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"…You can't unknow it, it's a new reality": a case study exploring a social justice public health intervention's impact on critical consciousness development in youth.

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"…YOU CAN'T UNKNOW IT, IT'S A NEW REALITY": A CASE STUDY EXPLORING A SOCIAL JUSTICE PUBLIC HEALTH INTERVENTION'S IMPACT ON CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS DEVELOPMENT IN YOUTH

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the youth of YVPRC; this would not have been possible without you bringing your brave authentic selves to the Center every day in hopes of shifting a narrative within society that creates conditions for you and those you love to experience violence. To TreyVon Neely, may you rest in peace.

To Quintez Brown, my prayer for you is this, that “the LORD bless you and keep you. May He make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.” Numbers 6:24-26

This is also dedicated to those who come from, or currently exist in racially marginalized communities, severely impacted by racism. May you come to know, if you don’t already, the greatness of who you are. Despite what a conspired narrative may say, you are indeed fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of God himself.

Last but not least, this dissertation is dedicated to my family!

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ABSTRACT

““…YOU CAN’T UNKNOW IT, IT’S A NEW REALITY”:
A CASE STUDY EXPLORING A SOCIAL JUSTICE PUBLIC HEALTH INTERVENTION’S IMPACT ON CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS DEVELOPMENT IN YOUTH

Monique Williams

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Even though public health purports to be rooted in social justice, it is not always clear how social justice frameworks are integrated in public health research and intervention. The discipline tends to focus on groups/populations on the margins, without integrating the social and political factors that cause marginalization into the intervention. Seeing communities, and individuals, as assets and experts in their own experiences is key to population-level health improvement. Particularly for public health youth engagement and intervention, how youth are defined, labeled, and engaged in social change process is critical to their healthy development. While public health lags in practically applying asset-based approaches to youth intervention, research shows that there are ways to improve outcomes for youth – particularly youth of color – by activating their latent capacity to change environments that increase their likelihood of being labeled “at-risk.”

This dissertation investigates and documents a process by which youth develop critical consciousness in a public health intervention. Its purpose is to determine if there is benefit to practical application of social justice theories and

practices within a public health intervention focused on youth. A case study approach was used to observe and engage 16 youth matriculating through a fellowship focused on developing critical consciousness, using the Social Justice Youth Development framework. Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) analysis techniques were used for data analysis.

Findings from this case study describe how participants define and make meaning of critical consciousness development. They also reveal a psychosocial meaning-making process, which is depicted through a context specific framework that describes a process for – and the personal impact of – critical consciousness development in participants.

These findings provide insight into necessary theory and methodology for youth engagement and intervention within public health. They also add to the paucity of research around the process for – and personal impact of – critical consciousness development, from youth's perspectives. How youth define critical consciousness is a determining factor for how they experience the process of its development within them. Sociopolitical development seems to be the better theoretical model for youth, as it incorporates critical consciousness as a component, and reveals a mechanism for moving youth from critical reflection to critical social action. Youth experience despair in critical consciousness development; knowing this can help improve intervention design that potentially mitigates harm. Though they experience despair, there are multiple influences that determine how they navigate that despair. Ultimately, youth perceive the intervention as necessary for growth in youth and foundational for public health.

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INTRODUCTION

Foundations of Social Justice and Public Health

From the inception of organized society, there have been social justice efforts that uphold the moral and political fabric of nations. In fact, Rawls (1971) suggests that social justice is a critical element to social systems and is foundational to societal development. Ideals of justice vary and have transitioned with time, philosophies, and societal norms; simply stated, social justice is historically and contemporarily bound by context, with roots in political theory, Western philosophy, and religious traditions of Judeo-Christianity (Beauchamp, 1976; Reisch, 2002; Sandel, 2009). In biblical times, the “year of Jubilee” (English Standard Version Bible, 2008, The Bible, Leviticus 25:8-11) was a year of redistribution – slaves were freed, debts were forgiven, and land was restored to original owners. This effort was intended to address culturally embedded societal inequities amongst the people of that day (English Standard Version Bible, 2008, Leviticus 25:8-11; Reisch, 2002); it was a group-specific effort and was not applied universally (Reisch, 2002). While we no longer operate according to this application of justice [because of contextual evolution], we still see elements of it in how we operate currently. Today’s social justice still seemingly attempts to liquidate unfair distribution of resources and goods among differing societal groups (Beauchamp, 1976; Sandel, 2009). The proper

application of justice, however, has been argued in multiple ways by many well-known justice thought leaders, political theorists, and philosophers (Miller, 1999; Sandel, 2009).

Plato, Aristotle, Marx, Rawls, Kant, and Rousseau are among those credited in Western civilization with developing theories and frameworks of justice; these ideals have been very abstract and overlap with the axiological and ethical standards of a certain subset of individuals within society (Reisch, 2002; Sandel, 2009; Finn & Jacobson, 2013). With this grounding, social justice ideals inevitably vary relative to what constitutes justice, what principles of justice are important in relation to components of justice (distributive, legal, commutative; Finn & Jacobson, 2013), and what is the best balance between individual and collective interests as it pertains to who deserves the justice being described (Miller, 1999; Jost & Kat, 2010; Corning, 2011). While there are variations to the notion of social justice, there are also similar threads that flow through those variations. The similarities include a belief that social justice entails: a) providing fair or “just” allocation of burdens and benefits (Beauchamp, 1976; Reisch, 2002); b) establishing a frame of existence in which members of society are treated with respect and dignity (Sandel, 2009); and c) creating procedures, policies, practices, and norms that govern decision-making bodies in efforts to preserve rights and privileges of constituents (Beauchamp, 1976; Sandel, 2009; Reisch, 2002). More recently, it has been argued that – while not explicitly stated in justice discourse – human health and well-being is an implicit, desired outcome and so a fourth similarity would be ensuring that members of society are

safe and secure both psychologically and physically (Bell, 2007, p.3; Vera & Kenny, 2013). Essentially, a socially just society should oppose and be void of exploitation, unjustified inequalities, discrimination, oppression, prejudice, and any other form of unnecessary suffering (Jost & Kat, 2010; Finn & Jacobson, 2013).

Central to the charge of public health is the notion of justice, Beauchamp (1976, p. 6) says this: “the historic dream of public health…is a dream of social justice.” As mentioned, the concept of social justice can be framed by three components: a) commutative justice, which describes what people in society owe one another; b) legal justice, which describes what people owe to society; and c) distributive justice, which is concerned with what society owes the people. While public health can be identified in all components, the distributive perspective is of particular importance to the public health infrastructure and what it provides to people. The distributive perspective of social justice considers societal decisions made in reference to the distribution of goods and resources. However, it also stresses just distribution of common advantages as well as sharing the load of burdens (Beauchamp, 1976; Gostin & Powers, 2006); it considers how society is structured – including institutions and systems – and to what degree human rights, dignity, and opportunities for meaningful social and individual well-being are made available to all people (Gostin & Powers, 2006; Finn & Jacobson, 2013). The distributive perspective of social justice sheds light on two moral underpinnings of public health, which are: 1) to enhance the well-being of people

through health improvement; and 2) to accomplish this by focusing on those most marginalized within society (Gostin & Powers, 2006).

Social justice discourse, in the context of public health ethics and policy, generally focuses on the different philosophical approaches used to make choices in society regarding distribution/allocation of goods (i.e., health care) and resources (i.e., access to what is needed for good health; Beauchamp, 1976; Gostin & Powers, 2006). This discourse generally refers to three leading theories around resource distribution, which are utilitarian thought, libertarian thought, and egalitarian thought. Utilitarianism touts the idea that decisions about justice should be made by adding up all benefits, subtracting costs, and then proceeding to do the thing that maximizes the balance of happiness over suffering (Sandel, 2009; Finn & Jacobson, 2013). In this philosophy, morality consists of weighing the costs and benefits, and ultimately determining to do the greatest good for the greatest number in order to maximize utility. To achieve justice within this moral frame of thought, individual liberties are to be overridden if doing so means that the interest of the majority is being met (Sandel, 2009). Libertarian ideals emphasize individualism versus equal or equitable distribution within society; each person should receive any and all resources that they have worked for or legally attained. This body of theories stresses the notion of autonomy, the basic right to choose, as well as the right to protect individual liberties from being infringed upon by others (Fitzpatrick, 2001; Steger & Roy, 2010). Along with an emphasis on individual rights, libertarians desire minimal engagement with state and federal governments, and believe that free markets and capitalism are

foundational for optimal societal functioning (Steger & Roy, 2010). Lastly, egalitarianism focuses on all individuals in society, believing that everyone deserves the same rights, the same opportunities, and the same access to goods and resources, despite individual effort (Finn & Jacobson, 2013). Within this perspective, societal resources should be redistributed in such a way that the most vulnerable people in it are at the advantage. As Rawls (1971) stated, redistribution is morally necessary for ensuring that unmet needs are indeed addressed.

In theory, Rawls' conceptualization of social justice aligns with public health ethics and what we hope to achieve in public health policy and practice. He describes a just society as one where basic human needs are met, excessive stress is diminished, threats to health and well-being are minimized, and human potential is maximized (Rawls, 1971). Egalitarian in nature, Rawls (1971) believed that distributive justice signifies equality and equity achieved through social cooperation, and not just related to material goods and services, but inclusive of nonmaterial goods – like access, opportunity, and power. If public health were to achieve its mission of fulfilling "society's interest in assuring the conditions in which people can be healthy" (Institute of Medicine [IOM], 1988, p. 40), it would ultimately reflect this theory of justice. Though all three conceptualizations of justice are identifiable within the public health system, the United States (U.S.) primarily aligns with libertarian values and practices – centering individualism – which impacts public health's ability to actualize social justice beyond theoretical discourse.

Health Equity and Social Justice

The growing emphasis on health equity and the root causes of inequity is bringing a social justice focus to the forefront of public health. The concept of health equity and identifying the “causes of the causes,” as described by Marmot & the Commission on Social Determinants of Health (2007, p. 1153), has become central to public health research and practice. In an attempt to go beyond theoretical discourse on social justice, health equity is intended to be the outcome of the utilization of a social justice lens. It focuses on social and structural determinants of health, recognizing that inequities in health outcomes are attached to cultural, ethnic, political and socioeconomic factors of individuals, and are not simply a consequence of poor autonomy among certain groups of people (Marmot, 2007). In line with Rawls’ (1971) redress principle – which calls for compensation of inequities by shifting the balance of contingencies toward equality – health equity appeals to the need for redistribution of resources as a means to achieving more equitable outcomes (Abasolo & Tsuchiya, 2014; Anderko, 2010). People need to have the ability, or freedom, to achieve optimal health, and social justice – at its core – functions as a mechanism of liberation towards achieving it. Though in narrative, public health has adopted this understanding, the discipline continues to fall short in closing the gaps in health inequity, exposing deficiencies in our processes for health improvement.

A contributing factor to the lag between our understanding and our practices in accomplishing health equity lies in our traditional public health theories and methodologies. At its inception, public health followed a biomedical

model that did not give room to social or even psychological dimensions of illness; it followed a very narrow host-pathogen-environment relationship (Corburn, 2004; Goldberg, 2012). Through the development of the socioecological model (SEM), however, public health has evolved its understanding of multiple levels of influence – individual, interpersonal, community, organizational, and societal – and accepted the notion that behavior shapes and is shaped by social environments (Nishi & Christakis, 2015). Though the SEM has contributed to the field of public health in many ways, namely by helping center social determinants of health, the field has not fully shifted its paradigm in practice and research (Blas, Sommerfeld, Sivasankara & World Health Organization [WHO], 2011; Braveman & Gottlieb, 2014). The biomedical [individually focused] approach to illness remains pervasive in some of the most prominent methods for intervention, like health promotion and health education.

According to Beauchamp (1976), our most significant public health problems are characterized by two things: 1) they tend to occur amongst a historically marginalized group within the larger population, and 2) they tend to exist because of societal arrangements that provide significant benefits to the majority (or a very powerful minority). This reality has created the lens of health equity from which public health now examines issues like poverty, racism, unemployment, housing situations, and other social and structural determinants of health (Ramirez, Baker, Metzler, 2008). A barrier to actualizing change as it relates to these significant problems is that to address any of them requires those who are experiencing unearned advantage to relinquish some of that advantage

(Beauchamp, 1976; Marmot, 2007). Beauchamp (1976, p. 3) sums it up well when he states that “the critical barrier to dramatic reductions in death and disability is a social ethic that unfairly protects the most numerous or the most powerful from the burdens of prevention.”

In theory, neither public health policy nor ethics align with what is actualized in society. Aligning with social justice as described would mean that public health policy necessitates the privileged to take on a fair share of burdens to protect the underprivileged from the threat of morbidity and mortality (Beauchamp, 1975), and that is not the case. In fact, the U.S. is predicated on creating disadvantaged groups through intentional inequitable, oppressive, and discriminatory policies and practices that inevitably produce and perpetuate illness and death (Feagin & Bennefield, 2014). Slavery, genocide, the era of Jim Crow, racial segregation and discrimination, and medical apartheid have all happened under the Constitution of the U.S.; the same Constitution that states, “We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish *justice*, insure domestic *tranquility*, provide for the common *defense*, promote the *general welfare*, and secure the blessings of *liberty* to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” Unfortunately, people of color were not considered in “we the people” – an intentional act of dehumanization – and so have been strategically and systematically exploited [and brutalized] for the accomplishment of the Constitution to the detriment of their health and well-being. White racial framing of society – and how society should function within this frame – is at the root of

many health inequities that exist today (Feagin & Bennefield, 2014; Krieger, 2003). Individual racism, in practice within systems engendered by racism, has generated cycles of oppression that we have yet to successfully interrupt (Krieger, 2003).

Critical Consciousness Development

Recognizing the historical and contemporary role of oppression in producing and sustaining social and health inequity, the core concern with achieving equity through social justice is that individuals lack the freedom to fully thrive (Sen, 1999). Systemic change is needed for the achievement of healthy equity (Frerichs, Lich, Dave, & Corbie-Smith, 2016); however, systems do not change on their own (Meadows, 2006). History has shown that change is enacted when empowered people within communities mobilize, organize, and take action against oppressive standards within society. It is critical that individuals are empowered materially, psychosocially, and politically (Marmot, 2007; Frerichs et al., 2016). They need their basic material needs met in order to live a good life, they need to be able to exercise control over their lives, and they also need to have opportunity for their voice to be elevated through participation in political decision-making processes (Frerichs, et al., 2016).

While individual constituents are the core of enfranchisement (Sen, 1999), achieving social justice requires that those individuals mobilize collectively to engage in social action; this is how communities are empowered and achieve social change, as well as the changing of institutions and nations. Critical consciousness is a well-established mobilizing tool for liberation from oppressive

societal conditions. As defined by philosopher and educator Paulo Freire (2000, p.19), critical consciousness is the ability “to recognize oppressive social forces shaping society and take action against them.” He argued that oppression exists due to the unjust ways in which society is ordered, creating violent tendencies within the oppressor, and so violence and dehumanization against the oppressed is inevitable (Freire, 2000; Montero, 2009). As an educator, Freire recognized the role of public education in maintaining oppressive conditions; this catalyzed his efforts to employ education as a mechanism for raising critical consciousness and initiating social action. In his literacy work with Brazilian migrant workers, he identified that they were encouraged in learning as it helped them understand the social and political factors that created barriers to opportunities that could potentially lead to improved social status (Freire, 2000; Montero, 2009). From this, he concluded that education should focus on teaching students to critically analyze and challenge societal norms that shape their social conditions (Freire, 2000; Montero, 2009; Watts, Diemer & Voight; 2011). He states:

> There is no such thing as a neutral educational process. Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes “the practice of freedom,” the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. (Freire, 2000, p. 34)

Thus, building critical consciousness through education (not necessarily school-based) is a key to addressing issues of oppression, dehumanization, and violence (Freire, 1973; Freire, 2000).

Throughout the literature, critical consciousness is often discussed as comprised of three components: critical reflection, political self-efficacy (critical motivation), and sociopolitical action (critical action) (Montero, 2009; Watts, Diemer & Voight; 2011). Critical reflection is described as an ability to identify root causes of oppression and analyze where they sit and how they operate within societal systems and structures (Watts et al., 2011). Political self-efficacy – or sense of agency – describes an individual's or group's confidence in their ability to effectuate change; this component is necessary as it is the bridge between knowing what needs to change (based on critical reflection) and being willing to engage in the work of change (sociopolitical action) (2011). Lastly, sociopolitical action describes what individuals or groups actually do in response to what they know related to oppressive societal factors. These three concepts combined are considered *praxis*, or the juncture between reflecting and theorizing to actual activity that obstructs dehumanization, oppression, and violence (Freire, 1970; Watts et al., 2011).

Based on the process by which this philosophy and practice was identified, it was originally utilized in the field of education. Since its inception, it has been applied more broadly across many academic disciplines, including social work, psychology, and public health (Watts, Diemer & Voight, 2011). Particularly within public health, this theory has been applied to research addressing health inequities with the perspective that internalized and systemic oppression are at the very core of many individual- and societal-level problems that lead to poor health outcomes (Chronister and McWhirter, 2006; Windsor,

Jemal & Benoit, 2014). The linkage between unjust processes and unjustifiably poor health outcomes is consistent, whether that be school discipline policies and practices leading to the school-to-prison pipeline, policing policies and practices leading to mass incarceration, or housing policies and practices leading to concentrated poverty and community violence. There has been the creation of cyclical injustice and harm, that without recognition of systemic and structural factors on inequitable, poor health outcomes (aka interruption of the status quo via critical consciousness development), the cycle will continue unobstructed.

Parallel to the pathogen-host-environment relationship, social injustice acts as the pathogen, infects the host (systems and subsequently the individuals in those systems), and causes negative disruption across the entirety of the social ecology (Jemal, 2017). Critical consciousness development has shown to be a viable tool in obstructing this cycle of oppression (2017). While there has been much published regarding its theory and practice, the population of focus has been primarily marginalized adults engaged as individuals or collectively in communities. It was not until the mid-to-late 1990s that the concept was introduced to youth development and engagement strategies.

Youth Development and Agency

Young people are unique from adults in various ways; therefore, their experiences with dehumanization, violence, and oppression are unique as well. Based on established social order, young people exist with inherent barriers to participation in certain social and political acts that impact their health and well-being (i.e., legal voting age) (Hardiman, Jackson, and Griffin, 2007). While

chronological age exists, what is considered appropriate across that chronology is socially constructed. What is expected of young people behaviorally, as well as their specific role in society, depends on a multitude of factors, including where they geographically exist in the world, the time in which they exist in the world, the economy, as well as technological advances within specific geographical locations (Adams, Blumenfeld, Castaneda, Hackman, Peters & Zuniga, 2000; Hardiman, Jackson & Griffin, 2007). Related to young people and social relationships, some physical and developmental factors should and do play a role in relational engagement. However, the dynamics within those relationships are still more about social construction rather than biology, as systems and structures determine levels of power and decision-making ability a young person should hold. Because of societal standards, young people often exist powerless, unacknowledged, and voiceless (Hardeman et al., 2007).

In discussing differences in youth experiences based on age and geographical location also requires interrogation of the intersection of race and how it impacts youth experiences with social and political systems. Oppression, dehumanization, and violence tend to occur against historically marginalized populations (Freire, 2000); therefore, youth of color have a differing experience when it comes to navigating society. While there is a general consensus in the U.S. that several forms of oppression, dehumanization, and violence exist and are harmful to youth of color (i.e., racism, discrimination, police brutality, constructed poverty), there is less consensus or even discussion about how to address the negative impacts (Dupree, Spencer, & Fegley, 2007; Farmer, 1996;

Ginwright & James, 2002). Ginwright and James (2002, pg. 28) wrote, “talking about the assault on urban youth of color in America is somewhat like uncovering the proverbial pink elephant in the middle of a large room: everyone knows it is there, but no one talks about it.” Youth in general navigate oppressive systems daily (Bettencourt, 2018); however, youth of color have the addition of extreme social conditions – created through racist policies and practices (Bailey, Krieger, Agenor, Graves, Linos, & Bassett, 2017; Poe, 2017) – through which they are expected to persevere. The school-to-prison pipeline, mass incarceration, community economic deprivation and the resulting high rates of unemployment (Poe, 2017), poverty and the resulting high rates of violent crime (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation [RWJF], 2011) are all threats to the health, well-being, and development of young people (Dupree et al., 2007; Ginwright & James, 2002; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Several studies show linkages between concentrated poverty and poor health, economic, and educational outcomes for youth (RWJF, 2017; McBride, Berkel, Gaylord, Copeland-Linder, & Nation, 2011).

Despite the declines in overall poverty rates in the U.S., the burden of despair still falls on youth of color, as well as among individuals and families who live in communities of concentrated poverty (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [DHHS], 2016). Statistics show that African Americans are twice as likely to be unemployed than their white counterparts (U.S. Department of Labor, 2019), and African American youth exist in poverty at three times the rate of their white counterparts (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2017). It is also well-

documented that people of color experience inequity in housing, health, and incarceration outcomes (Bailey et al., 2017; Poe, 2017; U.S. Department of Justice, 2015); all of which contribute to further marginalization of an already historically marginalized population. Such conditions place youth of color at greater risk for engaging in maladaptive behaviors than those who are able to exist in safe and secure neighborhoods (Ginwright & James, 2002). However, even though multiple factors impact youth behavior beyond individual choice, most policy focuses on the youth themselves, such as zero tolerance policies in schools (Fries & DeMitchell, 2007), Kentucky House Bill 169 – the Gang Violence Prevention Act (Gang Violence Prevention Act, 2018), federal incentive programs that increase school resource officers (James & McCallion, 2013), as well as inclusion of juvenile offenses as a “strike” in three strike laws (Forquer, 1995; Packel, 2002). Policymakers often vilify urban youth and create harsh penalties without adequately addressing the multiple factors that increase the likelihood of the risk behaviors. To adequately understand the difficulties faced by youth of color, there must be an understanding of the systems and institutions that facilitate violence against them (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002).

Though youth are impacted by oppressive social factors, capacity exists within young people to respond in ways that vie for social change rather than victimization (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). This notion is explored through the latest framework in youth development, known as Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD); it “acknowledges social contexts and highlights the capacity for youth to respond to community problems and heal from the

psychosocial wounds of hostile urban environments" (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002, p. 87). Developing a social justice lens, specifically when working with youth of color, becomes critical for their development and their engagement with their communities and beyond. Examining previous youth development models studied over decades, Ginwright & Cammarota (2002) argue that both the problem prevention and positive youth development models "obscure our understanding of urban youth of color more than they explain, because they assume that youth themselves should be changed, rather than the oppressive environments in which they live" (2002, p. 85). The framework explores the role that environment, societal, and systemic issues play in the lives and experiences of youth.

The issues that youth of color face in contemporary American society are not just the result of poor choices, but instead, are strongly tied to social, political, and economic patterns rooted in structurally violent systems in which they navigate from day-to-day (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Ginwright & James 2002). Youth are supported within SJYD through opportunities, services, and programs to develop critical consciousness and engage in social action with the end goal being the facilitation of liberation, healing, and improved health and well-being. These elements of the framework are influenced by Freire's (1970) idea of praxis; it is central to the SJYD framework. With the help of adults, youth can be supported in developing critical consciousness and engaging socio-politically for the betterment of themselves and their communities (Ginwright & James, 2002).

Even without an official framework specific to youth engaging in praxis through critical consciousness development, youth have been engaged and at the center of major social change throughout history. In the American Civil Rights Movement, we saw young people at the heart of social change, fighting for equality and an end to the oppression of Black people. From lunch counter sit-ins to bus boycotts, to the March on Washington, and the historic crossing of the Edmund Pettus Bridge, youth brought their knowledge, skills, and willingness to act in this movement for social change. Student Nonviolence Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was at the core of mobilizing and training those known as the "foot soldiers" of the movement (Clabough & Bickford, 2020); it was, at that point, the largest and most organized civil rights group (2020). The Vietnam War protests, organized by young people, took tips from the Civil Rights Movement and mobilized against a war that they felt was unjust. In similar fashion, they organized, marched, protested, and held sit-ins to disrupt what was happening (Kent, 2001). It was debated often whether youth should be allowed to protest because they were agitating and dividing the country around the war. More recent movements, like the DREAMers as well as Black Lives Matter (BLM) highlight the significance of youth voice and activation of youth power through mechanisms unique to their existence, like technology and mobilization via social media (Costanza-Chock, 2012).

In 2018, the Parkland, Florida high school mass shooting spurred a nationwide youth movement to end gun violence in the U.S. Young people organized and mobilized over one million students around the country who

collectively participated in school walkouts on the same day, they also held almost 800 “March for Our Lives” protests and rallies (Stone, 2021). This was by far one of the most significant expressions of youth activism in the history of this country. We see that the application of critical consciousness development as a mobilizing tool in young people is powerful for enacting social justice and bringing about much needed social change, but we know less about the impact of this development on the young person themselves. There are fundamental differences between youth and adults, suggesting that processes related to critical consciousness development and its impact are potentially different as well.

Study Purpose and Relevance

SJYD is a newer framework within youth development literature. The idea of intentionally engaging youth of color in building critical consciousness towards praxis is theoretically grounded, and studies have demonstrated that critical consciousness development is a measurable outcome of interventions (O’Connor, 1997; Campbell & MacPhail, 2002; Windsor et al., 2014; Watts et al., 1999; Zubrow, 1993). However, there are limited studies that articulate how youth experience the process of critical consciousness development. In addition, there is a paucity of research on the subsequent impact of a personal paradigm shift on the lives of the youth. Freire (1970) made mention of the potential despair that could be experienced as a result of becoming aware; identifying whether or not youth experience this state of being is critical for research and practice and should be explored.

The purpose of this study is to determine the benefit of practically applying social justice theories and practices to a public health youth intervention. It accomplishes this by: a) exploring the utilization of a social justice youth development framework within the intervention, b) identifying how urban minority youth within the intervention experience a process of critical consciousness development, and c) understanding its impact(s) on them as they participate in a fellowship utilizing the SJYD framework. The research questions to be explored through this study are:

1. How do the LYVV Fellows define and make meaning of critical consciousness development?
2. What is the process of critical consciousness development, described through the experiences of the LYVV Fellowship participants?
3. What is the intervention's impact on the critical consciousness development of the LYVV Fellowship participants?

Answering these questions will provide critical information for how we implement interventions with and for youth – particularly youth that have been racially, economically, and socially marginalized. This study can provide insight into how we minimize harm and properly develop and support public health interventions that serve and engage Black youth. It can also potentially reveal strategies necessary for training the youth workforce within public health.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Because this research covers several topical areas, it is important to provide foundational knowledge of theories and concepts in order to best conceptualize the study. This chapter will provide background information regarding public health's theoretical and practical relationship with social justice; a synthesis of the critical consciousness literature related to process and outcomes; critical consciousness development, specific to youth populations; youth development and youth agency; and public health youth engagement and intervention strategies. This chapter will also discuss existing gaps within the topical areas and support the necessity of the proposed research.

Social Justice in a Public Health Lens

Public health purports to be rooted in social justice, with many arguing that the moral, foundational justification for public health [as a social institution] is social justice (Beauchamp, 1976; Krieger & Birn, 1998; Rodriguez-Garcia & Akhter, 2000; Powers & Faden, 2006). The basis for this argument stems from the notion that public health is a social and human good that should be distributed equally (Ruger, 2004), but also, the outcome of health is tied to social, economic, and political factors that require a lens of justice for improvement (Beauchamp, 1976; Ruger, 2004). Social justice is about well-being and

outcomes: a significant component of well-being is health (Powers & Faden, 2006), thus making health a specific objective of social justice. Powers & Faden (2004) argue that the Institute of Medicine's definition of public health – bringing about the conditions necessary for people to be healthy – is exactly what is understood as one of many direct requirements for social justice. According to Krieger & Birn (1998), social justice as the foundation of public health is something that should be commemorated, tying it to significant public health and social justice events that took place around the year 1848. They highlighted the international uprisings and social movements of this year, including the movement of socialist and trade unions in Europe, the anti-slavery movement and crusade for women's rights in the United States (U.S), as well as several other justice-based movements that impacted individual health and social outcomes. They also highlighted the surge of public health activity around the world at this same time, from premier studies of worker's health in areas of France, to the 1848 Public Health Act passed in Great Britain. Whether specifically health or social justice focused, the argument is that these movements share elements of social, political, and public health strategies foundational to what is understood as "public health," theoretically.

Furthering this argument is the notion that social justice is implicit in the values and beliefs associated with the discipline and practice of public health (Rodriguez-Garcia & Akhter, 2000; Public Health Leadership Society, 2002); therefore, everything that arises from public health, has roots in social justice. Within the Public Health Code of Ethics (Public Health Leadership Society,

2002), there are 12 underlying principles, the first of which focuses on health and human rights. It states, “Humans have a right to the resources necessary for health. The Public Health Code of Ethics affirms Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states in part, ‘Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family…’” (p. 5). Rodriguez-Garcia & Akhter (2000) argue that the values underlying public health are synonymous with human rights and [social] justice values. They and others (Rodriguez-Garcia & Goodman, 1992; Yamin & Maine, 1999) reason that if the goal of public health is improving health for the sake of overall life and well-being improvement, then focusing on the outcome of health alone is not sufficient. Health, isolated from social, economic, and political factors cannot improve the human condition. Therefore, the work of public health has to be grounded in a social justice framework to keep health issues in a place where they are a concern of the public and are addressed as such (Rodriguez-Garcia & Akhter,2000).

While, in theory, the discipline of public health seems to show foundational integration of social justice, its actual commitment to social justice is less clear, with many arguing that its practical application is difficult/impossible given the social, political, and economic climate of the U.S. (Drevdahl, 2002; Whitehead, 2004; Goldberg, 2012). Some argue that public health is caught in a conundrum between humanitarianism and capitalism (Andrulis, 2000), which removes its ability to effectively be centered in social justice. Perhaps one of the most notable criticisms of this is the structure of the U.S. health care system – a system that

mandates payment for provision of needed care (Emanuel, 2000). Though the discipline aligns with the notion that health care is a basic human right (Public Health Leadership Society, 2002), the U.S. health care system is set up in such a way that the service of health care is a benefit that is purchased through private vendors – employers and managed care systems – rather than a right that is accessible to all. By far, most health care is provided through managed health care delivery systems, which have become primary service providers for public health clientele, most of whom are citizens in need of public assistance. Public health has partnered with such private systems for what could be considered mutual benefit. Managed care systems reach more people, which increase their profits, and public health agencies obtain increased access to services as well as cost-effective methods for servicing their clients (Holahan, Zuckerman, Evans, & Rangarajan, 1998). However, Emanuel (2000), Andrulis (2000), Drevdahl (2002) and many others argue that within this partnership, public service is outweighed by private profit, leaving stark inequities in health care outcomes due to the utilization of market justice versus social justice (Drevdahl, 2002).

Another argument against public health being able to enact social justice – in practice – is tied to its fundamental methodologies of health promotion and health education. Goldberg (2012) argues that traditional U.S. health promotion strategies are limited and ineffective due to methodological individualism, which centers the individual as the point of intervention. He, as well as Powers and Faden (2006), claim that this way of enacting health promotion violates public health ethics in multiple ways. First, centering the individual as the intervention

point violates what we know to be true of distributive justice because already limited resources are used for interventions unlikely to bring about the health improvement we seek. Second, this kind of health promotion exacerbates inequity by increasing the gap between those who have and those who do not. And lastly, health promotion in this way has created stigma against groups experiencing disadvantage, further marginalizing them (Goldberg, 2012). As stated earlier, a primary focus of public health as social justice is in creating equitable opportunity for all to be healthy, with an emphasis on supporting groups that have been marginalized; however, our leading methods and theories are not designed toward that end.

While much of the literature discusses the importance of understanding social, economic and political foundations of marginalization – as well as applying that understanding within our methods for health education (Whitehead, 2004; Miller, 2011; Goldberg, 2012; Fitzpatrick, 2014) – the argument continues that these efforts are feeble at best and cannot lead to social justice. Relative to disease prevention and management, public health education has attempted to ensure individuals minimize and/or avoid the outcome of illness by taking on specific health-related values, beliefs, and practices (Miller, 2011; Fitzpatrick, 2014). The research shows that this approach to health education has yielded improved health outcomes for not only healthy individuals (The HEALTHY Study Group, 2010), but also in groups placed at higher risk of chronic illness and groups that have been economically/socially marginalized as well (Lindström et al., 2006; Steinsbekk et al., 2012). The criticism though, with our health

education approach is that it also contributes to inequitable outcomes by upholding the values, beliefs, and practices of dominant groups within the population (Korp, 2008). Kendall et al. (2011) argues that this approach reinforces the social hierarchy that marginalizes those most in need of health education strategies, privileges the individual behavioral and biomedical methods for health and health care. Korp (2010), Leahy (2014), and Kendall et al. (2011) assert that public health education approaches should be entrenched with social conflict – as well as critical - theories and methodologies, focusing on building critical perspectives that challenge societal norms that constrain personal agency. This form of public health education would center social justice and acknowledge the political and social factors impacting individuals' health statuses.

Critical Consciousness

Critical Consciousness Conceptualization

As mentioned in chapter one, critical consciousness was first conceptualized by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire; it explores and explains a process of identifying and acting on oppressive societal factors that negatively impact groups that have been marginalized (Freire, 2000). He believed that educational processes were central to determining experiences and life outcomes for individuals within society, so he was a firm critic of the traditional education system which utilized what he called the "banking model of education" (Freire, 2000; Pratt, 2002). The banking model of education is said to be one-sided in that information flows in one direction, from teacher to pupil, and

requires the learning of the information for the sake of regurgitation. Freire argued that this kind of educational process was indoctrination and could not lead to liberation for those who were negatively impacted by the status quo.

One Component Critical Consciousness. Research on the topic of what *critical consciousness* is and how it is produced has evolved over time. Early literature conceptualizes it as a unidimensional construct, consisting of [what has been termed] critical reflection (Mustakova-Possardt 1998; Watts & Abdul-Adil, 1998), which is a cognitive state derived from critically analyzing social and political inequities that moved a person to act on their revelations of injustice (Watts et al., 1998). Being able to analyze the social and political context of society gave way to individuals being able to identify oppression within society and then question why certain things exist in certain ways (Freire, 2000; Mustakova-Possardt, 1998). This process of becoming critically aware illustrates the necessary understanding of relationship between individuals and the societies in which they exist; it requires a level of meta-cognition, or becoming aware of one's own thought processes (Houser & Overton, 2001), and then becoming aware of consciousness itself and the fact that it is ever evolving (Mustakova-Possardt, 1998; Houser et al., 2001).

Two Component Critical Consciousness. While the one component conceptualization of critical consciousness initially alluded to action being inevitable after critical reflection (Mustakova-Possardt 1998; Watts & Abdul-Adil, 1998), later conceptualizations characterize reflection and action as two separate processes within critical consciousness (Campbell & MacPhail 2002; Diemer&

Blustein 2006). The definitions derived within this conceptualization of critical consciousness suggest that critical consciousness is more than just a cognitive state, but is also inclusive of capacity, skill, and ability of an individual to realize their power for carrying out critical analysis of injustice and plausible action steps to take against it (Campbell & MacPhail, 2002; Diemer & Blustein 2006; Getzlaf & Osborne, 2010). For example, Getzlaf & Osborne (2010) define critical consciousness as a process by which individuals come to an understanding of inequities within social and political environments, but then also realize their capacity and power to take action – individually and/or collectively – that fosters equity and justice. So, according to several scholars, two component critical consciousness has been characterized by two separate dimensions: 1) critical reflection (also seen in the literature as synonymous with terms like sociopolitical analysis, critical analysis, and/or social analysis) and 2) critical action (also interchangeable in the literature as social action, sociopolitical action, and/or civic engagement) (Campbell & MacPhail 2002; Diemer, 2005; Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Diemer & Li 2011; Windsor & Benoit, 2014).

Three Component Critical Consciousness. While the literature has alluded to action in both one and two component critical consciousness, further research suggests that there are three distinct components and processes of critical consciousness, and each should be thoroughly examined. The three components include: 1) cognition (critical reflection), 2) political self-efficacy (critical motivation), and 3) behavior (critical action) (Morrell, 2003; Watts, Diemer & Voight, 2011). Consensus has not changed relative to critical awareness leading

to social and/or political action, it is the foundation of what critical consciousness is. However, supporters of looking at this process within a three-construct model give clarity to all of what it takes to achieve praxis, which blends theory with action (Watts et al., 2011). Freire (1973) defines praxis as the juncture between reflecting and theorizing to actual activity that obstructs dehumanization, oppression, and violence. Scholars (Watts et al., 2011) and empirical evidence (Berg, Coman & Schensul, 2009; Diemer & Li 2011; Zimmerman & Zahniser, 1991) suggest that two component critical consciousness does not highlight or give voice to the significance of political self-efficacy, though in definition it is recognized as critical; this is the component of understanding capacity, skill, and ability within oneself, which is necessary for motivating a person to act (Diemer et al., 2014). It is the point of expressed commitment to act against social and political injustice. Completing this argument for three components of critical consciousness is the notion that “acting” needs to be a recognized component all on its own and should not be lumped into the other two components due to the significant notion of what it means to act, and the processes of agency taken during this actual step (Watts et al., 2011). Thus, much of the latest research and literature around this topic utilizes the three-component conceptualization, as many attempt to finalize a model of critical consciousness that was not completed when Freire introduced the concept.

Tools and Methods for Critical Consciousness Development

The conceptualization of critical consciousness helps us understand what it is and what to identify within an individual to determine if a person is growing in

critical consciousness. Though the concept has been around for decades, actual, validated measurement tools for critical consciousness have been developed only in the last six years (Shin, Ezeofor, Smith, Welch & Goodrich, 2016; Diemer, Rapa, Park & Perry, 2017). Strategies and methods have been qualitative in nature, consisting of critical reflection through dialogue, utilizing reflective questioning, psychosocial support, group processes, and identity development through action (Freire, 2000; Freire, 1973; Garcia, Kosutic, McDowell, & Anderson, 2009; Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2002; Diemer, Kauffman, Koenig, Trahan, & Hsieh, 2006; Ginwright & James, 2002; Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002; Hatcher et al., 2010; Zaff, Boyd, Li, Lerner, J., & Lerner, R. 2010).

Critical Reflection, Discussion, and Questioning. Perhaps one of the most significant methods for critical consciousness development has been dialogue about inequity and injustice (Freire, 2000). Within the critical reflection process of critical consciousness, individuals examine how they think, and discussion is the primary way in which they examine. Freire (2000, p. 96) states that, “the methodology of investigation must likewise be dialogical, affording the opportunity both to discover generative themes and to stimulate people’s awareness in regard to these themes”. So, developing critical consciousness requires internal analysis and questioning, but also external questioning and discussion relative to the many social, cultural, and political structures that facilitate oppression, dehumanization, and violence for some, while privileging others (Garcia et al., 2009). Understanding structural violence is key for social change (Watts et al., 2011); dialogue is significant here because one mechanism

of structural violence is to remove the right to speak from groups that have been marginalized, recognizing that language, speech, and narrative are key components to freedom (Watts, Dimer, & Voight, 2011; Freire, 2000). Through discussion and examination of injustice, those who have been oppressed – through racial, economic, and social marginalization – regain power through reinterpreting their own experiences (Garcia et al. 2009; Saari, 2002; Watts et al., 2011); they understand and reshape their social identities based on critical reflection, make connections, and build relationships that would not have otherwise existed (Saari, 2002). Within the dialogue that promotes critical reflection are questions posed to provoke critical thought. Questions must focus on power dynamics within systems that create inequity; questions must also provoke thought and discussion of the status quo, create opportunity for analysis and identification of the meanings given to certain events and experiences, and finally, produce opportunities for the development of actionable steps that will improve social justice (Watts, Abdul-Adil, & Pratt, 2002).

Psychosocial Support and Group Processing. The literature purports that critical consciousness develops when individuals are socially supported in their exploration [and challenging] of social and political inequities (Diemer & Li 2011; Freire, 2000; Ginwright & James, 2002; Green, 2009). Having social support has shown to increase [political] self-efficacy and the likelihood of engaging in sociopolitical action (Diemer, Hsieh, & Pan; 2009) – essentially increasing the likelihood of praxis. Critical components of building social support are through the utilizations of group processing and co-learning strategies. Co-learning is

foundational to the theory and premise for which critical consciousness development is based (Freire, 2000); Freirean discourse was birthed from the field of education and his assertion that learning was reciprocal, between pupil and facilitator, and the learning environment should be egalitarian in nature (Freire, 2000; Montero, 2009). This type of learning space creates opportunity for autonomy and critical thinking in an environment supportive of the pupil's lens as expert of certain knowledge and experiences. To share knowledge on an equal platform builds social support and is pivotal to the process of developing critical consciousness (MacPhail, 2003). Another well-known critical consciousness tool is the utilization of small discussion group settings that incorporates listening with an open mind. Cohen (2011) discusses open minded listening as intensively listening while being prepared to have your mind changed by what you hear. From there, Watts et al. (2011) describes that individuals must discuss with humility and respectfully critique what is being discussed within the group. This process is recognized as both constructive and empowering for those engaged. It builds a sense of solidarity and fortitude towards social change (Hatcher et al., 2010; Watts et al., 2011; Cohen, 2011), and helps those who are becoming aware feel a sense of safety and support in shifting how they think about and perceive themselves and the societies in which they exist (Hatcher et al., 2010).

Critical Consciousness as an Intervention

With its many stages of conceptualization, and tools for engagement, critical consciousness development has been applied as a solution that challenges inequities (Baxamusa, 2008; Ozer, Newlan, Douglas, & Hubbard;

2013; Peterson, 2014; Prati and Zani 2013) that are seen as foundational to many social and health issues throughout the world (Capone & Petrillo, 2013; Peterson, 2014). More importantly, critical consciousness development has provided opportunities for autonomy, giving individuals more control of what happens in their lives, which has contributed to improved health, well-being, and overall life quality (Diemer et al., 2014; Prilleltensky, Nelson, & Peirson; 2001). There has been noteworthy scholarship and research utilizing critical consciousness to improve inequities that lead to both social and health disparities (Diemer et al., 2014). Examples include: a) health interventions to reduce HIV risk in South Africa (Campbell & MacPhail, 2002; Hatcher et al., 2011) as well as among Black, male, LGBTQ+ youth across the U.S. (Harper, Jadwin-Cakmak, Cherenak & Wilson, 2019); b) health interventions to reduce substance abuse (Windsor et al., 2014); and c) health interventions to reduce domestic violence (Chronister & McWhirter, 2006; Hernandez, Almeida & Dolan-Del Vehio, 2005). The individual-level outcomes associated with critical consciousness have been positive as well. Campbell and MachPhail (2002) found healthier decision-making related to sex among youth of color in South Africa. Windsor et al. (2014) found reductions in substance abuse among Black adult women and men who had recent histories of incarceration. Hernandez et al. (2005) found that critical consciousness was a critical first step towards empowerment and accountability related to engaging in and/or being a victim of domestic violence. O'Connor (1997) found improvements in academic achievement, as well as school engagement, among Black, urban youth. Finally,

Diemer and Li (2011) found increased civic participation among African American and Latin youth from households with incomes below the federal poverty level. Though this is not an exhaustive list of interventions that utilized critical consciousness, this research does support the notion that positive [health and well-being] outcomes are associated with critical consciousness development, which ultimately lead to reductions in the negative consequences caused by oppression, dehumanization, and violence (Hatcher et al., 2010).

Critical Consciousness Development in Youth Intervention

The interest in utilizing critical consciousness to address structural violence and improve physical, mental, and social well-being outcomes has significantly increased in the last few decades. This work was historically grounded in adult engagement (Freire, 1973 & 2000); however, current research and scholarship related to critical consciousness has focused on children and young adults. Earlier studies with this focus were based in achieving social justice through sociopolitical development, civic engagement, and sociopolitical action (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Ginwright, Cammarota & Noguera, 2005); while there was reference made to critical consciousness development and Freirean theory, these pedogeological writings were not focused specifically on critical consciousness and its developmental processes. In 2011, Watts, Diemer, and Voight introduced the three-component model of critical consciousness, and this iteration of the model has been utilized most in recent youth and young adult scholarship and research to delve into processes for development of critical consciousness (critical action, political self-efficacy, and critical action). Scholars,

like Diemer, Rapa, Voight, and McWhirter (2016) and Christens, Winn, and Duke (2016) have characterized the concept of critical consciousness as a core asset for development and promotion of empowerment, and therefore, more emphasis has been placed on the importance of engaging in critical consciousness methodology in youth and young adult development. In fact, in reviewing 72 published, peer-reviewed studies identified as having a centralized focus on either two- or three-component critical consciousness – as well as a focus on youth and/or young adults between the ages of 0 and 24 – 62.5% (45 studies) were published in or after 2016. Also significant in the year 2016 as it relates to critical consciousness development is the creation of the first validated measure for critical consciousness, known as the Critical Consciousness Scale (CCS) (Dimer, et al., 2017).

Critical Consciousness and Youth/Young Adult Development

An extensive amount of literature explores the relationship between critical consciousness and various other aspects of youth and young adult development; 39 of the 72 articles reviewed focused in this way. The methodology within these studies is diverse, with solely qualitative studies, solely quantitative studies, as well as mixed methods. The main topics (and findings) that emerged from review of the studies include an association between critical consciousness and the following:

- School Climate and Academic Achievement - The majority of studies focused on school-related outcomes showed positive associations between critical reflection and critical motivation with higher academic

achievement (Pérez-Gualdrón & Helms, 2017; McWhirter & McWhirter, 2016; Luginbuhl, McWhirter, & McWhirter, 2016); higher levels of critical reflection and motivation was associated with lower behavioral disengagement in school as well as higher grades (Pérez-Gualdrón & Helms, 2017). School classrooms and overall school climates that foster opportunities for critical dialogue and questioning, promote prosocial relationships between peers and school staff, as well as provide co-learning and group processing – particularly around issues of injustice – served as contributing factors for critical consciousness development in youth (Pérez-Gualdrón & Helms, 2017; Seider et al., 2016; Seider, Tamerat, Clark, & Soutter, 2017; Dimer, Hsieh, & Pan, 2009).

- Socialization with Parents and Peers – Among the studies within this topic, there were mostly positive outcomes related to critical consciousness development and socialization with parents and peers. A couple of the studies found a positive relationship between critical reflection and parent/peer socialization (Diemer & Bluestein, 2006; Diemer & Li, 2011), a few others identified a positive relationship between political self-efficacy and parent/peer socialization, and the last two studies that looked at sociopolitical action and parent/peer socialization found both positive, significant correlations between the two (Diemer & Li, 2011), while one found no significant relationship between the two (Diemer, Kauffman, Koenig, Trahan, & Hsieh, 2006).

- Community and Civic Engagement – All studies in this topic found positive relationships between critical consciousness development and community engagement. A couple of the studies identified critical consciousness development fostered increased community engagement (Perez-Gualdron & Helms, 2017; Roy et al., 2019), while the other studies showed that engagement in community, specifically around issues of justice, positively impacted critical consciousness development (Fegley, Angelique, & Cunningham; 2006; Fullam, 2017; Oosterhoff, Ferris, Palmer, & Metzger; 2017; Christens & Dolan, 2011). This depicts bidirectionality, which is critical when developing youth interventions.
- Voting Expectancy and Behavior – The majority of studies identified within this topic that focused on critical consciousness and its relationship to voting found positive correlations between them, specifically between political self-efficacy, sociopolitical action, and voting behavior (Diemer, 2012; Dimer & Rapa, 2016; Diemer & Li, 2011). One study, however, that looked specifically at the first component of critical consciousness (critical reflection) and voting behavior, had mixed results for one population (Latin students) and no association for the other population (Black students) within the study (Diemer & Rapa, 2016). These kinds of studies further highlight the significance of measuring and looking at the three components of critical consciousness differently in order to identify what is most critical related to the outcome(s) of interest.

- Experiences with Structural Violence, Marginalization, and Oppression – While these studies were not designed to measure exposure or determine causality related to structural violence, marginalization, and oppression, they do [theoretically] suggest that critical consciousness is higher – at the outset of an intervention – in those who have personal experience with the topics (Diemer, 2012; Diemer & Rapa, 2016; Dimer & Li; Kelly, 2018). One study in particular alludes to the sustainability of ongoing critical consciousness development is higher amongst those experiencing oppression because they are more likely to continue a search for liberation from that experience (Kelly, 2018).
- Social and Emotional Functioning – Of the studies reviewed within this topic, the majority of them revealed positive relationships between critical consciousness development and positive social and emotional behavior (Luginbuhl, McWhirter, & McWhirter, 2016; Clonan-Roy & Nakkula, 2016; Delia & Krasny, 2018). Specific social and emotional behaviors were measured by positive changes in resistance, resilience, leadership skills and ability, feelings around psychological needs being met, and also having a positive sense of self (Luginbuhl, McWhirter, & McWhirter, 2016). These findings align with the Cycle of Liberation model, which outlines a process that essentially starts with critical consciousness development and leads to improved social and emotional functioning, as well as positive social change (Harro, 2000). In contrast, one study found that youth with high levels of critical reflection had increased depressive symptoms and

low academic achievement (Godfrey, Burson, Yanisch, Hughes, & Way, 2019).

- Career Development, Expectancy, and Attainment – Several studies looked at the relationship between career-related outcomes and critical consciousness development. All of them showed positive relationships between critical consciousness development and career expectancy, career-related decision-making, and participants having a greater sense of their future career (Diemer & Blustien, 2006; Diemer, 2009; Nicholas, Eastman-Mueller, & Barbich, 2019; Olle & Fouad, 2015; Rapa, Diemer & Bañales, 2018). Across studies, the strongest linkages are shown between sociopolitical action (also known as critical action) in relation to career, with many participants expressing career exploration and identification as a form of critical action.
- Production of Knowledge and Beliefs – As a whole, these studies provide evidence that the degree to which one critical consciousness development is associated with youth and or young adult's beliefs and knowledge is directly tied to their identity, their experiences, and personal life context (including personal knowledge of historic and contemporary injustices) (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017; Diemer & Li, 2011; Diemer & Rapa, 2016).

With all of what is currently known related to critical consciousness development and youth/young adult outcomes there are multiple areas that still require further research and exploration. Although there are now more

quantitative studies due to the development of validated scales specific to critical consciousness development, they are said to lack in rigor (Jemal, 2017) and need to be designed using experimental or quasi-experimental methods. The limitation in this area though, is associated with the lack of validated measures (Jemal, 2017) for some time, but also because of the nature of the concept of critical consciousness and the traditional tools used for developing it. If anything, a mixed methods strategy that is rigorously designed could benefit the critical consciousness literature and generalize findings beyond the individuals who have engaged in the interventions. Specific to the purpose of this study though, is the limited research on critical consciousness development within a bound case study that explores the process of critical consciousness development and documents the experiences with and impacts of the process. Even more specifically, we need to examine what this looks like in a public health intervention. Of all 72 studies reviewed, only nine were case studies and the focus was educational or economic in nature.

Youth Development, Engagement & Intervention in Public Health

A common, and often used, definition of public health is “the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health through the organized efforts and informed choices of society, organizations, public and private communities, and individuals” (Gatseva & Argirova, 2011, pp. 205). The discipline, at its core, focuses on preventing poor health outcomes in populations of people through surveillance, risk factor identification, intervention evaluation, and implementation (Kass, 2001; Gatseva & Argirova, 2011). By design, public

health is a prevention science, with interventions created to reduce the prevalence of maladaptive behaviors and to increase the occurrence of adaptive behaviors (Coie, et al., 1993). While there is research in the field that supports the inclusion of asset-based approaches in intervention design (Cofino, 2016), there is still a strong tendency to focus on what is “broken” and what “needs to be fixed,” or problematizing. This has long been the case for youth development interventions in public health. The science of youth development echoes the public health model in that some strategies are similar (i.e., a focus on prevention, working in specific populations, and mobilizing affected communities; Birkhead, 2006). However, the differences between the two are determining factors in how youth actually develop into healthy adults with the ability to navigate life in ways that positively impact long term health outcomes.

Youth development has been primarily defined as, “stages that all children go through to acquire the attitudes, competencies, values, and social skills they need to become successful adults” (U.S. Department of Education, 2007, p. 1). The focus of youth development is to identify ways in which the adult population can support youth through the varying stages of their development process (Logan, 2006). In the formative years of youth development, the focus was on preventing youth’s “problem behaviors”, also known as the problem-prevention model (Small & Memmo, 2004). This model can be identified as early as the 1800s with the establishment of Jane Addam’s Hull House in Chicago, Illinois. Within the Hull House, racially and ethnically marginalized immigrant youth – and their families – were integrated into U.S. culture through the provision of supports

and services meant to ensure the immigrant youth, specifically, did not engage in behaviors deemed problematic for the U.S. standard of living (Lissak, 1989). This was a dominant approach in the work of youth development for many years, and fit agreeably with the biomedical paradigm of public health interventions – fixing a problem, where youth have been defined as “the problem”.

The Deficit Perspective (Fixing Youth vs. Working with Youth)

The problem-prevention model is now critiqued and often labeled as a deficit-based approach (Ginwright & James, 2002; Small & Memmo, 2004; Brown, 2016). Many youth development researchers and practitioners found that the problem-prevention model focuses solely on the problems that youth create in society (e.g., substance use/abuse, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV, teen pregnancy, violence, etc.) and how adults can fix them (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Small & Memmo, 2004; Carpenter & Mojab, 2017). The approach was adopted by many local, federal, and public health agencies where preventions and interventions were designed to “fix” certain groups of young people who exhibited or were “at risk” for exhibiting problem behaviors. Synonymous with the label “at risk”, however, are identities of marginalized populations, including youth of color, single mother households, and youth who live in poverty (Lubeck, 1995; Ginwright, Cammarota & Noguera, 2005). In the U.S., youth of color are overwhelmingly identified as “at-risk”, racializing the term and standardizing the notion that youth of color are problematic and need to be fixed. This model helped to create the ineffective response that focuses

intervention on the behaviors of “at-risk” youth versus the systems and structures that create the “risk” in the first place (Lubeck, 1995).

Key factors in utilizing a public health approach are to identify the “risk” factors (Gatseva & Argirova, 2011) for the aforementioned problem behaviors, comb through data – which shows that the majority of deaths for youth populations are caused by behavioral factors (Blum, 2002), and derive an intervention that would change the behavior(s). This is the stage of life in which lifelong habits are formed; the space in which a youth’s life trajectory can take a turn for the worse, even before anatomical and physiological components of development are complete (Birkhead, 2006). Consequently, youth development spaces are a prime opportunity for public health interventions – reducing risks and promoting optimal health, which includes increasing protective factors. This method of engagement for public health, however, further exacerbates a narrative of “white savior”, in which the public health system attempts to “save” the at-risk population based on a socially constructed idea of risk, which [early on in the discipline] negated the possibility of root cause intervention.

Positive Youth Development

In the mid-to-late 90s, a new approach to youth development was emerging and its strategies and foci were in stark contrast to the deficit-model (Larson, 2006). The Positive Youth Development (PYD) model emerged, and is defined as a process that motivates youth to actively engage in their development as they are motivated through the challenges that they face. (Larson, 2006). PYD sees and treats young people as resources rather than

problem-causers in society (Damon, 2004); it focuses on young people as assets, and asset-based approaches move away from centering the need to fix what is wrong, but rather center what is right and build on that (Damon, 2004; Larson, 2006). Research shows that asset-based approaches, building on strengths rather than focusing on deficits, actually generates answers to problems in ways that could never be identified from the deficit frame (Damon, 2004). PYD is undergird by the "five Cs" of youth development: competence, character, confidence, connections, and contributions (Hamilton & Pittman, 2004), but also posits those other characteristics, like positive self-identity, social maturity (Telzer, Van Hoorn, Rogers & Do, 2018), and self-efficacy (Tsang, Hui, & Law, 2012) are key for successful youth matriculation into adulthood (Pittman & Wright, 1991). The notion that youth development is an activity performed by adults *on* youth is a paradigm long held that stemmed from deficit models and frameworks. However, with PYD, the new idea is that young people have the capacity to be active and integral to their own development (Larson, 2006). Richard Lerner (2005) sums up PYD theory best with the following quote:

> …the theory of PYD that has emerged in the adolescent development literature specifies that if young people have mutually beneficial relations with the people and institutions of their social world, they will be on the way to a hopeful future marked by positive contributions to self, family, community, and civil society." (p.12)

Another key component to positive youth development is the fostering of prosocial relationships with adults in their lives, including the youth workers within the youth-serving organizations in which they engage (Rauner, 2000). This is promoted within PYD by the change in philosophy from deficit labeling to asset

framing, which is beneficial to all youth, but particularly significant for youth of color (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Ginwright & James, 2002). Removing the negative labels and supporting youth agency aids in their ability to positively engage with and impact their communities, their schools, and their own families (Ginwright & James, 2002; Ginwright et al., 2005).

PYD in Public Health Intervention

While PYD has been adapted into public health strategies for youth intervention, this is still an area where theory has not completely meshed with practice in public health. As mentioned earlier, public health recognizes asset-based approaches to health improvement (Kretzmann & Mcknight, 1993; Search Institute, 2006; Morgan & Ziglo, 2007; Cofino, 2016); specifically for youth interventions, PYD has been most commonly applied to the issues of substance abuse, violence and delinquency, teen pregnancy, and sexual risk behaviors (Bonell et al., 2015; Gillham, Reivich, & Shatte, 2002; Catalano et al., 2004). The outcomes associated with these interventions have been mostly positive, however, the issue lies within the paradigmatic differences within approaches (public health prevention science and positive youth development) (Catalano et al., 2002). The discipline of public health has continued to determine interventions from the perspective of the problem first (Morgan & Ziglo, 2007). So, while public health recognizes PYD and sometimes inserts PYD language or principles into interventions, the overarching intervention frame is within a problematized context (i.e., at-risk youth and the problems they cause). Public health utilizes PYD to help develop the young person in the hopes that they will

not engage in risky or maladaptive behaviors (Catalano et al., 2002). Consequently, changing a young person's behavior still remains the focus of interventions and only supplements PYD principles, essentially engaging in both the deficit model as well as the asset-based approach for improved health outcomes in youth.

The Social Justice Youth Development Framework

A little over a decade after PYD was developed, another new framework was theorized that placed a specific focus on marginalized youth of color and the influence that societal systems, structures, and institutions have on them. This framework, known as Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD), is still not as widely adopted as PYD but shows a great deal of promise based on the current social and political climate of the U.S. and globally. It also carries the conceptual underpinnings of critical consciousness development, making it an optimal strategy with recognized positive outcomes for youth and young adults (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Cammarota, 2011; Brown, 2016; Iwasaki, 2016).

SJYD is a framework within youth development that "acknowledges social contexts and highlights the capacity for youth to respond to community problems and heal from the psycho/social wounds of hostile urban environments" (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002, p. 87). For youth of color specifically, developing a social justice lens is pivotal for their development and engagement with their communities and broader society. Ginwright and Cammarota (2002) purport that the current models for youth development do not help us [youth supporters, researchers, practitioners] understand youth of color; they lead with the

assumption that youth need to be changed, rather than the socially toxic environments that they live in. The SJYD framework explores the role that environment, societal, and systemic issues play in the lives and experiences of youth of color.

The issues that youth of color face in contemporary American society are not just the result of them choosing to engage in maladaptive behaviors, but instead, are strongly tied to social, political, and economic patterns rooted in structurally violent systems in which they navigate from day to day (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Ginwright & James 2002). Youth are supported within SJYD through opportunities, services, and programs to develop critical consciousness and engage in social action with the end goal being the facilitation of liberation and healing. These two elements of the framework are influenced by Freire's (1973) idea of praxis, which is defined as the codependence of critical reflection and political self-efficacy working together to produce critical action (Watts & Guessous, 2006). Praxis is central to the SJYD, as the goal is for youth to engage in reflection and action to transform social and political circumstances that influence their existence (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). With the help of adults, youth can be supported in developing critical consciousness and engaging socio-politically for the betterment of themselves, their communities, and society at-large (Ginwright & James, 2002).

Social Justice Youth Development in Public Health

As mentioned previously, there is an argument that social justice is a part of the moral basis for public health (Gostin & Powers, 2006). Idealized, public

health's account of justice looks like equitable distribution of what can be considered common advantages as well as the sharing of common burdens. It is discussed as a "core value" to the field, with the understanding that the overarching goal is to improve health and well-being by focusing on the most disadvantaged (Gostin & Powers, 2006) - which in the youth development field, would commonly be discussed as "at-risk youth." This is about as close to SJYD as public health has come; marginalized populations are indeed the focus, and the intent is to bring them from the place of disenfranchisement to empowerment, however, the lens from which this is attempted does not account for social and/or political injustices of society (Goldberg, 2012) – the focus remains the individual and their deficits. The field has yet to fully embrace asset-based approaches to health improvement, and the idea of social justice-based practices within public health is only recently being explored with the rising focus on social injustices in the U.S. To delve into the social and political issues that oppress young people of color requires an understanding and level of acceptance that marginalization and oppression are facilitated by structurally violence systems. SJYD has provided a specific framework and strategies for engaging the youth population most focused on within public health; it only makes sense then, that public health attempt to incorporate these evidence-based practices from the youth development field.

Gaps in the Literature

This study seeks to investigate and document a process by which youth develop critical consciousness in a public health intervention, grounded in social

justice theories and methodologies. The purpose of the study is to determine the benefit of practically applying social justice theories and practices to a public health youth intervention. Unfortunately, even with the understanding of youth as assets, public health youth engagement and intervention still concentrate on making youth better by fixing them; the term “at-risk youth” – at the time of this research – was still a predominant term that defined youth by their problem behaviors within the discipline. Our resources go towards efforts to develop interventions for at-risk youth, but we know that the term “at-risk youth”, is generally synonymous with racially marginalized youth populations (Butler, Joubert & Lewis, 2009; James, 2012). This actually accomplishes the opposite of equity, and further marginalizes youth, as they enter interventions that gives them an identity of “at-risk”, which has negative connotations. However, there is an alternative, that centers, supports, and celebrates their marginalized identities, as well as activates their internal capacity to change the environments that increase the likelihood of them being placed at-risk. With limited research in public health – specifically focused on interventions that center Black youth’s social, economic, and political conditions within interventions – it is important that we explore the utilization of justice-oriented theories and practices to move us toward achieving health equity. Developing critical consciousness, through social justice youth development, is a practical way to for us to get there.

Most studies have looked at whether or not elements of critical consciousness were present, increased, or decreased based on intervention; those outcomes have been studied in relation to the topics outlined earlier in this

chapter: school climate and academic achievement; socialization with parents and peers; community and civic engagement; voting expectancy and behavior; experiences with structural violence, marginalization, and dehumanization; social and emotional functioning; career development, expectancy, and attainment; and knowledge production. We have measured critical consciousness development and derived meaning based on desired pro social behavior in youth; it is conceptualized as a way to predict positive social and emotional functioning in youth. However, with only four studies exploring this specifically (Clonan, Jacobs, & Nakkula, 2016; Delia & Krasny, 2018; Godrey, Burson, Yanisch, Hughes, & Way, 2019; Lugunbuhl, McWhirter, & McWhirter, 2016), there is room, and need, to further examine this idea. Freire (1970) made mention of the potential despair that could be experienced as a result of becoming aware; identifying whether or not youth experience this state of being is critical for research and practice and should be explored.

It is probable that the knowledge and outcomes produced from this study will provide new insights into necessary methodology for youth development and engagement in public health intervention – that centers social justice and moves us [as a discipline] from theory to action towards social justice integration and the achievement of health equity. In addition, there is a paucity of research on the subsequent impact of a personal paradigm shift on the lives of youth who engage in critical consciousness development, from a youth's perspective. Elevating their voice, through their experiences, is also necessary for the development of future interventions.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Why Qualitative Research

Qualitative research was the best choice for this study for several reasons. Firstly, it allows for the exploration of "how" and "why" a particular phenomenon occurs (Stake, 1995; Rich & Ginsburg, 1999). As stated by Creswell (2013), this form of inquiry relies on assumptions, the use of theoretical frameworks – utilized as sensitizing concepts – to inform the research, and helps to identify the meaning ascribed to a particular phenomenon or social issue by the participants themselves. This research study is novel, in that it centers and amplifies the voice of youth in relation to a process deemed beneficial to their health and well-being; determining the impact of this social process on the lives of youth, should come from those directly impacted (Yin, 2009; Larson, 2006).

This research provided real-life, in the moment, opportunity to explore, observe, and inquire as the social process took place. Youth perspectives and experiences are worthy of being explored, and qualitative research provided the best platform for exploration through the case study approach. Also, significant to note, is that there is limited case study research – only nine studies – related to critical consciousness development in youth/adolescents. Furthermore, qualitative research was ideal based on the argument that this type of research is well suited for culturally diverse populations because it creates space for the

integration of generally marginalized voices that are underrepresented (Morrow, Rakhsha, & Castaneda, 2001); it also pushes researchers to consider context of their participants, which facilitates a richer, more in-depth understanding of the issue from the perspective of those under study (Creswell, 2013).

Case Study Approach

The case study approach to qualitative inquiry is utilized to understand complex issues, beginning with a specific and defined case (or cases) (Creswell & Poth, 2013). It is described as a "type of design in qualitative research that may be an object of study, as well as a product of inquiry" (pg. 97). Within this approach, investigators are able to explore "a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within its real-life context" (Yin, 2009, p.18), which is a key tenet of the research approach. It is a well-established qualitative approach utilized across multiple disciplines but is mostly seen in the social and health sciences (Creswell & Poth, 2013). Thanks to the influential work of Robert E. Stakes, case study research has been categorized into three main types of study that help define the intent of the case study; those case study types are: instrumental, intrinsic, and collective (Stake, 1995). An instrumental case study is one that utilizes a particular case to obtain a broader understanding of an issue, while alternatively, an intrinsic case study seeks to understand the unique nature of a phenomenon, needs to define that uniqueness, and then describe why it is distinguishably different than other phenomena (Creswell & Poth, 2013). Lastly, the collective case study investigates multiple cases at the same time, or in a sequence, to create a larger understanding of a particular issue (Stake, 1995). These types of

case studies are not mutually exclusive and do coexist in case study research and literature (Sheikh, Bhopal, Netuveli, Partridge, Car, et al., 2009; Pinnock, Huby, Powell, Kielmann, Price, Williams, 2008).

Constructivist Grounded Theory

Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) is an approach and methodology utilized for understanding phenomena/social processes, where minimal to no prior knowledge or theoretical explanation exists (Glaser, 2007; Charmaz, 2014). It grew out of the Grounded Theory Method, originally formulated by Glaser and Strauss (1976), which posited that new theory could be generated through the data itself. In the formulation of CGT, Charmaz (2014) interrogates an original goal of Grounded Theory Method, which was to explain and/or predict phenomena and expounds to emphasize the construction of interpretive frameworks. She posits that theories, models, and/or frameworks are co-constructed through the interaction of not only the researcher with the data collected, but also inclusive of the participants, their environments, as well as the researcher's assumptions and subjectivities (Silverman & Mavasti, 2008).

Symbolic Interactionism is a critical underpinning of CGT that gets explained more depth in the theoretical frameworks section, but briefly, it purports that humans act toward situations based on interpretations (symbolic meaning) and human interaction (Blumer; Charmaz; 2014). Charmaz (2014) says that symbolic interactionism provides those engaging in CGT an open-ended theoretical perspective that informs CGT. Charmaz (2014) also emphasizes that CGT focuses on both meaning and action, where the researcher is seeking to

comprehend their participants worldview - their perceptions, truths, values, and language around a particular phenomenon – as well as account for their own worldview and how it affects their research process. This is why memo writing throughout the data collection and analysis processes is so critical to the method (Glaser, 1978; Charmaz, 2014); revisiting memos throughout the iterative process of data collection and data analysis is what helps the researcher move from codes to analytic categories of findings, to an interpretive theoretical model/framework co-constructed between the investigator and the participants.

While the current study is not considered a CGT study, because it is indeed a case study, CGT analysis techniques were utilized, and so a foundational understanding of CGT was necessary to incorporate. Within this case study, I was seeking to build a process model/framework from a specific bounded case. However, the case study approach does not have an embedded methodological process; it's a flexible approach that does not have a specific set of prescribed analysis techniques attached to it (Meyer, 2001), therefore, utilizing CGT analysis techniques was a logical choice given my analytic goal of constructing a framework from the data with the participants.

Ontological, Epistemological, and Theoretical Foundations

In research, investigators approach their work within their worldview; they have a set of ideas and/or beliefs about the nature of what can be real and what can be true (ontology) (Marsh & Furlong, 2002); this approach brings about questions related to epistemology. Both of these factors then impact how the investigator goes about their research processes, which facilitates a

determination of chosen methodology (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). In case study research, these concepts are relevant, as the approach to a particular case study will vary dependent upon the ontological and epistemological perspectives of the researcher as well as the ontology and epistemology associated with the sensitizing concepts and research methods.

Ontology

Ontology is foundational to epistemological and methodological positioning in research (Grix, 2002; Takahashi & Araujo, 2020). Defined as, “the study of the true nature of existence” (Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010), the ontological underpinnings of this research are grounded in my desire to explore a specific experience, in a specific setting and timeframe, with a specific group of individuals, within a specific organization. I entered the research processes wanting to explore meaning and social process within a specific “case”, assuming that I would understand the population and their experiences best via engagement with them in their real-life context of the LYVV Fellowship. Case study research, like many qualitative approaches, is often viewed as “naturalistic” research and can be situated within naturalistic ontology (Crowe et al., 2011). By definition, qualitative research follows a naturalistic process of inquiry that seeks a rich, in-depth understanding of social phenomena in real-life context – the natural setting (Guba, 1979).

Epistemology

Epistemology refers to the relationship between the one who knows and what can be known (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). There are three

epistemological approaches commonly associated with case study research: critical, interpretive, and positivist (Crowe, Cresswell, Robertson, Huby, Avery & Sheikh, 2011). For this study, I drew upon two epistemological approaches, both critical and interpretive. The critical approach involves interrogating one's own assumptions as well as considering the broader political and social environment in relation to those assumptions (Doolin, 2004). The interpretive approach attempts to understand meaning and social processes from varying perspectives; it focuses on building theory from what is understood about both individual and shared social meaning (Stake, 1995; Doolin, 1998); this also coincides with constructivist epistemology, relevant in this study through CGT data collection and analysis techniques (Charmaz, 2003; Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006). Because of the utilization of CGT methodology, the goal of understanding a social processes within a bounded case, and what a particular phenomenon means from the perspective of those within the case, an interpretive epistemological approach was warranted. But also in this instance, due to the nature of what is being studied (critical consciousness and increasing awareness of the impacts of governmental and societal systems and structures), it was also fitting to draw upon a critical and reflective perspective so that I could accurately consider the socio-political elements that have influence in shaping my case study; this similar approach was utilized by Doolin (1998).

Theoretical Frameworks

As articulated above, ontological and epistemological perspectives of researchers provide a frame through which the research is designed. Within this

frame, are theoretical underpinnings that guide the steps taken in the research process. Because it is important to interrogate and evaluate influential discourse around social problems [from multiple perspectives], three main sensitizing concepts were utilized to guide the research and processes used within it (Blumer, 1969; Charmaz, 2014): symbolic interactionism, critical theory, and SJYD.

Symbolic Interactionism (SI). SI is a unique approach to studying human life and interactions through the assertion that people make meaning of the world through an intricately woven set of symbols (Blumer, 1969; Salvini, 2019). What these symbols mean is determined by human interaction and communication; through these human interactions, concepts of both self and larger social structures are developed (Salvina, 2019). Three main assumptions within SI include: a) meaning is constructed by interacting and communicating, b) a motivation for behavior is self-concept, and c) a distinctive relationship exists between individuals and society (Blumer, 1969). The SI approach operates on a micro level, with its orientation focused directly on individual's interactions in distinct situations. It is also important to note the interconnectivity of SI and CGT methodology utilized for this particular study. SI tenets were implemented in both the data collection and analysis processes by emphasizing the participants' actions, interactions, meanings, and language (Ritzer, 2011).

In addition, much effort was put into the understanding of participants and their experiences as it related to the broader context in which they are situated; understanding their positioning within a broader context helped contextualize

how they each make meaning and take action. How they make meaning and take action are also interrogated through the lens of critical theory. Critical consciousness and its development process (derived from critical theory) have a goal of praxis, which is the juncture between reflecting, dialoging (making meaning of a thing) and actual action that obstructs dehumanization, oppression, and violence (Freire, 1973).

Critical Theory. Critical Theory, at this point, embodies a multitude of sub-theories, but its foundational aim is to challenge, critique, and change society as whole through the identification of underlying social, historical, political, and ideological forces that keep people from experiencing and participating in true democracy (Tyson, 2014). It was derived within the Frankfurt school and is associated with many scholars – Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Honneth, and Habermas – and in simplest terms, it teaches that knowledge is power (Mill, Allen & Morrow, 2001; Tyson, 2014). It is said to be a theory that provides a guide for human action, it is inherently liberating, has a cognitive content, and is self-conscious, self-critical, and non-objectifying (Macey, 2000; Tyson, 2014). Horkhemier's work added three critical criteria for critical theory: a) it must be explanatory, b) it must be practical, c) it must be normative, and it must be all three at the same time (Scherer, 2018). This means that critical theory has to explain the problem(s) in the current social world, there has to be an actor or set of actors with an ability to change things, it has to provide norms for criticism that are clear, and goals that are achievable for social transformation.

Critical Theory is a key lens through which this research is situated as many of the areas of focus (i.e., critical consciousness, social justice youth development, and structural violence) have roots and intended outcomes that are associated with this theory. It offers a means to interrogate the process of critical consciousness development and connect the micro-level experiences with macro-level societal change opportunities.

Social Justice Youth Development. SJYD was described briefly in chapter two related to its evolution in the study of youth development. It is essentially a youth development approach "focused on creating equitable access and opportunities for all youth by actively reducing or eliminating disparities in education, health, employment, justice, and any other system that hinders the development of young people" (Outley, Brown, Gabriel, Sullins, 2018, p. 486, informed by Ginwright and Cammarota, 2002). It employs a set of key principles, practices, and outcomes that have been established for youth development and youth programming (Ginwright & James, 2002). These are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1. SJYD Principals, Practices, & Outcomes

Principals	Practices	Outcomes
Program Outcomes		
Analyzes power in social relationships	Political education Political strategizing Identifying power holders Reflecting about power in one's own life (power & non-power as youth; how it's worked against you & your community; your privilege)	Social problematizing critical thinking, asking and answering questions related to community and social problems Development of sociopolitical awareness
Makes identity central	Joining support groups and organizations that support identity development	Development of pride regarding one's identity Awareness of how sociopolitical forces influence identity

Principals	Practices	Outcomes
Program Outcomes		
	Reading material where one's identity is central and celebrated Critiquing stereotypes regarding one's identity	The capacity to build solidarity with others who share common struggles and have shared interests
Promotes systemic social change	Working to end social inequity (such as racism and sexism)	Sense of life purpose, empathy for the suffering of others, optimism about social change
Encourages collective action	Involving oneself in collective action and strategies that challenge and change local and national systems and institutions	Capacity to change personal, community, and social conditions Healing from personal trauma brought on from oppression
Process Outcomes		
Analyzes power in social relationships		Youth transforming arrangements in public and private institutions by sharing power with adults (staff & partners)
Embraces Youth Culture		Authentic youth engagement Youth-run and youth-led organizations Effective recruitment strategies Effective external communications Engagement of extremely marginalized youth

From these principles, practices, and outcomes emerged youth-centered guiding principles for youth research. Ginwright, Cammarota, & Noguera (2006) purport that there are four key principles for engaging youth in research, those are that: a) youth should be contextualized in relation to social, economic, and political conditions; b) the process of youth development should be contextualized as a collective response to marginalization, c) youth are agents of change and not just subject to change; and d) youth have basic rights (Ginwright, Cammarota & Noguera, 2006, pgs. 17-19).

SJYD and Critical Consciousness. Based in the aforementioned key principles is the notion of critical consciousness development and its necessity

within youth programming and youth-centered research. SJYD posits that critical consciousness development offers youth the best opportunity for understanding and changing their social realities (Ginwright & James, 2002). The idea of praxis within critical consciousness development is the desired outcome, where youth are mobilized to a place of action based on what they understand and perceive to be problematic related to the social, political, and economic issues that impact them. There are three stages of progression necessary for the achievement of praxis, according to Ginwright and James (2002); those stages are self-awareness, social awareness, and global awareness (see table 2). The stages are described as interrelated and progressive.

Table 2. Stages of Progression Towards Praxis

Self-Awareness	Social Awareness	Global Awareness
• **FORMS OF ACTION:** Critique stereotypes; active engagement in identity development. • **COMMUNITY/SOCIAL OUTCOMES:** Political awareness and actively engaged citizens; general emotional, spiritual, psychological wellness. • **YOUTH SOCIAL JUSTICE OUTCOMES:** Pride of ethnic physical features; positive self-regard, racial and ethnic esteem. Empowerment and positive orientation toward life circumstances.	• **FORMS OF ACTION:** Community organizing; political education; youth exercising power in community institutions. • **COMMUNITY/SOCIAL OUTCOMES:** Equitable institutional practices; innovative solutions to community ad social problems. • **YOUTH SOCIAL JUSTICE OUTCOMES:** Social problematizing, critical thinking, asking and answering questions related to their social environment. Capacity to change personal, community, and social conditions. Feelings of being a part of something meaningful and productive.	• **FORMS OF ACTION:** Connection to others' struggles. • **COMMUNITY/SOCIAL OUTCOMES:** Safe and healthy community; social well-being. • **YOUTH SOCIAL JUSTICE OUTCOMES:** Sense of life purpose, empathy with the suffering of others, optimism about social change.

During the first stage of self-awareness, youth focus on the exploration of self, which supports positive identity development within oneself, culturally, and socially (Ginwright & James, 2002; Ginwright, 2015). This is said to be a catalyst for clarifying the relationships between identity, power, and privilege, which

allows youth to more critically evaluate the issues within their communities and how the interrelationships between those concepts relate to specific social problems more broadly, moving them into the second stage of social awareness. Youth evaluating power in the community gives them a foundation for determining what social action can (and should) look like from them, in partnership with other groups and institutional stakeholders for their communities. Ginwright and James (2002) posit that once social awareness is reached, youth can move to global awareness, in which they empathize and connect with the struggles of others outside of their immediate communities and support actions for liberation and healing for them.

Youth development frameworks, in general, advocate for youth voice and agency within youth development programs. However, SJYD homes in on the significance of youth voice and agency specifically understanding their social context, its impact on them, and then utilizing their voices and agency to create change. It pushes the notion that youth can make change, they just need opportunities to do so in collaboration with those who hold power and privilege. This is critical for marginalized youth of color, that they are provided the opportunity to improve their communities through assessing its strengths and weakness and reframing larger, structurally violent narratives that have historically, and contemporarily, impeded community improvement. They not only need to contribute to the identification of the problem, but also need to contribute to the resolutions, derived from their leadership, their voice, and their agency being centered in communal change processes.

Research Design

Researchers who utilize case studies are seeking a deeper understanding that illustrates “how” and “why” a particular phenomenon is occurring (Stake, 1995). This study sought in-depth understanding and exploration of concepts within a particular population, within a particular time frame, within a particular setting; thus, a qualitative, within-site, instrumental case study approach was utilized to explore the rich descriptions of the participant’s experiences and organize the bounded system of the case (Stake, 1995; Creswell, 2013). Constructivist grounded theory (CGT) analysis techniques (Charmaz, 2014) were utilized to build a process model grounded in the data of participant’s experiences; this methodology was necessary for both exploring meaning making as well as explicating social processes (2014).

For this study, a research protocol was created and approved by the University of Louisville Institutional Review Board (see Appendix 1). This section of the paper will outline the case study and frame, the intervention context, the fellowship context for which the case was focused, as well as data collection, management, and analysis processes.

Case Study Setting and Frame

The case study is bounded by time, location, context, and organization. The bounded time of this case is a 5-year grant cycle of a public health youth violence intervention, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), that lasted from 2015 to 2020. The case study was conducted in Louisville, Kentucky, with youth representative of the city’s west end of town; this

area of the city has suffered from historic and contemporary marginalization and structural violence. Within this case study, the focus was on multiple cohorts of youth who participated in the intervention as Fellows; the organization in which the Fellowship was situated was the Youth Violence Prevention Center in the University of Louisville's School of Public Health and Information Sciences.

Intervention Context

Youth violence had been identified in Louisville as a pressing community issue, particularly for the city's west. Substantial attention, resources, and political will were being mobilized to alleviate disparities facing the residents of this area, so, the University of Louisville School of Public Health and Information Science's (SPHIS) Office for Public Health Practice (OPHP) supported the current momentum and partnered with the community to establish a strategy to address the issue of youth violence. The OPHP – which was created to build relationships in community, be a liaison between SPHIS and the community, as well as facilitated community-based and community-engaged scholarship – applied for funding from the CDC; funding was received, and SPHIS was designated one of five National Centers of Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention. The Youth Violence Prevention Centers (YVPCs) were created for the advancement of science and practice around youth violence prevention, as well as to reduce youth interpersonal violence in a geographically defined, historically marginalized community. Historically, YVPCs addressed youth violence at the individual and interpersonal levels, however, the 2015 funding announcement specifically asked for the implementation and evaluation of a

community- and/or policy-level prevention strategy. The proposed intervention strategy was to design, implement, and evaluate a community-level, three-year social norming campaign aimed at changing the social norms of violence among youth in the city. The campaign utilized various forms of media that youth consume but focused primarily on social media platforms for youth engagement.

The Center partnered with young people, community members, artists, community- and faith-based organizations, and scholars to apply the best available science to violence prevention while recognizing the limitations of science in addressing everyday challenges experienced by many within the communities of focus (pridepeaceprevention.org, n.d.). The approach to violence prevention was novel in that it attempted to bring awareness to the racial and social injustices that produce conditions that lead young people to viewing violence as their best option. This required not only focusing on interpersonal violence, but structural violence against youth as well. The intervention sought to influence the social context of youth in the city by cultivating positive racial identity, fostering community dialogue around difficult issues such as racial and social justice, and motivating those who engage with it to act based on the intervention message. In doing so, the hope to raise critical consciousness to promote racial justice, increase social action around the issue, and reduce youth violence.

The intervention strategy had three major components for dissemination: a) social and big media b) community partner organizations and c) community youth. At the onset of intervention development, youth engagement in the Center

was established as critical to success; youth would not only be study subjects from which to glean data, but also intervention strategist, implementers, and disseminators as the target audience. Youth in the community were actually generators of the ideas around promoting positive racial/ethnic identity as a means to shift norms and behavior; the research followed their initial comments and ideas. The strategy was to engage as many youths as possible in the campaign development process through established relationships with community and city organizations. However, to ensure that youth voice was present on a consistent basis, and to attempt to engage a consistent population of youth, the Center established the Louisville Youth Voices against Violence (LYVV) as the in-house strategy for youth engagement.

LYVV Fellowship

While science and community were vital to the campaign, youth participation was considered essential to development and implementation. It was determined that each year of the campaign, the research team would work with community partners in the targeted areas to identify 18 youth to participate in the LYVV Fellowship. This strategy quickly changed as the research team began to engage youth and they voiced discontentment at the notion of a stipend and preferred employment. To be responsive to youth voice being equitably heard and co-creating the intervention structure, the chosen number of youths for day-to-day intervention engagement was lowered to 12 so that youth could be hired to work part-time in the Center. This group of youth served on the Campaign Design Committee, with representatives from community and local

government organizations working with youth around the city on violence prevention-related activities. They attended monthly design committee meetings, provided input regarding social norms and media usage by their peers, assisted in recruiting youth for message testing, and conducted data collection and analysis procedures with research staff.

While the focus was on community-level change with the campaign intervention, the research team determined that it would be a good idea to build into the Fellowship what was being portrayed at-large with the campaign. The Fellowship became a testing ground for the message of the campaign, and with that came the development of programmatic activities to walk with Fellows through the violence prevention strategy they were helping to disseminate. The purpose of the Fellowship was to have marginalized youth of color, impacted by both direct and structural violence, give voice to the development and dissemination of the intervention campaign; an additional purpose became supporting youth in being social agents of change to end systemic social inequity in their communities through building critical consciousness.

They worked a maximum of 20 hours each week and engaged in multiple aspects of the intervention. The Fellowship tenets and work focus areas are broken down into four categories:

- Critical Consciousness Development – Fellows researched American history (with a focus on African American history), participated in discussions related to history and social action, and developed ideas related to mobilizing social action based on historical and contemporary

concepts and context. Youth engaged in a curriculum adapted from the "Something is Wrong" curriculum (Al-Osaimi et al., 2009). This program tenet helped young people to foster an in-depth understanding of and connection to the world in which we live, the people in the world (past and present), and the forces that shape the world. These forces span from policies implemented by the government down to the experiences of individuals in their lifetime. In developing their consciousness, the hope was to ignite their conscious fire so that they were compelled to take social action against oppressive, dehumanizing, and violent elements that affect their communities/the world and threaten positive and progressive culture.

- Cultural Identity Development – Through the engagement of accurate world, national, and local history, exploration of culturally relevant art, artist, and museums, the Fellowship provided an outlook on different cultures and how this understanding shapes one's feeling of belonging to a cultural group as well as that cultural groups impact on the world. Cultural identity was based on socio-cultural identifiers such as (but not limited to) nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, generation, and locality (any group affiliated with unique cultural aspects).
- Campaign [Intervention] Engagement – Fellows engaged with other YVPRC staff, community partners, and the Campaign Creative director to develop content that depicted the campaign message. Connecting the goals of the four tenets, Fellows incorporated what they learned in

curricular sessions and field experiences into creative expressions that were used for intervention development and implementation. They served on the Campaign Design Committee, along with YVPRC partners to determine a relevant message for their peers; they identified media outlets for the campaign message, and recruited youth to help with message testing.

- Leadership Development – Fellows were provided the opportunity and experiences to nurture character development qualities such as integrity, effective communication, creativity, confidence, perseverance, optimism, time management, collaboration, and goal setting. Through these opportunities and experiences, Fellows were empowered and eager to utilize these skills to benefit their communities and set positive examples for peers through modeling.

Below, Table 3 delineates the activities in which the fellows engaged in relation to the tenet/s that it represents.

Table 3. LYVV Fellowship Activities

Title	Description
Campaign Design 101	These sessions provide an introduction to the basic elements of designing a health promotion campaign. Specifically, fellows will engage with research related to the process of designing a social norming campaign. **Tenet Addressed:** Campaign Engagement & Professional Development Skills
Campaign Planning	These sessions provide the fellows with an opportunity to apply concepts and theories learned in 'Campaign Design 101.' **Tenet Addressed:** Campaign Engagement

Title	Description
History of Systems & African History	This seminar examines accurate U.S. history through the lens of African American experiences with systems (education, housing, justice, health, religious, etc.). It also covers African ancient civilizations and their contributions to the world. Specifically, the fellows will engage in research and discussion to expand their knowledge on ancient African civilizations and systems, as well as U.S. systems. **Tenet Addressed:** Cultural Identity & Critical Consciousness Development
Engagement with the Arts	This seminar provides the fellows with the opportunity to engage in social justice activism through art forms like poetry, creative writing, music production, visual arts, etc. **Tenet Addressed:** Cultural Identity & Critical Consciousness Development
Video Blogging (Vlogging)	These sessions provide the fellows with an opportunity to reflect on topics covered in seminars and their identity as a fellow. **Tenet Addressed:** Cultural Identity Development & Cultural Identity Development
Lunch with the Elders	In these sessions the fellows will be given opportunities to meet and have lunch with elders in the community that have worked towards creating social change in Louisville. **Tenet Addressed:** Cultural Identity & Critical Consciousness Development
Leadership Development	Providing the opportunity and experiences to nurture character development qualities such as integrity, effective communication, creativity, confidence, perseverance, optimism, time management, collaboration, and goal-setting within the Fellowship. **Tenet Addressed:** Leadership Development
Professional Development	Equipping young people for college and/or careers by providing formal coursework, networking, and on-the-job training opportunities that will refine their skills and enhance their professional repertoire mutually benefiting the Fellows, YVPRC, and the community at large. **Tenet Addressed:** Professional Development
Group and Individual Counseling	These sessions provide Fellow's time and engagement with culturally competent mental health therapist that support them through the navigation of difficult content and experiences. Tenet Addressed: No specific tenet, just a needed mechanism for the Fellowship.

Title	Description
Public Health 101	These sessions provided opportunities for Fellows to learn about public health practice, research, and interventions. This will help them contribute to the campaign more effectively with an informed lens. **Tenet Addressed:** Campaign & Leadership Development

Data Collection

According to Yin (2013), case study findings are substantiated and accepted as more accurate when multiple forms of data are collected and utilized. Thus, data triangulation – defined as, "the use of multiple methods or data sources in [qualitative] research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena" (Carter et al., 2014, pg. 545) – was important for this case study. The specific data sources are depicted in the table below.

Table 4. Data Sources

Data Sources
In-depth interviews
Observations
Document Analysis (observations and reflections, participant journals)

Youth Interviews

In-depth, semi-structured interviews with fellows served as a primary source of data and took place across three cohorts over four years (2016 – 2020). There were six interviews associated with the first cohort, seven with the second, and three with the final cohort. A semi-structured interview format was

utilized because CTG methodology seeks the emergence of meaning and understanding, which requires steering from pre-determined questions to the creation of new questions based on participant responses during the interview process. The original semi-structured interview guide was created with a lens on the sensitizing concepts of this study: SI, Critical Theory, and SJYD. As described earlier, SI in concerned with how people make meaning and take action based on that meaning, Critical Theory is concerned with challenging the oppressive, dehumanizing, and violent ways that exist in society, and SJYD is concerned with supporting youth in identifying, building, and acting within a critically conscious paradigm to remove barriers [for self and community needs] that have been historically and contemporarily placed by structurally violent systems meant to marginalize, dehumanize, and oppress people of color.

The interview guide was used to help those engaged in the research understand each participant's life history in relation to critical consciousness development and social injustice, engaging them in dialogue that was reflective of what critical consciousness meant to them, in light of their personal experiences. It also helped the research team understand supports – currently present or needed – and barriers in their lives that impact their ability to reach self-actualization and be social agents of change in their communities (see Appendix 2 for interview guide). The nature of CGT methodology, using semi-structured interviewing, allowed for much flexibility in the interview process; it allowed participants to introduce topics that they determined were important for the discussion and follow-up questions were used to obtain more information.

The individual interviews were completed once fellows had been a part of the fellowship for at least 6 to 9 months; this time frame was chosen because by that time, they would have been exposed to critical content from within their curriculum and fellowship experience relative to structural violence, critical consciousness, and social justice youth development. Each interview was conducted in-person at the YVPRC and lasted between 40 minutes to 2 hours. Interviewers included the researcher, program staff, and a graduate research assistant in the center. Fellows were paid as part-time employees of YVPRC; though the fellows had already consented to being researched as part of accepting the fellowship, they were incentivized for their interview time by being paid their hourly wage during the interview. Because the fellows were aware that their engagement in the LYVV Fellowship was as intervention co-developers and research participants, when engaging them in research participant portions of the intervention (ex: being interviewed), they were allowed to use a pseudonym so that their responses were not identifiable. So, the interviews were recorded with participants utilizing [and being referred to by the interviewer as] their chosen pseudonym.

Observations

Another key source of data used to enrich and complete the interview data were observations. Because one of the elements that created this bounded case under study was that it was 'bound' by organization, qualitative inquiry within organizational research is discussed in terms of '*inquiry from the outside'* and '*inquiry from the inside*' (Iacono, Brown & Holtham, 2009, pg. 42). According to

Evered and Louis (2001), organizations (or groups) are said to be micro societies within macro society, having their own unique customs and practices; therefore, participant observations within this micro society are exponentially beneficial in understanding a particular phenomenon from within it. '*Inquiry from the outside*' refers to a detached observational method of research in which the researcher is observing as an outsider to the organization, while '*inquiry from the inside*' refers to observational inquiry as an insider, being a part of the organization (2009). For this research study, I operated in both forms.

During the course of this study, there were times when I was engaged as more than just an observer, but a participant-observer, who Yin (2013) describes as a researcher who takes on a specific role during fieldwork inquiry. '*Inquiry from the inside*' occurred during the times that I actively engaged within the fellowship; there were times that I facilitated and/or co-facilitated curricular sessions, I also traveled with participants for programmatic activities as program staff. Inquiry from the outside occurred during those times that I was specifically observing the program as a whole; observing participants within the fellowship as they engaged with one another, as they engaged with internal and external partners of the initiative, as they engaged and/or led discussions with external youth, as well as their engagement in curricular times in which I was not a (co)facilitator. I also observed program staff and their engagement of the fellows.

I recorded observations in a few ways; I would take notes in my journal during observations as an outsider. However, as an inside observer, I would reflect afterwards by either audio recording my observations and reflections

immediately afterwards, or I would journal my observations and reflections. I would describe my engagement as an insider, noting the activities, experiences, and indented outcomes of that particular engagement. I would review programmatic activities in light of what they meant for critical consciousness development in the participants, while also reflecting on the personal impact these experiences had on my own state of consciousness. Observational journal entries could range from one notebook page to five, and audio recordings ranged from 15 minutes to 45 minutes. Audio recordings were transcribed and analyzed along with the interviews and other documents of interest for the study.

Document Analysis

Document analysis is a useful tool in providing rich, in-depth information that complements the data collected via interviews and observations. As stated earlier, it is imperative to obtain data from multiple sources for case study research; Yin (2001) said that “documents can yield invaluable data about things not directly observed” (pg. 147). Data obtained from document analysis helps to inform the study in a way that enhances research credibility, specifically related to the findings and interpretations (Merriam, 1998). In this study, reflective journals, from both program staff and participants, as well as notes and flip chart writings from debriefing sessions were incorporated in the analysis of documents.

Reflective journals from youth participants were incorporated to ensure that all youth had an opportunity give voice to any particular area of the Fellowship and/or the content being shared within it. Though the youth met often, some youth at differing stages of their time in the fellowship were not always

comfortable sharing in group settings, so the opportunity was provided for them to share their thoughts and feedback through journaling. Program staff would sometimes provide prompts for writing, and other times the youth could choose to journal whatever they chose.

Reflective journals from program staff were incorporated to ensure that those who were overseeing the program had an opportunity to reflect on the process that they were taking youth through. Their thoughts and experiences related to how youth make meaning of the content and experiences of the fellowship provided an opportunity to further understand any process model created relative to how critical consciousness was developing – if at all – within the participants.

The debriefing sessions were facilitated similarly to focus groups within the program. Program staff or Fellows could request a debriefing session; these were generally held in response to either learning about a major historical or contemporary local and/or national event, or experiencing an event, that stirred emotions and recognizably needed to be sorted through. Data was gathered via flip charts or notes taken by program staff and were incorporated to support the need to understand pivotal moments in critical consciousness development among participants.

Data Management

Once interviews and observations were recorded, they were uploaded and saved to locked file on a locked shared drive, with restricted access only to those named in the Institutional Review Board approval documents. They were sent for

transcription via a transcription service, and then transcripts were reviewed against the recorded interview – by the research who conducted the interview – to catch any potential errors before beginning analysis (Tuckett, 2005). Observations were reviewed by the researcher who recorded them. Once the recordings were listened to with the transcripts for accuracy, they were deleted. Paper documents (memos, field notes, situational maps, information sheets, journal entries, observation notes, debriefing session notes) were locked in a file drawer in the office of the investigator of the research; only the IRB approved investigator(s) had access to this file drawer.

Transcripts – that were already de-identified – were uploaded to Dedoose, a web-based data analysis software program that is password protected (Sociocultural Research Consultants, LLC, 2014). Qualitative research is known for its labor intensity; it requires a lot of time in both data collection and analysis. This software program is known for its ability to store large amounts of data, multiple forms of data, and assist with the amount of time it takes to engage in the analysis process (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008). While it is great for data storing, data sorting, and data analysis, this software does not interpret; so, it is important to note that it is still up to the researcher to determine meaning as a result of the analytic process.

Data Analysis and Rigor

As stated, and rationalized earlier in this chapter, CGT analytical techniques were best suited for the analytic goals of this study. In this section, I will describe the coding process, memo writing, diagramming, constant

comparison, situational analysis, sufficiency, saturation, and theoretical sampling, and reflexivity as essential techniques within this interpretive process. Though presented in a linear context, it is critical to note that these analysis processes occurred iteratively with the data collection processes, as is required for CGT (Charmaz, 2014).

Coding

The first phase of coding is open coding; this is where the properties of various concepts are initially explored. In this phase, codes were developed that represented the preliminary concepts in the data. Questions like, “What is actually happening in this data?”, guided the open coding process and was meant to support the discovery of novel theoretical possibilities within initial engagements with the data (Charmaz, 2014). The purpose of separating the data and then labeling – or coding – them is to help the researcher iteratively compare and contrast related events/context within the data set. This happens by organizing all the pieces of data (ex: quotes) that are labeled with the same code; this increases rigor associated with this analysis technique as it pushes the researcher out of any preconceived notions and/or biases related to the research (Saldana, 2009).

During the open coding process, gerunds are utilized for coding each line of transcribed documents; gerunding helps to place emphasis on participant actions and meanings (Charmaz, 2014). This was conducted with six interviews from the first cohort, combined with transcribed observations, other documents for analysis relative to this cohort, and memo writing. This step in the process

helped to create focused codes that were grounded in prominent actions, processes and strategies discussed by participants. From the gerunds, 30 focused codes emerged; these codes were then applied to all of the transcripts. Once the focused codes were applied, memo writing occurred in order to make comparisons across multiple sources supporting the codes, as well as to compare codes to one another in attempt to define the relationships between them (Charmaz, 2014). This process supported the next step in the coding process, known as axial coding, which helped to make connections and identify relationships between focused codes to establish higher level analytic codes, or categories (2014). The 30 focused codes collapsed into 11 analytic categories. With clarification of analytic categories, properties and dimensions associated with those categories became easier to identify. Properties are the characteristics of the formulated analytic categories and dimensions describe a range of characteristics, values or positions each property may have (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

The 11 analytic categories (codes) were used to develop a codebook in Dedoose, and the six interviews – and accompanying documents – were moved from the locked shared drive to Dedoose and re-coded with the new codebook. The interview guide was expanded based upon what emerged from this first iterative analytic process, and data collection and analysis for the next two cohorts was informed by this emergence. Upon engaging with the data collected from the second cohort, two additional analytic categories emerged and were added to the codebook in Dedoose; I also went back to the original six interviews

to ensure that I applied the new, emergent codes from the expanded codebook. The third cohort's data were then coded using the expanded codebook, and a process model began to become evident.

Memo Writing

Memo writing is a core practice withing grounded theory, making it a core practice in CGT analysis as well (Glaser, 1978; Charmaz, 2014). It captures the researcher's initial responses to the data; emerging analytical ideas and insights are recorded as concepts and categories are initially developed, then re-ordered, sometimes abandoned, and sometimes revived through continuously collecting and interpreting data at the same time (Glaser, 1978). The primary investigator for this study engaged in memo writing throughout varying stages of the data collection and analysis processes; these memos helped to identify concepts, categories and ultimately supported the interpretation of the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Strauss, 2015).

Diagramming

Throughout the analytic process, as codes, analytic categories, properties, and dimensions developed, I explored them and their relationships through diagramming; Corbin and Strauss (2015) share that this is a beneficial analytic tool. During the latter phases of the research process, I utilized these visual depictions for member checks and in the second and third cohort interviews. They were edited throughout the research process as concepts/categories emerged from the data and by participants when I used them for member checking.

Constant Comparison

As mentioned in the coding section, constant comparison was another rigor building analytic tool (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) utilized within this study. This is a process of sorting and organizing passages of raw data into groups (or codes) according to particular attributes, and then organizing for groups (codes) in a way that produces a newly structured framework and/or theory (2015). This method helped me to contradict, expand upon, or support my existing data.

Situational Analysis

Situational analysis is a qualitative analytic strategy created by Adele Clarke (2005) that provides the researcher with practical mapping tools to design and conduct analysis of qualitative material. Clarke, Friese, & Washburn (2015) explained that situational analysis stands alone as an analytic strategy, but for its utilization within CGT, she and colleagues had this to say, “As an analytic approach...SA can be used along with CGT in the same project to *also* analyze and portray action – basic social processes – in that situation” (pg. 26). There are three main mapping approaches in situational analysis: situational maps, social world/arenas maps, and positional maps. These maps help to center the phenomenon and through mapping the data, allows the researcher to empirically construct the situation of inquiry (Morse et al., 2016). For this study, both situational and social world/arenas maps were organized into an ordered map. Situational maps portray the dominant human, non-human and discursive elements of the research and provokes analysis of the nature of relationships between them (Clark, 2005). Social worlds/arenas maps portray the collective

actors, major non-human elements, and the arenas of commitment and discourse in which they occur, bringing in more meso-level interpretations of the situation (2015). Examining both and the interrelations between them was critical for this research study that has to consider micro-, meso-, and macro-level factors.

Sufficiency, Saturation, and Theoretical Sampling

Participants ranged in age from 16-24 years old and were selected for this study based upon their participation in the LYVV Fellowship at the YVPRC. I achieved 100% participation for this study, utilizing both consent and assent forms that were administered according to the age of the participant in the study. While participants were not purposefully sampled due to the constraints of the bounded case and so theoretical sampling was not an option, I employed strategies for theoretical saturation because an analytic goal of the research was to build a context-specific framework from the data.

Standards regarding sample size in qualitative research do not exist; there is more emphasis placed on depth of data rather than sample size (Padget, 2008). A goal in qualitative inquiry is to achieve saturation and sufficiency within the iterative process of data collection and analysis and this generally supports the determination of how many participants engage in the research. So, for this study, because it was a bounded case, to ensure sufficiency and theoretical saturation, in addition to the rigorous coding, constant comparison, diagramming, and mapping processes, I also employed member checking as a strategy to ensure thick, rich data, absent of any gaps. Member checking occurred with nine

participants (six individual member checks and one focus group of three) and two program coordinators. This strategy allowed for me to go back to participants and clarify obscurities in the data or fill in gaps of where a previous topic needed more explanation (Charmaz, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Theoretical saturation was said to be achieved once the context-specific framework was saturated with data that completed analytic categories, properties, and dimensions, as well as the nature of relationship between them were thoroughly understood and clarified (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser, 1978).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in a qualitative study refers to its level of rigor (Amankwaa, 2016; Shenton, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and includes the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and reflexivity. Credibility is the first and most essential criterion of trustworthiness; it requires that the researcher connect the study findings to the real world as a demonstration of truth within the findings (Amankwaa, 2016; Shenton, 2004). Two well-known strategies for building credibility are triangulation and member checking (Amankwaa, 2016; Yin, 2014). Transferability is the degree to which the research can be to other contexts with different respondents (Amankwaa, 2016; Shenton, 2004); dependability refers to the stability of the findings over a period of time, it involves participant engagement and involvement in what the findings are, how they are interpreted, and the recommendations associated with it (Amankwaa, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Confirmability refers to the degree in which finding can be confirmed by other

researchers (cite) and reflexivity refers to the critical reflection process of the researcher situated within the research experience, being able to identify biases, preconceived notions, preferences, as well as relational elements to participants that may affect how participant's answer questions (Amankwaa, 2016; Shenton, 2004; Pagget, 2008).

As has been discussed in various forms in this chapter, multiple methods were utilized to establish and increase rigor within this study. For credibility, I exercised data and method triangulation to assess emerging analytic categories for their properties and dimensions (Yin, 2014). I also engaged in member checking, repeatedly revisiting the developing process model, and paying close attention to deviant cases emerged (Creswell & Poth, 2018); a process of respondent validation occurred through individual member checking interviews and focus groups. For transferability, thick descriptions were used to provide detailed descriptions [and interpretations] of behavior, experiences, and context related to the research (Korstjens & Moser, 20184). For dependability, an audit trail was kept for transparency of each step taken from the onset of the research process to the reporting of findings (Amankwaa, 2016). I also engaged in peer debriefings with other research staff and members of my committee to ensure that there were varying perspectives on the research process, lending to dependability through external oversight (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For confirmability, I engaged in an iterative team-based data collection and analysis process rooted in constructivist grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2014).

Lastly, to ensure confirmability, an inter-rater reliability test, also known as a kappa statistic test (Cohen, 1960), was utilized by the principal investigator and a second researcher who had supported the research. The kappa statistic tests the degree to which the data collected accurately represents the variables measured (McHugh, 2012). As with most statistical correlations, the kappa ranges from –1 to +1 and McHugh (2012) breaks down the range values that determine the extent of agreement between two (or more) raters (or coders) (see Table 5).

Table 5: Kappa Statistic Test Level of Agreement

Kappa Score	Level of Agreement
≤ 0	No Agreement
0.01 - 0.20	None to Slight agreement
0.21 - 0.40	Fair Agreement
0.41 - 0.60	Moderate Agreement
0.61 - 0.80	Substantial Agreement
0.81 - 1.00	Almost Perfect to Perfect Agreement

Another researcher and I coded transcripts independently and then took a kappa test after the addition of the second cohort data, which added two analytical categories to the code book; inter-rater reliability was achieved through a 0.83 composite test score. We desired a stronger score before applying the codebook to the rest of the data, so, we discussed amongst coders – bringing in a dissertation committee member – and then retook the kappa test to achieve a 0.96 composite test score. With this score being much closer to perfect agreement, the codebook was applied to the remaining data.

Reflexivity (Researcher Positionality & Assumptions)

While conducting this study, I operated with certain assumptions that are tied to my experiences as an African American woman, a public health professional, and a person who grew up in marginalized conditions created by structural violence. I assumed that youth of color hold a unique place in the U.S., and with that, they hold unique perspectives of their social, political, and cultural worlds. I assumed that critical consciousness was a desired outcome for youth of color – even if they didn't have the proper terminology – that deep down, they want to understand the "why" behind their current state, and what they could do to change it – whether or not they realized they had the agency to change it, the subconscious desire to change it was present (in my assumption). I also assumed that critical consciousness was both a process and an outcome, therefore, not a final state of being to be reached, but rather a process of attaining over and over based on life situations and life choices. I assumed the study participants would be open to interviewing, observations, and having their journals read due to the nature of relationship between them and the researchers engaged in their fellowship, and because of previous consent. Lastly, I assumed positive outcomes because I believe it to be an unconscious bias that can sometimes be had by those engaged in research.

In many ways, this research is tied to my personal identity. While that is the case, it also symbolizes an attempt to step out of my own experiences and become emersed in the lives of those who have similar experiences as me, but also have their own unique life context, experiences, and histories. I am an

African American Christian woman, pursuing a PhD in a predominantly white institution (PWI); I am a mom, a wife, a racial justice advocate, and an American citizen concerned about the state of our society. I have dealt with multiple forms of oppression, starting as early as 3rd grade, being "othered" by teachers because my skin color was a significant minority within the institution I attended. If I cut my life experiences into thirds, the first third encompassed economic and class oppression due to growing up in the oldest, and poorest, African American community in my city. It was positioned in the midst of wealth on each side, so that those who lived in my community had easy access to the low-level jobs as house workers and/or hotel and entertainment industry help for the wealthy White populations that surrounded it. I was blessed to have a mother who wanted more than the limitations placed on her, and so she ensured that I had access to opportunities that my peers and other family members did not. In that way, I also had a level of privilege.

The other present privileges in my life include being a Christian – which has been the dominant faith in the U.S. – and what my faith says it means to be a child of God. My faith won't let me remain in a place of despair because I ultimately have victory in Christ, no matter what situations and circumstances. I identify as heterosexual; I am a U.S. citizen; and I was afforded the opportunity to move away from the toxicities that sometimes exist in poor neighborhoods/communities of color through my mother's marriage to my bonus Dad. And while growing up in the "hood" comes with oppressive experiences, I also count it as a privilege that I now use to connect marginalized spaces with

spaces of power and influence. Both my professional and personal experiences have led me to an interest in critical consciousness development as I reflect on my own processes with the concept. I entered this research as a person processing through my own experiences and identifying critical moments in my youth that would have served me better had I been able to critically reflect, increase in my political self-efficacy, and then been given the opportunity to mobilize collectively with my peers to act against what I saw that I could recognize as unfair.

I have obviously made this a central point of my studies, reading articles and books, watching videos, and studying the context of this country and how it has shaped multiple aspects of my identity, including how I show up in particular spaces. I have deemed it critical to share the knowledge through research, and the translation of that research to practice, but also through engaging in movements steeped in dismantling oppression, dehumanization, and violence. I have engaged in both psychological and political processes for building resistance against injustice throughout my life. I believe that my own experiences with the concepts articulated in the study bring great insight to what I am exploring, however, I also recognize that my personal experiences could potentially taint outcomes. For this reason, I am articulating such matters in my study and will describe more in-depth under my rigor section, what I did to ensure a sound, rigorous study was performed.

Writing & Dissemination

The writing process for qualitative inquiry exists simultaneously with data collection and data analysis; writing is integral to the development of study results (Glaser, 1978; Silverman & Marvasti, 2008). While previous segments of the chapter have focused on the writing process within data collection and analysis, this section will focus on writing for the sake of dissemination. As a researcher, I have an obligation to write academically as a contributor to science, and supporter of knowledge sharing with others in my field to help advance new applications of what is now known based on my research (Doshi, Dickerson, Healy, Vedula, & Jefferson, 2013). I also have a responsibility to the participants within the research to ensure meaningful utilization of results (Fernandez, Kodish, & Weijer, 2003). For this reason, there has been transparency with and inclusion of participants throughout my research process; participants have received a presentation of results, but will also receive a copy of the final product (Seidman, 1991).

Dissemination will also happen in association with my work on local and national platforms that seek inquiry into strategies for violence prevention.

Summary

In summary, this chapter gives an overview of the case study approach, as well as details the CGT analysis techniques utilized for data collection, analysis, and the reporting of the findings in the next chapter. Overall, the aim of the case study approach is to explore a phenomenon in-depth, within its real-life context. The data collection and analysis techniques were chosen to unveil an

emergent process, through the creation of a context-specific interpretive framework that contained concepts most significant within the data (Padget, 2008). While the entire experience of each specific participant within the case study is not reflected, the next chapter does capture the most significant process that emerged in relation to the shared experiences of participants.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

Chapter four documents study results in relation to the following three research questions: *1) How do the LYVV Fellows define and make meaning of critical consciousness development? 2) What is the process of critical consciousness development, described through the experiences of the LYVV Fellowship participants?* and *3) What is the impact of critical consciousness development on the LYVV Fellowship participants?* Through the implementation of the methods discussed in chapter three, four main findings were identified that aligned with the research questions: 1) the development of a definition, 2) the process, 3) personal impact, and 4) the influences. Each question was explored within the frame of the overall study aims, which were to: 1) explore the utilization of SJYD as a public health intervention strategy, 2) identify how urban minority youth within the intervention experience a process of critical consciousness development, and 3) determine the intervention's impact on the youth as they participated in a fellowship that utilized a SJYD framework.

Study Participant Description

There were 16 youth participants in this study, with an age range of 16 to 24 years. All participants were part of the fellowship conducted by the University of Louisville's Youth Violence Prevention Research Center. The participants were

predominantly Black, with one participant who identified as white. Six participants identified as female, nine identified as male, and one identified as trans male. They each chose a pseudonym to safeguard their identities. To further safeguard identity, throughout the results section, sometimes pseudonyms are used, and other times they are referred to as “participant” to keep from identifying who may have potentially provided certain information.

Table 6. Relevant Participant Demographic Information

Chosen Pseudonym	Age at first interview	Gender	Race	Year of Interview	Cohort
Odd	23	Trans male	White	2018	2
Cardi	19	Female	Black	2018	2
P-dub	17	Male	Hebrew Israelite	2018	2
Q	17	Male	Black	2018	2
Zee	21	Male	Black	2018	2
Easy E	17	Male	Black	2017	1
Ex	23	Male	Black	2017	1
Jay	16	Male	Black	2018	2
Lisa	18	Female	Black	2017	1
Angel	17	Female	Black	2017	1
Not Important	18	Female	Black	2017	1
JJ	16	Female	Black	2017	1
Alice	17	Female	Black	2019	2
Nocturnal	18	Male	Black	2019	3
Cash	23	Male	Black	2019	3
James	19	Male	Black	2019	3

There were also five coordinators over the span of the Fellowship who were observed during their interactions with the fellows, and four of them kept journal reflections and summaries of varying experiences within the fellowship. These data were used within analysis that yielded the findings below.

Overview of Findings

To help understand the complex nature of what is written within this chapter, Table 5 below depicts the main findings, their key properties, and a summary of what each finding reveals. Below Table 7 is Figure 1 that depicts the content specific framework that emerged from the findings.

Table 7. Summary of Findings

Finding	Properties or Analytic Categories	Summary
The Development of a Definition	"Becoming aware" "An ongoing process" Necessary for growth in youth Foundational for public health	A descriptive analysis of the characteristics of critical consciousness as described by the participants.
The Process	"Initial Thinking" Experience(s) Knowing and the pursuit of knowledge Self-awareness "You See It"	An emergent process of critical consciousness development as described and/or experienced by participants.
Personal Impact	Knowing and the pursuit of knowledge Self-awareness "The goal" Unintended Consequences	A descriptive analysis of the varying impacts of critical consciousness development as described and/or experienced by participants.
The Influences	Length of time/Extent of exposure to content and concepts Personal & societal factors Supports Barriers Faith	A descriptive analysis of characteristics that influence both critical consciousness development and how participants were impacted by that development.

Figure 1. Context Specific Framework

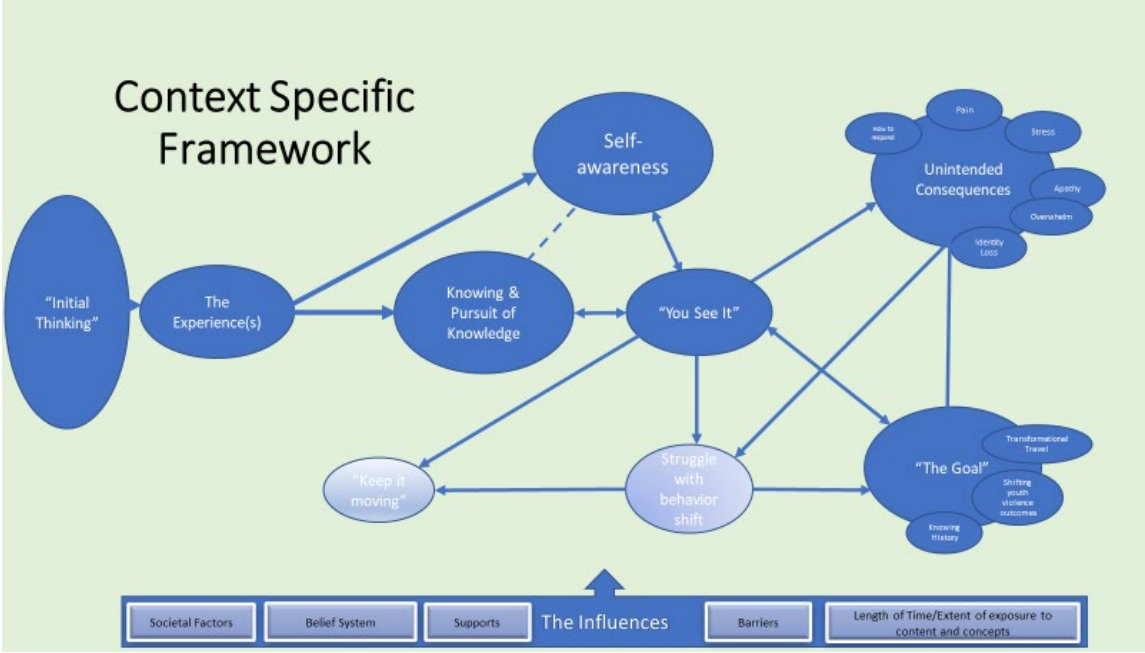

Figure 1 depicts the relationships between three of the four findings (the process, personal impact, and the influences), which creates the context specific framework sought by the researchers. I will describe the overall framework and then detail each component of it within the associated findings section. The framework begins with the emergent process for critical consciousness development, as experienced by the participants. Within the process, participants moved through the phases of “initial thinking”, experience(s), knowing and pursuit of knowledge, and self-awareness to arrive at the pivotal point of “critical consciousness”. They did so by two separate – but linked – pathways in that after a pivotal experience, some participants moved to self-awareness and then to the “you see it" state of being, while other participants moved from experiences to knowing and pursuit of knowledge and then to the “you see it” state of being. Both self-awareness, as well as knowing and the pursuit of knowledge, were

described as part of the process and a part of the impact. There is a reinforcing loop between “you see it” and self-awareness, meaning that there are times where participants discuss an experience of critical consciousness development and it leads to them being more aware of themselves, while alternatively, other participants describe becoming more self-aware, and that leading to an experience with critical consciousness. This same reinforcing loop exists between “you see it” and knowing and the pursuit of knowledge.

Once in the “you see it” state of being, participants discuss an urge or feeling to do something with what they now know or understand. This leads us to the personal impact finding, which describes the varying impacts of critical consciousness development on participants, as described by participants. There are multiple pathways identified that followed the “you see it” state of being. Some participants discuss an inability to effectively do anything with what they now know or understand and so they “keep it moving”. Others discuss struggling with behavioral shifts, and from there, they either keep it moving or move towards “the goal” of engaging in action that disrupts cycles of oppression, dehumanization, and violence. Some move straight from the “you see it” state to “the goal”, which depicts the desired outcome of critical consciousness development. But others move to unintended consequences before moving to “the goal” or they move from unintended consequences to struggling with behavior change, which showed to lead to either “keep it movin’” or to “the goal.”

Lastly, at the bottom of the framework are depicted the influencers of both the process and how participants are impacted by the process.

Finding I: The Development of a Definition

Finding I was predominantly derived from participant interviews, but also through document analysis of journal entries, group debriefing sessions, and member checks. It began from two interview questions: 1) *What is critical consciousness and what does the term mean to you?* and 2) *Why do you think this is important for public health intervention?* The study aim was to explore the utilization of SJYD as a public health intervention strategy by understanding youth's perspectives on its most critical component, critical consciousness development. This theme is descriptive in nature and encompasses the varying perspectives of participants in how they define and make meaning of critical consciousness – as influenced by the intervention as well as external to the intervention. Within the definition and significance of critical consciousness development, there were four distinct properties: 1)" becoming aware", 2) "an ongoing process", 3) necessary for growth in youth, 4) necessary for public health intervention. The first two properties were derived from direct quotations from participants. The last two property titles resulted from co-constructed focused codes, representing multiple participant perspectives.

Becoming Aware

In interviews, Cash, Zee, Ex, Lisa, and JJ defined critical consciousness in terms of "becoming aware." Cash described it as "the process of becoming aware of hidden social problems." Lisa simply stated it is to "become aware of what you don't know about history and being self-aware." Ex said this, "I define it when I talk to other people and make it simple. I always say your awareness of

where you at in the world, who you are, and what's going on around you. It's just becoming aware of it all." This sentiment was echoed by Zee when he defined it as, "how aware you are, how woke you are as we say, but just knowin' what may be tryin' to go on behind closed doors that affects you at different levels"; though he did not use the exact in-vivo code, he too, described a need to be aware as a main point in his definition. JJ articulated that it is "...learning the truth. We're not always taught the truth, but it's framed in a certain way to make you believe it's true. So just knowing the truth, knowing the schemes that exist to keep the elite and the poor." In Angel's interview, she presented from a different perspective as she discussed whether or not she believed she was critically conscious, but her sentiments still aligned with critical consciousness being defined as becoming aware. She had this to say:

> I feel like if I was more into the way things are, had more understanding about the way things are handled, like within our society and within our government and within our communities. If I was able to gain a deeper understanding and awareness of how exactly they tie in with each other, I feel like then I would be able to say that I'm critically conscious.

It is important to note that participants defined critical consciousness in the context of critical action; no one defined it in relation to critical motivation or critical action. How they define the concept impacts how they describe experiences with the concept, which also impacts how they perceive being impacted by the concept.

An Ongoing Process

Many participants described critical consciousness development as "an ongoing process" or cycle that keeps going and going without an end. According to all

participants, you can be at a point of critical consciousness, but there is always another point to reach, therefore, it is continually building on knowledge and through experiences. The next part of Angel's explanation of critical consciousness above was that, though she felt like she needed to know more to be critically conscious, she "*didn't believe it is a final destination, so it's okay if I'm not all the way there yet."* Odd said:

> I think I'm critically conscious. At least I like to think that I am. I've learned a lot in this fellowship, and it has helped me grow to be more critically conscious, but I don't think I've 'arrived'. I don't think anyone has ever 'arrived' because there's always more to know, you know?

Ex denotes a daily strive to increase his critical consciousness with the statement that, "Each day I wake up trying to do more things to become more aware so that I can help my people." James discussed it as "an ongoing process" of continual engagement with knowledge/information and with people; he said,

> So, to me, it's an ongoing process, and um, I think it's like lifelong. As you keep going in the process, you learn more and more information. You engage with your peers as a collective about the knowledge you're learning. It's just continually opening that next level of understanding. With all our superheroes in the social justice work, the Garvey's, the King's, the Ali's, the X's and so forth. They were all giants in the movement and helped a lot of people know and see injustice. If any one of 'em was still here, I don't think they would even say that they were fully critically conscious.

Nocturnal also discussed critical consciousness in terms of "an ongoing process," but he spoke in terms of it being a difficult journey rather than with the same optimism as his peers. Most responses generally notated an understanding that it was a process and it was okay that they were not there yet, but spoke in terms of believing that they would get there. In opposition to that sentiment, Nocturnal said this,

> You gotta look at it from the perspective of like a long-term goal. You put the work in, it's an ongoing process, and you know, you hope it pays off in the long run. I look at it like math. Like we go through different levels of math based on how we do at the previous level. And it gets harder and harder the further you go up. So like, critical consciousness has that same type of vibe, that same type of trajectory, you feel me? You keep goin' and goin' as you grow, but it gets harder and harder. You just gotta decide if you wanna be that mathematician or not, and I don't know if I really wanna be a whole mathematician.

During a member checking interview with Q, as he was reviewing the interpretive framework for accuracy, he stated that, "no place on the diagram was a place of arrival, or a place that you stay", he said, "you move from one to another depending on what's happening in society and what's happening in your personal life."

Necessary for Growth in Youth

Social Justice Youth Development was the foundational framework for the fellowship. There were many discussions and practical engagement with the concept and how it was being experienced in the fellowship. Data from participant journals reveal their thoughts and reflections on what was important for youth development, the significance of social justice youth development, and the experiences of critical consciousness development within it. In his journal entry below, Ex expresses his excitement with becoming aware of a social justice concept, known as adultism, that he was introduced to through the SJYD Fellowship. He illustrates an example of the significance of being critically conscious – or becoming aware as they have defined it – in relation to this social justice issue and discusses his plans to utilize that consciousness for social action with youth. The exploration of this concept through the SJYD framework is

significant for him and what he perceives as necessary for youth/young adult development. His entry reads:

> Thank you Social Justice Youth Development! This concept of adultism is changing my life on some real shit. Equitable power in youth voice is crucial and really has been missing in a lot of spaces that I navigate as a young leader. With this knowledge of how adults can be discriminatory against youth, I can use that in spaces where I see youth being silenced. I'm bringing this knowledge to every space and it's critical that young people know it's a thing. We can make more change the more our voices are respected and included as equitable at the table.

With a similar sentiment regarding a component of SJYD in the fellowship, which is the centering and elevating of youth voice, Lisa mentions in a journal entry that,

> I think I appreciate most the fact that I'm more vocal. Coming into the Fellowship I really wouldn't voice my opinion, I would stay silent. But it was constantly shared with me that I'm important and I have an important role. I appreciated our lunch with the Elders session with Ms. Mattie Jones, she was old but she was unapologetic. She was so loud. She was an activator for me, she gave me permission even though I know it was already told to me that I was important and my voice was significant in center [YVPRC]. I guess it's not really discovering my voice, but owning my voice like Auntie Maxine, I can reclaim my time!lol Not all the way there yet, but I think I can get there now.

While this also denotes a level of how the program impacted her, it illustrates the significance of SJYD techniques in raising critical consciousness and supporting youth in developing their voice and place in society. When Lisa says, "she was old but she was unapologetic", we see that a stereotype about older adulthood – or ageism – is being challenged, as well adultism, as she claims the right to and begins to own her voice. Within the fellowship, lunch with the elders (Table 3) served as a way to connect the youth with elders in the

community to have intergenerational conversations around social and racial justice, as well as to glean from one another what social action can or should look like in spite of injustice. Lisa was empowered to no longer be silent, as evidenced by the influence of a past well-known, local elder social justice warrior (Mattie Jones) and a current [to the time of the journal entry] well-known, national social justice warrior politician (Maxine Waters). She needed these examples, this experience, to unlock a part of herself – her voice; this is evidence that SJYD is necessary for critical consciousness development in youth.

P-dub mentioned in his interview that the fellowship should be a standard for youth engagement because “critical consciousness is foundational for my growth, I was born needing to know this shit, so what are we even doing in these youth spaces if they aren’t entrenched with activism, especially arts activism.” He later mentions the need for skill building around social problematizing and critically analyzing power dynamics between youth and other groups in society, this is a depiction of the necessity of SJYD for his growth, from his perspective. He says that:

> We need support in picking situations apart that we deal with. Picking them apart and understanding the many facets of them or any problem really. Then helping us try to figure out what we can do about it. A lot of times we don’t know who to go to or how to do something about a problem. You see leaders and politicians but don’t really know what they actually mean when they talk and whether or not we can approach and they will listen, so like yeah, we need this piece of the puzzle sooner rather than later.

> Cardi believed that knowing pivotal African American history was important for her development, as well as the development of her peers, because it helps them to recognize the power that they have as youth. She recognized that social change has largely been activated by youth

> and could begin to situate herself as a change agent based on exposure to content relevant to her racial identity as well as her identity as a youth.
>
> Cardi: the young people is always where the revolution starts. I just learned how young Martin Luther King was when he started. I saw some stuff in the curriculum about the freedom riders and when I did research, I saw how young some of them were. Like 14 years old. So like they were the change agents of their time and we say that's what we want to be. But sometimes it's a scary thought and you don't think you can accomplish what they did. Or just realizing that I don't even know a lot of stuff to even be impactful just because I didn't know, you know? So, my development in this area is important. And my peer's development is important because we got next. Or we are supposed to have next.

Foundational for Public Health

Because the fellowship was situated within a public health intervention, the fellows were engaged in foundational sessions and workshops related to public health research and practice. They were asked in their interviews if they thought critical consciousness development was important for public health intervention, and many participants agreed that it was not only important but should be a primary focus due to what they had come to understand as foundations of public health practice. Easy E said in his interview that "with what public health is trying to accomplish, you know, population level change, it's critical to have interventions that have strategies geared towards understanding what's causing the underlying problems that are helpin' to facilitate outcomes for individuals." A focus on population health improvement is a key component of public health practice, as well as a focus on groups that have been marginalized based on race, sex, gender, age, and socioeconomic status (Braveman, Kumanyika, Fielding, et al., 2011). Alice found connection with the need to understand racial marginalization in public health, she stated in her interview

that, “working with predominantly black communities requires that you understand the context of the community and what the community has been through”, which means that a history of the community has to be understood in order to properly engage and improve outcomes for that community. This validates the need for theories and methodologies that account for social and political influences because both help to contextualize how individuals are experiencing certain health outcomes.

In a debriefing session, focused on wealth and health outcomes, the fellows theorized about interventions that would drive up wealth in Black communities experiencing marginalization. They utilized the social ecological model, a public health framework, to move through strategies that could be effective from the individual level to the societal level. Their strategy at every level included raising awareness, which is the foundational premise of how they define critical consciousness. The fellows present in the session talked through this together and notes were taken to document their collective thought process for addressing this particular issue, rather than individual voice.

At the individual level, it was noted that their needed to be “awareness raised in individuals about the wealth gap and the difference between wealth and income,” stating that once there was knowledge of the difference then “an intervention of financial literacy would be beneficial”. They moved to the relational level of the ecological model and it was noted that there needed to be “awareness raised in relational settings so that dialogue with others can happen regarding an issue effecting both parties”; the noted viable solution for this would

be “to have people in a photovoice project together where collectively they talk about what is known about the wealth gap, it’s history, and what they can do collectively to change it”. For the community level, they said that “awareness should be raised at the community level through a campaign to visualize the effects of and the history behind the wealth and income gaps” – this strategy likely surfaced as they were themselves a part of a community level strategy for violence prevention that utilized a campaign for awareness building. It was noted that a good “strategy at the community level could be a co-op,” referring to cooperative economics in which community members join together and own equitable shares of a business to create community wealth. Lastly, at the societal level, it was noted that, “awareness should be raised at local, state, and national levels” through “advocating for policies that create equity in education and employment.” As identified through their process of addressing this public health issue, critical consciousness development was a significant component for how they believed issues should be addressed within the field.

In a member checking session with Jean, we were discussing the findings and she took interest in this particular property. She had this to say about public health’s infrastructure for youth development:

> Oh, this is accurate. Public health really doesn’t have any youth development frameworks. Think about it, we borrow from community engagement strategies, which are typically developed to engage community members over 18. Just like with community, youth are asked to participate so their voice is represented for the sake of representation, but there’s no truly shared decision-making power or capacity building for them to be the change agents for their community and environment. Because the Fellowship engages youth from marginalized groups, it’s particularly important to engage in youth development frameworks that not only address

> youth adult power dynamics, but also historical and contemporary context in which their marginalization is rooted.

This supports both the current property, as well as the previous property, which denotes critical consciousness development as significant for youth development overall.

Summary of The Development of a Definition

The initial analytic work of this study was to understand how the participants defined and made meaning of critical consciousness as a concept. There were four properties of the definition, grounded in the voices of the fellows ("becoming aware", "an ongoing process", necessary for growth in youth, and foundational for public health) that descriptively supported their understanding of the concept and its significance. "Becoming aware" referenced a coming into the understanding of social issues and what contributes to oppression, dehumanization, and violence in the world. It was also defined as "an ongoing process" to denote that there is not an arrival point, according to participants, critical consciousness development is an iterative process that takes place over time, multiple times, as influenced by personal and societal factors. It is important to note that within their definition, they only described critical consciousness as a state of mind, becoming aware. This reflects the critical reflection component of critical consciousness, but not the other two components of critical motivation or critical action. How they defined the concept is important in relation to how they describe the experiences and impacts of critical consciousness development. In relation to the significance of the concept, participants described that it was necessary for growth in youth and foundational to public health intervention. They

discussed that the concept of critical consciousness development, being a significant outcome of SJYD, is key for helping them develop critical thinking skills, their voices, and opportunities for critical action against the people and systems that marginalize them. They purport that if public health has a focus on populations that have been historically marginalized, then it should deploy theories and methods that address factors contributing to their marginalization. The context of those populations should be centered in the intervention with a critical lens toward what is at the root of the public health problem being addressed.

FINDING II: The Process

The second aim of the study was to identify how urban minority youth within the intervention experience a process of critical consciousness development, and the second question posed was: *What is the process of critical consciousness development, described through the experiences of the LYVV Fellowship participants?* This analytic category, again, was mostly derived from interview data, but was supported by member checking interviews and focus groups as well as document analysis of journal entries and observations. Five analytic stages make up this finding and represent a different stage of the process; those stages are: 1) “initial thinking”, 2) the experience(s), 3) knowing and the pursuit of knowledge, 4) self-awareness, and 5) “you see it”. The first and fifth phases are titled with in-vivo quotes from the participants and their reasons for those titles are explained in each phase. The remaining titles were co-constructed focused codes that best supported the explanation of the process.

Initial Thinking

From the data, a process of critical consciousness development starts with an original thought/opinion/state-of-being held by the participant and the stage title created for this was *Initial Thinking*. Participants chose this title to replace the title created by the researcher, as they deemed the original title “too long” and “hard to connect with because it’s just too deep, like deeper than it needs to be”, during a member checking focus group. Data excerpts were coded under this stage of the process if they discussed thought processes or ways of being and/or behaving prior to gaining awareness of historic and/or contemporary social issues and how they impacted individuals, communities, and society as a whole.

From the interview data, prompted by a question asked about whether the participants felt like they had grown or changed as a result of becoming critically aware, many answered by talked in terms of before and after. JJ said:

> I’ve changed in my understanding of like injustices and how much they are a part of our history and like the foundation of our country. Like before, it’s like you just know you’re different because your black, and sometimes you can like recognize that just something is just different with how you’re treated, but you don’t really know why. It’s kinda just what it is and nothing to really think about. But when you start understanding why [you’re different], you really have to be different.

This depicts that there was an initial thought process – or way of being – prior to exposure to information and/or experiences relative to historic and contemporary social ills. Odd followed with similar sentiments, stating that his way of thinking shifted within the Fellowship, in their interview response, they stated, “There’s a lot of stuff that I didn’t know before I started working here. I just didn’t know some of this stuff. I had never even heard the term redlining, for example.” Jay further

confirmed when he stated in his interview that, “When I first started, um, I was a totally different person, totally different. I came in smart, I knew a whole lot of stuff, but quickly recognized that I was ignorant. I was literally living in the interpersonal violence, living in the structural violence, and just didn’t know”.

Participants were able to write about whatever they wanted to write about in their journals and could write as much or as little as they chose. There were times when program staff would provide a prompt to guide the journal writing, that prompt would be written at the top of the page and was sometimes dated. Below are two participant journal entries that depict a way of thinking, processing, or being prior to applying [or even being aware that they could apply] social problematizing and critical thinking strategies that would help them connect more deeply and understand more clearly the social problem in which they were exploring or experiencing:

> Lisa’s Entry: (Critical Point of Awareness This Week, June 15th, 2016) Okay so this week an older white lady was visiting LCCC and she came into our office and offered us money. She asked us to pronounce [spell] these 5 words and said she would give us 5 dollars for it, like words like apple and detergent and logistics. So I ended up answering [spelling] the words and she gave me 5 dollars. Me and Angel went to Ms. Monique’s office to show her the money and she was so mad. I mean she wasn’t mad at me, but she was mad at the situation because the words were so simple. After we kinda talked through it I felt like crap. Like that lady really thought she was doing good for the little black kids in the community. That me, as a college student, working for a program connected to the University of Louisville, could spell apple. Like that’s how they see us for real for real? My initial thought was, ‘it’s a game, it’s easy money’, but after we talked through it, and talked through [the fact that] LCCC helps a lot of low-income black kids and a lot of times, like when white people come through, it’s like they are walking through the zoo exploring animals. And learning how they can help the animals. Her giving me the money was like her feeding me, the animal essentially,

> because she didn't recognize that I was separate from the LCCC kids. But I'm really not separate. And she should have been able to see that I wasn't in third grade, which is where you learn how to spell words like apple. So this was my critical point of awareness this week. I'm going to be mindful of the 'good job black girl' statements or like when I'm being professional and I hear things like 'you're really articulate'. My response from now on will be CLAP-BACK-ISH.

While there is a lot that can be unpacked from this journal entry, the gist of it denotes a way of thinking and/or being that the participant entered the fellowship with that impacted how she behaved and engaged within it. She is discussing an experience of being belittled without knowing that it was happening; this highlights her initial thinking.

Participant Not Important shares her initial understanding of individuals who are violent in west Louisville and how her narrative was shaped by the societal standard of how you are to talk about – and what you are supposed to believe as it relates to – individuals who engage in violence. Not Important's Entry:

> (Understanding of Violence, July 26th, 2016) "So when you talk about violence in the west, it's just like 'they stupid' or 'they killin each other for no reason' or like 'niggas is just dumb'. Like that's what it is when you see it or hear about it. Like nobody is trying to figure out what they [perpetrators of violence] are going through or what may have pushed them to the limit or nothin like that. So thinkin' like that wasn't my first mind."

Here she describes her initial way of thinking about the issue of violence, what she calls her "first mind". In her statement that "no one is trying to figure out what they are going through or what may have pushed them to the limit", she is engaging in a strategy learned within the fellowship, which was to examine root causes and try to figure out the underlying causes of a particular outcome. So,

she's reflecting here on how she previously thought, engaging in reflexivity around a concept she learned, and confirming that prior to being introduced to social problematizing as a strategy, she would not have thought to perceive violence in any other way.

As mentioned in chapter three, as the researcher, sometimes my role was within the program to facilitate curricular sessions and activities. Below is an entry I journaled after a session with the fellows that reviewed an instance of violence in the community and challenged them to think about all aspects of how we could have potentially gotten to that incident of violence. This incident was dissected based on what we knew at the time as facts of the case, what we knew about interpersonal violence from the science, and what role structural violence potentially played in the outcome. This entry supports this stage of the process, initial thinking, as it identifies my summation of where the Fellows were in this initial stage of the Fellowship.

> Researcher entry: (May 25th, 2016) WHEW…ok, this session was skressssssfullllllll! Yes, I'm writing skressful because stressful isn't enough to describe the session. So today I had to facilitate a session, tying structural racism [structural violence] to interpersonal violence, around the case of the two teenagers that were stabbed, burned, and placed in an alley. Some of the fellows are familiar with the young men and the grown man who have been identified as perpetrators in this case. They brought up that apparently the young men did what they did for the grown man because the grown man bought them designer things (shoes, clothes, belts, etc.). Most of them have a standpoint that everyone directly involved with the murders are essentially bad people. So, we reviewed this case using the social ecological model, which is a concept that we'd reviewed a week prior. We looked at intrapersonal risk and protective factors for violence, we looked at interpersonal risk and protective factors for violence, we looked at community level risk and protective factors for violence, and so on and so forth. While they could accept the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and to some degree, some community level factors associated with the incident, many of them could not come out of

> victim blaming. And not that we wanted them to say that the young and grown men were not ‘guilty’ or ‘wrong’ for what they allegedly did, but we did want them to understand all of the factors that go into making a crime more likely, looking at the social and political context around their communities. As a collective, they were not hearing this conversation today. Even my most conscious fellow was outnumbered, and so when they didn’t share his sentiments, he merged his opinions with theirs to a degree, though you could see that he had a deeper understanding of how and why violence happens. They blamed the boys for being stupid enough to murder for clothes, they blamed parents for not watching their kids and keeping their kids from doing what they considered dumb stuff. And they were angry about it. They argued with one another, as it is easy to identify that there are dominant personalities and dominant opinions in the group. So, we had to do a lot of re-grounding in our set principles of engagement as far as respect, the importance of every single person’s voice, and making room for everyone’s reflexive processes, discussion points, and questions. We were able to get through some group processing around the topic, but many of them are not yet clear on the connectivity or significance of structural barriers and problematic health outcomes like violence. Reminding myself that this is the beginning, this is a starting place for many of them. Where they start is absolutely fine, how they end is why this work is important.

In this entry, I concluded – more so assumed – that the fellows were at the beginning of their critical consciousness journey. I recognized that there was work to do as far as helping them: 1) analyze power in social relationships (which would have helped bring clarity to some of the potential reasoning behind the young men being willing to act in violence on behalf of an adult with whom they had a relationship); 2) promote systemic social change (which supports their ability to empathize with the suffering of others by focusing on root causes); and 3) encourage collective action (which supports the building of self-efficacy and them believing that they have the capacity to effect social conditions that contribute to the outcome of violence). All are principles of SJYD, and I could see that the fellows needed to grow in these areas, so I made note that this was an initial state of mind – as many of the fellows had only been in the fellowship a few

months at this point – and that if we were effective within the program, we would see a shift in this initial state of being.

The Experience(s)

Participant data showed a process of going from their *Initial Thinking* stage to moving into a pivotal moment/experience – whether internal or external to YVPRC – that caused them to interrogate their initial thinking. This analytic stage is titled The Experience(s) and captures any data related to recalling life experiences, events, and or activities that caused them to question their perceptions relative to varying historic and/or contemporary social problems. All interviews were saturated with this code, and much of the journal entry data, as the fellows wrote a lot about their experiences in YVPRC. The data points described here are those moments that participants describe as moments they knew something was different or needed to be different – based on a pivotal moment/experience – even if they did not have the proper terminology for what they were experiencing.

There are many interview excerpts that discuss experiences which caused a level of self-reflection, or a moment of pause to think about what they really understood about particular social issues. Within the interview data, there were several life experiences discussed as critical or pivotal moments that opened their eyes to a need to interrogate their initial thinking. Odd, in their interview, discussed YVPRC as a point of entry to the concept of critical consciousness, but remembered an instance prior to YVPRC that was significant in their growth and had forgotten about it until the interview. They said:

> I think I'm a pretty critically conscious person. At least, I think. I've done a lot of LGBTQ advocacy, but that was just my personal life and so there's not a point, that I can think of anyway, outside of YVPRC that made me really pause and kinda situate myself in like, a place in society and just kinda examine the dynamics and relationships across social groups. To truly recognize where injustice may be outside of my own personal dealings with injustice. Oh wait. Well- well I don't know if this counts, but actually, when I was 17, something happened. I was 17, I was living in upstate New York…so far upstate that it was like the deep South so you know what that means. Republican and pretty racist against anybody not white. I just didn't know it was racism at the time. I was working at Six Flags. And I was born in 94 but I largely grew up post 9/11, I was six when it happened. And at the Six Flags I worked at, and I don't know about the rest of them, they could do things where it was almost like a theme day. I don't know if it was groups of people would rent out the park or it was just they would invite these groups of people to come, I don't know. But it was Muslim day or something, and so there was a lot of Muslim people in the park, which that's cool you know. And I remember I was a ride operator, I was running this one ride and this mother and her son came to get on my ride. And this mother, she, I don't know the terms for, I think the burka, where it's the full-face cover with just the eyes, I think that's a burka. I could only see her eyes, and I realized in that moment that I was afraid of her. And I also realized in that moment how messed up that was. She was an innocent woman just trying to have fun with her kid, and having grown up post 9/11 where I lived I just learned to be afraid of that, and that wasn't okay. So, in that moment I realized that I needed to work on that because it wasn't okay for me to just be afraid of people having fun. Thought about even looking into why the women wear the burka.

In this excerpt, they discuss their position, recognize where their initial thinking came from, and conclude that something about their initial thinking needed to change. Their last sentence supports the next stage for discussion, which is knowing and the pursuit of knowledge, but it will be defined and described at the conclusion of this stage.

Another example from an interviewee comes from Easy E, as he explains a bit of his initial thinking and a pivotal moment in his life that caused him to interrogate his social identity, in relation to what it meant to be a Black male in his community. He stated:

> All types of crazy stuff I had to witness early on as a kid, having a gun pointed at me in fifth grade by a brother who I just didn't assume would want to hurt me because he didn't know me, so it didn't make no sense. I was taught that as long as you didn't start none, there wouldn't be none. He sat there for a minute with a rifle just pointed at me, can't really explain the feelin'. Also, this was a grown man and due to me having my pops in my life, I associated Black men with protection. So I'm seeing them and thinking it's all good and then he points a rifle in my face and I'm just like wow, something you thought was true, no, that ain't true. Like how do I sit with that as a 5th grader and this one moment just shifted everything. Just opened my eyes to other realities I wasn't ready to see. But this matched what I continued to see in my community. It matched what I saw on tv. What I heard on the radio. So there must be some truth to it. Must be the way I'm supposed to be.

Later in the interview, he connects this experience with another pivotal moment within the fellowship that challenged his current way of thinking and caused him to pause and interrogate his perspective yet again. He stated:

> So, I mean, some things are just full circle, you know what I mean? That incident when I was a kid was big. I think I was upset because I didn't have my rosy shades on no more. I saw Black males as niggas now, and I expected them to act like niggas. And they did. It made me angry. It was trauma. Then dealing with shit in school made me angry. More trauma. Always being bullied by white kids at school, turned me into an even more vicious nigga. I was like fuck it. Fuck er'body. I met ya'll in my vicious nigga stage, then I was all of a sudden, you know, surrounded by more positive Black males like myself, who weren't on that energy. Who could help me, um, you know, better articulate my anger, and point me in a direction of, um, more positive outlets to deal wit' it. And like helpin' me process through the social and community problems that were iggin' me. Meeting ya'll at that workshop about angry youth, bein' around Trinidad, Russell, my brother Ex. Like that let me be a version of myself that I had suppressed. It opened me back up to faith in like humanity. To hope and possibilities, you know what I mean? So yeah, bein' the guinea pig of the Fellowship was crucial for me.

In the journal data, we found support for YVPRC specific experiences that brought Fellows to a moment of interrogating initial thinking. In Cardi's journal write up, she states,

> So today we went to the Frazier Museum and it was impactful and eye opening. I learned a lot about redlining, but it made me a little mad though. Being from the west end and to know the way it is, is on purpose just because people are racist is some bull. Like simple humanity cures this. I used to think everyone was mostly humane and that everyone is inherently good, but I don't know. I don't know what kind of human you have to be to do some of the stuff they was doing back then. How do you even deal with certain people when it comes to stuff like this?

In another journal write up, she discusses the significance of events and experiences within the center that pointed her in a direction of wanting to further interrogate a previous assumption. She wrote, "Today was heavy. We visited the Lynching Museum and I barely have words. I want to fight. I want to hate. I want to just tear some stuff up but what would it help? This trip changes the game for me in so many ways. Really every time we do a major activity, like a trip or an event that focuses on growing what I know about history, another light turns on. I have another question and then another question and then another question. And so, I go looking for answers." Here we see a natural segue way into the knowing and pursuit of knowledge stage that is described next.

Knowing & Pursuit of Knowledge

This stage is very fluidly attached to "the experience(s)" phase; the data reveal that the experiences lead into knowing and pursuit of knowledge, and it is a bit hard to separate it from excerpts related to experiences because it helps tell the complete story of the experience(s) – as identified in the quotes above. This analytic stage is saturated with data that reveal reflective moments in which participants analyze – or reflect on – historic and/or contemporary social issues. It illustrates how they make meaning of why it is important to know, see, and/or understand the societal ills. It also encompasses a quest for knowledge,

particularly to gain an understanding of social issues in relation to one's social identity. This stage has dual placement in the framework as both a stage in the process and an outcome of the process since it is a concept that leads to critical consciousness development and is also an output/product of that process. In her discussion of what it means to be critically conscious, Not Important explains that since her experiences in YVPRC, she is:

> …more critical in a different way. I mean, I was a super detective already, I can find anything honey, just let me know what you are looking for! But I'm not just superficial with it anymore. A lot of these things now cause me to stop and think about what's really happening because it's important to really think it through, and then I go look for more information because sometimes it's just so unbelievable.

In this quote, she is reflecting on having knowledge of historic and contemporary social problems and how having this knowledge causes her to interrogate situations and seek knowledge to gain a more thorough understanding of the situation and/or experience.

Cardi spoke metaphorically about the significance of knowing and pursuing answers as a way of sustaining life. She explains that becoming critically consciousness is "like existing in an oasis, and not even a good one. But existing in it and then realizing that it's actually a desert and you're actually gonna die if you don't get to something real, some real water, some real truth that can help you live." This too, follows the pattern of recognizing that there is an initial state of being, having an experience that causes you to reflect and interrogate your initial thinking, and now you are aware of something or somethings that you were not aware of prior to, and so you pursue more

knowledge/information/context to sustain you in the new reality you have essentially entered.

A journal entry from James supports this analytic category in all of its parts, he reflects on particular historic knowledge of slavery, alludes to the need to pursue more knowledge and understanding of the applicability of this historic event to contemporary society, and makes meaning of why it is important to be critically conscious.

> (What I'm Pondering Today, no date) So today I'm pondering the diagrams that we drew that helped us to see how many plantation owners [there were] versus how many slaves there were. And the fact that it was a small number of slave owners at the top of the pyramid and the number of slaves at the bottom was the biggest part of the pyramid. So basically, I want to know how did they take power over all these people when the people were the majority? Like this really had me thinking hard. How does that happen? But it really isn't different than now, because if we were the majority then, ain't we still the majority now? I have to do some research on that. I know this has some kind of effect today, and I know it's in racism. But I'm trying to know what power dynamics they used because I'm thinking of a master plan. Had to be some level of ignorance on the slaves' part, but we aren't slaves now and we have information available. We just have to educate ourselves so we can know. That's all I'm pondering.

Sometimes the pursuit of knowledge was not in the form of researching and learning from written information, sometimes it was talking to a peer to get feedback about what is being pondered, in Cash's interview he said that he likes to "check in with my partners to make sure I'm not trippin', but it has to be a partner that thinks about social justice issues". For Ex, it was, "going to talk to my mentor, Trinidad, to help me think through a certain type of situation so I understand what's really goin' on and not just jumping to conclusions." In a separate fashion, Alice says that she revisits certain experiences to interrogate

what is happening to help her formulate an opinion on the reason/s behind certain actions. She said this about an experience in school.

> I remember a time when I felt like I may have been discriminated against. Well not really discrimination, but definitely "othered," hopefully it'll make sense as I'm talking. But a school administrator would always greet kids at the door and she greeted everyone a certain way. She would give a calm or regular 'good morning' to kids, but to me on this one morning she gave me a 'whassup girl' and a head nod, so immediately I'm thinking, 'is she greeting me this way because I'm black?' There were different teachers at the doors sometimes, so I didn't always see her when I got off the bus, but once I had that thought, it's like I couldn't get rid of it until I knew what was really going on. So, for about a week, I tried to make sure I went through the door where she was standing, I would specifically look for her to walk through her door. And honestly there was no consistency with her greeting me like that. I just think some days she felt like trying to relate to me as a young person, because I noticed her doing it to other nonblack students as well. So, you kinda got whatever she was feeling on that day, and it wasn't racist I don't think.

So here we see Alice having a pivotal experience, and then pursuing a deeper understanding of that experience, which she perceives to be in relation to a dominant social issue of racism. She was interrogating this perceived social issue in light of her social identify, so it was important for her to attempt to situate herself continually in the situation until she had an understanding of what was really happening. We see her, in essence, come to a resolve based on her initial thinking about racism and discrimination, her experience with the teacher at the door, here pursuit to know more and interrogate what the experience actually meant, and then come to a resolve or a conclusion about what she now knows. Her conclusions of what is true, and her resolve regarding what she saw and

belief about what she now knows, partially describes the “you see it” state of being, which is the stage that follows knowing and pursuit of knowledge.

Self-Awareness

As with the knowing and pursuit of knowledge state, self-awareness is also a stage that exists dually within the framework, represented as both a part of the process as well as an impact of the process. It is defined as knowing who you are, your viewpoint, how you see the world around you, and/or how you perceive where you fit in the world. It describes how participants see themselves in relation to others and their viewpoints, making meaning of social identity, as well as situating self within the context of what is being learned or experienced. All participants discussed a level of self-awareness, or becoming self-aware, and some discussed what that meant for them as a person in relation to engaging in social action. For the purpose of the self-awareness discussion in this section – as a stage in the process – I will only provide examples that support it within the confines of it being a stage in the process. I will draw from examples where participants depict a relationship between experiences and self-awareness. In Jay’s journal entry below, we see this pathway:

> Before the fellowship, I was aware that I was African American, and I would say that my identity was that I was a young, 16 yr. Old, African American male. Since I’ve engaged in the fellowship, that has shifted a lot just because of what I know now and what I’ve been experiencing in here. I used to be afraid to talk about African American history before, I didn’t want to offend anyone. I thought it was offensive to say “Black Lives Matter”. I thought that people who said that were just angry Black people. But now, I feel like I know it’s okay to be Black and to be proud of that and of where I come from in the west End. I want to teach more people what I know now. I want to reach out to other young people and just educate them on our history. Having pride has caused me to act different. I was confident before, but now I’m really confident. I didn’t think being Black was a bad

> thing before, but now I really know it's a great thing and something I should be proud of. And I can't really care who has a problem with it...

Here, Jay talks about how becoming critically conscious through the fellowship shifted how he saw himself and what that meant for his relationships with people he identified as "like him", as well as with people whom he did not feel shared his identity. There is acknowledgment of an initial thinking stage (before the fellowship), an experience stage (the fellowship itself), and then he describes his state of self-awareness. He identifies what it means to be him and how he can show up in the world based on what he now knows and believes about himself.

Now, it is important to note, that since his *experience* was the fellowship, it was probable that he was gaining self-awareness simultaneously with the stage of knowing and pursuit of knowledge because it was an expectation within the activities of the center. For clarification, checked in with this participant to review the framework a second time and to ask his opinion on the pathway of his process to critical consciousness development and he said this:

> So, if we go back to what I was speaking about in that quote, YVPRC covered a whole plethora of activities and experiences that led me to both pursue more knowledge and increased my self-awareness and it probably was happening at the same time. It's kinda hard to pinpoint at this stage. It feels like the chicken and the egg question of which one came first. I just recall moving more towards critical consciousness as I learned more and as I knew more and became more confident within myself.

Here he confirms self-awareness as an important part of the process and supported the notion of it leading to critical consciousness development. Another example of self-awareness, as indicative of process, is seen in Angel's journal entry about the D.C. trip where the participants engaged in discussions with Senator Rand Paul.

> So today was cool, I liked meeting with the legislators, except Rand Paul. I did not like Rand Paul. He basically tried to tell us that we could pull ourselves up by the bootstraps. He kept trying to connect by name dropping the one or two black people he knew from the west end that "made it out", and told us we could be resilient and "make it out too". No matter what we said he had a quick response to like oppose what we said. We prepared for these discussions and at first it was exciting to talk to them, but my excitement left because talking to him made me realize just how much he doesn't represent me. It's like at that moment, I realized that I was just a kid from the west end to him. Felt kinda powerless to change his mind.

In this entry, we see Angel in an experience (engaging with legislators) and then becoming aware of her identity in relation to how she perceived others perception of her. In this moment, her awareness related to her political self was deflated by engagement with this particular politician. So, based on these data – and other excerpts not used – I believe there is sufficient evidence to say that experiences can lead to both knowing and pursuit of knowledge, as well as to self-awareness, and sometimes both are happening simultaneously. Both pathways though, lead to the "you see it" state of being.

"You See It"

"*You see it*" was a concept derived from participant quotes to explain a place of entering critical consciousness. It reflects their light bulb moment(s) when a shift in their thought process occurred; it defines and describes what it means to exist once "you see it"; and what the participants think they should do now that they can see what they could not before. During an interview with Angel, she discussed the importance of knowing critical historic and contemporary social problems; she also introduces the in-vivo code as she

explains how she perceives the importance and experience of critical consciousness development. She stated:

> ...it's very important…all youth should be engaged [in SJYD]. It's good stuff to know [historic and contemporary social issues], you can't really take it out of your brain. Even if you're not trying to pay attention to it, you see it. You see the unfairness all around. You see the on purpose putting you down. You see the president is stupid and racist and a discriminator. You see it.

This phase follows the "knowing and pursuit of knowledge" stage – or the self-awareness stage – and describes how participants see and experience critical consciousness (based in how they have defined it, which is heavily embedded in the critical reflection component of the concept). It describes their "ah ha" moments, as James stated, "it's an 'ah ha' moment that you step into and can't step out of, and you can and probably should have continued 'ah ha' moments as you keep growin in the work [of social justice]". Easy E called it "the point of no return" in his interview. Their explanations of how they experience a moment of entering critical consciousness – or entering a new level of critical consciousness – reflects enlightenment and is a bit other worldly, as Cardi asserted that, "you can't unsee it and you can't unknow it, it's a new reality." This is where a shift in thinking occurs; the pondering and reflecting has settled into a resolve, and they feel as though they have entered new mental territory.

In a journal entry from Q, he is discussing what drew him to the fellowship, but he starts by explaining his interests in social justice work. From this quote, we see the previous phases as well as this current phase; we see a way of existing before, having a pivotal experience, pursuing knowledge/information because of

that experience, and a change/shift happening in how he thinks that impacts his state of being as a result. A part of this journal entry is below.

> I've been very interested in social justice as it relates to anything, but mainly I like to focus on politics. I like to look at the political system and examine its history and contemporary state, learning how those things effect minority groups. Before though, I was mainly a student athlete. It was all about school and sports before I switched it up. I had to switch up my focus the more I learned about the Black Lives Matter movement because of what I could see. You can't stay the same when you recognize injustice, something changes in you. I started thinking about my own life experiences from the perspective of a social justice lens and started to see how I was being shaped by standards of justice without even recognizing it was happening.

This phase is not only discussed as a moment of enlightenment, but also the point at which there is an urge or a need to respond. It is interesting to note, again, that though critical consciousness has been defined primarily by the act of becoming aware or having critical awareness, within their process, there is acknowledgement of the need for critical action as they describe coming to a place of needing to make a decision about – or do something with – what they know. It does not denote that action is inevitable and will happen, but the feeling is experienced that makes them think that there is some action that should take place. "I can't just hold it in, I have to let it out" is how P-dub expressed the urge to respond to the knowledge he has gained. Cardi expresses similar sentiments in that a next step has to be taken when she stated, "a decision has to follow, you get to this point [of enlightenment, where your thought process shifts], and you just have to make a decision."

In my field note observations, I capture this concept of being pushed to a place of discontentment and contemplating the need to do or to act based on an experience/moment of enlightenment.

> [Researcher, 8/31/19] “Today I noticed Jay was rather quiet and seemed to just be in deep reflection all day. It was an exhausting day for pretty much everybody just because of the nature of what we saw and learned in the two museums [The Legacy Musuem and Lynching Memorial] ... When it was time for dinner, we were walking around trying to find a good spot to eat and I decided to talk with Jay to see what was on his mind. As we ate dinner, he shared that that basically there was a rumbling inside, a sort of discontentment because something needed to be released. We talked about whether or not he meant an emotional release, a physical release, creative release, what needed to be released? He didn’t really have clear explanations other than he feels like he needs to do more in relation to what he knows. He said that today he had been reflecting on his time with YVPRC. He talked about the conflict he had with Russell (program coordinator) on our DC Trip while at dinner at Bus Boys & Poets. He was so frustrated at what he felt like was push back against his stance that all lives mattered. He said he ‘couldn’t see it then’, but here we are 3 years later on a similar trip, and the trip is affecting him in a different way because ‘he sees it all’. He said his ‘eyes were open to seeing the oppressive nature of systems of power’ and it’s not something you can just sit with... He also mentioned his eye-opening moment of asking his teacher about why Black History wasn’t taught in their curriculum when he was in high school and he just remembered being shocked by how his inquiry was dismissed...

Many fellows discussed – or were observed –determining what should happen next; they would think through what they wanted to do, how and who they wanted to be, and evaluate what was possible based on what they knew. At this point in their process, what happened next was in no way prescribed; it was influenced by a myriad of factors – as with the other phases and themes –, which is discussed more thoroughly under the fourth finding of “the influences”. The data depict that some participants moved toward shifting behaviors that align with

taking action against oppression, violence, and/or dehumanization, which is an intended consequence of critical consciousness development and also the point of praxis where knowing and theorizing shifts to action. Movement in this way is outlined more in depth in the third finding that defines and describes intended outcomes of critical consciousness development. The data also depict that some struggled with behavior change, others moved into a space of negative existence (described later), and yet still others chose to “keep it movin” (an in-vivo code pulled from participant data that will be explained later). The data also show that participants existed in some of these spaces simultaneously.

Summary of The Process

An aim of this study was to understand a process of critical consciousness development, as described by participants in the LYVV fellowship. There were five identified stages of the process: 1) “initial thinking”, 2) experiences, 3) knowing & pursuit of knowledge, 4) self-awareness, and 5) “you see it”. The initial thinking stage described an original/existing state of mind or way of being for the participant, which denoted a starting place in the process to critical consciousness development. The experience stage denoted a pivotal moment that caused the participant to interrogate their initial thinking. From that interrogation, participants moved to either the self-awareness stage or the knowing and pursuit of knowledge stage. There are no identified determining factors that explain why some participants go from experiences to self-awareness or experiences to knowing and pursuit of knowledge. It is plausible

that moving from experiences into either phase is determined by the context of the experience itself.

In the self-awareness stage, participants are starting to know who they are, their viewpoint, and how they perceive where they fit in society. They are able to see themselves in relation to others and their view points and then make meaning of their social identities. From this stage, participants enter the next stage, which is “you see it” - the state of being that describes entry into a realm of consciousness.

Knowledge and pursuit of knowledge is the other pathway that participants take after their experience(s) that moves them towards the “you see it” state of being. In this stage, participants are seeking to understand more about what they experienced, and are attempting to make meaning of those experiences for the sake of coming to a resolve. This resolve is within the “you see it” state of being, which denotes the intricate connection between knowing and pursuit of knowledge and “you see it” stages.

FINDING III: Personal Impact

This theme was predominantly derived from participant interviews (first interviews and second interviews from the first cohort of fellows), with supporting data from member checking interviews and focus groups, observations, and program staff reflection entries. The final aim of the study was to determine the intervention’s impact on youth who participated in a fellowship that utilized a SJYD framework; the final research question was: *What is the impact of critical consciousness development on the LYVV Fellowship participants?* This theme

answers the final research question within the scope of the study aim by describing the varying ways in which developing critical consciousness, both within and outside of the fellowship, impacted the fellows from their perspectives. There were three identified analytic categories for this theme: 1) self-awareness, 2) “the goal”, and 3) unintended consequences. The researcher created two of the three category titles to ensure accurate representation of all participant’s voices; the third category title is an in-vivo code that fits the description of the category and was approved by participants during member checks.

Self-Awareness

As described earlier in the process phase, self-awareness was defined as knowing who you are, your viewpoint, how you see the world around you, and/or how you perceive where you fit in the world. It describes how participants see themselves in relation to others and their viewpoints, making meaning of social identity, as well as situating self within the context of what is being learned or experienced. All participants discussed a level of self-awareness, or becoming self-aware, and some discussed what that meant for them as a person in relation to engaging in social action. In this section, examples will not be indicative of self-awareness as part of the development process, but prescriptive to the emergence of the analytic category in relation to what happens after you enter the “you see it” state of being.

In this example, Cardi discussed the struggle between how she sees herself, how her peers see her, how her family sees her, and how she felt she should engage as it relates to social issues because of her social identity.

> I deal with the fact that some people don't see me as "black" in the community, they see my name and my religion and my features and think I'm whatever they choose to identify me as. So that like kept me from going all the way in [being an advocate for issues affecting Black people] because I'm just trying to figure out me, and where I fit. You know? My family is like different than me. They are closer to my ethnic origins and I'm closer to how and where I was raised, which is here in west Louisville. So, like we clash a lot in my house. So, it's not like they are teaching a whole lot of the "black history", but my experience in community and out in society reflects me being 'black', so it's a weird position.

In his interview, James discussed self-awareness in terms of understanding who you are based on historical knowledge and what that historical knowledge meant for him in the future, his quote says,

> You have to know your history because it helps you know who you are… I feel like if we don't learn from the past, we are bound to repeat it. So, being conscious of what has happened in the past, and knowing what that means for me now and how me knowing it now effects my future, my community's future. We have to know it (history) to be able to apply that (knowledge) to the present. I know for me I think that's necessary to start change. Learning about history and how social change has happened over the years, helps shape who I am and how I move.

In the following journal entry, the participants were asked to watch a documentary and identify the causes of violence based on what they had learned and researched. Then, they were to reflect on what they learned and JJ had a moment of self-awareness as she reflected on the documentary, situating herself within it and identifying what that meant for her.

> Mr. Russell,
> Based off the documentary it seems like violence was more so happening because of the environment and the neighborhood [as opposed to being the direct fault of individuals]. The people living in certain areas felt as if their neighborhood wasn't pretty and that gave them negative feelings about their neighborhood. This feeling about the neighborhood gave them bad feelings and made them want to stay in the house... Joe Black was someone who noticed what was going on in the community and he wanted

> to make a change. He started his own Business that would help his community and change the atmosphere in the Neighborhood. Once he started cleaning his community up and planting grass, people in the neighborhood started coming outside and taking care of the neighborhood. These kids even watched Joe Black and tried to even mimic what Joe Black was doing, so that they could have grass. Joe Black taught them how to clean their yard and even gave them grass seeds. These kids loved what Joe did for them. I recognize that I am like the people in the neighborhood but I'm also like Joe. Both are me really. I have negative feelings sometimes about the way my community looks, you just get used to it looking that way though. But then sometimes I want to do something about what I see, which is why I asked about a community cleanup. Like I'm someone who can make my community better, even if just by doing the little things like picking up trash.

We see from these data how critical consciousness development can impact a sense of identity and participants situate themselves in the world based on that identity. It is an example of self-efficacy, or critical motivation within the critical consciousness literature, where individuals come to understand their capability in addressing social problems.

"The Goal"

The Goal is an in-vivo code provided by participants during member checks, and within it are intended outcomes and impacts of the program and the impacts of critical consciousness development. It describes shifts in thought, paradigm, behavior, sociality that is deemed positive by participants as a result of gaining self-awareness and/or becoming [or growing] critically consciousness within – and outside of – the fellowship. It was originally coded as intended consequences, however, as participants talked about what the category was supposed to be based on reviewing the framework during member checks, they kept saying, "that's the goal" or "those are the goals of the program/critical consciousness", and so they decided that it should be called "the goal" because

everything within it is a desirable state for them related to the intervention. This analytic category had three properties: 1) knowing history, 2) transformative travel, and 3) shifting youth (interpersonal violence) outcomes. In all three properties, you see how participants make meaning of each in relation to their personal lives. Each property is also discussed in relation to the form of action it produced or the forming of ideas about action that participants wanted to take.

Knowing history. This property delves into how participants discussed the impact of knowing history and what it meant for their personal lives. In a summary written about the activities of a day in the Fellowship, Russell expressed frustration with the Fellows not wanting to engage in the way that he was facilitating their African/African American History Session. He was avid about education and learning African and African American history through reading books and having discussions. The primary book utilized for their sessions was “African American Odyssey: 2nd Edition”, by Hine, Hine, & Harold (1999). This is a text that illustrates the story of African Americans, with the journey of African American’s collective identity and history starting in Africa. In his journal entry from 2016, he said this,

> Today’s summary will be short because I don’t have the energy. They don’t want to learn the things that are critical for them to overcome what they are coming up against in the community. Getting through today’s session was like pulling teeth. They started the afternoon great with check ins, and I told them we would go outside for a bit and facilitate the session because the weather was nice. As soon as they realized we were starting with reading they tapped out. Attitudes everywhere, voices low in responses...

Following up with participants from that first cohort, a couple of them recalled this time and shared similar sentiments as they remembered how they felt in the

moment, but also spoke to what it means to them now. In an interview with Lisa in 2018, she said,

> Oh, and if I go back to things that I learned [in the fellowship] that have shifted me, we can talk about slavery. That's one of the things that's like cliché, everybody knows slavery happened. But we aren't taught it in schools or what it was really really like. Also makes me think about Russell's book (Hines, Hines, & Harold, 1999) and us not wanting to read it because it was boring, but I found myself thinking about those ancient civilizations, I took a pan-African studies class around African ancient civilizations just because some of the YVPRC stuff was still lingering. Our African American history sessions and the African American Museum in DC. That's that part again about certain experiences just not going anywhere, once you know you know, so I'm grateful for that and the experiences.

This quote depicts "the goal" in that there was a shift in her perspective that moved Lisa to a place of action; that action was taking a course to further her understanding and to quell the lingering urge she felt to know more. Looking back, she – and others – shared that the readings had a positive impact, though they did not see it that way while they were actively engaged with it at the time. Not important said,

> I hated reading that stupid book (Hines, Hines, & Harold, 1999), but I recognize that I was pretty ignorant then. I can't even lie, the name Mansa Musa is still with me because of that book! And I remember learning he was one of the wealthiest people in the world and he was of a black civilization. I just remember learning that as a pivotal thing because you don't see us in history as wealthy... You see us as slaves, so it opened my eyes to the possibility of wealth, we talked about wealth a lot and not just barely makin' it. Everything is about makin' money anyway, so this kinda helped me see that there is a difference between just makin money and being wealthy. And I am definitely on the track of makin' money, so even recalling this just made me think I need to think a little deeper about how I make that transition to wealth building.

In this excerpt, we also see an impact on self-awareness. Because she is in a state of being reminded of what she knew/learned, in the moment of the

interview, she began to reevaluate her motives and actions as it related to making money versus building wealth.

All the participants talked about the positive impacts of knowing and learning African American history within the fellowship; it was often tied to their self-awareness and them growing in or establishing positive racial identities. During her member checking interview JJ recalled a time when she did not know who Rosa Parks was, recalling that when asked by Jean during their African/African American history session, she said, “I don’t know, it’s that lady that gave up her seat on the bus I think”. She said she was ignorant to a lot of things related to history, “even the ones [African American history figures] that everybody knows I was kinda in the dark about”. But she said, thanks to her time in the fellowship, “I could see myself as more valuable, I could take off the stigma of being a Black, teenage mom, ...and I could see myself maybe making history one day because ya’ll showed us so many black people who made a difference.” When asked what it looks like for her to see herself as more valuable and destigmatized, she said, “It looks like me being a confident mother, and takin’ care of my son, and being proud to share what I learned. I shared a lot while I was in the fellowship, I shared with people who were like me and just woudn’t have ever known.” A goal of critical consciousness development is increasing pride associated with a person’s racial/ethnic identity; that was achieved here through JJ knowing history. It also catalyzed a desire for action, as she mentioned sharing what she knows, which is a form of action.

Many other participants – during their interviews – shared the sentiments that knowing history helped them know who they are; Easy E stated that, “I am black history personified, without knowing who they are [ancestors and historical figures], I can’t fully know who I am”, while Alice expressed that, “I came in [to the fellowship] with an understanding of the importance of black people and black history, it’s a part of why I joined. But I have enjoyed growing in my perspective of just how significant collective consciousness is, and growing in my collective identity.” When asked how she defined collective identity, she said, “a shared identity rooted in understanding who you are as a person, but the strength you gain when you connect that to a shared identity with a community. And you strive for the same goals of improving life for everybody.” Lisa wrote a poem during her time as a fellow that reflected the sentiments of the impact of the component of the fellowship that focused on learning historical content; she also tied it to the significance of her identity.

Who I Am, by Lisa

Can you identify me?
I seem to have no knowledge of who I am
The school system has obliterated my true identity from the history books
It’s all a big sham
They force lies about how I started off as property
When in reality, we were wealthy and strong black people with empires as big as the eyes can see
I’m so confused
They made it out to be that being black is a curse
And that a white man discovered America, but how is that if black people were here first?
I’ve been constrained to knowing about white domination
And where black people have been oppressed in this nation
Working here as a youth fellow, has taught me how to know thyself
In a world that hates a person with a darker complexion like myself
I am no longer blind

> Researching and gaining knowledge is all it took
> And it all started with the opening of a black history book.

An interesting note to add, is that even outside of the fellowship, there is evidence of the impact of knowing history and it pulling new fellows into the project. Q said that:

> As I started researching opportunities to be more active, because something was ignited in me, the more I looked into history of injustice and things like police brutality. I just had to find ways to get involved. I came across a billboard of some of the former fellows and then started looking into YVPRC. I saw the commercials, I saw all the media, I read about what it was supposed to do, and I felt like it was working because it reached me, a West End youth impacted by a history of injustice. All the content on the web page, the history information, and then seeing other young people activated like me. I wanted to join that kind of a movement.

Transformational Travel**.** This property describes the impact of traveling to locations with historical significance that provided hands-on exposure to and experience with the content and context of the YVPRC intervention. The trips in some way touched each activity component of the fellowship; they were used for the sake of campaign development, to enhance understanding of ancient African civilizations, to understand African American history, to engage with the arts, to have real time experiences with what they learn/heard from elders, and for leadership and professional development as they co-planned trips and engaged as co-facilitators of the trip processes. Travel was not a prescribed, or predetermined activity within the fellowship, so there was no set number of trips nor were they based on any time frame. They were mostly determined based on opportunity, fellowship needs, and campaign needs.

The participants traveled to Washington D.C. for the grand opening of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture; they also

visited the Holocaust Museum and various monuments in the area. They walked around and engaged with ONE DC, a community development organization that focuses on structural causes of poverty and injustice impacting residents of racially marginalized communities of D.C.; met with legislators (Rand Paul, John Yarmuth, and representatives for Senator Corey Booker); ate at restaurants with significant African American History, and visited both Howard and Georgetown University. The participants also went on a Civil Rights tour through Tennessee and Alabama. In Tennessee they ate and engaged with the manager of Woolworth in Nashville; the restaurant known for the 1960s lunch counter sit-ins.

In Alabama, the participants visited four cities Birmingham, Montgomery, Tuskegee, and Selma. They visited historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) (Tuskegee University and Alabama State University), as well as several historical sites and museums, including: 1) The Civil Rights District of Birmingham which included Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, 16th Street Baptist Church, Kelly Ingram Park, and the Urban Impact of Birmingham to meet with the Civil Rights Foot Soldiers; 2) The Legacy Museum and the Lynching Memorial; and 3) The National Voting Rights Museum & Institute, the Slavery and Civil War Museum, and the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The participants also traveled to Nashville, on a separate trip, for the sake of visiting an HBCU (Tennessee State University) and engaging with local youth and youth serving organizations to provide them a co-learning space with other youth and to see innovative ways to address issues experienced by youth from strategies at play in other cities.

The data depict that these travel experiences were of significant impact to the participants in that they built self-awareness, critical thinking, self-efficacy (critical motivation), and critical social action. During a member checking interview with Angel, she reviewed the framework and reflected on her time in the fellowship. She spoke about the significance of the D.C. trip for her and how it galvanized political engagement for her. She said:

> The impact for me, or the goal that I feel like I achieved, was just knowledge about the importance of voting, elections, and elected officials. The DC trip was major. Even my opportunity to like, write the Kentucky Court on behalf of Judge Olu Stevens. I felt [when I wrote that letter] like I was empowered, like my civic voice mattered. And my actions mattered, I did something about what I felt was injustice. And the DC trip really impacted by ability to be that bold. Meeting staff from Corey Booker's office, meeting um, Yarmuth, and what's his name... I don't even want to remember his name, but you know the one we didn't like. Oh! Rand Paul, yeah... Meeting them and realizing just how much decisions are made on my behalf and on behalf of my community by people who don't even represent us. I couldn't really believe it, I wasn't aware of how like, government really worked, I was only what? Seventeen at the time I think, so I hadn't really had any interactions with voting or government. And honestly, now that I'm in college, I don't think I would have really transitioned to like, caring about voting because no one had taught me why it was important and how I was directly impacted.

A copy of Angels letter, in support of a sitting African American judge whom she felt like was being treated unfairly, is below.

> Dear Kentucky State Court,
>
> I think that Judge Olu Stevens has done nothing wrong. I actually believe that he was doing a good thing. I believe that Judge Olu was trying to show that African Americans have a say and a voice and was trying to help us exercise our rights. He was doing something positive in my opinion. Most juries are all-white so the fact that he was asking for more diverse juries says a lot.
>
> In fact, on Nov. 18, 2014 Judge Stevens had dismissed an all-white jury because the defendant had been African American and he felt that having an all-white jury would be troublesome. In fact, he even said, "I cannot in

> good conscience go forward with this jury." I don't blame him, I would rather go with a diverse jury and have a clear conscience than go with an all-white jury and have a guilty conscience.
>
> I also believe that Attorney Tom Wine has a personal vendetta against him. Tom Wine has asked John Minton to disqualify Judge Stevens a couple of times even after John Minton has told him that it's beyond his responsibility. In November of 2014, Wine had even sought Steven's removal from all criminal cases. Then in December the Chief Justice ordered the two mediations.
>
> I'm on Judge Olu's side and will continue to be until justice has been served. He has done nothing wrong, and doesn't deserve this. He is a good person with good intentions. Judge Olu deserves to be heard.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Angel

Many others described traveling as life changing and transformational. JJ had never been on a plane and had not experienced history in the context of the trip, and she said she felt, "so lucky to be able to go and be where history took place". Another participant shared similar sentiments when she stated,

> ...the DC trip was a good experience. I can't describe how it really made me feel, definitely a life changing experience. And like even going to the museum [Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture]. We couldn't really appreciate it because we were tired and frustrated. But to know we were a part of history on that day. That's a big deal. So, I'll keep that with me like, I made history that day. I tell people all the time when somebody mentions the museum. I get to say I was there. And that was my first time out of Louisville for real. Well, my first time out of Kentucky. And on an airplane. Like all of that was life changing for me. And made me realize that I really need to get out of the confines of Louisville.

The fellows were interviewed by a marketing an advertising agency that was contracted with the center. The agency accompanied us on both trips and captured feedback from the participants as they engaged in the content and

context of the experiences. Ex said in his interview reflection of the D.C trip, that *"*...going to the capitol to talk to senators about my community and policy change that's needed was a game changer for me today. And I'm definitely gonna engage with politicians more often." Easy E reflected on opening day of the museum and being among the first individuals to enter the museum, he said, "it was so inspiring just to see so many of my own people, focusing on one goal. We're some of the first to go into the museum, it's powerful". Lisa said that "walking on the very ground that our ancestors walked on should inspire us and empower us."

Similar sentiments were shared in relation to the Civil Rights tour, Cardi said that "a trip like this is important because this is history that we don't know. This is history that we've never been taught. This is history that's been censored in schools. This is history that we must learn. And this is history that we can never forget." Many described the trips as "very impactful" and meaningful. Nocturnal described it in this way during his interview with the agency,

> It was very impactful. It was mixed emotions – I was angry, I was sad, but more than that, I saw like, love in my people. Like that's what kind of made me cry. Like the love I have for my people 'cause we are so strong as a people and that's something that like, gets overlooked in America. So it [the trips to Tennessee and Alabama] really meant a lot to me... It really means something to me on a different level. I kinda took a piece of what I needed in life from this experience. Me being a black male, it kinda impacts me majorly.

As Q reflected in his vlog journal for the day, he stated:

> It [the trip] really put into reality the struggles and the terror of the slave trade and its, uh, parallels with today's incarceration system, today's prison industrial complex. Today we still see that same affirmation, that same fight, against injustice, against inequality, so it's important to get that perspective of where we've been and how far we've come and how far we

> have to go. It's evident that it's not in our [African Americans/Black people's] nature to give up.

For transformational travel, particularly for youth, they must have support in getting to the locations for travel, as well as intentional dialogue about what is being experienced within the travel between youth themselves, as well as the supporting adults. This is seen in a quote from JJ who stated that, "I'd never been on an airplane before and never even thought I would have the opportunity to go to D.C. really", but she said of the trip, "it changed my mind about a lot of things and now I want all this history to go in a library for my son." Jay, who traveled on every single excursion with the office stated that, "Every time we travel, another part of me changes. Literally. It's probably been one of the most beneficial parts of the fellowship." When asked how he has changed, he stated that "my mind expands, my pride expands, my intentionality about what I do just gets sharper and I'm ready to push forward [in the work of social justice and youth engagement] even more." Ex shared this opinion as he mentioned that, "every time we travel, I grow." He went on to discuss the importance of the support he receives from the center and what it meant for his life. He said:

> If it wasn't for ya'll giving me the opportunity to travel and see things outside of my normal everyday life, I may still be stuck in some ways [that were problematic for healthy life outcomes]. We travel, I have some mind opening experiences, and I talk it through with my peers and my mentor [Trinidad] and my life continues to get better little by little.

These views were seen on multiple occasions within the data, illustrating that the more travel experienced, the more significant the impact of the overall fellowship.

As I reflected on the trip on our bus ride home, I too, identified travel as a significant component for social justice youth development and youth intervention in general. Below are my field notes from the final day of the Civil Rights tour.

> [Researcher field notes, 9/1/2019]
> So, we are on the bus on our way back to Louisville. It's hard to put into words what I've observed on this trip and what has happened to me internally. I'm impassioned in so many ways, as I can see the fellows are too. With all my knowledge, expertise, personal experiences with injustice, being from the south where the injustices for Black people are higher than in other areas. With all of that, I was still transformed. Each time we travel with the fellows it's transformational, I'm just gonna call it transformational travel. For me it's the experience of traveling with a purpose and being transformed by the experience. As I think about the frame in which we're traveling...the social justice youth development...the engaging young people in a public health intervention with a social justice lens...I think traveling (in context) is critical. Traveling out of context may be beneficial as well, when I think about youth needing to be rewarded, and how much behavior can be shaped based on the anticipation of something good happening, like a vacation or retreat. But traveling for the sake of growing in knowledge, getting the on the ground experience and context, especially related to the root causes of social problems, I don't think any other strategy matches this one. We've engaged them in so many ways, but none seem to be as impactful and transformational as traveling to experience. I don't even know if that's something in the literature, or how funding agencies would perceive travel as an intervention strategy. But there is definitely something to be said about this type of travel. Making a note to look through the literature relative to this concept.

Shifting youth (interpersonal) violence outcomes**.** The final property within this analytic category is shifting youth violence outcomes. It contains data that discusses interpersonal violence in relationship to structural violence and what should be done about it with this perspective. While the campaign and intervention focused on structural violence, it too was meant to impact youth interpersonal violence. The data also show participant views on what public health intervention strategies should look like when addressing youth violence. As they were engaged in learning multiple content areas simultaneously, (public

health, violence, youth development, campaign planning and design, history of systems, and African/African American history), they were able to pull from these multiple areas to generate ideas about how to better engage in the work of eradicating youth interpersonal violence – though the strategies derived, many times, addressed issues related to structural violence at their core. Some participants talked about behavioral changes from engaging in criminalistic and/or violence behaviors to struggling to engage in those behaviors due to the intervention. When those instances are sighted in this section, I will only use the term “participant” and identifiers “them/they/theirs” to further protect the identities of the participants who were willing to be vulnerable and discuss personal violence by nature of relationship with the researcher engaging with them.

Many participants spoke about the importance of positive racial identity, stating that if there were improvements in racial identity for young people, there would be improvements in youth violence outcomes for youth of color. Little Gabe said this on his first trip with YVPRC, “So when you learn about your history, you feel proud about your history, and then you’re gonna see other people who look like you, and you’re gonna say ‘both of us should be proud of who we are, why would we wanna harm each other?’” In this quote, he is purporting that being intentional about building critical awareness of history could shift current outcomes of interpersonal violence, therefore, keeping that content away from particular youth could essentially be a risk factor for violence. Three years later, on his second trip with the center, he again, spoke to structural violence impacting interpersonal violence when he said that, “A lot of

[interpersonal] youth violence doesn't start with youth itself (themselves), it starts with the people around them and what they're [the youth] being taught [or not taught] about themselves." Central to both statements is positive racial identity, knowing who you are, and youth violence being reduced because of those factors. James said that his mission as a fellow was to "combat [interpersonal] violence in kinda a nontraditional way that builds comradery through understanding [racial] identity". He went on to explain similar opinions as Little Gabe, as he expounded on what he meant by that statement.

> We're talking about systemic issues, and things that impact us on a community level. We're talking about making changes to the systems [of power including education, government, criminal justice, health care] rather than changing the youth. We're talking about helping youth understand why things are the way they are in hopes that they will shift how they're participating in some, more so destructive behaviors and align with positive thinking about themselves and their communities. I think I understand now that to change the system is to change the people. Those in charge and those impacted by those in charge.

Some participants spoke about their direct involvement in violence, or their support of violence, and how the fellowship helped them shift their behaviors. In an interview with one of the participants, they reflected on their engagement with crime and violence, and how being critically aware of societal issues plaguing their community, made them struggle with engaging in that kind of behavior because they saw it as a planned outcome of racism. They said,

> When I use to rob people just for kicks, I ain't even really think nothin' of it. It wasn't like, out of the norm for niggas in my area of town to engage in those kinds of extracurricular activities, so I was just joining the environment. Being a product of my environment, I knew it was wrong though. So when I started engaging in positive settings that focused on who I could be, and who I needed to be based on a collection of evidence about what I come from and the plight of my people through generations, like, it makes you change it up. I started bein' in spaces like this that

> taught me how to properly fuel my anger in a direction that brought positive change. So uh, I stepped out of my niggatry... You can't be a nigga and be critically conscious, you got new ammunition, so you gotta use it.

Another participant said that the fellowship made them change their views on fighting and sharing fights on social media; this became a wider known and recognize problematic trend among youth on social media around the year 2013 (Carrington, 2013, Larkin, 2017). Research shows that fighting, and the posting of fights, among young women have exponentially grown over the years (Larkin, 2017) following a recorded fight that went viral in November of 2013. The participant said the following about posting fights:

> ...you normally wanna be the first person to post the fight so you can get all the likes and shares, so I always had my phone and I was always trying to be the first one to post. But in the fellowship, we were using social media to share a different message. And it had me feeling hypocritical to be postin' fights, but then also posin' in a campaign for work promoting antiviolence. So I had to stop posting fights.

When asked about why they cared about feeling like a hypocrite, they said,

> The one thing I am is real, being hypocritical is fake. Say what you mean and mean what you say. If I'm rockin' with this new message, then I have to be real about it and not be fake. You can't even post the fights with the same conscious because what you learnin' in the center is in the back of your mind just eating away at you.

Some fellows talked about the struggle with behavior change away from violence because of structural factors. A participant made this statement regarding struggles with retaliatory violence.

> So, this program has been helpful in changing something I may have wanted to do, it like, in the instance when I last got in trouble. I didn't use anything from this program, I had to go with what I knew because like, I learn, I do learn stuff here, but it don't always translate right to the streets.

> That nigga owed me money. He thought that because I work for the university now and the city, that I'm like, like soft or something. He was baitin' me in front my people in my neighborhood sayin' he wasn't gone pay me and I'm not about that life no more and tryin' to make me seem like a bitch, so I pulled a gun on him. Like I can't have people out here thinking I'm soft, and that was my first reaction. Like you in my hood, we standing in California Park, this my block. I can't walk out here every day with word spreadin' that niggas can get over on me because niggas will try you. Sometimes that's a worse scenario than me pullin' a gun on one dude because it can turn into real beef. People randomly drivin' by shootin' just 'cause they think you not gone do nothin. Later I thought about stuff that I learned about conflict resolution and about campaign stuff and social norms. And that I played into the social norm of my environment in that moment, but honestly that's survival. Like we come in here and wanna do better and wanna do good, but in the streets, it don't always give you the option to respond that way. I know it was wrong. And I'm glad my case didn't end up a felony. But that's another reason I just wanna be out here talking to the black males because it's real out here for all of us. It can't just be me who knows this stuff, who knows how to do better, it's got to be all of us. But enough about that...it's over and done! You already have the details, and thanks for letting me keep my job.

This participant is citing his struggles with behavior change, that essentially caused them to initially move into a direction of not readily being able to use what they knew – which means they were pushed toward the "keep it movin" phase. But once they had time to reflect and were out of the heat of the moment, could recognize that other means of resolving conflict amongst his peers are available and more viable – in theory. But because of the social norms of violence in his community, which have been established from centuries of divestment, racism, and discrimination, it is difficult to exist in his community without struggling with responding to violence in an unhealthy way.

In relation to youth violence interventions, many fellows felt like SJYD should be a strategy that is utilized. "It's how all of youth should be engaged because it's stuff we need to know, and it not only gives us this information that's

significant, it empowers us to do something about what we see, and lets us develop what we want to do." This was a shared belief amongst the fellows as they often discussed amongst themselves about how to address the issue of interpersonal youth violence with a lens towards justice. In a group session that was facilitated by the fellows, Jean captured flip chart notes of their ideas for addressing interpersonal youth violence with a social justice frame. Those written ideas were:

1) Create a freedom school in Louisville that is similar to the Chicago Freedom Schools;
2) Organize around campaigning and advocating for changes in the JCPS school curriculum to require Black history be taught;
3) Create safe, healing, community spaces that center youth in communities impacted by youth violence;
4) Create a city-wide collective of youth who teach other youth about Black history and help them build positive racial and communal identities (Youth facilitated SJYD);
5) Create a healing and Rehab center for youth that have been placed at risk for violence perpetration – make it mandatory like JCYC, but instead of just locking them up, rehabilitate them with mental health resources, support, and critical knowledge.

Based on their experiences, they believed that SJYD and the activities of the center should be a part of public health prevention and intervention strategies for violence. While they held this notion as it specifically relates to violence, they

also believe that SJYD should be a part of any youth intervention with a focus on racially marginalized youth.

Unintended Consequences

The unintended consequences analytic category was described as shifts in thought, paradigm, behavior, situation, and sociality that were deemed undesirable by the participant. Experiencing pain, fear, grief, depression, stress, or any other ill emotion or action as a result of gaining awareness are not intended to be outcomes of critical consciousness development, however, most participants experienced them. This category emerged with six properties (emotional and physical pain, being overwhelmed, stress, identity struggle, apathy, and how to respond). All participants discussed some kind of unintended consequence associated with growing in knowledge of – or having experiences with – social injustice, however, they also described the unintended consequences as an unavoidable part of the critical consciousness development process. Lisa had this to say,

> I don't really think you can avoid the feelings [unintended consequences] really. You can be overwhelmed with so many emotions. Like you'll be mad, but proud, "at the same damn time" [said in the melody of the song, "Same Damn Time" by rap artist, Future]. And tired but strengthened at "the same damn time" ... It's a mixin' bowl of emotions, "at the same damn time" ... It's painful to like sit and um, like feel them [the negative emotions]. But also, you like, have a level of understanding that's good for you, you know? And there's no way to prepare because you don't know what's comin' until you see it. So it's like being slapped out of nowhere... just pow! You don't know how you're gonna respond to that until it happens. You might be discombobulated for a sec, you might scream, you might cry, you might pass out dependin' on how hard you were slapped. You might laugh, like you just really don't know until it happens.

Several participants shared the notion that the process of critical consciousness development had both benefits and costs, and sometimes they coexist. Participant Ex stated, “[When] You become aware, it's like hell. It’s two sides to every coin you feel me? So, it's like the most heavenly hell you'll ever dwell in man. Yeah, like it's torture almost to some degree.”

Emotional and physical pain. Emotional and physical pain is an unintended consequence that came out of participants describing their emotional and physical responses to being aware of societal ills. The concept that knowing can be physically painful is described by participant Zee when he stated, “I see like what really lies behind the mask. I pulled back societies’ mask and now I see like the horrendous face like underneath. I see like the blemishes, the pimples, the busted lips, the black eye. I see all that and it makes me sick. Like for real sick.”

Some participants expressed pain in relation to empathizing with victims of social and racial injustice, Alice said,

> I've been a lot more emotional when I, you know, read about things. Like during the beginning of the [Black Lives Matter] movement, you know, the different names, Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, it was just names. But now critically thinking about the human part of it, the public health part of it, I see these people as individuals now, and like it hurts. Like it's definitely painful.

Following with similar sentiments is Nocturnal when he stated,

> I know when you know more, it hurts more. So, like you know that there's back door deals going on. You know that there's been talk about changing certain issues for decades, and it still won't change. You know that black men and boys are still getting killed, still being locked up at a higher rate, still being suspended at a higher rate. So, all that still hurts while I'm doing the work.

While others expressed pain in relation to physical discomfort and/or mental anxiety related to the potential of becoming a victim of social and/or racial injustice.

> But you know, coming here [to the program], you're not realizing the privilege and the power that they [white people] have, and the ignorance of the privilege. The power and privilege they have is just bothering to me. It's just like, I feel like I'm threatened now, you know? It's not like I'm gonna go down here and like start hurting white people because I'm threatened, but I'm like more consciously aware. I mean like I said, being more critically conscious is to realize how much danger you're actually in because of their ignorance, you know? It's dangerous because you now make decisions that put you in uncomfortable, undesirable positions. For example, I'm just gonna talk about, you know, I like the Matrix movie a lot. I see critical consciousness as exiting the Matrix. So you know, once you exit the matrix and people realize you exited the Matrix, the agents are gonna come after you because, you know, you're a threat to their system." – Easy E

Identity struggle. Several of the participants discussed struggles with identity in relation to critical consciousness development; they used terms like "stripping away of youthfulness" and "repositioned in our communities" in ways to describe the feelings of no longer belonging to social groups of significance to them. One participant said, "I'm damned if I do [change in thought processes and behavior] and I'm damned if I don't [change in thought processes and behavior]," as he discussed his internal struggle with engaging in behaviors that he now – since gaining awareness of certain things – views as stereotypical.

> …certain words like I can't even use [anymore] you know, there are certain words I can hardly use at this point. Or when I hear them used, I just like, cringe. You know what I'm saying? And [I] can't watch certain movies at this point. Cause I realize like, "Ah this is perpetuating, you know, that misconception about Black men," or, "That's perpetuating the stigma that Black women have to experience pain and trauma," and I can no longer just participate in behaviors and activities that were once normally recreational. Now I just, I'm cursed…

Participants went on further to discuss the struggle of being ostracized and isolated from spaces that were previously communal for them. As they determined to make lifestyle changes in alignment with their new paradigm shift(s), they were met with disapproving responses from peers and sometimes family. Some of the responses mentioned were, “you’re fake, you ain’t real, you used to be down for whatever” or “you forgot where you came from.” Another participant said of gaining critical consciousness, “you may lose trust of people, people may lose trust for you, you know, you may lose friendships, you may lose a lot, and it’s isolatin’ sometimes.” Another example of this is from Angel, she stated,

> In my classes, it’s like I want to be normal and just keep going, but you hear certain things that make you say hmm sometimes. And even if you don’t make a big deal about it or like question it on the outside, you’re sitting with it on the inside…the mentality of “ignorance is bliss” mindset is kind of taken from you. You’re not dumb to it anymore.

Being overwhelmed**.** The state of being overwhelmed emerged as participants discussed how the information and/or experiences made them feel. “Sometimes, it’s too much and it’s overwhelmin’ to think about,” is how Lisa described it. Many agreed that, as Cash put it, “it wasn’t no sugar canes and lollipops in this learnin…it is a tough pill to swallow.” There was a sense of being overwhelmed at recognizing the plight of the Black community, as participants said, and just how many things need to be addressed for the community to properly progress. Any time participants engaged in reflexive thought about the extent to which Black communities have historically and still contemporarily suffer[ed], the response was a state of being overwhelmed. One participant

described feeling like they could not get away from what they now knew, “I'm now more aware of the societal woes. So, that gets overwhelming. So, there’s some things that… Things I would’ve once turned a blind eye to that now end up following me home.”

Additionally, participants described their responses to being or feeling overwhelmed, one participant said, “Sometimes I just fall asleep. Like for real. Like just fall asleep and I just collapse and then I wake up and hope that whatever was troubling me, that it's moved on elsewhere. I'm still trying to really figure out what self-care looks like.” Another said:

> I mean I just stop thinking about it and try to do something else. It’s just overwhelmin’ to think about all the stuff that’s been done that still goes on some of it. It seems just out of the ordinary to go so out of your way to make yourself higher and lower someone else. My brain doesn’t really get it. So, like I’m always trying to figure out but why though?

Apathy (lethargy, weariness, hopelessness)**.** While the majority of participants experienced a range of unintended consequences, apathy was closely linked to being overwhelmed. Participants would describe being overwhelmed, and within that, feeling hopeless and/or tired. Some of the reasons for the tired and/or hopeless feelings were related to trying to help others understand, Q said, “I get tired sometimes of trying to help my peers understand [social injustices].” As explained earlier, they are met with rejection sometimes in their attempts, which also causes participants to shut down. Beyond peer rejection, they also discuss the causes of apathy being associated with reflecting on an extensive history of oppression, having current experiences that mimic

things learned of the past, and working hard for social justice, but minimal recognition and/or reward for the work accomplished.

Many of the excerpts are interchangeable between overwhelm and apathy, a quote from Not Important discusses the two properties together in her statement that, “Every time I learn something new related to this stuff I’m just like why? And then you get tired. It’s too much. It’s depressing. And then I just have to move away from it and focus on something else.” Ex echoed her statement by saying, “It could lead you to going to the place of resentment when you see your people continue to behave in such a manner after you try to give them the truth, you just start to say like fuck it. And you start to feel hopeless about the idea of getting black people to unite. You become paralyzed and catatonic.”

Q explained the paradox, tension and exhausted experienced by this process:

> Once you reach this level of critical consciousness, part of you can feel, kinda proud of yourself. And part of that pride makes you want some recognition. But you realize that society doesn’t recognize social justice work as they should. You feel like you’re changing the world and should be recognized for it, but when you don’t get it, you can become hopeless, or you can start resenting the world. Especially when you been workin’ hard. And I mean hard for a long time. You can get tired without the praise, or like something to motivate you to keep going because it’s already hard.

Participants also discussed significant mood changes because of being tired; some mentioned anger and frustration, while others mentioned depression, sadness, and hopelessness. A common coping mechanism for the burnout was to move away from the context of social justice for a while.

Stress**.** Stress overall was discussed in relation to power dynamics and how external situations, or institutions of power, created moments of stress in

relation to critical consciousness development. There were distinct ways in which male and female participants discussed the stressors. Female participants discussed stress tied to struggles with identity. For these participants, stress was associated with attempting to exist in spaces with their counterparts who had expectations of “stereo-typical black girl behavior.” One participant reflected, “It’s hard to play the part when you know you’re playing the part now, so it can be a bit stressful.” Another female participant discussed stress at work, in relation to identity. She described how she would prefer to express herself because of what she knows about her heritage, but feeling like it would be impossible to do for fear of losing her job. Power dynamics associated with norms in socials groups and norms in professional settings, caused stress for young women with critical awareness.

Male participants expressed stress in relation to safety and power as well. One participant said he was in a constant state of “fight or flight.” Another participant described the “irremovable target” on his back. He went on to explain that, “everywhere you move, everywhere you go, you’re automatically perceived a certain way just because of the color of your skin, and the heritage that you represent and should be proud of. But society don’t see it that way and like just because of things that I can’t even control, I’m a target. It brings a lot of stress.” In relation to power dynamics, some participants discussed that they felt as though they had no control over the oppression in their lives. This lack of control led to feelings of stress that they would not otherwise have experienced without

being critically aware of historical and contemporary social issues. Nocturnal said that,

> "When you're in school, and they're teachin' this history that you know is false, it brings stress. The fact that you don't have control over the curriculum is stressful sometimes. You want to provide alternatives or options, but you can't, you're the student and not the one with the power. It's stress. I can go on and on about the stresses of knowing all this."

Zee followed with similar sentiments by stating that, "when you have knowledge of these different systems and these different ills, but you don't have the control or power to fix it how you want to, it's stressful and depressin'."

How to respond**.** As this analytic category of unintended consequences began to emerge, it revealed the need to know what could be done to avoid them. This question was asked during initial interviews for cohorts one and two, but was also a part of member checking interviews for participants who had already exited the Fellowship. The unanimous response was that unintended consequences could not be avoided; they said that they were just a part of being aware of and/or experiencing injustices. Q said that:

> "I mean, there's no way to avoid some type of like negative feeling or emotion, because like, this is some dirty stuff that's been done to Black people period. It can be empowering but then depressing at the same time. It helps you understand some things because it's like, oh a light bulb went off that explains why certain things happen. But at the same time, it's like damn, like is that really the reason it happened?"

As expressed in this quote, the unintended consequences are not a result of the intervention per se, since participants discussed the general notion of being racially marginalized. However, for interventions that intentionally engage Black youth in social justice and conscious raising work, there should be intentionality

around minimalizing these experiences as much as possible. While participants said the responses were unavoidable, they also provided feedback for how supporting adults that are engaging with them can help them process through, manage, and heal from the unintended consequences. This also supports the notion that strategies are needed that are grounded in the understanding of the sociopolitical climate and context of participants; you cannot help them process through, manage, and/or heal from unintended outcomes if there is not a strategy that intentionally acknowledges and addresses systemic oppression.

As the participants talked through what would be helpful for them when dealing with the unintended consequences, spaces for youth healing, space for youth organizing, space for youth culture, and affirmation all arose as critical elements for participants. When they discussed spaces for youth healing, they mentioned needing room to detoxification; Easy E explained this as “you know a place to detoxify, to get rid of all the negative emotions amongst people that will, like, help you process through it all. Walkin’ in this shit day in and day out you just start to feel like you just gotta wash it all out of you and off of you.” They said that they needed a space that was empathetic to their experiences and that understood, “the shift [in critical awareness], even if it was ugly [the way they respond to it]”, as Ex said. They explained “ugly” as hyper emotional responses of crying, screaming, pacing, and maybe appearing to be aggressive, but the aggression is geared toward the processing of information. Lisa mentioned that supporting the mental health needs of participants was a critical component, as she reflected on their sessions with mental health therapists within the office.

> I remember when we would meet with Marlena and the tall guy...I can't remember his name. But we had those sessions that we used to call AA meetings (laughs). It gave us some really good tools for dealing with our emotions, and it was nice to have her (Marlena) to talk to even about things not really completely related to the fellowship. Just to kinda mentally dump like we were able to was just really important.

Another critical element associated with youth healings spaces was the integration of youth culture within support spaces. The Fellowship existed within YVPRC, which, though a university institution, was embedded within the community for ease of access to the communities it served. The participants often discussed making the space feel like a youth space. James said he, "appreciated the dress code because it made it easy for me to go from school to work without feeling like I needed to change into 'professional' clothes." Cardi said that the space was conducive to youth self-expression in a lot of ways, "I don't feel like I have to come in here and like put on for anybody. I can just be myself. I can listen to my music. I can get up and talk to people. I can sit at my desk and just be quiet if I want to, but like, I'm not confined to this standard of 'this is how you have to be in the workplace." So, they discussed the importance of a space where they felt welcomed in their identity as youth, and how that brought a sense of peace that was helpful in mitigating negative emotions. Nocturnal said:

> Sometime you just need to be in a space with like-minded people you know? Like in a community of self-expression, where creativity is allowed. I write poetry while I'm here. I draw. And it's like a peaceful place. When I'm dealing with all of the stressors outside, it's like, nice to come into a place that accepts me for just bein' me and also is like tryin to make sure I'm good, and like work on bettering our community.

Another element of discussion was space for youth to organize; going back to that sense of urgency to do something once they are in the “you see it” phase, or entering a state of critical consciousness, participants said it would be helpful to have space that allows for youth to organize. And not only space for them to organize, but space that is filled with like-minded youth, to decrease the sense and experience with identity struggle and the isolation it brings. Cardi said, “when I start feeling helpless, or overwhelmed in the work, I need a new spark, and a lot of times my [like-minded] peers give me that spark and I’m brought out of my negative feelings.” P-dub said that youth needed “outlets to channel my sparked flame, and resources that cultivate effective responses to what sparked my flame”. Participants stated that many times a critical incident, or experience, happens and it causes high emotions to surge and they just want to do something; if that energy is not intentionally channeled in a positive way, it could lead to “what some folks see as like, catastrophic, or like problematic outcomes because you just be ready to tear shit up,” Easy E said. So, participants said that they needed structured engagement as an outlet so that they are pushed toward critical social action that can achieve social change rather than outcomes that potentially leave them “demonized,” as Ex put it. Many participants also said that community organizing training should be a part of youth organizing spaces.

Lastly, the participants talked about the significance of affirmation, being affirmed in who they are as well as being affirmed in the work of social justice. Q said that “I think it’s important to like, affirm youth in this work. Like through recognition. Recognize youth for their contributions because it feels like

sometimes, like adults take credit for it all, but it's of our backs that the work is accomplished." Angel said that adults need to "share the stage" with youth, "and recognize them and their contributions as important." Many insinuated that the affirmation would make them feel good about themselves and the work and give them motivation to keep going, in spite of the negative emotions. Ex said:

> Sometimes you just wanna be recognized and you want somebody to say 'job well done'. That's motivation to keep doing what I'm doing. Damn the system and anything it's throwin' at me because I'm fightin' it and I'm winnin'. Like you can easily feel like you losing, but like constantly recognizin' the good work and the hard work we put into this just helps us to keep pushin' in the right direction.

Participants needed affirmation and validation of a "job well done". They said affirming language and actions go a long way in helping them fight through unintended consequences. Along with the affirming language and actions are the affirming historical experiences. While knowing of – and experiencing – social injustices can lead to undesired physical and/or emotional states, knowledge of – and experience with – triumph assists with detouring participants from existing in pro-longed states of negative emotions. Many stated that the longer they engage with certain content and concept, the more likely they are to experience the unintended consequences. However, they seemed to draw strength from seeing and learning about how Black people have overcome because it helped them feel like they could overcome too.

We saw this notion evidenced in the first year of the campaign where the participants chose a figure in Black history and described what that figure meant to them. Jay said this in his campaign commercial, "My power comes from knowing my history, and the power that Ali has instilled in me. It lets this west

end student know, that I too can shock the world." In Easy E's commercial, he stated that his power also came from his people (those in which he shares racial identity), understanding "...the power it took Tommie Smith to stand up for what he believed in. It taught me, to never run from what I believe." We also see an earlier example from Lisa as she likened herself to Congresswoman Maxine Waters and her famous statement about "reclaiming her time"; Lisa was associating finding and being confident in her voice to reclaiming lost time from seasons of existing silently. She too, pulled strength from a Black historical [but also current] figure. So, it is important to focus on triumph that is affirming to youth identity and that builds a sense of self-efficacy within social justice work.

Summary of The Impact

A part of the analytic work of this study was to identify and describe the impact of critical consciousness development on the LYVV Fellowship participants. The Impact provides a descriptive analysis of the varying impacts of critical consciousness development as described and/or experienced by participants. There were three analytic categories: 1) self-awareness; 2) "the goal", which had three properties, and 3) unintended consequences, which had six properties. Self-awareness was a dual analytic category, it is also cited in the process finding because it is both a part of the process of developing critical consciousness, as well as an outcome of the process.

Self-awareness was defined as knowing who you are, how you see the world around you, and/or how you perceive where you fit into society as a whole. Within this finding, self-awareness was not discussed in its role as part of the

process, but in its role as part of the impact, an outcome of becoming critically conscious. “The goal” provides a description of shifts in thought, paradigm, behavior, and sociality deemed positive by participants as a result of gaining awareness and/or becoming (or growing) critically conscious. There were three properties to this category: a) knowing history, b) transformational travel, and c) shifting youth violence outcomes. Knowing history delved into how participants discussed the impact of knowing history and what it meant for their personal lives; transformational travel described the impact of traveling to locations with historical significance that provided hands-on exposure to and experience with the content and context of the YVPRC intervention; and shifting youth violence outcomes discussed interpersonal violence in relation to structural violence and what public health should be doing in intervention with this framing as the lens.

The final analytic category was unintended consequences, which had six properties (emotional and physical pain, being overwhelmed, intense stress, identity struggle, acute apathy, and how to respond). This category captures any shifts in thought, paradigm, behavior, situation, and/or sociality deemed undesirable by participants. We learn from this finding that critical consciousness impacts everyone differently, but there are collective experiences from which we should glean. We also learn that participants have desired ways in which they want supporting adults to help them cope with the knowledge of – or experiences with – injustices. Those desired coping mechanisms are spaces that center youth healing, space that centers youth organizing, space that supports youth culture, and affirmation. There was no prescription or phases/stages within this finding.

FINDING IV: The Influencers of the Framework

This finding supports the second and third aims of the study, which are to identify how urban minority youth within the intervention experience a process of critical consciousness development and determine the intervention's impact on the youth as they participated in a fellowship that utilized a SJYD framework. It brings clarity to why the interpretive framework has the components that it has, describing what influences the critical consciousness development process for the participants, as well as what influences how they are personally impacted by the process. The primary data source for this finding was interviews (first interviews and member checking interviews), as well as data analysis of journal entries and field note observations. This was a descriptive finding, with dimensions that describe each identified influence of the process and process impact. There are five analytic categories that make up this theme: 1) societal factors, 2) Length of time/extent of exposure to content and concepts, 3) supports, 4) barriers, and 5) Belief System. All analytic category titles were co-constructed through the data to best represent multiple voices within the data.

Societal Factors

May participants were influenced by what was happening in society and discussed those societal factors in relation to how they increased opportunity for critical consciousness development, which fueled how they engaged or approached social action. They spoke, or wrote, about larger social factors – like racial injustice, police brutality, Black Lives Matter movement, youth-led movements – that influenced their critical consciousness development and that

influenced how they were impacted by those social factors. They also discussed experiences with, or knowledge of, discrimination/othering within institutions that they have to navigate daily, as influencers as well. James shared the societal influences on his social action.

> ...I remember in middle school, like Trayvon Martin was killed... That was the first instance where I learned about, it wasn't necessarily police violence, but I learned about racial profiling. And then, um, there was Michael Brown, who was killed in 2014, then the uprisings in 2015...and that might have been like my first point of critical consciousness. It all just kind of stayed in the back of my head, but I tried not to think about it too much. And then I started learning more about like, Tamir Rice and Sandra Bland and all kinds of people who were murdered by the state. And then, summer of '16, Alton Sterling and Philando Castile are murdered within two days of each other. And that was like a catalyst for me. That was the point where I was like, "Okay. Yeah, what can I do. So, this moment kind of jump started my growth and I started to want to learn more and more about systemic racism. That's why I wanted to be in the fellowship. Like be with a group of young people who wanted to do something about all the instances of injustice because I was starting to get antsy you know?

Here James essentially walks us through the process described above – the process of critical consciousness development – at the point where he had his "ah ha moment", he became antsy and wanted to take action; that action for him, was looking for a place to mobilize for social action, which led him to the fellowship. Circumstances external to himself, that were happening on a national level, influenced his process of critical consciousness development, as well as how he was impacted by that development, which led him to a place of action.

Alice shared that for her, it was the environment in which she grew up, the experiences she had navigating the public school system, and social media, which gave her access to the experiences of others that were similar to hers. In a journal reflection, she said:

> ...there were multiple influences in my life. I always thought it strange that though I identified as a person of strength and dignity and a person that deserved good in the world, society [organizations, institutions, and people that she identified as outside of her community] didn't always treat me that way. And it was so subtle, the othering, and so I realized that others in society didn't necessarily perceive me how I viewed myself, and many times it made me shrink back or question if what I believed about myself was true. I've always been quiet, reserved, and just more internally inquisitive, so I researched [online] a lot and learned all about the history of racism and injustice for people who looked like me. I could see me being othered as racism, especially out in places around the city. But from my research, I could see that others have had similar experiences as me and I wasn't weird in my feelings that something was just off in how society sometimes responded to me. In a store, the crazy looks sometimes. In school, when I thought that I should be in a more advanced class, but teachers telling me I can't and I should just stay at my grade level. That's why I really like Central [high school] because it celebrates us as students and it feels like they just want us to go for it. To go for it all with no limitations, which is what really matched what was in my spirit anyway.

As Alice, too, further confirms the process of critical consciousness development in the fellows – whether the experiences happened within the center or not – she also confirms that social factors and experiences within society influenced her critical consciousness development process.

Easy E shared Alice's opinion that school socialization was an influencer to his critical consciousness development process as well, he stated that within the schools "they expect us to be a certain way, and they're teaching us that their standards for how we should be are right. But my standards didn't always match up with theirs, so it caused friction. Made me think they didn't like me or I was somehow wrong...". He goes on in his interview to say that his self-esteem was impacted by this, and that his engagement in school was now "filtered through this lens that made me question and, uh, try to understand who I was or was supposed to be in that environment. Like I reflected on that a lot and behaved

accordingly. Most of the time rebelling against their expectations." So, for Easy E in this statement, we see him going through the critical consciousness development process (initial thinking, experiences that caused him to reflect, moving into self-awareness, becoming critically aware of what he felt was improper or unfair, then taking action based on what he understood to be true of the situation) and being influenced by the school system.

Length of Time/Extent of Exposure to Content and Concepts.

This concept was relevant to both the process and personal impacts experienced by participants. Within the process, it supports the framing of participant's initial thinking stage, their experiences, self-awareness, and knowing and pursuit of knowledge stages. Some fellows entered the fellowship with a level of consciousness already, and so their experiences (and the rest of their process) were influenced by the degree to which they were already exposed to certain content and concepts. In his interview, Nocturnal said that he "already kinda knew a lot about injustice and racism and stuff like that, so what happens in YVPRC [related to critical consciousness development] only further helps me understand more and equips me with even more tools [for fighting injustice]." For some participants, as data from both Odd, Lisa, and Angel depict, YVPRC and the fellowship was an introduction to the development of critical consciousness, while for others like Nocturnal and Easy E, the fellowship was a deepening experience and contributed to further enlightenment and more strategic action. Easy E explains that he has been engaged in critical consciousness development for quite some time,

> I'm deep in this [awareness/understanding of oppressive factors impacting his and his community's lives], Ya'll know when you met me. I been peepin' this, which is why I was strugglin' so much when you met me. I just needed a more constructive way to deal with it all.

For Easy E, this concept impacted his process because he had already been through several iterations of it, and so within the fellowship for him, it influenced his depth of understanding, rather than him coming into an understanding.

Length of time/Extent of exposure to content and concepts also influenced how participants were personally impacted by the process. Many described a relationship between how long they have grappled with issues of injustice and how much they knew about historic and contemporary social issues to how they moved forward with any level of actionable engagement. There is an identified association between unintended consequences and how much you "know," with several participants indicating that more unintended consequences surface with more exposure to content and concepts. In a quote from James' interview, he stated that he feels like

> "there is a negative effect of being critically conscious sometimes. Being woke or being aware... Because man, the more you know, the more it hurts. The more things you see that are wrong, the more you don't wanna look. There are definitely effects of being in the class [of those who 'know']."

Cash shared this belief, but also discussed this category as one of benefit. In a vlog entry, he reflects on the impact of being critically conscious, as he walks through how he experienced a part of the Alabama trip.

> Today we ventured to museums that left us pretty speechless for most of the day. Some of this stuff I knew, but like, being here... being here makes it more real like, it's not just knowledge in a book or on the internet, but it's real. Being here just took me to a deeper place. Like deeper in my thinking about myself, what happened to me [being a survivor of gun violence], and

> the kinds of things that have been done from a historical perspective to fight for freedom and justice... I don't even know how like some of those who were in this [justice work] before us stood as long as they did. Like we see short synopsis in books, but then you read the stories, and close the books and it's finished. But then to read that some of this [civil rights movement strategies] happened for years. YEARS!! For years they were marching, and for years they were like bus boycotting. It wasn't a onetime deal; they held it down for years. And like I'm just getting into this like journey of knowing and I'm already tired. (laughs) The more I learn the more exhausted I get in my mind the more I think about it, it can be overwhelming. It becomes real big in my head. But on the flipside, it's what I need to like see and what I need to know because if they endured, then we can too. Like going deeper in my understanding of their fight, grit and perseverance, makes me know I can have the same fight, grit, and perseverance. I don't have to be bogged down in my brain tryin to save the day today. Change happened slowly, I think too slowly honestly, but like there is a point that comes where you can see the results of your hard work.

Cash's personal experience as it relates to this concept is that the more exposure to content and concepts, and the longer he engaged, it made him tired and overwhelmed – which is discussed as an unintended consequence. However, he also reflects that continuing to learn more and continuing to be exposed to more content and concepts provides a fuel for continuing on in the fight for justice.

It is important to note that there may be something to the kind of information they are receiving that is tied to the kind of response or impact it has on them. It could be that continued exposure to something like police brutality over and over can lead more often to unintended consequences, but exposure to historical and/or contemporary information that highlights the triumphs experience related to social justice work, that those may lead more to the intended consequences, or "the goal".

Support

Support was captured a few different ways in the data. It was defined and described by participants, and it was also illustrated through the identification of positive relationships and assistance from family, friends, or the YVPRC center that helped participants to achieve personal goals and/or community change. Again, support was identified in the process of critical consciousness development, and also in terms of how support was associated with the personal impacts of that development. In describing what support meant and looked like to them, Cardi said in her interview that support is "when you care enough about someone to be there for them. You help them, and that shows you care." JJ said support is when "they [people in your life] do for you and you turn around and do for them. No one wants to do life alone, those that support you provide opportunities to do life with people." Many described support in terms of being there for someone and showing a person (or people) that you care.

Ex, who was a participant in the fellowship for several years, stated that:

> my journey of developing socio-politically has just grown the more and more I get information and support from the center. My activism has grown. I just know way more than I used to, and it makes me want to change and improve some things about myself... A big support for me is Trinidad, he like, kicks me in the ass sometimes when I need some motivation to keep going and helps me stay out of my previous lifestyle so that I can be a change agent like I say that I want to be.

Here we see support in the process of developing socio-politically, as well as the personal impact of that support being a mentor from the center who helps him navigate this process and life in general.

In contrast, from fellows who were only in the fellowship for a short time (less than or around a year and a half), there engagement with the concepts of critical consciousness and SJYD were not the same once they exited the fellowship, and they talked about social action as something that was harder to continue on with outside of the fellowship. Not Important mentioned in her member checking interview that she struggled with shifting behavior and staying in what she considered a "critically conscious state of mind" due to survival, needing to deal with other things in her life, and having a lack of support. She shared:

> I don't really know if I'm different. Well, I guess I do do somethings differently sometimes. After [leaving] the fellowship though, I don't think my life was really set up to like stay in this critically conscious state of mind. It's like it comes and it goes like I was saying before. It's here sometimes and then sometimes I can't consciously think about it, though I might be experiencing something like right then [something that denotes injustice or would require her advocacy and/or activism]. Like, you know. Like in the moment of something that, like, I should take a stand on or do something about. But it's not my first mind sometimes. The first mind is to survive and to finish the thing you're already doing. Maybe later you go back and reflect and think about what you should have done or said. And get mad. But you deal and you <u>keep it movin'</u> honestly.

This quote speaks to the importance of the support available within the fellowship that she felt she did not have outside of it. A similar sentiment was expressed by JJ in her member checking interview. She said she connected with "keep it movin" on the interpretive framework for similar reasons expressed above by Not Important. She is also another participant that was active in the fellowship for less than two years. An excerpt from her interview is below.

> Yeah, I mean you pretty much have to keep it movin because you got competin' priorities. I'm worried about feedin' my son, getting a job to take

> care of my family, and like just navigating life every day. Ain't nobody in my circle talkin' 'bout this stuff like we did in YVPRC... I keep the things near to my heart that impacted me, but like, I can't always stay thinkin' about how to make a change for everybody else, I just have to do the best I can do for my family. But I will make sure my black son knows what he needs to know with some of the stuff I learned in the fellowship.

Barriers

The data reveal participant discussions of, and experience with, barriers; these are identified talks or experiences with impediments to achieving the goal of becoming social agents of change for their communities. Barriers were also discussed as resistance from internal (within self) or external (societal) forces that stopped progress towards a justice-oriented goal. Participants identified an array of barriers; structural racism, perception of self and self-efficacy, personal factors, and intergenerational communications struggles were among the most notable barriers. Much of the data illustrates the context of the U.S. and its history of racism and discrimination as the predominant barrier to the participants perceiving the possibility of social change and their ability to be a part of that change.

Alice stated that, "systems have been set in place to be barriers to the things that we fight for. The policies within the systems were created for marginalizing some and centering others. I think the biggest barrier we have is the undertone of racism in systems." In a facilitated discussion group, the participants were asked to talk about barriers; for Lisa, the barrier related to the system (I.e., systems of power in the U.S.) is the ignorance it facilitates by not telling the truth of U.S. history in its entirety. So, people do not know how to

mobilize for change when they don't know or cannot see what they are mobilizing against.

> Ignorance [of systemic oppression] is a barrier. People have been oppressed so long they don't even know the barriers exist. You can't fight against what you don't know or can't see or don't understand really. They want us to be ignorant because if we're ignorant, we can't change things. We stay at the status quo, which benefits them but is bad for us.

Nocturnal, in a separate cohort of participants, participated in a similar facilitated discussion around barriers to social and community change, and he said this, "Barriers? Simple. The system. Period. As a young Black man, I have strikes against me just based on my identity and how I was born. I came out the womb with barriers in this country." Cardi held similar opinions in that, "systemic barriers are the worst kind of barrier and exist for no reason". When asked why she thought the barriers existed, she said, "Because people are greedy. And people have hate in their hearts. I can't think of any other reason that they [facilitators of racism and discrimination] would do what they've done."

In the context of being an influencer of the context specific framework, this barrier influenced self-awareness, experiences with unintended consequences, as well as experiences with "the goal", which denotes action towards addressing social change. Participants discussed this as a barrier, but the majority shared the notion that social change is harder because of this barrier, but not impossible. The lens towards identifying what it possible connects to a second identified barrier, which is self-awareness. How participants view themselves and their ability to affect change determines if they take actionable steps to facilitate change. Participants with a more optimistic lens believed that barriers did not

exist and only exist to the extent that you accept them. Cash said that, “there are things meant to be barriers, like racism and discrimination, and the political games that are played and stuff like that. But those things really can’t stop you unless you let them.” Angel said that “Barriers don’t exist. Well actually, they do exist, but there’s always ways to overcome them if you believe that you can.” In P-dub’s argument, that barriers exist to the degree that you perceive them to, he said:

> You have to know what’s real and what’s fake. A lot of the barrier talk is fake because the barriers are a created farce. It’s not real. It’s a fear tactic, fear is a factor of institutions trying to get you to believe a certain thing so you’ll behave a certain way. Fear should dissolve at the point of realization (critical consciousness). To me, it’s like how they obtain circus animals in the most ridiculous ways. When they tie elephants to plastic chairs and they don't move, stuff like that. Yeah, this I [plastic chair] s in your way, but what are you going to do about it? You’re much stronger as an elephant than the chair you’re tied to as well as the folks who tied you to it. You are strength. You are strong. But only to the degree that you believe it.

Because participants are youth, there are youth specific barriers that they identified as influencers to their critical consciousness development process and how they are personally impacted by it. Some of the identified personal barriers are economic, identity, being a youth, and adult-youth dynamics. In relation to the economic barriers, because they are youth, and all are marginalized base on race, age, and socioeconomic status, there existed barriers to the process simply because it was a struggle to get to the center. Nocturnal said that, “in this space [YVPRC], transportation is a huge barrier. I don’t really make enough money to get a car or nothin’ like that, so I gotta use public transportation or like try to get rides from friends, but none of that is 100% reliable.” He goes on to mention a few more barriers, which positions us to understand the difficulties of being a

young person who is trying to be an agent of change, but juggle multiple things amidst multiple barriers.

> [It's a struggle] Just trying to get everywhere and juggle all the work and really try to be engaged in the work even after the clock ... after I punch out I might have to go somewhere like California Community Center or another community center and sit in the youth talks so I need transportation to be able to get around.

Q stated almost the exact same thing in relation to this type of barrier, but further helped depict how barriers are influencers the process and its impact. He said:

> One barrier, uh, definitely [is] an economic barrier. Is um, I don't have a car so it's difficult to come here, I have to catch a bus to come here. That means I have to like think about my time, and in regards to my classes, and my location on campus. And that's stress right there, so stress can be a barrier that comes because of the economic struggles. Stress as a college student can be a barrier, stress as a young individual trying to make change and trying to keep a social life, but also do this social change work is, you know, stress, and can be [experience] cognitive dissonance, which can be a barrier.

This excerpt reveals how barriers influence the process of critical consciousness development in many ways – economic barriers leading to stress, stress in one area then impacting other areas, then leading to cognitive dissonance, which is "the state of having inconsistent thoughts, beliefs, or attitudes, especially as relating to behavioral decisions and attitude change (cite)." A state of cognitive dissonance could lead to unintended consequences, struggles with shifting behavior in a way that supports participants in heading towards "the goal".

Additionally, adult-youth dynamics were discussed as barriers to the process, but more so as barriers to authentic youth engagement and the facilitation of adequate youth development strategies, that then impedes their

ability to develop socio-politically. Jay had this to say about adult-youth dynamics.

> Um, so baby boomers. Baby boomers, they're just very abrasive to me, a lot of them. Um, and it's just like, they've been here longer, which is true, but they think they know everything and treat me like I don't know enough of anything. I put it like this, experience and imagination. I feel like the older generation has the experience, but really don't have the imagination to keep dreaming. So like social change falls with them because they have the power to make the decisions, but they aren't dreaming anymore, so it just dies.

JJ confirmed this belief, reflecting on his own experiences with being frustrated as a young person trying to facilitate change. She said, "Being young is my barrier. A lot of people don't listen to millennials in the same way that they would to somebody who's been here [on earth] a little longer. They aren't familiar with you, so you have to build relationships and have somebody vouch for you, it just takes forever." Cardi shared in a journal entry what frustrated her most about being a young person trying to engage in social change efforts.

> [My Frustration as a Youth, no date] My frustration is in the fact that everybody wants you to engage as a young person. Like everybody wants you to show up to this or show up to that, but almost like mindless or with the same mindset as whoever is asking you to come. It's frustrating because I have my own mind. I'm not just going to show up because you want a youth in the room, we should actually be paid for that. We should be paid for showing up since it's our valuable time and we're juggling everything. Money is my other frustration, but not related to getting paid to show up at events. Me and my friends put together a plan and wanted to start a summer program camp, to basically mimic what we do here [in the fellowship] and there are no resources. Nobody wants to fund the youth ideas, but you want the youth to show up though? I don't get it. So, this is what frustrates me the most about the work and it just becomes another road block [barrier].

Lastly, norms of structural violence and interpersonal violence were described as barriers. Participants mentioned it being hard to enact change when

people are ignorant to the need for change. Lisa said of a conversation with peers, as she shared what she was learning, how their lack of understanding about history made it difficult for them to receive the information she was sharing. She said that the way society tells the story of what we should know skews the mindsets of masses of people. In a journal reflection, she wrote.

> [Lisa, no title, 12/4/2016] I remember trying to have this conversation about African and African Americans with a friend at school. She could not hear what I was saying. She kept saying, “I’m not African”, “I’m not African”. She kept saying she wasn’t African because we get to see negative images of Africa all the time. History tells us that the bases for math, science, and even some technologies came from Africa! Yet the only Africa we get to see are the hungry children on tv.

In a quote from Ex, he discusses the acceptance of interpersonal violence, but overlooking structural violence and both need to be addressed to achieve social change. He stated:

> I know there's a, there's a brighter day, hopefully ahead of us, so, I try not to like let it be a barrier that stops me. But me knowing all this [knowledge about structural violence], [knowing] all the work that has been done for decades, and we still see where we at. It’s many stories out here about kids dying because of gang violence or whatever, or like, black on black crime. But like, it’s not just interpersonal, there’s other crimes going on also. But it’s the crimes that get ignored and like that really keeps us from achieving the goals we say we want to achieve out here in the community.

Here again, is an example of norms of violence that are accepted within society, yet participants feel that because of what is accepted as “normal” in society, changing that “norm” can feel impossible when everyone is “going with the flow of injustice like it’s the thing to do”, as Alice stated.

Belief Systems

Belief systems, within this data, are defined as a set of religious or spiritual principles or ideas that support the interpretation of reality for the participants.

Through the lens of their various belief systems, participants made meaning of social justice work and how it impacted their personal lives. What or who they believed in and what they believed to be true or possible, all influenced how they navigated the process of critical consciousness development. We see some evidence of this in some of the data related to barriers; P-dub and Cash both took a stance that barriers only exist if you let them. For P-dub, a part of that stance is associated with his grounding in the Hebrew Israelite faith; his religious affiliation asserts that African Americans are descendants of the ancient Israelites and that they are God's chosen people. Because of this belief system, P-dub stated that:

> There's not much of anything that can stop me from achieving my goals. There may be attempts, but they're feeble at best due to who I am. As a Black, Hebrew Israelite, my history is regal, which means my lineage will be too. This is why the work of social justice is so important because, who are you [persons and/or institutions that facilitate racism] to tell me who I'm not? Or to treat me like less than? I'm prolific.

His pride in who he is, and his belief about being connected to a royal lineage, created a lens of optimism, which impacted how he experienced the process of critical consciousness development. He said, that "I use what I learn – what I have realized – so that I can mobilize people and youth to know who they really are, too. Our history tells us who we are."

In similar fashion, Cash credits his belief system, or his faith, for is life outcomes and applies that to his time and experiences in the fellowship. He said, "my faith in God is what helps me cope. I can get tired, I can get mad [related to learning about and experiencing injustice], but at the end of the day, it's gone be alright 'cuz God got me. You know what I'm sayin'? Cardi, on the other hand,

talked in terms of the practices of her religious belief system being her “saving grace” in navigating the difficulties of what she experiences in everyday life. She said:

> I’m not gonna lie, like my faith is my saving grace sometimes. It’s not always cool to talk about faith as a young person, but it really is helpful for me. I look forward to things like Ramadan, because it centers me, no matter what is going on around me, I have my intentional focused time on Allah and my family. It’s so peaceful, and it helps me cope. Social justice work can feel like raging against a machine sometimes, so even though the machine is still there, like during this time, it reminds me to pray for the machine and for those who intentionally cause harm to others. I’m filled up by reminders of the goodness from the people in my life. It helps me to refuel so that I can keep going [in the work of social justice].

Many of the participants discussed spiritual or religious belief systems – Christianity, Muslim, Hebrew Israelite, ancestral spiritualism, a higher power – as a grounding place, a centering or coping mechanism for navigating social justice work. Easy E sums up this notion in his statement that:

> You can’t do this work, or navigate this field that’s constantly digging into the societal ills, the social destruction of a people, and not believe in something outside of yourself that keeps you motivated to keep goin’. I go back and forth between certain types of religion because I’m just findin’ my own path, but central to my belief is just in a higher power. There is a higher power who has a master plan for it all.

Summary of The Influencers of the Framework

This finding helped to clarify why the framework has its specific components and describes key dimensions of influence for the process and its outcomes. There are five dimensions that make up this finding: 1) societal factors, 2) length of time/extent of exposure to content and concepts, 3) support, 4) barriers, and 5) belief systems). Societal factors were identified as things that happen in society,

or experiences had within a larger social context, that influenced critical consciousness development in participants. They discussed large movements, like Black Lives Matter, as well as experiences within institutions, like the school system, that set them on a journey of critical consciousness development. How long, and the extent to which, a participant had exposure to the content and concepts reviewed in the intervention, was a determining factor in how they experienced critical consciousness development as well. Some participants were new to the content and concepts, while others had several years of experience with it; they were able to identify how this concept correlated to their process and personal impact. It is important to note that it appears the longer a participant was engaged with the content and concepts, the more likely they were to experience unintended consequences. It is also important to note, that participants with less engagement with the content and concepts, tended to "keep it movin" more often, meaning they did not move toward "the goal" of shifting thoughts, paradigm, or behaviors that were indicative of impacting oppression, dehumanization, and violence.

Support was defined as having positive relationships and assistance from family, friends, and/or the YVPRC center, that helped them achieve personal goals and/or social change. Participants discussed what support looked like to them, what it meant to them, and how it influenced their critical consciousness development process. In contrast, barriers were described as the impediments to progress on social justice issues, as well as the things that stopped them from achieving personal goals for self or personal goals for social change. Barriers

were described as existing both internally and externally to the participants, and what were perceived as barriers also influenced their critical consciousness development. Lastly are belief systems, specifically those of religious or spiritual affiliation; in the data these represented principles and ideas that support the interpretation of everyday life realities for the participants. Their belief systems were also key influencers to the navigation of critical consciousness development. It is important to note that participants who felt like they had a "grounding" in a particular faith, religion, or spiritual practice, had a lens of optimism and/or hopefulness in spite of the realities that cause there to be a need for social justice work.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

These data reveal how participants define and make meaning of critical consciousness and its development a) within them, b) through the YVPRC fellowship and c) through their everyday lives. They illustrate a psychosocial meaning-making process, as depicted through a context specific interpretive framework, which depicts a process of critical consciousness development and meaning making. Lastly, the data reveal how the participants are personally and collectively impacted by the process. Understanding these findings are important for social justice work, as critical consciousness development is often a major goal and outcome of social justice work. This project sought to teach young people how to identify and act against oppressive societal factors that negatively impact groups that experience marginalization to achieve social change. In turn, this will improve health outcomes at a population level, thus engaging in social justice youth development work through a public health approach.

Defining Critical Consciousness

How participants defined critical consciousness is significant because it determined how they experienced the process of developing critical consciousness, as well as what they did (or did not do) in response to becoming critically conscious. Unanimously, participants shared the notion that critical

consciousness is a state of awareness – becoming aware. From that point, they would describe what it meant for them to have entered a state of critical consciousness, and how it impacted their personal lives. In the literature, critical consciousness discussions have evolved over time, with arguments around whether it is a one, two, or three-component concept (Freire, 1973; Mustakova-Possardt 1998; Jemal, 2017). Within the frame of this study, participants seem to identify best with it as a one-component concept of becoming or being critically aware (critical reflection). How they describe and discuss what happens after critical awareness is significant because critical consciousness is conceptualized as a process geared toward reaching praxis – the point at which theorizing and reflecting turns into action (Freire, 2000; Watts et al., 2011). However, their definition is not inclusive of critical motivation or critical action; so, does that then mean that they are not critically conscious?

Within their process of becoming aware, they discuss a feeling of urgency, or a need to do something with what they know, but that does not always lead directly to critical social action as seen in the data findings. The implication that being critically conscious – as defined by participants – does not automatically result in critical action could be correlated with the degree to which certain influences of the process were present (or absent). It could also be correlated with levels of personal development and/or maturity. This reveals a need to somehow test the notion that there are potential “levels of consciousness”, as theorized by Jemal (2017). She purports that there are levels of consciousness and levels of action; the three levels of consciousness are denial, blame, and

critical, and the three levels of action are destructive, avoidant, and critical. Her theory is that the highest level of consciousness is critical consciousness, and the highest level of action is critical action, and when an individual is within the highest level of consciousness, they will produce the highest level of action (2017). So, Jemal (2017) would say that the participants who did not continue in social action, were not actually critically conscious, but exist within a lower level of consciousness – either denial or blame. However, this theory is still absent a timeline of expectation between becoming critically conscious and when an individual decides to critically act.

What the literature around critical consciousness development and praxis does not reveal is a 'prescribed way' of moving from critical reflection to critical social action; this research has shed some light on this gap in the literature within the context of this case study. However, we see that it is necessary to at least attempt to understand how participants move from critical reflection to critical action for the sake of ensuring that praxis is indeed reached. The way that participants discuss critical consciousness and what happens afterwards, matches ideologically with sociopolitical development (SPD) – which comes out of the community psychology field and expounds upon the ideas of empowerment and how it is significant for social change and activism (Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003).

At the point of participants coming to a resolve about what they now know and understand about oppression and the intentional production of it historically and contemporarily, they are brought to a place of deciding, as Cardi stated, "a

decision has to follow, you get to this point [of enlightenment, where your thought process shifts], you just have to make a decision." A decision that is made at any point stems from the influences of their process, and within those influences, is an undertone of empowerment. Empowerment is indicative of critical motivation and increases the likelihood that critical reflection will lead to critical social action. By definition, empowerment is "the capacity, and the creation or perception of a capacity for effective action" (Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003, p. 185) Following key principles, steps, stages, and/or phases for catalyzing power in youth, beyond critical reflection, helps us better tailor interventions to ensure that the goal of critical action is achieved.

Within SPD, critical consciousness is discussed as a significant component, but it is solely the cognitive state in which a person becomes aware of oppression and decides to resist it (2003). SPD, in contrast, provides a frame for understanding the mechanics of *how* to move from that cognitive state of awareness to self-empowerment to ultimately critical social action. Beyond that, it helps to understand how long-term sustainable change is achieved. This framing of critical consciousness development, within the scope of SPD seems to fit best with the results of this study. Though the arguments will probably continue relative to what critical consciousness is and how it is achieved, these data add to the evidence that it is a state of being – that if seeking to achieve it within youth should be coupled with curated ways of moving youth forward towards praxis.

It is also important to note, that if we abide by the definition of critical consciousness that emerged in this study, critical consciousness is a state of being that continues to evolve based on a multitude of influences, resources, and opportunities. Once you "become aware," it seems that you remain aware. One participant likened becoming critically conscious to being free from the Matrix, he stated that he liked, "the Matrix movie a lot," and that he saw "critical consciousness as exiting the Matrix." We know the Matrix to be a movie about escaping an artificially created world that was established to enslave humans; once awake from the false reality that was the Matrix, those individuals existed as outsiders, but also survivors and heroes who helped others come to know the truth. Once you know you know, but what you choose to do with what you know depends on a myriad of factors.

Critical consciousness is a broad concept, applicable to many context-specific experiences. Being critically aware in relation to one area of injustice (ex: racial injustice) does not mean that a person is automatically critically aware of other areas of injustice (ex: gender- or sexual orientation-based injustice). According to Ginwright and Cammarota (2002), SJYD identifies that becoming critically aware starts with self-reflection and becoming self-aware of oppressive systems that impact one's personal identities. The goal then, is that over time, individuals move from self-awareness to social awareness, to global awareness, which gets them to the place of empathizing with the suffering of others and co-laboring on issues of injustice that are not directly affecting their identities. So, it is possible to be critically conscious, but still hold marginalizing beliefs relative to

other identities. What becomes critical, though, is the social action taken (or not) based on those beliefs – which we have already identified that belief systems are an integral influencer to the process and outcomes of critical consciousness development.

Hints of Harro's Cycle of Liberation

The emergent process of critical consciousness development, and how it personally impacted participants within this study, mirrors components of Harro's Cycle of Liberation (Harro, 2000). I did not discover this theoretical framework until after my framework began to come together years prior. It could not have been a sensitizing concept because I did not know about it until it was introduced in coursework that made me reflect on my own data and I was able to identify many similarities. Though they are not completely identical, I thought it should be noted, as it may give credibility to what emerged within this study, without being a focal point within the study.

As participants came into varying levels of understanding regarding oppression and the nature of its existence within systems and institutions, most of them sought a pathway that allowed for them to create [or join in an effort that focused on] social change. The Cycle of Liberation recognizes a wake-up moment, caused by what it calls "a critical incident that creates cognitive dissonance" (2000, p. 620); this correlates with study participants "initial thinking" and "experiences" stages in which they have an initial thought process/state of being, but then a critical incident – or critical experience – occurs that causes them to now interrogate their initial thinking. That period of interrogation is

synonymous with the experience of cognitive dissonance, as there are two conflicting thought patterns at this point, and the participants had to determine how they could come to a resolve about what they were experiencing. Furthermore, the Cycle's "getting ready" phase, which encompasses understanding and building parts of oneself, and how individuals see themselves situated within the world, to then determine their new perspective (2000). It also involves building consciousness through education and learning. This phase is very similar to both this study's self-awareness and knowledge and pursuit of knowledge phases.

The rest of the Cycle's phases are seen in various components of what was identified within "the impact" finding, which focuses on what participants did and/or experienced after marking a moment of entering (or growing in) critical consciousness. While Harro (2000) depicts an iterative interaction of events post becoming critically conscious, this study also identified an iterative process, but there was no prescriptive way in which they maneuvered within the impact finding. We could identify that how the young people were impacted directly tied to what was identified as "the influences" on both the process of critical consciousness development, as well as the impact of critical consciousness development. In relation to influences, Harro's cycle has a component called the "core", and within it are elements of influence that impact how a person navigates within the cycle. According to Harro (2000), these elements exist prior to, or grow during, the cycle of liberation, and are necessary for the achievement of liberation. These elements include self-love, self-esteem, hope, balance, joy,

support, security, a spiritual base, and an authentic love of others. From this study, similar influences were identified; a belief system (spiritual base), support (support), length of time/extent of exposure to content and concepts (balance, hope, joy). Barriers in this study were identified as impediments to progress toward personal goals and social change, and are not depicted in Harro's model; however, her phases of community-building and coalescing appear to have notions that speak to what needs to be present to negate many of the barriers that participants described.

Further studies looking at the process of critical consciousness development in youth should utilize the Cycle of Liberation, along with sociopolitical development theory, to support the understanding of phases that youth could potentially move through as they come into the understanding of the nature of oppression and what should/could be done about it. However, in the same way it was recognized within this study that there was no exact prescribed way that participants engage after becoming aware, and that some participants entered at different parts of the context specific framework, Harro (2000) shares similar sentiments as she said that:

> It is important to note that one can enter the cycle at any point, through slow evolution or a critical incident, and will repeat or recycle many time in the process. There is no specific beginning or end point, just as one in never "done" working to end oppression. Although there is not a specific sequence of events in the cycle, it is somewhat predictable that all of the levels (intrapersonal, interpersonal, and systemic) will occur at some point (p. 619).

With so many similarities to existing theology and frameworks, this study's framework has potential to be utilized more broadly. One element of this study

that has not appeared in other frameworks in the literature is the concept of unintended consequences. Freire (1970) made mention of the potential experience of despair that could happen as a consequence of being critically aware. While there is expectation of anger and frustration, the unintended consequences described by the participants went beyond those emotions to states that should be noted and strategies developed to address.

Significance of Unintended Consequences

Findings indicate as participants' paradigms shifted to one which was informed by critical consciousness, they also experienced the unintended consequences of: emotional and physical pain, being overwhelmed, intense stress, identity struggle, and acute apathy. These findings are supported by previous research advocating for healing justice (Wallace, 2012), the recognition of effects from long-term exposure to social trauma (Lee, 2014), and radically healing Black lives through restoration, resistance, and reclamation (Ginwright, 2015). This study added to the foundation of that literature by explicating the process by which youth develop critical consciousness and the stages in that development where they encounter these unintended consequences and the kinds of things that influence the extent to which they experienced them. Additionally, this study expanded the range of unintended consequences and described coping mechanisms utilized by participants grounded in their own experiences in data.

This study was theoretically sensitized by the Social Justice Youth Development Framework (Ginwright & James, 2002), Critical Consciousness

(Freire, 1970), and Symbolic Interactionism (Ritzer, 2011). Though Ginwright acknowledges the trauma of institutional and internalized oppression (2010), and Freire alluded to the possibility of the unintended consequences from becoming critically conscious (2018), neither detail the specific physical or emotional embodiment of those encounters (Krieger, 2005). This study sought to expand the understanding of the perceived negative consequences of critical consciousness beyond a simple acknowledgement of their existence, to a description of the experiences by participants within a specific bounded case of a public health intervention to prevent violence among youth. The findings of this case study—viewed through the lens of Symbolic Interactionism's meaning making— validate the assertions of the original theories and expand them by specifying the physical and emotional consequences of critical consciousness. Similar consciousness raising interventions should consider the specific unintended consequences of developing critical consciousness and, to the degree possible, mitigate the prevalence of such within their distinct contexts. Participants were certain that the experiences could not be negated; however, the extent to which they are experienced and the length of time they experience them, could be mitigated by intentionally planning to build infrastructure within interventions that provide resources for processing and healing.

Most of the participants in this study discussed encountering at least one of the unintended consequences to critical consciousness development. It is important to note that these occurrences can [and often do] happen outside of a programmatic setting. They often occur in school settings where the goal is not

necessarily to raise critical consciousness, but the learning of certain historical events still results in physical and emotional wounding (Ginwright, 2016). They also occur as they navigate regular life as a historically marginalized race of people, who are at increased likelihood of experiencing racism and/or discrimination based on the history of this country. So, participants of this study, whether engaged in programmatic activity related to social justice or not, had experiences with unintended consequences, which elevates the need for structured ways to engage in conversations and activities geared toward dismantling oppression, dehumanization, and violence. Results also indicate that adults working with youth need to be vigilant and preemptive in assessing and caring for the emotional and mental health of their students/participants/children. Many youths may not openly admit to emotional and physical pain, being overwhelmed, intense stress, identity struggle, or acute apathy during their critical learning process. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the caring adult to ensure proper self-care and reflexivity of youth. Within this study, we partnered with a counseling clinic that offered culturally relevant counseling opportunities, as well as skill building for coping with emotional distress, for our youth.

As stated above, not all of the unintended consequences of adopting a critically conscious paradigm can or should be avoided, as it is the natural process of learning to critically perceive the world. Youth should have opportunities to voice their challenges, critically reflect, and receive confirmation and affirmation from supportive adults and mentors, build their peer-support networks, and heuristically discover productive coping mechanisms. Youth not

only need to be educated in perceiving the oppression in society to take action against such, but also how to cope with the knowledge of being systemically oppressed as a people. The realization of the intricacies and depths to which oppression occurs and the impact of oppression should be addressed in interventions and programs that focus on Black youth. Participants in this study provided insight into what could better help them cope with learning about and experiencing injustices: 1) create spaces for youth healing, 2) create space for youth organizing, 3) create space for youth culture, and 4) intentionally affirm youth.

Significance of Knowing History

Despite experiences with unintended consequences, the results denote a wealth of positive, intended consequences of engaging youth in this way. Participants still deemed the process necessary for growth within all youth, as well as necessary for the public health field's efforts to engage youth in violence prevention work. If public health is to address the root causes of interpersonal violence among youth, then it must address structural violence (Wendel et al., 2020). Addressing structural violence requires individual, as well as collective, consciousness raising around systemic oppression, and historic and contemporary marginalization. To understand these things, knowledge of accurate American history – as well as ancient African history – is paramount for Black youth.

Knowing history led participants to many desired prosocial behaviors for youth. It led some to engage more civically, as they participated in researching

about legislators that make decisions that affect them and their communities. It made voting a more central practice for many, as Angel stated that she would not have entered her adult life exercising her right to vote, had she not engaged in the content and experiences of the LYVV Fellowship, because she had not been exposed to its significance or importance. In many of the participants, it improved a sense of identity. More specifically, youth discussed improvements in their thoughts about their racial identity, and we know positive racial identity to be a protective factor against interpersonal violence among youth (French, Kim, & Pillado, 2006). There is evidence within the findings that highlights a struggle with engaging in maladaptive behaviors once there is a sense of self that aligns with being proud of who they are and where they come from. Supporting positive racial identity through consciousness raising processes and activities can have a positive impact on both violence outcomes, as well as structural violence – as a root cause of interpersonal violence among youth.

Many of the participants talked in terms of knowing fully who they were with the understanding of history. This is important because the participants exist in an environment marginalized by the historic context of their ancestral existence in this country. They exist in the aftermath of heavy warfare, which yields an understanding of how society treats and engages with them today. So, while it is significant to know history in general for the sake of not repeating the bad parts of it, it is also critical to understand triumphant moments, and how those before them overcame similar experiences of oppression and marginalization through resistance. It is from the place of seeing and identifying

triumph despite struggle, that participants could then also see themselves as triumphant. It is a form of affirmation; affirming who they are and what they are capable of doing. This aligns with what the data show in relation to what could potentially help youth cope with existing in a state of consciousness, affirmation of who they are and what is possible for them to do. This is another critical point of knowing history, there is a lot of information that is painful to know and that places a person in a state of despair, but that must be coupled – if not quadrupled – with the knowledge of how Black people have historically overcome, as well as knowledge relevant to the truth about African American existence prior to America. The need to highlight the greatness of ancient African civilizations and their contributions to science, medicine, agriculture, and technological advances.

Significance of Transformational Travel

Critical to knowing history, was this notion of traveling to experience history. The impact of the intervention increased with the travel experiences. Participants discussed travel as life changing, purporting that it is one thing to read/learn about history, but it is quite another to exist tangibly with history. While there is not literature specific to the impact of travel within the public health field, it does exist in travel, service learning, and tourism research (Puri, Kaddoura, & Dominick, 2013; Soulard, McGehee & Knollenberg, 2021). Transformative travel is a concept that comes from tourism sciences and was derived from Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1991). It is defined as, “travel that places the individual in a novel context that forces him or her to develop new

resources and respond creatively to challenging situations" (Phillips, 2019, p.68). It is a mechanism for encouraging tourists to be more self-reflexive, to question assumptions they may hold, and to develop a worldview that is less ethnocentric and more empathetic (Soulard, McGehee & Knollenberg, 2021). Similar to SJYD, the goals are to build critical consciousness – which has already been identified to encompass self-reflection and interrogation of current thoughts and perspectives – and support youth in reaching global awareness, in which they empathize and connect with the struggles of others (also recognized as tolerance; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). So, there is overlap with what transformative travel is meant to accomplish that fluidly supports the goals of SJYD.

This finding is also indicative of the importance of cultural excursions, which exist within contemporary Rites of Passage (ROP) programming for Black youth (Pinckney, Outley, Black, and Kelly, 2011). ROP can be explained as ritualistic or ceremonial events that have existed in many historical societies, and mark a passage from one religious or social state to another (Pinckney, Outley, Brown, Stone, & Manzano-Sanchez, 2019). There are many examples of rites of passage (marriages, graduations, quinceañeras, bar/bat mitzvahs), but specific to the findings of this study, is the notion that ROP programming for Black youth is linked to increasing positive racial identity, as well as improving health and well-being outcomes for Black youth (2011). Pinckney, Outley, Blake, and Kelly (2011) outline eight critical components of contemporary ROP programs for Black youth, and component four is "cultural excursions"; it is defined as,

“ongoing field trips to visit sites within and outside of the community that reflect African American heritage” (p. 109). Here is another example of how travel, specific to the population of interest in this study, is deemed necessary and beneficial to positive outcomes for Black youth and their healthy transition into adulthood. It is a part of the necessary journey of undoing and unlearning toxicities associated with societal standards set around what it means to be a young Black person in the U.S.

While contemporary ROP programming has connections to addressing behavioral concerns that could lead to violence, there are current, well-known violence intervention strategies that also utilize travel to promote peace and nonviolence. Advance Peace is a program that started out of the Office for Violence Prevention in Richmond, California. It deploys a program, known as the Advance Peace Fellowship, that focuses on interrupting cycles of gun violence in historically marginalized communities by creating transformational opportunities for young men and women who have histories of firearms charges (Advance Peace, 2017). The strategy utilizes seven touch points for transformation – one of those touchpoints is transformative travel. The concept within this program is to provide opportunities for persons who have previously been incarcerated for violent firearm offenses to go on cultural, civic, and educational excursions that take them out of the toxic social conditions that increased the likelihood of them engaging in violent acts. In this way, they have opportunity to be transformed by experiencing life outside of their physical and internal mental limits, engaging

safely with others from rival gangs and expanding their knowledge and skills for peaceful existence (2017).

Though I termed it transformational travel in my research, transformative travel has a place in youth violence prevention and youth development overall, specifically when engaging racially marginalized youth. It has potential to not only transform the youth who travel, but also impact their communities when they return home with the goal of being change agents for their communities (Lean, 2009), now having new confidence to be released into their communities to do good. The transformative travel research points to it being a way to counter the negative impacts of increasing intolerance and extremism happening within society (Soulard, McGehee & Knollenberg, 2021; Smith, 2017), which we know leads to violence. The newly developed Transformative Travel Experience Scale (TTES) could be beneficial to programs and organizations wanting to determine the positive effects that result from participating in transformative travel (Soulard, McGehee & Knollenberg, 2021); this would help validate the request for travel funds when applying for grants and other types of funding to support youth interventions.

Connection to Rites of Passage

While there are commonalities with this intervention and Rites of Passage (ROP), critical consciousness development, or even the SJYD framework, would only be considered a fraction of an entire ROP program. Similar to the Fellowship, ROP programs utilize intentional curriculum, workshops, and discussion sessions that offer youth of color a more in-depth understanding of

who they are, based on their ancestral history (Pinkney et al., 2011). The function within a ROP program, however, is to provide youth of color with necessary knowledge, skills, and critical awareness related to who they are, as it is deemed significant for their passage into adulthood (Warfield-Coppock, 1992; Pinkney et al., 2011). It focuses on a pathway in which young people are ultimately reintroduced to society as adults (Blumenkrantz & Gavazzi, 1993*).* Critical consciousness development in youth is for the sake of equipping youth, or activating latent capacity within youth, to address social injustices that impact their day to day lives as youth. The goal is to open their eyes to truths associated with their identities, and not to necessarily develop them – or shift their phase of youthfulness – into adulthood.

There is a lack of case-specific theoretical frameworks grounded in the voices of youth to guide ROP programs. This study shows the value of creating a framework, using a case study approach, and building a framework using CGT. Though the framework identified in this study may not be entirely relevant to ROP, it could be helpful to build context-specific frameworks to support ROP programs for the sake of replication.

The Influences

There were a few things discussed as influencers to both the process and its personal impact on participants. Societal factors played a big role in how the participants matriculated through the process and its impacts. For example, the fellowship started in 2016, amidst the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, which essentially started in 2013 after Trayvon Martin was killed. So, the fellowship

happened within the timeframe of the BLM movement. I cannot say if the fellowship was the first-time participants were exposed to this movement; however, I can say that for many of the first cohort, it was not something that they thought about or completely connected with. There were a couple of outliers, like Easy E, who influenced the space with a conscious perspective, but he also struggled in the space with being around individuals who were not at a point of critical awareness and thought he was being "too deep" or over analyzing. This speaks to the unintended consequence of identity struggle, stemming from peer isolation. But by the time we got to the second cohort, those from the first cohort – who came to learn of social movements, as well as experienced the deaths of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile within the fellowship – had elevated in their consciousness. The second cohort entered the fellowship ready to have discussions about racial injustice and wanting to engage in critical social action. So, we do see a relationship between when participants entered the fellowship and ongoing national movements, as well as discourse about those movements.

Societal factors with closer proximity to the participant's everyday life were also critical to how they navigated the experiences of the intervention. Because of the toxic social conditions in which all of the participants existed, there was a struggle with achieving praxis. In the case of JJ, while in the fellowship, she had moments of enlightenment that shifted her thought patterns and placed a desire within her to enact change in her community. She was most impacted by knowing African American history and was adamant about building little libraries for Black youth, since she was a mother herself, and ascertained that life up until

that point could have been different for her had she known certain things. But once she left the fellowship, she discussed not having support that continually helped to cultivate and maintain the critical awareness that she had come to know. Similar to what Ex expressed in an earlier quote about responding according to street code versus what he knew, this also applied to JJ as she needed to respond according to her dominant social environment that was not inclusive of the affirmations or opportunities needed for her to continue on in this way. She was from an area with a lot of gang activity and so life was a bit tougher; it is difficult to maintain a paradigm shift within a communal space that does not share that shift without some form of support. If she was connected to someone or something that could help her continue to build in this way, she likely would have continued to engage in this work.

Lessons Learned

Implications for General Public Health

In utilizing the public health approach to addressing a problem, we first define the problem. Based on how we define the problem, we assess the causes of that problem, as well as what could potentially protect against them. Once we have defined and assessed the problem, we then identify theories, frameworks, and methodologies for the development, implementation, and evaluation of the chosen intervention strategy. Lastly, we engage in wide-spread adoption of what we identify as the answer, or at least a part of the answer, that solves the problem. It is important to note though, that the chosen theories, frameworks, and methodologies set the foundation for how we implement, how we evaluate,

and ultimately determine how we go about solving the problem, as well as how we talk about what everyone else should be doing regarding this problem.

While our approach make sense, what is absent is a critical lens during the definition phase. According to the public health approach, defining the problem includes understanding the “who”, “what”, “where”, “when”, and “how” associated with it. What we do not ask, is “why”? Why are we seeing what we are seeing in the ways that we are seeing it? Our approach is absent a critical component that would situate critical thinking and analysis at the beginning of our understanding of an issue. Root cause analysis should be situated within the phase of defining the problem. Asking and ascertaining why a problem is occurring puts us in a frame for root cause analysis, which takes us deeper than what we are able to see as the direct or more proximal causes of a problem. Public health is getting there as a discipline theoretically – somewhat – in our adoption of the social ecological model which helps us see risk and protective factors at multiple levels of influence outside the individual or specific ‘problem’ of interest. However, even in our approaches, we have yet to fully shift over to defining a problem by its root causes, which would then allow for us to identify theories, frameworks, and methodologies that are geared toward addressing those root causes. Interventions are shaped differently based on how the problem is defined.

With social justice purported as the core of who we are as a discipline, social justice-oriented schools of thought and methodologies should be a starting point in our search for answers to solve public health problems, particularly within

historically marginalized populations of interest. Our inability to close gaps in healthy equity is directly related to our current tools for health improvement, which still fit the biomedical mold of public health being birthed out of the field of medicine. This also translates to how we build our public health workforce and the competencies that we focus on for our future students, teachers, practitioners, researchers, and scholars. Our public health competencies must be strengthened in a way that grounds equity and justice in every crevice and venue from which public health information flows including schools of public health, public health departments, our national public health agencies (ex., the CDC), as well as funding institutions for public health practice and research.

Implications for Public Health Youth Engagement

Public health does not possess its own frameworks for engaging or intervening with youth populations. We typically use general community engagement strategies for youth engagement, but those engagement strategies are not specific to youth. The field of youth development and public health have similarities in community engagement; however, the dynamics between youth and public health practitioners creates the similar tensions that exist between practitioners and community. This was evident in the initial creation of the Fellowship program. The complexities of youth-adult partnerships and engagement presented tensions that could have been remedied with the incorporation of youth development frameworks.

Youth development frameworks are important because they provide structure for both youth engagement and relationship building. Working with

youth requires trainings and the unlearning of historic norms, attitudes, and behaviors that perpetuate youth “staying in a child’s place.” Often in academic and community environments, youth are used as tokens (Hart, 1992). They are asked to participate, but without truly working alongside adults as shared decision makers with power or building their capacity to change their community and environment.

Because many of our public health youth interventions engage youth from marginalized populations, it is particularly important to engage in youth development frameworks that not only address youth-adult power dynamics, but also historical context. Youth development frameworks, such as Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD), are important because they account for the systemic injustices that populations who have experienced historical and current marginalization encounter. Public health practitioners planning to engage with youth should utilize youth development trainings as well as frameworks prior to development of interventions or engagement with youth. This is necessary for the successful relationship and capacity building of youth engaged in public health work.

Youth voice and participation are necessary to public health research and practice. It is important to expand the definition of community to intentionally include youth. While it may extend timelines and it may be a tedious task to receive institutional review board (IRB) approval, youth are necessary to the successful planning and implementation of public health strategies, and properly engaging them determines the level of success achieved. The current work of

many practitioners and researchers will impact young people, it is imperative to engage them in the decisions not only about their current life, but future. Youth provide experiences and unique inputs that are beneficial to the success of public health work. This was evident in this intervention, as youth co-developed the intervention strategy and implemented as partners who had decision-making power within the intervention.

Implications for Public Health Youth Interventions for Violence Prevention

Young people are quite often at the forefront of experiences with unhealthy, unsafe, and inequitable social conditions. As a generation, they have the most at stake when it comes to the well-being of the communities in which they exist. We know the research shows that engaging youth in efforts focused on health and safety have the potential to improve outcomes at the community-level (Rosenfeld, Baumer & Messner, 2001; McKoy & Vincent, 2007; Ballard & Syme, 2015; Ballard, 2018). So, it is imperative that we look to youth, first, before developing strategies for youth violence prevention. This particular study would not even exist without the input of youth who determined that the only way to engage the population of interest was to employ them. Employing them placed them within the center for much more time than we otherwise would have been able to spend with them. Identifying that there was potential to create a micro-study that tested the hypothesis of the macro-study was made possible because of youth input into the intervention strategy.

Findings from this research show that interpersonal violence among youth can be impacted by youth engaging in strategies that address structural violence.

Through consciousness raising, support, and provision of resources and opportunities, the very population that has been placed at highest risk for interpersonal violence perpetration and/or victimization, can be positioned to disrupt the cycles of violence that impact them, their families, and communities. The outcomes of violence in the communities of focus for youth violence intervention are inequitable, and they are inequitable due to historic injustices against those communities. Empowering the youth within those communities, not only affects the youth engaged in the intervention, but it also affects their communities due to the nature of what happens when youth's sociopolitical selves have been activated. The goal becomes community transformation, and they are then equipped to facilitate that transformation. As we begin to focus on structural violence that happens against youth, the need to focus on youth interpersonal violence will decrease, as the root causes of youth interpersonal violence will begin to be addressed.

This by no means implies that addressing structural violence is a linear, easy, or quick process, particularly in relation to this intervention and building youth of color's critical consciousness for the sake of social change. It is also not solely the responsibility of youth to grow, shift, and change their own mindsets for larger social change. When critical consciousness development happens for both the oppressed and the oppressor, it is more likely that we would see the sought-after result of decreasing youth interpersonal violence more quickly. A concerted effort, inclusive of those who hold power to facilitate large scale social change, is our best chance for eradication of violence.

The history of this country reveals that strides made towards addressing structural violence (ex: systemic racism) are slow, and efforts have to be organized, consistent, enduring, and loud (Morris, 1986; Glennon, 1991; Hall, 2007). Our democracy is not as direct as it presents itself to be, and many suffer in this country because of it. History also reveals that there are generally casualties associated with meaningful and impactful efforts to address structural violence (Bennett, 2010; Posner, 2013). However, historical and contemporary accounts of large-scale social change have been catalyzed by critically conscious youth. It is a slow process, it is a hard process, yet it is a necessary process that moves the needle toward youth of color experiencing less violence; we just have to be intentional about our engagement strategies and the supports and resources made available within interventions.

Study Limitations

Case study research is sometimes very difficult to replicate, providing the many unique elements of studies that cannot be replicated due to the occurrence of the research in the natural, real-time setting (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001). One such limitation is the timing of this case study, and the timeframe in which these data were collected. Discourse related to social justice, racial justice, and race-based trauma has shifted since the LYVV Fellowship ended. Future studies who implement a similar model may want to adjust for nationwide and global events, as well as discourses around topics of racial and social injustices.

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APPENDIX 1

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

Human Subjects Protection Program Office
MedCenter One – Suite 200
501 E. Broadway
Louisville, KY 40202-1798
Office: 502.852.5188 Fax: 502.852.2164

DATE: November 07, 2018

TO: Monica L Wendel

FROM: The University of Louisville Institutional Review Board

IRB NUMBER: 18.1011

STUDY TITLE: Are We Woke? Exploring the Development and Consequences of Praxis and Critical Consciousness within a Youth Violence Prevention Program

REFERENCE #: 671487

IRB Staff Contact: Barbara Dearinger 852-5987 badear01@louisville.edu

This study was reviewed on 11/06/2018 by the Chair/Vice Chair of the Institutional Review Board and approved through the Expedited Review Procedure, according to 45 CFR 46.110(b), since this study falls under Category 7: Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. **This study now has final IRB approval from 11/06/2018 through 11/05/2019.**

The following items have been approved:

Title	Version Date	Outcome
CC Qual Study Interview Guide V3 10.23.18	10/23/2018	Approved
CC Qual PROTOCOL 05OCT18	10/05/2018	Approved
CC Qual Study Informed Consent Form V3	10/23/2018	Approved

For guidance on using iRIS, including finding your approved stamped documents, please follow the instructions at https://louisville.edu/research/humansubjects/iRISSubmissionManual.pdf

Please note: Consent forms no longer have an expiration date stamped on them. The consents expire if the study lapses in IRB approval. Enrollment cannot take place if a study lapses in approval. For additional information view Guide 038.

Site Approval

If this study will take place outside of the University of Louisville Campuses, permission from the organization must be obtained before the research may begin (e.g. Jefferson County Public Schools). Failure to obtain this permission may result in a delay in the start of your research.

Privacy & Encryption Statement

The University of Louisville's Privacy and Encryption Policy requires such information as identifiable medical and health records: credit card, bank account and other personal financial information; social security numbers; proprietary research data; dates of birth (when combined with name, address and/or phone numbers) to be encrypted. For additional information: http://security.louisville.edu/PolStds/ISO/PS018.htm.

Implementation of Changes to Previously Approved Research

Prior to the implementation of any changes in the approved research, the investigator will submit any modifications to the IRB and await approval before implementing the changes, unless the change is being made to ensure the safety and welfare of the subjects enrolled in the research. If such occurs, a Protocol Deviation/Violation should be submitted within five days of the occurrence indicating what safety measures were taken, along with an amendment to revise the protocol.

Unanticipated Problems Involving Risks to Subjects or Others (UPIRTSOs)

In general, these may include any incident, experience, or outcome, which has been associated with an unexpected event(s), related or possibly related to participation in the research, and suggests that the research places subjects or others at a greater risk of harm than was previously known or suspected. UPIRTSOs may or may not require suspension of the research. Each incident is evaluated on a case by case basis to make this determination. The IRB may require remedial action or education as deemed necessary for the investigator or any other key personnel. The investigator is responsible for reporting UPIRTSOs to the IRB within 5 working days. Use the UPIRTSO form located within the iRIS system to report any UPIRTSOs.

Continuation Review Requirements

You are responsible for submitting a continuation review 30 days prior to the expiration date of your research study. Investigators who allow their study approval to expire have committed significant non- compliance with federal regulations. Such lapses may require reporting to federal agencies, a program audit by compliance auditors to ensure that subjects were not enrolled during the expired period, and may lead to findings of serious and continuing non-compliance if expiration were to occur a second time.

The committee will be advised of this action at a regularly scheduled meeting.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB analyst listed above or the Human Subjects

Protection Program office at hsppofc@louisville.edu.

Sincerely,

Peter M. Quesada, Ph.D., Chair

Social/Behavioral/Educational Institutional Review

Board

We value your feedback. Please let us know how you think we are doing: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CCLHXRP

Full Accreditation since June 2005 by the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs, Inc.

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE

[Introduction]

Good [morning/afternoon/evening]. How are you doing? My name is [state name] and I'm conducting interviews with youth from the Youth Violence Prevention Research Center Fellowship. I'll be speaking with you about your engagement in the fellowship in relation to your ideas and experiences with the concept of critical consciousness. We are hoping to gain a better understanding of the process by which critical consciousness is developed over the span of a participant's engagement in the program and how that development impacts your life. Please feel free to share anything that you like, and feel free to refrain from answering questions that you do not want to answer.

Before we start, I'd like to ensure that you are aware that I will record our session; this will allow me to transcribe what you have said and analyze it, along with the other interviews I complete. The main potentially identifiable information obtained during the interview will be the audio recording.

[Turn on recorder once consented and ensure consent/assent has been signed]

First I'd like to you to:

1. Tell me about yourself.

2. Why did you choose to participate in the fellowship opportunity?

    Probe: What about it did you find interesting? What drew you to it?

[Critical Consciousness]

Within the campaign and frame of the fellowship, we talk a lot about raising critical consciousness.

3. How do you define the term critical consciousness?

4. Do you think the concept is important?

   Probe: In what ways is it important or unimportant?

5. Do you consider yourself critically conscious?

   Probe: how have you come to this conclusion?

6. What are your thoughts on sociopolitical development?

7. Tell me about a time, within your experience in the Center, where you were introduced to new knowledge that shifted how you thought about a particular topic/concept?

8. Tell me about something that you've learned [within the context of your YVPRC experience] that has been relevant to your life?

   Probe: At what point(s) in your work/program did you learn these things?

   Probe: Have these things shifted how you view and/or navigate the world?

9. As you think about your life and future goals, do you see yourself applying anything that you are learning in this space?

10. Has there been a time you were motivated to act, in a new or different way, because of the things that you're being exposed to within the work.

11. Have you changed, professionally or personally, as a result of the programming?

Do you consider the changes to be positive, negative, neither, or both?

[Supports]

12. What does support mean to you?

13. How are you supported in the YVPRC space to facilitate change in your community?

    If you don't feel supported, what would you recommend changing to better build your capacity/agency to affect change?

[Barriers]

14. Are there barriers to you being a social agent of change?
    If yes, why do you think those barriers exist?

[Exit Questions]

15. Is there something that I haven't asked you that you want me to know?

16. Do you have any questions for me?

CURRICULUM VITAE

Monique Williams

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy, Department of Health Promotion and Behavioral Sciences, University of Louisville School of Public Health and Information Sciences, Louisville, Kentucky (Expected Graduation: Summer 2022)

Master of Public Health, Department of Social & Behavioral Health, Texas A&M Health Science Center School of Public Health, College Station, Texas

Bachelor of Science, Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Director, Mayor's Office for Safe & Healthy Neighborhoods, Louisville Metro Government, Louisville, Kentucky (September 2020 – Present)

Instructor, University of Louisville School of Public Health and Information Sciences, Louisville, Kentucky (September 2020 – Present)

Director, National Center of Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention, University of Louisville School of Public Health and Information Sciences, Louisville, Kentucky (September 2015 – September 2020)

Research Manager, Office of Public Health Practice, University of Louisville School of Public Health and Information Sciences, Louisville, Kentucky (June 2014 – September 2015)

Research Associate, Center for Community Health Development, Texas A&M University System Health Science Center School of Public Health, College Station, Texas (June 2012—May 2014)

Interim Vice President of Community Impact, United Way of the Brazos Valley, College Station, Texas (November 2012—July 2013)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Guest Lecturer, Graduate Course PHMS 708: Population Health & Health Disparities, *"Addressing Violence within a City System"*, University of Louisville School of Public Health & Information Sciences, Louisville, Kentucky, Fall Semester 2021

Guest Lecturer, Graduate Course PHEP 655: Emerging Issues in Epidemiology, "*Structural Violence as a Public Health Issue*", University of Louisville School of Public Health and Information Sciences, Louisville, Kentucky, Spring Semester 2019

Guest Lecturer, Graduate Course PHEP 655: Emerging Issues in Epidemiology, "*Structural Violence as a Public Health Issue*", University of Louisville School of Public Health and Information Sciences, Louisville, Kentucky, Spring Semester 2018

Co-Instructor, Graduate Course HPCH 610: Community Assessment and Organizing, Texas A&M University School of Rural Public Health, College Station, Texas (January 2014 – May 2014)

Teaching Assistant, Graduate Course PHPM 605: Introduction to Health Policy and Management, Texas A&M University School of Rural Public Health, College Station, Texas (August 2013 – December 2013)

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES, GRANTS, AND CONTRACTS

2021 - 2022 **Principal Investigator**, The Economic Impact of Gun Violence Study, funded through the Whitney Strong Foundation, $85,000

2020 – 2022 **Co-Principal Investigator**, Trauma Resilient Community (TRC) Initiative, funded through Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), $5 million

2020 – 2021 **Co-Investigator,** University of Louisville Youth Violence Prevention Research Center, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Centers of Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention Research, $5.7 million (PI: M. Wendel)

2017 - 2019 **Co-Principal Investigator**, Social Justice Youth Development in Violence Prevention, funded through the Commonwealth Institute of Kentucky by KentuckyOne Health, $180,000 (PI: G. Jones)

2015 - 2020 **Director,** University of Louisville Youth Violence Prevention Research Center, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Centers of Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention Research, $5.7 million (PI: M. Wendel)

2015-2017 **Principal Investigator**, Evaluation of Arise to Safety – Domestic Violence, funded by the Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence, $24,750

2014- 2016 **Research Manager**, Louisville Cities United Zones of Hope Initiative, funded by the James Graham Brown Foundation, $250,000

2014-2017 **Project Manager**, West Louisville Health Literacy Project, funded through the Commonwealth Institute of Kentucky by KentuckyOne Health, $300,000 (PI: R. Combs)

2014-2017 **Project Director**, Adolescent Diversion Project, funded by KentuckyOne Health, 350,000

2013 **Research Personnel,** 2013 RHP 17 Regional Health Assessment, funded by the Texas A&M Health Science Center School of Rural Public Health, $250,000

2013-2014 **Co-Project Manager,** Central Texas HIV/AIDS Client Needs Assessment, funded by the Brazos Valley Council of Governments, $35,000

2013-2014 **Research Personnel**, Statewide Evaluation of the Texas 1115 Medicaid Transformation Waiver, funded by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, $2,400,000

2012-2014 **Co-Project Manager**, Using a Community Health Development Intervention to Build Community Capacity, Core Research Project within the Center for Community Health Development, funded by the Prevention Research Centers Program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, $300,000

2012-2014 **Research Personnel,** Geocaching for Exercise and Activity Research (GEAR) Study, funded by the Center for Community Health Development at the Texas A&M University System Health Science Center School of Rural Public Health, $10,000

2012-2014 **Research Personnel,** Evaluation of the Madison Outreach and Services through Telehealth (MOST) Project, funded by the Office of Rural Health Policy at the Health Resources and Services Administration (through a $450,000 Rural Health Services Outreach Grant to Madison County), $117,000

2012-2013 **Research Personnel,** Evaluation of the Weight of the Nation (WON) Mass Media Campaign, unfunded

PUBLICATIONS

Peer Reviewed Journal Articles:

Wendel, M.L., Nation, M., **Williams, M**., et al., (2022). "Their help is not helping": Policing as a tool of structural violence against Black communities. *Psychology of Violence Journal, 12(4):*231-240.

Wendel, M. L., Nation, M., **Williams**, M., Jackson, T., Jones Jr, G., Debreaux, M., & Ford, N. (2020). The structural violence of white supremacy: Addressing root causes to prevent youth violence. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, *35(1).*

Wendel, M.L., Jackson, T., **Ingram, C.M.,** Golden, T., Castle, B.F., Ali, N. & Combs, R. (2019). Yet we live, strive, and succeed: Using Photovoice to understand community members' experiences of justice, safety, hope, and racial

equity. *Collaborations: A Journal of Community-Based Research and Practice, 2(1)*: 9, 1-16

Wendel, M,L., Garney, W.R., Castle, B.C. & **Ingram, C.M.** (2018). Critical reflexivity of communities on their experience to improve population health. *American Journal of Public Health, 108(7)*: 896-901. PMID: 29874497

Castle, B., Wendel, M., Pryor, B. N. K., & **Ingram, M.** (2017). Assessing Community Leadership: Understanding Community Capacity for Health Improvement. *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice, 23*, S47-S52.

Garney, W.R., Wendel, M.L**.,** McLeroy, K., Alaniz, A., Cunningham, G., Castle, B., **Ingram, M.** & Burdine, J. (2017). Using community health development to increase community capacity: A multiple case study. *Family and Community Health, 40(1)*: 18-23.

Garney, W. R., Beaudoin, C. E., Clark, H. R., Drake, K. N., Wendel, M. L., McLeroy, K. R., . . . Shaw, R. L. (2015). Using Community-Based Participatory Research to Disseminate a Mass Media Campaign Into Rural Communities. *Journal of health communication, 20*(7), 799-806.

Technical Reports:

2019

Williams, M., & Wendel, M., Jackson, T., & Jones, G. (2019). *University of Louisville Youth Violence Prevention Research Center Technical Report: Data 2017 – 2018.* Louisville, KY: National Center of Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention

2017

Ingram, M., & Oglesby, A. (2017). *Arise to Safety: Final Evaluation Report for Emergency Room Usage of Domestic Violence Assessments*. Louisville, KY: Commonwealth Institute of Kentucky.

2014

Nimmons, K., **Ingram, M**., Moreno, J., & Noor, M. (2014). *Central Texas HIV/AIDS Client Needs Assessment: Regional Report*. College Station, TX: Center for Community Health Development.

Nimmons, K., **Ingram, M**., Moreno, J., & Noor, M. (2014). *Central Texas HIV/AIDS Client Needs Assessment: Austin HSDA Supplemental Report*. College Station, TX: Center for Community Health Development.

Nimmons, K., **Ingram, M**., Moreno, J., & Noor, M. (2014). *Central Texas HIV/AIDS Client Needs Assessment: Bryan/College Station HSDA Supplemental Report*. College Station, TX: Center for Community Health Development.

Nimmons, K., **Ingram, M**., Moreno, J., & Noor, M. (2014). *Central Texas HIV/AIDS Client Needs Assessment: Concho Plateau HSDA Supplemental Report*. College Station, TX: Center for Community Health Development.

Nimmons, K., **Ingram, M**., Moreno, J., & Noor, M. (2014). *Central Texas HIV/AIDS Client Needs Assessment: Temple/Killeen HSDA Supplemental Report*. College Station, TX: Center for Community Health Development.

Nimmons, K., **Ingram, M**., Moreno, J., & Noor, M. (2014). *Central Texas HIV/AIDS Client Needs Assessment: Waco HSDA Supplemental Report*. College Station, TX: Center for Community Health Development.

2013

Ingram, M., & Prince, A. (2013). *2013 – 2015 Community Impact Grant Executive Report*. College Station, TX: United Way of the Brazos Valley.

Alaniz, A., Catanach, C., Clark, H., Drake, K., Garney, W., Nimmons, K…& Moser, A. (2013). *RHP 17 health status assessment 2013: Regional report*. College Station, TX: Center for Community Health Development.

Alaniz, A., Catanach, C., Clark, H., Drake, K., Garney, W., Nimmons, K…& Moser, A. (2013). *2013 RHP 17 health status assessment 2013 supplemental report: Brazos Valley region*. College Station, TX: Center for Community Health Development.

Alaniz, A., Catanach, C., Clark, H., Drake, K., Garney, W., Nimmons, K…& Moser, A. (2013). *2013 RHP 17 health status assessment 2013 supplemental report: Brazos County*. College Station, TX: Center for Community Health Development.

Alaniz, A., Catanach, C., Clark, H., Drake, K., Garney, W., Nimmons, K…& Moser, A. (2013). *2013 RHP 17 health status assessment 2013 supplemental report:*

Burleson County. College Station, TX: Center for Community Health Development.

Alaniz, A., Catanach, C., Clark, H., Drake, K., Garney, W., Nimmons, K…& Moser, A. (2013). *2013 RHP 17 health status assessment 2013 supplemental report: Grimes County*. College Station, TX: Center for Community Health Development.

Alaniz, A., Catanach, C., Clark, H., Drake, K., Garney, W., Nimmons, K…& Moser, A. (2013). *2013 RHP 17 health status assessment 2013 supplemental report: Leon County*. College Station, TX: Center for Community Health Development.

Alaniz, A., Catanach, C., Clark, H., Drake, K., Garney, W., Nimmons, K…& Moser, A. (2013). *2013 RHP 17 health status assessment 2013 supplemental report: Madison County*. College Station, TX: Center for Community Health Development.

Alaniz, A., Catanach, C., Clark, H., Drake, K., Garney, W., Nimmons, K…& Moser, A. (2013). *2013 RHP 17 health status assessment 2013 supplemental report: Montgomery County*. College Station, TX: Center for Community Health Development.

Alaniz, A., Catanach, C., Clark, H., Drake, K., Garney, W., Nimmons, K,…& Moser, A. (2013). *2013 RHP 17 health status assessment 2013 supplemental report: Robertson County*. College Station, TX: Center for Community Health Development.

Alaniz, A., Catanach, C., Clark, H., Drake, K., Garney, W., Nimmons, K…& Moser, A. (2013). *2013 RHP 17 health status assessment 2013 supplemental report: Washington County*. College Station, TX: Center for Community Health Development.

Alaniz, A., Catanach, C., Clark, H., Drake, K., Garney, W., Nimmons, K…& Moser, A. (2013). *2013 RHP 17 health status assessment 2013 supplemental report: Walker County*. College Station, TX: Center for Community Health Development.

SCIENTIFIC & OTHER PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

2022

Louisville's public health approach to violence prevention. **Williams, M.** Presentation at the June National Network of Offices for Violence Prevention (OVP) Convening. Virtual, June 30.

Utilizing a community health development (CHD) approach for community-based violence prevention efforts. **Williams, M.** Presentation to the Los Angeles County Public Health Department. June 16.

2020

Narratives rooted in supremacy have terrorized the violence prevention landscape: Prioritizing structural violence prevention. Jackson, T., Wendel, M., **Williams, M.,** Howard, T., & Jones, G. Panel presentation at the American Public Health Association (APHA) 148th Annual Meeting. Virtual, October 24 – 28.

Effects of structural violence on youth development and wellbeing. Nation, M., Wendel, M., Jackson, T., **Williams, M.,** Brown, A., & Jones, G. Panel presentation at the American Public Health Association (APHA) 148th Annual Meeting. Virtual, October 24 – 28.

Identity, norms, and attitudes in conflict: Complex determinants of violence among youth. Jones, G., Wendel, M., Nation, M., **Williams, M.**, Jackson, T., Robinson, Q., Brown, Q, & Ahmed, H. Panel presentation at the American Public Health Association (APHA) 148th Annual Meeting. Virtual, October 24 – 28.

Social justice youth development as a strategy for prevention violence among youth. **Williams, M.**, Brown, A., Jackson, T., Wendel, M., Jones, G., Robinson, Q. Panel presentation at the American Public Health Association (APHA) 148th Annual Meeting. Virtual, October 24 – 28.

Scaling up: Institutionalizing a social justice youth development approach throughout city policies and structures. James, V., Brown, A., **Williams, M.**, Wendel, M., Nation, M., & Jackson, T. Panel presentation at the American Public Health Association (APHA) 148th Annual Meeting. Virtual, October 24 – 28.

2019

Unintended Consequences: The Impact of Critical Consciousness Development in a Youth Violence Prevention Intervention. **Williams, M.,** Howard, T., & Young, K. Oral presentation at the American Public Health Association (APHA) 147th Annual Meeting. Philadelphia, PA, November 2-6.

Changing the narrative: The Impact of a social norming campaign on racial identity and youth violence. Jackson, T., **Williams, M.,** Nation, M., Jones, G. & Wendel, M.L. Oral presentation at the American Public Health Association (APHA) 147th Annual Meeting. Philadelphia, PA, November 2-6.

Does sociopolitical awareness prevent violence: An examination of the relations between race, sociopolitical development, and adolescent wellbeing. Nation, M., **Williams, M.,** Wendel, M.L., Castle, B.F. & Jackson, T. Oral presentation at the American Public Health Association (APHA) 147th Annual Meeting. Philadelphia, PA, November 2-6.

All we want is peace: Using the expertise of young people's lived experience to run an organizational social media account for structural violence prevention. Jones, G., Wendel, M.L., **Williams, M**. & Brown, Q. Poster presentation at the American Public Health Association (APHA) 147th Annual Meeting. Philadelphia, PA, November 2-6.

Campaigning for youth violence prevention: A structural violence lens. **Williams, M.** Oral presentation at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's CE16-1605 Recipient Meeting. Minneapolis, Minnesota, August 5-7.

Changing the narrative: Challenging White supremacist norms and structural inequality to prevent youth violence. Wendel, M., **Williams,** M., Nation, M., Debreaux, M. Symposium at the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA) 17th Biennial Conference. Chicago, Illinois, June 26–29.

A latent class analysis of youth civic engagement: Do sociopolitical attitudes differentiate civic engagement profiles? Nation, M., Wendel, M., Gardella, J., **Williams, M.,** Debreaux, M. Poster presentation at the Society for Prevention Research (SPR) 27th Annual Meeting. San Francisco, California, May 28–31.

2017

Brown, A., **Ingram, M.,** & Castle, B. (Presented November 4 – 8, 2017). Challenges and Triumphs: Applying the Social Justice Youth Development Framework to Public Health. Panel presentation presented at American Public Health Association (APHA) 145th Annual Meeting. Atlanta, Georgia.

Wendel, M., Ali, N., **Ingram, M.,** Castle, B., Combs, R., Jackson, T., & Nation, M. (Presented November 4 – 8, 2017). Pride, Peace, & Prevention: A social norming campaign to reduce youth violence. Roundtable discussion presented at American Public Health Association (APHA) 145th Annual Meeting. Atlanta, Georgia.

2016

Wendel, M., Jackson, T., **Ingram, M.,** Ali, N., Castle, B., Combs, R., Jones, G., Rogers, W., & Carthan, Q., Smith, A. (Presented on May 11 - 14, 2016). West Louisville photovoice project: local perspectives on justice, safety, hope, and racial equity. Panel presentation presented at Community-Campus Partnerships for Health 14th International Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Jackson, T., Wendel, M., **Ingram, M.,** Castle, B., & Jones, G. (Presented on May 11 – 14, 2016). Louisville Listens to Ferguson in Order to Sow Justice, Safety, Hope, and Racial Equity. Poster presentation at Community-Campus Partnerships for Health 14th International Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana.

2015

Ingram, M., Jackson, T., Wendel, M., Ali, N., Castle, B., & Combs, R. (Presented on October 31 – November 4, 2015). *Addressing social determinants of health through photovoice.* Round table discussion presented at the American Public Health Association (APHA) 143nd Annual Meeting. Chicago, Illinois.

Castle, B.F., Wendel, M., **Ingram, M**., Ali, N., Jackson, T, & Combs, R. (Presented on October 31 – November 4, 2015).*A partnership approach to addressing violence in West Louisville, Kentucky.* Poster presented at the American Public Health Association (APHA) 143nd Annual Meeting. Chicago, Illinois.

Ali, N., Wendel, M., **Ingram, M.,** Castle, B., Jackson, T., & Combs, R. (Presented on October 31 – November 4, 2015).*United we stand: The role of an urban university*

in strengthening community capacity. Oral presentation presented at the American Public Health Association (APHA) 143nd Annual Meeting. Chicago, Illinois.

2014

Castle, B.F., Garney, W.R., Wendel, M.L., Alaniz, A., **Ingram, M**., Jackson, V. & Meece, L. (November 17-19, 2014). *Grimes County Physical Activity and Community Engagement (PACE) Project: Increasing Access to Physical Activity in Rural Populations.* Poster presented at the American Public Health Association (APHA) 142nd Annual Meeting. New Orleans, Louisiana.

Garney, W.R., Wendel, M.L., Castle, B.F., Cunningham, G.B., **Ingram, M.,** & Alaniz, A. (November 17-19, 2014). *Exergame Options for Physical Activity: Geocaching for Exercise and Activity Research.* Poster presented at the American Public Health Association (APHA) 142nd Annual Meeting. New Orleans, Louisiana.

2013

Ingram, M., Castle, B., Turner, J., and Danford, D. (September 12, 2013). *Leon County Physical Activity and Community Engagement Project (PACE): 2013 Leon County Cache Dash.* Poster presentation at the 2013 RHP 17 Regional Health Summit, College Station, TX.

Castle, B., Jackson, V., **Ingram, M.,** Finke, P., and Meece, L. (September 12, 2013). *Grimes County Physical Activity and Community Engagement Project: Healthy Living Grimes County.* Poster presentation at the 2013 RHP 17 Regional Health Summit. College Station, TX.

Wendel, M. L., Garney, W. R., Cunningham, G., Ory, M., **Ingram, M.** & Castle, B. (November 2-6, 2013). *Geocaching for Exercise and Activity Research (GEAR): Exploring the Physical Activity Aspects of a Modern Recreational Activity* . Poster presentation at the American Public Health Association (APHA) 141st Annual Meeting. Boston, MA.

SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Louisville Metro Criminal Justice Commission, **Member** (2020 – present)
Louisville Community Action Board, **Member**, (2020 – present)

Louisville Metro Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee, **Member** (2020 – present)
American Public Health Association, **Member** (2013 – present)
Community Campus Partnerships for Health, **Member** (2014 – present)
Society for Community Research in Action, **Member** (2019 – present)
Louisville Central Community Center Youth Engagement Sub-Committee, **Member** (2014-2018)
Metro United Way Community Impact Cabinet, **Member** (2015-2016)