

Working Together to Empower African American Females

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Learning Outcomes

- ◉ Discuss racial differences in challenges and behavioral patterns of adolescent girls
- ◉ Identify risk factors to success of African American adolescent girls
- ◉ Identify protective factors
- ◉ Discuss and exchange ideas around effective methods to increase self esteem within this population

Why is this Necessary?

- Practical research on increasing self-esteem within adolescent populations has been conducted on mostly Caucasian adolescents
- Link between self-esteem and academic achievement
- Limited existing research suggests that there may be different mechanisms at play across race

Common Challenges Among Adolescent Girls

- ◉ Dramatic drop in self esteem
- ◉ Anxiety and stress
- ◉ Decreased academic achievement
- ◉ Increased depression
- ◉ Body dissatisfaction and eating disorders
- ◉ Relational aggression
- ◉ Suicide attempts

Risk Factors for African American Females

- ◉ Increase in family responsibility
- ◉ Socioeconomic challenges
- ◉ Earlier sexual activity
- ◉ Conflicting messages about success
- ◉ Availability of mentors
- ◉ Common stereotypes and misperceptions

Protective Factors

- ◉ Strong ethnic identity
- ◉ Family connections and social support
- ◉ Sport participation
- ◉ Assertive female role models
- ◉ Non-traditional sex roles
- ◉ Higher self-confidence and independence

Contributing Factors to High Self-Esteem

- ⦿ Academic achievement
- ⦿ Positive body images
- ⦿ Sport participation
- ⦿ Social support
- ⦿ Positive self concept
- ⦿ Cultural identification

Anxiety and Stress

- ⦿ Adjustment difficulties
- ⦿ Achievement pressures
- ⦿ Family concerns, responsibilities, and care-taking
- ⦿ Sexual identity issues
- ⦿ Socioeconomic concerns
- ⦿ “Silencing”

Academic Achievement

- ⦿ Positive self-concept
- ⦿ Knowledge acquired in a field
- ⦿ Realistic self-appraisal
- ⦿ Understanding and dealing with racism
- ⦿ Leadership experience
- ⦿ Preference for long range goals
- ⦿ Access to strong support person

Psychological Benefits of Sport Participation

- ⦿ Higher self-esteem and self-confidence
- ⦿ Lower levels of depression
- ⦿ More positive body image and higher body satisfaction
- ⦿ Higher rates of psychological well being
- ⦿ More goal-directed and achievement oriented

Body Image and African American Adolescents

- ◉ More of a concern than it has been suggested
- ◉ Risk factors for body image concerns among African American females
- ◉ Protective factors for body image concerns among African American females

Intervention Strategies

- ⦿ Encourage cultural/ethnic identification
- ⦿ Provide opportunities for leadership experience
- ⦿ Encourage participation in “non-traditional” experiences
- ⦿ Illustrate positive outcomes of continued sport participation
- ⦿ Require service learning or volunteer experiences

Intervention Strategies

- ⦿ Provide opportunities for mentoring relationships
- ⦿ Discourage use of disparaging self-talk and self-statements
- ⦿ Provide opportunities to dialogue about friendships and relationships
- ⦿ Encourage opportunities for self-awareness and reflection