasted very long in her current role. In addition to advocating on her behalf, Victoria also shared how Daniel was able to advocate for student staff.

> Daniel’s always advocating. Maybe not for what is ideal all the time to everyone, but like what it would improve efficiency and what would improve employee morale. And sometimes that takes a lot of energy to cut through … red tape on things. One example is … our student staff were consistently asking for … a pay raise to match what is going on in the market and the fact that the position hadn't received any type of adjustments for some years. This was something that took time and effort, a lot of politics. A lot of mixed emotion and feelings. The pay raise would impact not one group of students, but the entire department. Daniel took the time to really advocate for that, knowing that it was an important benefit factor for student staff.

Victoria explained how advocating for student staff pay raises was not an easy task for Daniel. It involved a lot of energy, time, politics, and mixed emotions because the change was going to impact the entire department. Daniel knew getting these pay raises was a needed change that had not been seen in several years and would be welcomed by student staff and boost morale.

Doris’ supervisor also needed to navigate campus politics when advocating on her behalf. In a previous example, Doris explained how it could be challenging for her to communicate with campus partners. Doris found campus partners were not always equitable in their communication

and made it especially challenging for staff who were new, in lower-level positions, or did not have advanced degrees. Doris said her supervisor Ben would use his privilege to advocate for her.

> If we're [Doris' department] reaching out to campus partners or reaching out to maybe other people across campus, I found that they respond to him quicker than they respond to me. I've been able talk to him about that and he's been very understanding of that. And he has been able to reach out on my behalf, introduce me, and let me into those spaces.

Doris shared her concerns with Ben about campus partner outreach and he stepped in to help by nudging them along, introducing Doris, or inviting Doris into campus partner spaces. Without Ben's help, Doris probably would have been ignored. Outside of campus partner outreach, Ben was also supportive of her professional development and career advancement.

> There's a specific professional development opportunity that's usually during the summer, and I wanted to be part of that professional organization. And he [Ben] was just like, "yeah sure." He [Ben] said money was kind of tight, but he asked me to write a proposal. And I was able to do it and send it to him and he was … very supportive that he actually liked the proposal and I was able to do that. And there was a certificate that I wanted to do through the summer. It was a social work certificate, but it can help with a lot with trauma informed practices. And he's [Ben] working with Title IX, since we do work with them a lot. He was very supportive of that. I told him when I got accepted and he was like, "Yeah you can do that for professional development, and do it during your work times over the summer." He was very supportive of that and just anything I wanted to do on campus.

Doris provided two examples of professional development her supervisor supported: 1) being part of a professional organization, and 2) obtaining a social work certificate. Ben even expressed their budget was limited but was willing to financially support her membership to a professional organization after she provided him with a proposal. Not only did Ben financially support Doris' professional development, but he also allowed her to use office time to complete her social work certificate. Silvia experienced similar support from her supervisor, Janet.

Janet was also incredibly supportive of Silvia's career transition and provided additional guidance in her personal life. Silvia explained these conversations came naturally because they had such a positive foundation in their relationship with one another.

> Because we [Silvia and Janet] had such a good relationship and because she presented herself, as someone who … deeply cared for my own wellbeing, we would have conversations about … me finding a different job, and she would very 100% gung-ho support me on that. And she [Janet] understood what I wanted and so she would … talk with me about what I wanted and like be able to understand that. And so, when I told her that I had applied for a hall director job she was genuinely excited for me, because she knew I wanted to work with students again. And then beyond that, we had talked about housing at some point. We were constantly having … life skills conversations and so she would talk to me about … how to find housing. I must have talked to her at one point about … wanting to get a car, because I remember us sitting down and talking about … what the process of getting a car loan. And what are the things you want to look out for and how do you want to show up at a dealer, and like what are the ways in which they take advantage of people. And so, she [Janet] was both supervisor and life skills coach in

> some aspects and so she became like a mom for me here on campus. So, … we're both still pretty good friends to this day.

Although it might be scary for someone to tell their supervisor they were searching for another job, that was never the case for Silvia. Silvia developed a close relationship with her supervisor because she could see Janet deeply cared about her wellbeing. Silvia said her supervisor was both supportive and excited for her when she decided to apply for a new position. Janet also gave Silvia life skills advice like finding housing and buying a car. Silvia, on more than one occasion, called Janet her "campus mom," and that is certainly indicative of their personal relationship and the ways Janet cared for Silvia as a person and as a professional.

Advocacy for personal and professional development came in different forms from participants' supervisors. In some cases, participants received support from their supervisors to join professional organizations, capitalize on their strengths, or receive certificates. In other instances, supervisors needed to advocate on their behalf by talking to their superiors. Rick advocated for Samantha by disagreeing with his supervisor who was trying to encourage Samantha to take an on-call shift before she was trained. Daniel advocated to his superiors to get Victoria a flexible work schedule. Finally, Brianna and Silvia shared how their supervisors Trisha and Janet showed a vested interest in their development by continuing to mentor and support them even after they left their positions. Each example participants shared about advocacy for personal and professional development represented different degrees of time, effort, and intentionally.

Chapter Summary

The stories from each participant show how much influence their supervisors had on their professional and personal experiences. Participants expressed close and trusting relationships through personal discussions when they could be vulnerable in the workplace. Participants also shared that it was important for supervisors to create space for vulnerability by initiating those conversations and showing care for them as individuals.

There were also a multitude of factors that impacted how much participants suppressed their identities and showed up as their authentic selves. Some participants felt comfortable showing up as their authentic selves when they saw this behavior role modeled by coworkers and/or supervisors. Other participants found authenticity and personal relationships at work as a foreign concept because of how they were socialized. Workplace dynamics also played a part in how participants and their supervisors showed up at work. Some assimilated to their workplace environments through code switching, professional dress, and by mirroring their supervisor's behavior. Through reflections and comparisons of their current supervisors with past supervisors and coworkers, participants learned about the importance of identity-consciousness and what they needed in a supervisory relationship and a professional environment.

Finally, through careful observation, participants learned how their supervisors advocated for social justice and personal and professional development. Some supervisors did what was expected of them by encouraging further education related to social justice and development. Whereas other supervisors were more intentional in their advocacy by taking a personal and identity-consciousness approach. These stories illustrate how Black women can begin to find supportive and lasting relationships with supervisors when they can be their authentic selves.

Supervisors can create these relationships and become positive influences in the workplace as cultural change agents.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Conclusions

This study aimed to understand Black women entry-level student affairs professionals' experiences with their supervisors through an identity-conscious framework. In Chapter One, I shared my study's purpose, research questions, and relevance. My literature review, in Chapter Two, provided valuable information about attrition rates, supervision practices, identity development and negotiation, anti-Blackness, and the diversity of student affairs professionals. I outlined my conceptual framework of Black feminist thought (BFT) and Critical authentic leadership (CAL) in Chapter Three. Additionally, I explained my use of Black feminist thought (BFT) as the epistemology undergirding my study to honor the scholarship and leadership Black women contribute to society. Lastly, I described my qualitative narrative inquiry method and how I captured these narratives using semi-structured interviews.

As described in Chapter Four, four themes emerged which include 1) vulnerability through personal discussions, 2) identity suppression and authenticity, 3) reflection and comparisons, and 4) advocacy. The findings presented in Chapter Four helped me answer the two research questions: 1) How do Black women navigate social identities in their relationships with direct supervisor(s)?, and 2) How do Black women entry-level student affairs professionals at PWIs perceive identity-conscious supervision? Overall, my findings revealed Black women navigate their social identities depending on prior socialization, their supervisor's level of vulnerability and authenticity in the workplace, and the workplace dynamics. The degree to which Black women experienced identity-conscious supervision depended on their supervisor's perceived authenticity, understanding and support of social justice, and advocacy. In the

following sections, I connect these themes to extant research described across my literature review. I close with practical and theoretical implications and suggestions for future research.

Vulnerability Through Personal Discussions

The study's framework of critical authentic leadership (CAL) suggests supervisors can further develop their own identity-consciousness by building trusting relationships with supervisees through dialogue and vulnerability (Brown et al., 2019). The participants in this study shared how their supervisors allowed for vulnerability in the workplace through personal discussions. Participants also noted how having their supervisors initiate personal discussions as appropriate for the workplace was helpful. By discussing things other than their positions and upcoming tasks related to their jobs, participants were able to share valuable information about themselves like personal challenges that affected their professional lives. Although these personal discussions may have put the supervisees in a vulnerable position, the participants never described it this way because they had developed trusting, reciprocal relationships with supervisors who also shared personal information about themselves.

These findings align with what researchers have said about power, vulnerability, and relationship development within supervision practice (Brown et al., 2019; Peyton et al., 2019; Richard et al., 202; Shupp & Armino, 2012). Relationships between supervisors and supervisees are defined by organization hierarchies that create a difference in power and positional authority (Peyton et al., 2019; Richard et al., 2021). Critical authentic leadership acknowledges power dynamics beyond organization and positional authority. Critical authentic leadership also recognizes how identity contributes to differences in power and privilege in supervisory relationships. This framework does so by including leadership practices like racialized relational transparency, multipartial balance processing, and internalized moral perspective. These

components of CAL consider the impact of race, racism, white supremacy, and social justice in supervision practices and the workplace.

Before people enter the workforce, they are socialized differently to interact with authority. This socialization process is connected to white supremacy which has removed and devalued identity and vulnerability in professional spaces (Davis, 2016; Gray, 2019). Therefore, people like Victoria and Didine have learned to keep their personal and professional lives separate. However, Victoria benefited from having vulnerable discussions with her supervisor which eventually led her supervisor to advocate for her having an alternate work schedule so she could be successful at her job and have the flexibility in caring for her sick father. Unfortunately, the full extent of labor done by Black women is often overlooked. Black women are not recognized for their work outside of professional spaces like caring for families (Collins, 2009). If Victoria's family labor was not recognized by her supervisor; she may have been unsuccessful in her professional position. Supervisors who discuss power dynamics and allow personal relationships and discussions with supervisees can disrupt power imbalances and encourage vulnerability in the workplace (Brown et al., 2019; Yu & Duffy, 2016).

Developing personal relationships may seem like a strange supervision practice since supervisors are often told they need to create boundaries within supervisory relationships (Beinart & Clohessy, 2017). However, the development of trusting, personal relationships are components of recommended supervision practices like identity-conscious supervision and synergistic supervision. These approaches to supervision position the personal goals and development of supervisees as the priority and trusting supervisory relationships can be the result (Shupp & Armino, 2012; Tull 2006; Tull et al., 2009; Winston & Creamer, 1998). Samantha

realized how much she needed to have a personal relationship with her supervisor Rick when she entered her first position in student affairs.

Novice professionals like Samantha are learning the scope of their positions and how to navigate their new career fields, while developing a professional identity (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Pittman & Foubert, 2016). In addition, Samantha was becoming familiar with a new city and learning to manage her own personal challenges in a new environment. New student affairs professionals like Samantha, transitioning from student roles to professional roles could benefit from identity-conscious supervision. As a student their personal *and* professional development was prioritized. Unfortunately, many new professionals enter workplaces to find their individual development has a different level of importance than their job performance (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008).

Silvia and Brianna saw how the level of support they received varied after transition from students to professionals. Trisha was Brianna's supervisor during graduate school and Janet knew Silvia as an undergraduate student. Brianna received personal and professional development through identity-consciousness from Trish but not her current supervisor Tyler. Silvia was fortunate enough to work with a supervisor who knew her as an undergraduate student and continued supporting her personal and professional development as a student affairs professional. Unfortunately, Silvia did not receive the same level of support from her current supervisors and often suppressed her identity while at work. Identity-consciousness and developing personal relationships are not standard workplace practices because white supremacist ideologies have defined professional behaviors to keep minoritized populations in positions of lesser power (Davis, 2016; Gray, 2019).

Identity Suppression and Authenticity

The Black women in this study represented a range of diversity beyond race and gender. The new student affairs professionals I interviewed, represented different ages, nationalities, religions, sexual orientations, income, and education levels. Black feminist thought recognizes the diversity that exists among Black women beyond race and gender (Collins, 2009). This reality of the Black woman experience is akin to the unique perspectives of participants and how they defined their Black womanhood based on other identities. Furthermore, Black identity development theories have explained how Black people develop unique racial identities based on how they have been socialized (Hannon et al., 2016; Patton, 2016; Sullivan & Esmail, 2012; Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017; Tatum, 2003; Williams & Lewis, 2021; Williams et al., 2020). Each participant shared stories of how they learned to socialize in different environments by suppressing their identities.

Identity suppression is typical for Black people because systematic oppression and white supremacy have determined what behaviors are acceptable and unacceptable for Black people (Brown et al., 2011; Brown et al., 2016; Feagin, 2013; Thomas et al., 2011). Black feminist thought ascertains that we can expect Black women to have similar experiences with racism and oppression (Collins, 2009). Identity suppression was a common experience for participants because professional expectations like how to behave, dress, and talk in workplace settings are defined by white standards and are grounded in white supremacy (Davis, 2016; Gray, 2019; Williams, in press). Workplace settings ignore other cultural ways of being and require minoritized people to downplay their own identities and show up as white as possible to be seen as serious professionals (Davis, 2016; Gray, 2019; Perez & Hayley, 2021; Williams, in press). Appearing as white as possible is exactly how Silvia showed up at her current work

environments. Silvia said she could only truly be herself in the privacy of her own home or around those she trusted like her previous supervisor, Janet, who developed a personal relationship with her.

Identity suppression is part of the socialization process that extends to the workplace in defining professional behaviors (Byrd et al., 2019; David, 2016; Gray, 2019; Perez & Haley, 2021). In developing a professional identity, novice practitioners often seek the advice and guidance of supervisors (Hirschy et al., 2015; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). The behaviors of supervisors and workplace dynamics influenced how participants showed up in professional spaces. Samantha, for example, learned to talk and dress differently when she was at work. Samantha compared her ability to show up authentically in professional spaces to another white woman coworker. Samantha saw how her coworker could point out department discrepancies and passionately speak in meetings. Samantha saw this as a privilege due to her coworker's whiteness, because her style of speech did not affect how she existed in professional spaces. However, Samantha knew if she spoke in a similar fashion she could easily be labeled as an "angry Black woman." Therefore, Samantha would carefully package her speech and in some cases choose to not speak up at all.

Outside of meetings, Samantha spoke naturally with her supervisor Rick, with whom she had a personal and trusting relationship. However, when she began working with her new supervisor, Morty, the way she showed up to work began to change and, in some ways, she was encouraged to adapt new professional behaviors. Samantha was very aware that Morty held a higher position and had developed a positive reputation within the department. Therefore, Samantha felt pressure to show up as her most professional self to impress Morty and she would often code switch to use more professional and cleaned up speech. Morty also encouraged

Samantha to begin dressing more professionally so others would take her seriously. Samantha's use of code switching, and professional dress are synonymous with other literature surrounding identity suppression strategies (Cross, 1991; Daniels, 2018; McCluney et al., 2021; Williams, in press; Williams et al., 2020). Identity suppression strategies can be viewed as a process of assimilation (Cross 1991) where Black women mirror the behaviors of white people to be perceived as more professional (McCluney et al., 2021). Black women like Samantha have learned to code-switch and adopt other self-protective strategies from adolescence to adulthood in educational environments (Daniels, 2018; McCluney et al., 2021; Williams, in press; Williams et al., 2020).

Samantha used identity suppressive strategies like coding switching when working with Morty, but described authentic behaviors when working with Rick. Samantha and other participants were often mirroring the behaviors of their supervisors. Some supervisors in my study were described as showing up as their true selves, while others did not share their authenticity and vulnerability in the workplace. Participants had to decide for themselves whether to act in similar or different ways than their supervisors. Brianna's supervisor Trisha always showed up as her authentic self, but she saw how her supervisor Tyler would change his behavior in the presence of senior leadership. Brianna realized she needed to be more tactful in discussing workplace challenges or avoid certain topics altogether. As Williams and Lewis (2021) articulated, adjusting how you communicate or show emotion in the workplace is another identity suppression tactic. Moreover, it is a way Black women are required to shift their senses of self for the comfort of white people and/or people who uphold white systems (Williams, in press).

Identity negotiation becomes necessary for Black women who are in the minority (Dickens & Chavez, 2017). Participants like Silvia and Victoria experienced being token staff members who sought out or were encouraged to seek out other professionals with similar identities to better navigate PWI campuses. Victoria recounted being one of two Black women in her department and the lack of Black folks at her workplace was often seen in group pictures and gatherings. Victoria was encouraged by her supervisor to network with other women on campus to learn how to navigate a political and predominately white environment. Similarly, Silvia's supervisor encouraged her to find networks with other Black professionals so that she could find a sense of community. Finding a sense of community is important for professionals who wish to gain a connection to their institutions (Wilson et al., 2016). After all, professionals who experience a community connection at their institutions are more likely to stay in their current positions (Wilson et al., 2016) and feel a sense of belonging (Strayhorn, 2018). This was a survival tactic that participants like Victoria and Silvia used to navigate PWIs they described as exclusionary to students, faculty, and staff of minoritized backgrounds.

Reflection and Comparisons

Participants learned what they needed in supervisory relationships and whether their identities were considered in the workplace through reflections and comparisons of current and past supervisors. The use of comparisons for learning aligns with other literature regarding professional identity development. As new professionals develop a professional identity, they are largely influenced by the supervision style of their direct supervisors (Perez & Haley, 2021; Pittman & Foubert, 2015) and their professional colleagues (Hirschy et al., 2015). Furthermore, a new professional's perception of their current workplace will likely be influenced by past professional experiences (Weidman et al., 2001). New professionals will also compare how they

were socialized in graduate school and re-socialized in their professional positions by supervisors (Perez & Haley, 2021). How supervisees were socialized by their supervisors will also inform their perspectives of good and bad supervision (Perez & Haley, 2021).

In essence, comparing current and past supervisors became essential reflection practices for participants to learn what they needed from a supervisor. For example, Brianna realized she was missing a lot of personal and professional development opportunities and discussions from her current supervisor Tyler, after reflecting on her relationship with her previous supervisor Trisha. As a graduate student Brianna's personal and professional development was prioritized under Trisha's supervision but she did not receive this kind of developmental support in her first professional position. This change in developmental support is referenced by Renn & Jessup-Anger (2008) who explain how personal development is no longer prioritized when individuals transition out of student roles and into professional positions. Brianna shared how Trisha would often encourage her to capitalize on her strengths to get her to the next step of her career. Unfortunately, Brianna was not being challenged to develop as a professional with Tyler and realized this was one aspect of their relationship she hoped to change.

In addition to different professional development approaches, participants also mentioned differences in personal discussions, personalities, identities, and how supervisors operated in diverse environments. Participants found comfort in having supervisors with similar identities. As Davis and Cooper (2017) underscored, supervision is a challenging practice that requires individual attention because each person has unique strengths, personalities, and identities. Navigating supervisory relationships becomes even more challenging when the supervisor and supervisee differ in personality and identity (Davis & Cooper, 2017). Supervisors who practice critical authentic leadership may be able to recognize these challenges by considering multiple

perspectives and recognizing how race influences those perspectives (Brown et al., 2019). By considering the impact of identity on individual perspectives, supervisors can learn more about their supervisees as people and as professionals. In addition, supervisees may feel more understood and valued for their identities (Brown et al., 2019; Perez & Haley, 2021). Participants like Victoria and Doris described challenges in working with a supervisor who did not understand them individually, were more introverted, and less authentic in the workplace. Victoria had challenges with her previous supervisor George whom she felt needed help understanding her and how to operate in a diverse environment. Doris also found difficulty in working with a supervisor who was more introverted and did not engage in personal discussions in the workplace. Ben is not practicing identity-conscious self-awareness by avoiding personal discussions in the workplace. As defined by CAL identity-conscious self-awareness involves developing trusting relationships with supervisees through vulnerability and personal discussions. This is one way that Ben is not practicing identity-conscious supervision because he is not getting to know Doris beyond the position she fills.

Participants also made comparisons between their relationships with coworkers and supervisors. While some participants were able to develop positive personal and professional relationships with coworkers' others did not find making relationships with coworkers easy. Akin to Black women in other studies (Dickens & Chavez, 2017; Dickens et al., 2019; Williams, in press), some participants felt the need to suppress their identities to interact with coworkers. Silvia felt the need to appear as white as possible in the workplace and therefore had inauthentic relationships with coworkers. This did not come as a surprise as Black women often feel marginalized at PWIs (West, 2015) and even fewer are in positions of power on campuses (Smith, 2009). Victoria spoke about feeling like a token staff member at her institution where

there were so few Black students, faculty, and staff. The demographics of a higher education institution is one of several observations that participants made about their workplace experiences.

Advocacy

Participants also observed how their supervisors acted as advocates for social justice and personal and professional development. Prioritizing social justice and inclusion is a component of critical authentic leadership (Brown et al., 2019). Black women are often forced to take on diversity work at higher education institutions because of their racial identities (Byrd et al., 2019; Gardner et al., 2014). This poses a challenge for Black women to develop authentic professional identities (Byrd et al., 2019). Furthermore, Black women can expect to experience racial battle fatigue (Smith, 2004) when they constantly battle racism and oppression while being burdened to be the minority of individuals doing diversity work at their institutions (Harlow, 2003). It is important for supervisors to recognize this reality to support Black women in student affairs positions better.

Participants discussed how their supervisors showed support and understanding of social justice. However, when it came to social justice advocacy, participants often saw how their supervisors would support students. There were very few instances where supervisors found ways to acknowledge the impact of social justice issues on the identities of participants. This is another example of how positions and job responsibilities take priority over individual care and personal development (Perez & Haley, 2021; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). The only participants who mentioned this kind of advocacy were Samantha and Silvia. Samantha and Silvia had ongoing conversations with their supervisors about social justice topics. Silvia, however, knew her supervisor as an undergraduate student which made their relationship unique from other

participants. The support Samantha and Silvia received is not common for Black women because care for identity is not a common professional practice, even though Black women will often be called upon to support students in their identity development (Frazier, 2011; Gardner et al., 2014; Perez & Haley, 2021; Smith 2004). Overall an identity-conscious approach to social justice advocacy appears to be a privilege for students but not for faculty or staff.

Other forms of social justice understanding, and support came from continued education and professional development. Supporting the professional development of new practitioners can be viewed as an identity-conscious supervision practice grounded in social justice. This is because professional development focused on learning often occurs in graduate school, whereas the development of student affairs practitioners is centered around productivity (Perez & Haley, 2021). Professional development can also come in the form of mentorship. Silvia and Brianna shared how their previous supervisors continued to mentor them after they moved onto new positions. It is important to note that Silvia and Brianna knew their supervisors as students. This mentorship process is often absent from supervision, and new professionals need to find mentors outside of supervisory relationships (Perez & Haley, 2021).

Participants' stories also revealed how their supervisors were knowledgeable about social justice, made efforts to continue their social justice education, and how they also encouraged others to learn about social justice issues. This proved to be a positive finding because continued social justice education can help supervisors improve their awareness of power and privilege (Shupp et al., 2019). Silvia discussed how her supervisor Janet had often initiated conversations about social justice to the point where they were commonplace. Janet was acting as an identity-conscious supervisor by engaging in dialogue about identity in the workplace. These conversations made Silvia feel valued and cared for as a person which led to a personal and

trusting relationship with Janet. Supervisors can create trusting relationships with their supervisees by further developing their cultural competency and creating space for dialogue and vulnerability (Brown et al., 2019; Perez & Haley, 2021; Shupp & Armino, 2012; Tull, 2009; Winston & Creamer, 1998). Silvia and Victoria's supervisors encouraged them to seek out identity-based professional organizations. Identity based engagement is important as Black women have developed self-efficacy and a sense of authenticity by engaging with other Black women through sista-circles (Collier, 2017; Dorsey, 2001; Gaston et al., 2007; Neal-Bartnett, et al., 2010).

Supervisors serve as advocates and change agents (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002) for their supervisees, departments, and institutions. This is a significant role for supervisors because new professionals will be evaluating their work environments to decide if they have found the right institutional fit (Collins, 2009; Gansemer-Topf & Ryder 2017; Marshall et al., 2016; Perez 2016; Perez & Haley, 2021; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2004). A supervisor's advocacy and support of social justice education may be one of many ways new professionals are evaluating their work environments. The person in the position of your supervisor can ultimately change your work experience positively or negatively. Therefore, higher education professionals might want to consider best practices in supervision like identity-consciousness. The following section will outline implications for theory and practice.

Implications

Black feminist thought and critical authentic leadership served as my study's conceptual frameworks. In alignment with BFT, my findings showed diversity among Black women and how Black women try to avoid the racist images ascribed to them. As demonstrated by Samantha's experience, she needed to code switch to avoid being labeled as an angry Black

woman. Black feminist thought helped me conceptualize participants' personal and professional experiences while CAL was specific to their workplace experiences.

Critical authentic leadership suggests that supervisors should develop trusting relationships with supervisees through dialogue and vulnerability. Several participants shared how they benefited from having trusting supervisory relationships grounded in vulnerability and personal discussions. As exemplified by Victoria, she had the opportunity to develop a trusting relationship with Daniel, where she could discuss personal challenges. Victoria benefited from this relationship because Daniel advocated for Victoria to have a flexible work schedule to aid in her success personally and professionally. Since workplaces do not always allow space for vulnerability and personal discussions, higher education practitioners would need to redefine expectations about supervision and professionalism. Student affairs professionals can disrupt white supremacist ideals about professionalism and supervision by making space for vulnerability, identity-consciousness, and the development of personal relationships with the people they supervise.

Implications for Theory

Black feminist thought (Collins, 2009) highlights the diversity that exists among Black women and explains how we cannot limit Black womanhood to only understanding their experiences through the identities of race and gender. While it is easy to discuss Black womanhood through solely a racial and gendered lens, each Black woman has several other identities that make their experiences unique. Participants discussed how identities like class, religion, and immigration status impacted their upbringing and influenced their perspectives. Other external factors like hometowns, family, and friends also influenced how participants were socialized and made meaning of their identities. Even though these identities and external factors

were not specifically discussed when participants shared stories about their supervisory relationships and professional experiences, it does not negate the fact that Black women come to understand and make meaning of their identities in diverse ways.

As evidenced in the literature review, identity development occurs throughout adulthood and include socialization (Porter, 2017), oppression (Porter, 2017; Winkle-Wagner, 2009), identity negotiation (Jones et al., 2001; Williams et al., 2020; Winkle Wagner et al., 2019), assimilation (Williams & Lewis, 2021), and coping mechanisms (Williams et al., 2020). Brianna experienced her Blackness in a new way when she immigrated to the U.S. She was coached to be more approachable to avoid negative stereotypes. Brianna's immigrant identity is an example of something other than race or gender that influenced how she was socialized in society. She was then experienced a new way of being from her supervisor Trisha who was a Black woman who showed up as her authentic self in the workplace. This encouraged Brianna to also be her authentic self in professional spaces.

Brianna's story exemplifies how new professionals will continue to explore and understand their identities through their workplace experiences. As new professionals are learning about their roles and career fields, they begin to develop a professional identity (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). Supervisors will likely influence the professional identities of new professionals (Pittman & Foubert, 2016). Identity-consciousness is important because someone's professional identity forms through their work environments, past experiences, and ascribed identities (Weick, 1995).

Several participants in the present study developed trusting relationships with their supervisors. These trusting relationships reflected a commitment to vulnerability and personal discussions in the workplace. Critical authentic leadership suggests that supervisors can develop

identity-consciousness and trusting relationships through dialogue and vulnerability (Brown et al., 2019). Other components of CAL include racialized relational transparency, multipartial balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective. Racialized relational transparency refers to someone's ability to recognize how race, racism, and white supremacy influence our perspectives (Brown et al., 2019). Furthermore, multipartial balanced processing refers to how people view the world through the dominant culture. Commonly held supervision and professionalism standards are grounded in white supremacy and do not consider the identities of each individual (Davis, 2016; Gray, 2019). These standards do not allow Black women to show up as their authentic selves and encourage them to suppress their identities (Davis & Chavez, 2017). Identity suppression also does not allow Black women the same range of opportunity for vulnerability in the workplace (Williams, in press). Supervisors who wish to adopt identity-conscious practices could benefit from racialized relational transparency and multipartial balanced processing by recognizing this harmful reality and considering perspectives different from their own when making supervisory and workplace decisions.

Implications for Practice

The 2022 ACPA report on the 21st century employment in higher education highlights the ongoing attrition problem in the field of student affairs. High turnover rates are known to negatively impact institutional budgets and resources (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Tull et al., 2009). Therefore, it is imperative that higher education leaders find the cause to this problem and the report suggests "an identity-conscious approach to considering the issue(s) of attrition and retention among early career student affairs professionals" (ACPA Presidential Task Force, 2022, p. 5). Furthermore, the report identifies supervisors as key contributors to employee attrition success and failure (ACPA Presidential Task Force, 2022). Poor employee retention, the

racialized nature of higher education, and my findings suggest a need to redefine supervision practice that is more person centered.

To create a person-centered definition of supervision I recommend that identity-consciousness becomes a regular part of supervision practice. Supervisors can become more identity-conscious by incorporating critical authentic leadership in their daily practice. These practices include developing trusting relationships grounded in vulnerability and dialogue and learning how race, racism, and white supremacy have influenced individual perspectives (Brown et al., 2019). By allowing vulnerability and dialogue about identity into the workplace, supervisors can support the holistic development of new student affairs practitioners whose professional identities encompasses who they are as people (Shupp et al., 2018; Shupp et al., 2019).

The literature and research around identity is forever evolving therefore, it would be in the best interest of supervisors to participate in ongoing education and training regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002). On going education and training to foster equitable environments that recognize oppression, power, and privilege is also supported by the NASPA/ACPA competencies (NASPA & ACPA, 2016). Therefore, it would behoove supervisors and higher education leaders to evaluate the performance of student affairs professionals based on this standard by developing accountability measures related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

To further develop trusting relationships and to recognize the racialized nature of individual perspectives, supervisors should also practice self-reflection by “acknowledging their own awareness and limitations in social justice, power, and multicultural areas” (Shupp et al., 2019, p. 1). Acknowledging your limitations regarding social justice knowledge can be a first

step in further developing your understanding or power and privilege and how it shows up in systems like education and the workplace. Supervisors that learn how higher education continues to perpetuate systemic oppression may begin to understand how someone's identities will influence how they think about power (Chavez & Sanlo, 2013; Bryd et al., 2019).

Furthermore, institutional structures will affect how someone views power, diversity and inclusion, and sense of belonging on their current campuses (Byrd et al., 2019; Dickens et al., 2019). This includes recognizing what populations are lacking representation and how institutional practices may uphold unequitable representation of minoritized populations. This information can be captured in campus climate surveys (Ancis et al., 2000; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Smith, 2009) and supervisors can use their positional authority and power to create equitable change in hiring, promotion, and development of new student affairs professionals. Critical authentic leadership supports this level of social justice advocacy through an internalized moral perspective that guides someone's actions (Brown et al., 2019).

Through these actions supervisors may begin to understand how the experiences of Black women on PWI campuses may be similar or different from their own. The positions of Black women in society and higher education will not change without systemic change (Dancy et al., 2018; Dumas & Ross, 2016). Although disrupting systematic oppression requires collective action, supervisors can be a part of smaller steps towards change by adjusting their supervision practices. Inclusive supervision means acknowledging how someone's identities influence their professional lives and making space for those kinds of discussions (Shupp et al., 2018). Supervisors who get to know their supervisees as people will have more success in establishing effective partnerships with the people they supervise.

Future Research Directions

To further expand on the findings presented in this study, I would recommend additional studies from the supervisor's perspective and studies about supervising Black women who are new student affairs professionals. Having narratives of the supervisors *and* Black women as supervisees could provide a more well-rounded picture of the supervisory relationship. Many of the current studies that did focus on supervising new student affairs professionals did not speak to the unique experiences of Black women (David & Cooper, 2017; Marshall et al., 2016; Shupp & Armino 2012; Winston & Creamer, 1998). As mentioned previously, supervision is a challenging professional practice, because of power differentials and the unique needs of each person. Therefore, it will be difficult for higher education practitioners to find one supervision practice that works for everyone.

Moreover, Black women's experiences and voices are also missing from the extant literature specific to staff experiences (Byrd et al., 2019; Gardner et al., 2014; West, 2015; Williams, in press) and professional identity development (Hirschy et al., 2015; Pittman & Foubert, 2016; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Trede et al., 2012). What is clear from several studies is the need to focus on new student affairs staff given their low attrition rates, but very few focus on Black women (Byrd et al., 2019; Gardner et al., 2014; West, 2015). My study needed to look at parallels between Black women in faculty and undergraduate student positions given the limited research on staff. Student affairs staff are taught important theories regarding student development and the impact of identity, but current studies about professional identity development in staff do not review the impact of ascribed identities on this process (Hirschy et al., 2015; Pittman & Foubert, 2016; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Trede et al., 2012).

Chapter Summary and Concluding Thoughts

There is a need to celebrate and honor the important work Black women contribute to higher education. The scholarly contributions of Black women have been ignored and silenced historically and today (Collins, 2009). As long as white supremacy continues to sustain systematic oppression, the work of Black women will continue to be ignored. Collins (2009) further expanded on this truth in describing the foundation of Black feminist thought in the U.S. as "analyzing Black women's work, especially Black women's labor market victimization as 'mules.' As dehumanized objects, mules are living machines and can be treated as part of the scenery. Fully human women are less easily exploited" (p. 51). Black women will never be able to bring their whole selves to work if their work is seen as synonymous to that of a mule.

Prior to entering the work force, Black women are socialized through interactions with family, friends, teachers, schools, and the media. Through this socialization process, Black women come to understand themselves, their identities, and the world around them (Cross, 1991; Patton et al., 2016; Porter, 2017; Seaton et al., 2012; Tatum, 2003; Williams & Lewis, 2021). Black women enter the workplace after years of socialization through controlling images that have defined them as lesser and as society's problems (Collins, 2000). Continuing to exclude emotions, vulnerability, and identity in the workplace keeps Black women silent and white supremacy in place.

Higher education is rooted in anti-Blackness, and systemic change is essential to changing the reality that Black women currently face (Dancy et al., 2018; Dumas & Ross, 2016). Colleges and universities play a critical role in society to educate future leaders and change makers. The NASPA/ACPA competencies hold higher education institutions to the standards as society's educations (NASPA & ACPA, 2016). Standards that include prioritizing social justice

to acknowledge equitable practices like hiring, recruitment, and supervision. My study explains how we can begin to think differently about workplaces, professionalism, and supervision.

Identity-conscious supervisors can lead the way in improving workplace culture through person-centered practices like acknowledging how identities inform individual needs and aspirations (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). Student affairs professionals have full lives, and their positions just happen to be a part of their experience. Professional positions and places of work can certainly be a part of us, but they do not need to define us.

Black women and people of other minoritized identities do not have the luxury of showing up as their authentic selves in the workplace (Dickens & Chavez, 2017; Gray, 2019; Williams & Lewis, 2021), but supervisors can make this more possible through relationship building and social justice advocacy. The poor attritions rates of new professionals (Davis & Cooper, 2017; Tull et al., 2009; Ward, 1995) and lack of Black people in higher education leadership (Pritchard & McChesney, 2018) demand changes in our current practices. Supervisors can Black women feel included and understood through critical authentic leadership practices. Black women are leaders, scholars, activists, and an important part of higher education's future. Perhaps redefining supervision can retain them.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Flyer

Identity & Supervision:

How Supervisors Can Impact the Experiences of Black Women as New Student Affairs Professionals at PWIs

My name is Vanessa – I am a current doctoral student at St. Cloud State University in the Higher Education Administration program. I am looking for Black women who are interested in telling their story about navigating social identities through their relationships with supervisors at a Predominately White Institution (PWI).

This study will consist of three, 1-hour interviews, and I am specifically seeking the following:

- Self-identified Black women who are employed full time (i.e. either salaried or work at least 35 hours per week);
- Currently work in student affairs at a PWI;
- Have 0-5 years of experience working in student affairs.

My dissertation study is being conducted under the advisement of my dissertation chair Dr. Brittany M. Williams who has extensive knowledge of the Black woman experience in higher education. **If interested, please email Vanessa Kay Herrera at tx1260qd@go.minnstate.edu.**

This study has been approved by the St. Cloud State University IRB.

Appendix B

Qualtrics Survey

Identity & Supervision

Identity & Supervision: How Supervisors Can Impact the Experiences of Black Women as New Student Affairs Professionals at PWIs

My name is Vanessa Kay Herrera and I am a current doctoral student at St. Cloud State University in the Higher Education Administration program. I am looking for Black women who are interested in telling their story about navigating social identities through their relationships with supervisors at Predominately White Institutions (PWIs).

The study will consist of 3 one-hour interviews, and I am specifically seeking the following:

- Self-identified Black women who are employed full time (i.e. salaried or work at least 35 hours per week);
- Currently work in student affairs at a PWI;
- Have 0-5 years of experience working in student affairs.

My dissertation study is being conducted under the advisement of my dissertation chair Dr. Brittany M. Williams (brittany.williams@stcloudstate.edu) who has extensive knowledge of the Black woman experience in higher education. For additional questions about this study please email Vanessa Kay Herrera at tx1260qd@go.minnstate.edu.

This study has been approved by the St. Cloud State University IRB (ResearchNow@stcloudstate.edu).

Identity & Supervision

Contact Information

Name

Phone Number

Email Address

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Identity & Supervision

Demographics

This study uses an identity conscious framework. The purpose of this framework is to acknowledge the power, privilege, and marginalization attached to various identities and how identities further impact supervisory relationships. Therefore you will be asked questions about the social identities of you and your supervisor. The questions in this survey will be used to ensure a diverse pool of participants and to highlight the diversity of the Black woman experience.

Gender

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Agender
- Bigender
- Gender fluid
- Genderqueer
- Other

Sexual Identity/Sexual Orientation (select all that apply):

- Aromantic
- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Fluid
- Gay or Lesbian
- Pansexual
- Queer
- Questioning or unsure
- Same gender loving
- Heterosexual
- Prefer not to disclose

Income Level/Socioeconomic status

- Rich ($373,894+)
- Upper Middle Class ($106,827 - $373,894)
- Middle Class ($53,413 - $106,827)
- Working Class ($32,048 - $53,413)
- Poor or near poor ($32,048 or less)
- Prefer not to disclose

Race (select all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other

Ethnicity

- Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin
- Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin
- Other

Age

- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- Other

In which country were you born?

In which state did you grow up?

Hometown Area

- Rural
- Urban
- Suburban
- Other

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Identity & Supervision

Where did you grow up? (Countries, Cities, States, etc.)

When did you move to the United States?

	Year
Please Select:	

Hometown Area

- Rural
- Urban
- Suburban
- Other

← →

Identity & Supervision

Undergraduate Education

Name of undergraduate institution

In which state was your undergraduate institution located?

In which city was your undergraduate institution located?

Public or private institution?

- Public
- Private
- Other

What type of institution did you attend? (Select all that apply)

- Community College
- State College
- University
- Women's College
- HBCU (Historically Black College or University)
- Liberal Arts College
- Tribal College
- Minority Serving Institution
- Other

Size of Institution

- Very Small (Less than 1,000 students)
- Small (1,000 - 2,999 students)
- Medium (3,000 - 9,999 students)
- Large (10,000+)
- Other

What was your major(s)?

test

What type of degree did you receive?

When was your undergraduate degree awarded?

	Month	Year
Please Select:		

Is there another undergraduate institution you would like to include?

Yes

No

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Identity & Supervision

Graduate Education

Did you receive a graduate degree?

- Yes
- No

← →

Identity & Supervision

Graduate Education

Name of Graduate Institution

In which state was your graduate institution located?

In which city was your graduate institution located?

Type of area where your graduate institution was/is located.

- Rural
- Urban
- Suburban
- Other

Public or private institution?

- Public
- Private
- Other

What type of institution did you attend? (Select all that apply)

- Community College
- State College
- University
- Women's College
- HBCU (Historically Black College or University)
- Liberal Arts College
- Tribal College
- Minority Serving Institution
- Other

Size of Institution

- Very Small (Less than 1,000 students)
- Small (1,000 - 2,999 students)
- Medium (3,000 - 9,999 students)
- Large (10,000+)
- Other

What type of degree did you receive?

When was your graduate degree awarded?

	Month	Year
Please Select:		

Is there another graduate degree you would like to include?

- Yes
- No

Identity & Supervision

Current Employer

Name of institution where you are currently employed.

Public or private institution?

- Public
- Private
- Other

In which state is your institution of employment located?

In which city is your institution of employment located?

Type of are where your institution is located.

- Rural
- Urban
- Suburban
- Other

Type of institution where you are employed? (Select all that apply)

- Community College
- State College
- University
- Women's College
- HBCU (Historically Black College or University)
- Liberal Arts College
- Tribal College
- Minority Serving Institution
- Other

Size of Institution

- Very Small (Less than 1,000 students)
- Small (1,000 - 2,999 students)
- Medium (3,000 - 9,999 students)
- Large (10,000+)
- Other

Name of department where you are employed.

Current position title

Briefly describe your job responsibilities.

Number of years working full time in student affairs.

0

1

2

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4

5

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Identity & Supervision

Current Supervisor(s)

For privacy reasons place provide a nick name of your supervisor.

Note: If you have more than one supervisor you will be able to provide information about them later on in the survey.

How long has this person been your supervisor?

- > 1 year
- 1 year
- 2 years
- 3 years
- 4+ years

Gender of current supervisor

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Agender
- Bigender
- Gender fluid
- Genderqueer
- Other

Race of current supervisor (select all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other

Ethnicity of current supervisor

- Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin
- Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin
- Other

Do you have another supervisor to include?

- Yes
- No

Identity & Supervision

Informed Consent Notice

Study Title

Identity & Supervision: How Supervisors Can Impact the Experiences of Black Women as New Student Affairs Professionals at PWIs

Primary Investigator: Vanessa Kay Herrera
Telephone: 305-299-7186
Email: tx1260qd@go.minnstate.edu

Academic Advisor & Dissertation Chair: Dr. Brittany M. Williams
Email: Brittany.williams@stcloudstate.edu

Notice Description:
The informed consent notice was created for all individuals participating in my study. The notice outlines my study's purpose, participant expectations, and benefits and risks associated with participation.

Purpose:
The purpose of my study is to understand Black women entry-level student affairs professionals' experiences with their supervisors through an identity conscious framework. I plan to consider the identities of both supervisors and supervisees. Identity is important given the dynamics of power and privilege that exists within supervisory relationships.

Study Procedures:
Each participant will receive an introductory email with instructions to complete an online survey to collect important background information. Following completion of the survey, I will gather verbal consent and availability from each participant. Each individual will be scheduled for three separate 60 minute interviews. Interviews will take place over zoom and participants will be asked about their personal backgrounds, relationship with their supervisor(s), how they navigate social identities, and how (if at all) they experience identity conscious supervision. Since interviews will take place over zoom you will need to complete the attached release form for use of photograph/video/audio recording. Following the interviews participants will be invited to review the interview transcripts and suggested themes summarizing major points from the interview. During their review participants can choose to change or omit information.

Risks and Discomforts:
I understand that the stories you share may be hard to discuss if you are currently working in a challenging professional environment and/or with a difficult supervisor. Protecting your identity will be a priority throughout this study since the information you reveal about your supervisors or current institution could affect your professional reputation. For this reason, all interview questions will be optional, you can choose an alternative (i.e. pseudonym) name, and have the opportunity to review interview transcripts to edit or remove information. If at any point you feel uncomfortable during the study you have the right to stop. Your participation is completely voluntary and your involvement in the study will not impact your current workplace, relationship with SCSU, or with me as the researcher.

Benefits:
You will be able to share information about your personal and professional experiences while considering your unique identities and perspective. The interview will also offer you the opportunity to practice self-reflection which could aid in your personal and professional development.

Compensation:
No compensation will be provided to participate in this study.

Confidentiality:
The information gathered in this study will be kept confidential. Your personal identity will not be shared, and you will not be identified by name in any of the written material. All data will be password protected on a computer in a locked office.

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal:
Your decision to participate in this study is voluntary. You can decide to not participate or withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason. Your decision to not participate in the study will not impact you in any way.

Please sign below to indicate that you read the informed consent form and are agreeing to participate in this study.

Release Form for Use of Photograph/Video/Audio Recording

Your participation includes 3 one-hour interviews that will take place via zoom. Therefore we ask that you provide your consent to use any recordings or analysis of audio, video, and zoom transcripts.

We would like you to indicate how we can use your media. On the next page is a list of media types that we will use. Please select the appropriate response to indicate your consent for each type of media used. Legal representative initials will provide consent when needed.

Regardless of your answers, you will not be penalized.
We will not use your media in any way you have not indicated.

Questions regarding this form should be directed to the researchers. Additional answers can be found by contacting the IRB Administrator or an IRB Committee Member. Current membership is available at: https://www.stcloudstate.edu/irb/members.aspx

A copy of this form will be provided for your records.

Audio Release

I consent to the research team analyzing and recording audio data.

I DO NOT consent to the research team analyzing and recording audio data.

I consent to audio data being published or presented in an academic outlet (e.g., journal or conference).

I DO NOT consent to audio data being published or presented in an academic outlet (e.g., journal or conference).

Video with audio

I consent to the research team analyzing and recording video with audio data.

I DO NOT consent to the research team analyzing and recording video with audio data.

I consent to video with audio data being published or presented in an academic outlet (e.g., journal or conference).

I DO NOT consent to video with audio data being published or presented in an academic outlet (e.g., journal or conference).

Transcription of audio

I consent to the research team analyzing and recording transcripts of audio data.

I DO NOT consent to the research team analyzing and recording transcripts of audio data.

I consent to transcripts of audio data being published or presented in an academic outlet (e.g., journal or conference).

I DO NOT consent to video with audio data being published or presented in an academic outlet (e.g., journal or conference).

I have read the above carefully and give my consent only for those items I selected

Do you required consent from a legal representative?

Yes

No

Identity & Supervision

Legal Representative #1

Legal Representative #2

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Identity & Supervision

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. I will contact you within 1-2 business days to schedule your first interview. As a reminder you participation in this study involves 3 one-hour zoom interviews. Your decision to participate in this study is voluntary. You can decide to not participate or withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason. Your decision to not participate in the study will not impact you in any way.

Please reach out to me for any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Kay Herrera
305-299-7186
tx1260qd@go.minnstate.edu

Appendix C

Qualtrics Survey Results

Demographics

Pseudonym	Gender	Sexual Orientation	Income Level/ Socioeconomic Status	Race	Ethnicity	Age	Country of Origin?	Hometown	Hometown Area
Doris	Woman	Heterosexual	Middle Class ($53,413 - $106,827)	Black or African American	Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin	25 – 34	Bahamas Came to US in 2010	Grenada	Rural
Victoria	Woman	Prefer not to disclose	Working Class ($32,048 - $53,413)	Black or African American	Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin	25 – 34	United States of America	Southern Region of US	Urban
Samantha	Woman	Pansexual	Working Class ($32,048 - $53,413)	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin	25 – 34	United States of America	Northeast Region of US	Urban
Brianna	Woman	Heterosexual	Middle Class ($53,413 - $106,827)	Black or African American	Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin	25 – 34	Bahamas Came to US in 2013	St Lucia	Island

Didine	Woman	Heterosexual	Middle Class ($53,413 - $106,827)	Black or African American	Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin	45 - 54	United States of America	Northeast Region of US	Urban
Silvia	Woman	Queer	Poor or near poor ($32,048 or less)	Black or African American, White	Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin	25 – 34	United States of America	Southern Region of US & Midwest Region of US	Southern Region of US (Suburban) Midwest Region of US (Rural)

Research Participants – Undergraduate Education

Pseudonym Name	Received undergraduate degree?	Location of undergraduate institution	Public or Private?	Type of Undergraduate Institution	Size	Major	Graduation Date
Doris	Yes	South	Private	University	Small (1,000 - 2,999 students)	International Business	May 2018
Victoria	Yes	South	Public	University	Large (10,000+)	Business Administration - Marketing	December 2012
Samantha	Yes	Northeast	Public	State College	Medium (3,000 - 9,999 students)	English; Latin American and Caribbean Area Studies	May 2019

Brianna	Yes	Midwest	Public	University	Large (10,000+)	Elementary Education	June 2020
Didine	Yes	Northeast	Public	University, Minority Serving Institution	Medium (3,000 - 9,999 students)	Speech Language Path & Audio	May 1997
Silvia	Yes	Midwest	Private	University, Liberal Arts College	Small (1,000 - 2,999 students)	Communication Studies and Studio Art	May 2019

Research Participants – Graduate Education

Pseudonym Name	Received graduate degree?	Location graduate institution	Type of Area	Public or Private?	Type of Undergraduate Institution	Size	Type of Degree	Graduation Date
Doris	Yes	Midwest	Suburban	Public	State College	Large (10,000+)	Masters	May 2021
Victoria	Yes	South	Urban	Private	University	Large (10,000+)	MSEd - Community Psychology and Social Change	August 2021
Samantha	Yes	Northeast	Suburban	Public	State College	Medium (3,000 - 9,999 students)	Master of Arts	April 2021
Brianna	Yes	Midwest	Suburban	Public	University	Large (10,000+)	M.A. in Higher Education	December 2021
Didine	Yes	Northeast	Urban	Public	University, Minority Serving Institution	Medium (3,000 - 9,999 students)	MS	May 2006
Silvia	No							

Research Participants – Current Institution

Pseudonym Name	Public or Private?	Location of current institution	Type of Area	Type of Institution	Size	Number of years working full time in student affairs
Doris	Private	Northeast	Suburban	University	Medium (3,000 - 9,999 students)	> 1 year
Victoria	Private	South	Urban	University	Large (10,000+)	4+ years
Samantha	Private	South	Urban	University	Large (10,000+)	> 1 year
Brianna	Public	Midwest	Suburban	University	Large (10,000+)	> 1 year
Didine	Public	South	Rural	State College	Small (1,000 - 2,999 students)	> 1 year
Silvia	Private	Midwest	Suburban	University, Liberal Arts College	Small (1,000 - 2,999 students)	3 years

Research Participants – Supervisor #1

Participant Pseudonym Name	Supervisor #1: Pseudonym Name	Gender of Supervisor #1	Race of Supervisor #1	Ethnicity of Supervisor #1	Length of time supervised
Doris	Ben	Man	White	Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin	> 1 year
Victoria	Daniel	Man	Black or African American	Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin	4+ years
Samantha	Rick	Man	White	Hispanic or Latino	> 1 year
Brianna	Tyler	Man	Asian	Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin	> 1 year
Didine	Kay Kay	Woman	White	Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin	> 1 year
Silvia	Martha	Woman	White	Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin	2 years

Research Participants – Supervisor #2

Participant Pseudonym Name	Supervisor #2: Pseudonym Name	Gender of Supervisor #2	Race of Supervisor #2	Ethnicity of Supervisor #2	Length of time supervised
Samantha	Morty	Man	White	Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin	> 1 year
Brianna	Trisha	Woman	Black or African American	Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin	2 years
Silvia	Amy	Woman	White	Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin	2 years
Victoria	George	Man	White	Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin	> 1 year
Doris	Caitlyn	Woman	White	Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin	> 1 year

Research Participants – Supervisor #3

Participant Pseudonym Name	Supervisor #3: Pseudonym Name	Gender of Supervisor #3	Race of Supervisor #3	Ethnicity of Supervisor #3	Length of time supervised
Samantha	Jerry	Man	White	Hispanic or Latino	> 1 year
Silvia	Janet	Woman	White	Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin	1 year

Appendix D

Interview Protocols

Before Interviews

- Introductions – Start interview with brief introductions and restatement of the purpose and goals of the study.
- Rapport Building – Before interview begins I will have informal chats with the participants that have nothing to do with the study but will make an effort to create a conversational and relaxed tone.
- Reminders of participation parameters and confidentiality:
    - Interview will include audio and visual recording.
    - Participants have the option to turn their cameras off.
    - Participants can display their pseudonym name during the recording.
    - Participants can choose not to answer questions.
    - Participants will be invited to review and edit the interview transcripts and findings to be sure it reflects their stories accurately.

First Interview

1. Tell me about how you grew up. Can you describe your home, neighborhood, and community?
2. Tell me about your K-12 education. How would you describe each community and school?
3. What family members and friends had the greatest influence on your life? What values did you learn from them?
4. What did you learn about education from your family and friends?
5. How and when did you decide to go to college?
6. Tell me about your undergraduate experience (involvements, academics, social life, etc.).
7. How and when did you decide to get a master's degree?
8. Tell me about your graduate experience (involvements, academics, social life, etc.).
9. What did your family and friends think about you pursuing a masters degree and a career in higher education?

Second Interview

1. Tell me about your current supervisor. How would you describe them (identities, personality, supervisory style, leadership style, etc.)?
2. How would you describe one-on-one conversations with your supervisors (i.e. what are they like? What things do you discuss or not discuss?)
3. How would you describe your relationship with your supervisor?
4. How has your supervisor demonstrated trust and advocacy?
5. How has your supervisor demonstrated inclusivity and an open-minded perspective?

6. How do you navigate disagreement and feedback with your supervisor?
7. How do your identities impact the way you communicate with your supervisor?
8. Do you think your relationship with your supervisor would be different if they were another race, gender, or other identity?

Third Interview

1. In what ways can you be your authentic self around your supervisor?
2. In what ways can you not be your authentic self around your supervisor?
3. How would you describe your comfort level in being your authentic self around your supervisor?
4. In what ways are you able to be vulnerable with your supervisor?
5. How has your supervisor demonstrated vulnerability?
6. How has your supervisor demonstrated social justice awareness?
7. How does your supervisor recognize your identities in the workplace?
8. How do you navigate your relationship with your supervisor as a Black woman?

Appendix E

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