Group Mentoring and Identity Formation for Young Men of Color

A Case Study

Kevin Pribnow

America's schools are re-segregating at an alarming rate (Kozol, 2005; Stancil, 2018). Over the past 40 years, many metropolitan communities have reversed progress made toward integration following the 1954 Brown decision. The number of schools where less than 40 percent of students are White has almost doubled between 1996 and 2016, according to the National Center on Educational Statistics (Stancil, 2018).

During that same time, the percentage of Black students attending a segregated school rose from 59 to 71 percent (Stancil, 2018). Segregation has been shown to cause deficits in social and economic supports for students of color. Schools serving predominantly Black students often have deteriorating buildings that are staffed with inexperienced teachers using outdated, Eurocentric textbooks (Kozol, 1991; Putnam, 2015). In addition, teachers in racially segregated schools are often unprepared to properly nurture students dealing with the trauma caused by racial segregation and poverty (Noguera, 2003; Tatum, 2005). Ultimately, the educational inequalities faced by students of color result in a higher risk for negative life outcomes such as school dropout, economic poverty, and incarceration (Noguera, 2003).

Although schools themselves cannot address re-segregation, they can mitigate some of the detrimental effects of racial inequalities. Students of color internalize racial inequalities in educational environments at critical times in their identity formation. This internalization can lead to attitudes and behaviors that

KEVIN PRIBNOW is a fifth-grade teacher in Racine, Wisconsin, with a background in culturally and linguistically diverse education. He is a doctoral student at the University of Northern Colorado, where his research interests include multimodal digital communication and academic language acquisition. He hopes his research will elucidate educational practices that can strengthen schools' role in promoting social justice.

contribute to academic underperformance, most notably in boys and young men of color (BYMOC; Noguera, 2009; Tatum, 2005). As educators search for ways to close academic achievement gaps, they need to consider the role of both schools and out-of-school time (OST) programs in developing healthy racial identities in BYMOC. Research shows that students with strong ethnic identities are better suited than others to meet both academic and social challenges (Sue & Sue, 2002).

Community-based and school-based OST programs targeting BYMOC have been operating in the U.S. for decades. In the 1990s, these programs shifted their focus from the prevention of dangerous behaviors to more holistic models (Gilgoff & Ginwright, 2015). A literature review of OST models for BYMOC found three main program structures: extracurricular activities, mentoring, and rite of passage programming (Woodland, 2008). All three were shown to be effective in aiding positive identity formation for BYMOC (Woodland, 2008). The formation of a positive afterschool group identity can help promote desirable outcomes such as higher self-esteem, better work habits, and fewer behavior problems in classrooms (Sánchez et al., 2016; Woodland, 2008). More school districts than ever are recognizing the benefits seen in OST programs and are funding afterschool mentoring groups to support BYMOC (DuBois et al., 2011).

This case study explores the group mentoring program Natural Circles of Support (NCOS), which combines school-based and community-based support to mitigate the risks faced by BYMOC in urban school districts. As a classroom teacher at a NCOS school, I taught several program participants. After seeing the impact NCOS had on participants' lives, I conducted this qualitative case study into NCOS to discover how its community circle of support met the needs of BYMOC.

Background: Identity Development and Mentoring for BYMOC

Racial Identity Development in BYMOC

Researcher William Cross developed his Black racial identity model in 1971 (and updated it in 1991) to theorize about the stages of identity development through which Black individuals progress. His model features five stages: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion, internalization, and commitment (Cross, 1991). Although these stages are outlined sequentially, they do not necessarily occur in a linear fashion. Healthy racial identity development is achieved when Black individuals progress through the stages and end with internalized positive feelings about themselves, their culture, and other racial groups (Benjamin et al., 1998).

The first stage in Cross's theory is the pre-encounter stage, in which the individual is surrounded by the dominant culture and attempts to assimilate to it. In this stage, children act on the world and receive messages back from the environment that either confirm or disconfirm their identity struggles (Stevenson et al., 1997). In the United States, culturally and economically marginalized communities struggle to forge their own positive identities against presumptions of inferiority (Adams et al., 2001). This issue is common in schools, where the messages students receive often are based on the color of their skin. BYMOC are more likely than any other group in American schools to be punished, to be categorized for special education, and to experience academic failure (Lee, 1996; Noguera, 2009). Educators have grown so accustomed to seeing Black male students being punished, failing, and dropping out that these outcomes are barely regarded as cause for alarm (Noguera, 2009). BYMOC in the pre-encounter stage can internalize these adult expectations, which then manifest themselves in academic underperformance, in the phenomenon Claude Steele (2011) calls *stereotype threat*. Stereotype threat causes individuals to perform based on their perceptions of others' expectations (Steele, 2011). Educational environments with low expectations for BYMOC cause students to fulfill the outcomes predicted by the stereotypes.

Another result of failure to assist BYMOC in their identity development is oppositional identity, in which behaviors seen as authentically Black are highly valued and behaviors associated with White individuals are viewed with contempt (Tatum, 1997). The behaviors associated with Whiteness include academic success,

> This case study explores the group mentoring program Natural Circles of Support (NCOS), which combines school-based and community-based support to mitigate the risks faced by BYMOC in urban school districts.

according to Fordham and Ogbu (1986). Their ethnographic study of Black students' academic success found that students who were academically successful in the pre-encounter stage became less so as they entered adolescence (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). At this age, students began to associate academic success with "acting White" and feared loss of acceptance by their Black peers. Often Black students who remained academically successful developed a strategy called *racelessness,* in which they assimilated into the dominant group by de-emphasizing characteristics that might identify them with their ethnic group (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).

Understanding the experiences of BYMOC through the early stages of Cross' racial identity theory can help educators support BYMOC in avoiding negative outcomes associated with improper identity formation. Honoring the worldview of BYMOC in the pre-encounter stage by using student-centered approaches to learning and by surrounding students with positive images of African Americans have been shown to contribute to positive identity development (Baggerly & Parker, 2005; Lee, 1996). As schools have been slow to adapt culturally responsive practices, mentoring programs have proliferated as an intervention against negative outcomes for BYMOC (DuBois et al., 2011).

Mentoring for BYMOC

Research on OST mentoring programs found that BYMOC have a stronger racial identity when they can identify a role model in their life (Yancey et al., 2002). Rhodes and DuBois (2008) suggest that mentoring relationships contribute to positive youth outcomes by aiding in social and emotional, cognitive, and identity development. Strong mentor relationships can help young people develop a sense of identity that is associated with self-confidence and that helps them meet academic and social challenges (Martinez & Dukes, 1997; Sue & Sue, 2002).

In 2014, President Barack Obama introduced the My Brother's Keeper initiative to promote mentoring for BYMOC. In a mixed-methods study cited by the initiative (DuBois et al., 2011), researchers conducted over 120 interviews and analyzed more than 3,000 surveys. They found that mentoring helped mentees express their strengths and provided support through adversity (DuBois et al., 2011). The study also found that one anchoring relationship is often not enough to help young people thrive; however, mentoring can help illuminate a child's existing social web. Studies also found that a close mentor–mentee relationship led to an increase in coping skills and self-esteem (My Brother's Keeper Alliance & MENTOR, n.d.). In addition, participation in youth mentoring programs led to lower measures of emotional and behavioral problems (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009; Sánchez et al., 2016).

Research regarding the connection between mentoring and academic success is less clear. An evaluation of mentoring programs funded by the U.S. Department of Education concluded that its Student Mentoring Program did not have significant effects on academic outcomes (Bernstein et al., 2009). These findings have been challenged by people who claim that mentoring relationships lead to benefits that affect academic behaviors but are difficult to measure (Wyatt, 2009). Qualitative studies found that students in mentoring programs became more engaged in school and were more motivated to do well (Wyatt, 2009).

Although consistent evidence supports the positive outcomes of mentoring relationships, programs have had limited success in fostering such relationships (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009; Sánchez et al., 2016). The quality of the relationships depends on program structures such as the method for pairing mentors and mentees, the environment in which the relationship is developed, and the duration of the interactions (Sánchez et al., 2016). Important factors for positive youth outcomes included rapport-building activities, safe spaces, mutual support, and trust (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009).

Group mentoring provides unique opportunities to mitigate some of the issues of one-to-one mentoring programs. Group mentoring can save resources and can create stability to avoid the detrimental impact of "drive-by" mentoring (Struchen & Porta, 1997). In groups, participants can share similar problems and observe how peers are handling similar situations. Groups foster empathy, caring, and respect for others, all of which promote the self-confidence that enables young people to change their behavior (Struchen & Porta, 1997). Peer support groups create

> Research on OST mentoring programs found that BYMOC have a stronger racial identity when they can identify a role model in their life.

a miniature society in which members can feel a sense of belonging. Group association is strengthened using rituals unique to that social setting. Psychologists explain that group rituals "allow an individual to participate fully in the social world by affiliating with fellow group members, reaffirming one's position in the group, and sharing in important social conventions and cultural knowledge" (Hobson et al., 2017, p. 270).

Methodology

My investigation of the local NCOS circle in fall 2018 used case study methods. I collected qualitative data in face-to-face interviews with the youth advocate who led the program, the school principal, a classroom teacher involved in NCOS, and a student, age 10, whom I interviewed with his parents. I conducted four observations of afterschool group mentoring sessions. In addition, I collected anecdotal data in my position as an educator in the school that partnered with NCOS. In my two years at the school, I had several students who participated in the program. Regular contact with the youth advocate about specific students piqued my interest in the program. I wanted to know what made NCOS an effective group mentoring program.

Program Context

NCOS has been operating in Wisconsin schools since 2005. Created as a University of Wisconsin Extension program, NCOS currently operates as a nonprofit organization with programming in more than 20 schools across eight school districts (Natural Circles of Support, n.d.). NCOS has been shown to be an effective approach to reducing school behavioral referrals for students of color (Kalk Derby, 2017). Although specific support structures and group demographics vary based on the needs of the school community, NCOS often provides schools with a youth advocate, an adult leader who facilitates weekly afterschool group mentoring sessions called *circles*. The demographics of the circles vary, but most are single-sex and are composed of children of color. Participants typically either are referred by school staff based on perceived needs or are enrolled voluntarily by their families.

The centerpiece of any NCOS implementation is the

> Group mentoring provides unique opportunities to mitigate some of the issues of one-to-one mentoring programs. Group mentoring can save resources and can create stability to avoid the detrimental impact of "drive-by" mentoring.

youth advocate, who organizes and runs the afterschool circles. In addition to providing afterschool support, youth advocates maintain a presence in the children's school in a flexible role that allows them to assist in classrooms, provide supervision, and meet with students. This dual presence creates a unique opportunity to bridge the participants' school and family lives.

This study focuses on the implementation of NCOS in my elementary school, where the program served 20 boys ages 8–11 at the time of my study. Rather than meeting in the school building, the afterschool circle met at a location in the children's neighborhood. Three times a week for approximately two hours, the boys did their homework, had a snack, participated in the circle time described below, and then played games of their choice until it was time to go home. Three years before my study, NCOS was implemented at the school as a pilot for the district. The success of the pilot led to the program's expansion within the school, where a girls' group was added, and to other schools in the district.

Findings

My interviews and observations suggest that boys in NCOS experienced positive social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes as a result of their participation in the program. All the adults I interviewed described positive school outcomes such as a decrease in disciplinary referrals and an increase in classroom engagement and school attendance. The schoolteacher I interviewed told stories of transformation as a direct result of children's participation in the circle. For example:

> Before NCOS was brought into our school, one of our boys was out of control. When this particular student was a third grader, he would swear, disrespect staff and students, would get into fights, leave the classroom, not come to school, struggled in school, destroy property. After spending three years in Circle of Support, this student left fifth grade with very few, if any, [office discipline referrals], came to school daily, rarely fought or disrespected students and staff, and became a mentor to our younger NCOS students. Academically, he left with all passing grades.

The teacher also reported on a student who had qualified for special education services due to an emotional behavioral disorder. After he joined NCOS, the student's academic performance and behavior improved; the label was removed, and special education services were no longer required.

Early in the program's implementation, some adults feared that participation in NCOS would be associated with social stigma. Separating out a group of boys who had been determined to need special support could draw unwanted attention to them. However, program observations and interviews revealed that participants took pride in their label as "Circles boys." The afterschool group became a part of their school identity. The youth advocate, Mr. A, explained, "Students' attendance has gotten better because they have a purpose and a reason why they want to come to school and be part of the school community."

My investigation of NCOS revealed three program characteristics that contributed to positive identity association among the participants:

1. The youth advocate served as a shared mentor for the boys.
2. The location of the program in the children's neighborhood allowed participants to build their identities beyond the walls of the classroom.
3. The use of rituals strengthened group identity formation.

The Role of the Youth Advocate

Around the school, NCOS participants were known as "Circles boys" or "Mr. A's boys." Participants accepted these labels as positive largely because of Mr. A and the role he played in their lives. Mr. A was a Black male in his late twenties who was born and raised in the same community as his mentees. He had attended a nearby school system and was continuing his education at a local university. Around the school, he often donned a baseball or stocking cap—something that clearly differentiated him from the classroom teachers. He told the Circles boys stories from his childhood, revealing that he had faced obstacles like the ones they were facing and expressing a strong desire to help them overcome these obstacles. Mr. A had been with NCOS for three years and said that he felt fulfilled in the work.

All the adults I interviewed described positive school outcomes such as a decrease in disciplinary referrals and an increase in classroom engagement and school attendance.

Observations of the afterschool program revealed the level of relationship that Mr. A maintained with each participant. He asked the boys about specific classroom assignments and inquired about family members' well-being. The interactions with participants showed authentic care for their welfare together with a desire to push them to do more.

Mr. A also developed strong relationships with both parents and teachers. In contrast to the district recommendation that teachers not use their personal phones, Mr. A's phone had multiple contacts for each participant. In his interview, he discussed the importance of communication with families.

Parents play a major role in our success. We have a strong relationship with a majority of parents. Our parents know they can call, text, and reach out to us whenever needed. We ask our parents to commit to attending our parent nights, where we provide strategies for academic support in the home. I think we have excellent connections with our NCOS families.

Participants' appreciation for the care Mr. A provided was evident in their eagerness to be with him and their engagement when he spoke. At school, they would rush out the door for their pull-out reading group with Mr. A; they continually asked for hall passes so they could show him their completed classroom work. The teacher I interviewed reported that inappropriate behavior on the part of a Circles boy could be quickly addressed by a conversation with Mr. A. When asked why, she replied simply, "It's because of the relationship he has with the boys."

The Role of Place

Afterschool circles took place at the community-oriented policing (COP) house in the children's neighborhood. The house is one of several in the community that serve as safe houses with police officers on site at all times. Though police-run sites often do not feel safe for BYMOC, I saw no evidence of discomfort among the Circles boys. As participants got off the school bus that brought them to the COP house, the two police officers on duty warmly greeted them with high fives and quips that signaled their familiarity with each other.

The boys' snack time and circle took place in a part of the house that was formerly a garage, a large, mostly open space with white walls and cement floors. Folding chairs were scattered throughout the room, along with some bins of books and board games. On the walls were posters of African American role models such as Martin Luther King, Jr., and Michael Jordan, as well as student work. When I arrived for my first observation, several boys grabbed my hand, wanting to show me around like young children showing off their room and toys. Clearly the boys were proud of the space and considered it theirs.

The proximity of the COP house to the students' homes added to the sense that it was their place. During one visit, one boy quickly ran across the street to bring over his little brother, who was playing outside. Another flagged down his older sister, who was walking the dog. Participants' home lives were visible from the COP house, and most parents walked to pick up their children. When they did so, Mr. A often offered quick updates, providing a cohesive transition from the program to the home.

> The teacher I interviewed reported that inappropriate behavior on the part of a Circles boy could be quickly addressed by a conversation with Mr. A. When asked why, she replied simply, "It's because of the relationship he has with the boys."

Having their own place helped participants solidify their group identity. Only Circles boys went to the COP house after school. Other students at their school were aware of the house but could not attend circles. This exclusivity was a visible point of pride for participants.

The Role of Rituals

My observations revealed a sense of community formed from shared routines unique to the group. Many of these routines were Afrocentric, in keeping with NCOS principles. The first NCOS group, formed in 2005, was called the Kilembe Brotherhood; its participants, fifth-grade boys, discussed the book *Hero with an African Face* (Natural Circles of Support, 2017). The routines of each NCOS circle are co-created with participants, but tribal artifacts and community aspects of the circles retain the Afrocentric focus.

Each NCOS meeting I observed began with a circle meeting governed by a consistent routine. Mr. A got everyone seated and then calmly said, "I'd like everyone's permission to begin the circle." During the moment of silence that followed, the room felt like it slowed down from the controlled chaos that had existed only moments before. Finally, Mr. A struck a bell and let the timbre spread throughout the space to signal the start of the circle. Next, each child shared how he was feeling at that moment. The boys passed around a talking stick so that only one spoke at a time. This process, which took approximately 10 minutes, felt time-consuming to this classroom teacher; I was used to more transitions. I couldn't determine whether the participants who were waiting were actually listening or simply rehearsing what they would say when it was their turn. Either way, they were quiet for their peers.

After everyone had shared, Mr. A introduced the afternoon's topics, which circle members discussed with continued use of the talking stick. Children had opportunities to share something they were proud of, a problem they had, or a goal for something kind they were going to do for someone else. The questions seemed familiar to the boys, so I concluded that the questions were frequently used to launch discussions. During the sharing time, the rule that only one person could speak at a time was often broken as participants excitedly blurted out ideas, but the discussion never got out of control. To close the circle, Mr. A paused everyone for a moment of reflection and once again rang the bell. Once the circle time ended, the energy in the room changed almost immediately as the boys began to disperse into self-chosen activities.

My interviewees discussed the importance of this circle time. The program participant I interviewed explained how circle routines were different from school routines, most notably in that "at circles, everyone gets to talk." Mr. A explained that the routines are important for building community: "The circle is a way for everyone to express themselves. It represents our connectedness."

Discussion

In NCOS, targeted mentorship fostered relationships and support structures for BYMOC in the pre-encounter and encounter stages of their racial identity development. These supports came at a crucial time when children can internalize messages of racial inequality

from their educational environments. To counterbalance this trend, Circles boys developed a positive association with NCOS that became part of their identity at school. The initial hesitation over creating a racially separated group was overcome by the program's effectiveness in improving participants' social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes.

Beverly Tatum (1997) touches on the paradox of racial separation in her book *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*

It might seem counterintuitive that a school … could improve both academic performance and social relationships among students by separating the Black students for one period every day. But if we understand the unique challenges facing adolescents of color and the legitimate need they have to feel supported in their identity development, it makes perfect sense. (Tatum, 1997, pp. 73–74)

Before young people in the encounter stage of their racial identity development internalize a negative view of their culture, they need supports that honor their culture and world view. Timely intervention may help prevent racial identity problems such as stereotype threat, oppositional identity development, or racelessness. Although NCOS did not explicitly focus on racial identity development, the formation of a group identity may have contributed to a positive identity association as the label "Circles boys" became a point of pride for the participants.

This study revealed three characteristics of NCOS that may have led to a positive identity association in participants: the mentor, the location, and the rituals.

According to the My Brother's Keeper Alliance and MENTOR (n.d), effective mentors should be culturally competent, have a social justice mindset, express care for their community, and have life experiences relevant to the mentees. The fact that Mr. A met these criteria helped him serve as an effective mentor. Most of the adults at the NCOS participants' school, as in many schools in America, were White, middle-class women. It was important for the Circles boys to see themselves in their mentor. Although studies are inconclusive on the role of race and gender matching in mentoring relationships (Liang & West, 2007), it is hard to deny

> Mr. A explained that the routines are important for building community: "The circle is a way for everyone to express themselves. It represents our connectedness."

the role that match played in Mr. A's effectiveness. Steele (2011) describes how mentors help reduce the effects of stereotype threat by providing an example of overcoming the stereotypes. Mr. A was that example because he looked like his mentees and shared their life experience.

Recruiting such mentors is incredibly challenging. Financial support, whether from partner schools or from other sources, is necessary to attract uniquely talented individuals who can effectively mentor BYMOC groups. The participants in my case study were fortunate enough to have Mr. A as a full-time youth advocate. Other districts may not have the financial resources to provide one full-time advocate per group. However, one youth advocate could facilitate multiple groups from multiple schools. That advocate might be less able to provide personalized support than Mr. A was, but they could still develop the group identity that was so valuable to study participants.

The location outside of the school was a benefit to NCOS participants, particularly because of the distance between the school and the students' neighborhood. Many of the boys' families had never been to their school, located three miles away, and their teachers had never been to the neighborhood. Having their program in their neighborhood extended support into the children's home lives. During pick-up, the COP house became a meeting ground on which parents and Mr. A interacted the way families and teachers typically would at a neighborhood school—a form of communication that was missing when students went home by bus. In these quick interactions, Mr. A let families know how the children were performing in school and shared resources for supporting the children. Even when locating the program in the children's community is not possible, creating a unique space for the group can add to the sense of group identity.

Additionally, group-specific routines can foster group identity by creating an experience that is unique for group members. At school, NCOS participants shared the rituals and routines typically associated with formal education. By contrast, the rituals used in NCOS were unique to them. The most notable ritual was the opening circle, in which all students were given the opportunity to share. This aspect was crucial for group

identity formation. Taking the time for everyone to be heard developed an inclusiveness not typically seen in classrooms, where the discourse is typically controlled by the dominant voices, leaving marginalized students silenced. The circle discussion protocol was extremely effective at both developing a sense of community and enabling all voices to be heard.

Supporting Identity Development in BYMOC

In these three ways, the afterschool group mentoring program I observed supported the identity development of its BYMOC participants. Participants developed a positive group identity that fostered a sense of belonging, which in turn improved their engagement in school. The quality of the mentoring program relied heavily on the abilities of the youth advocate, Mr. A. Having a mentor whose life experience was similar to their own was part of NCOS participants' identity development. The in-school and afterschool format bridged the participants' home and school lives and helped to fully engage them in their education.

Ultimately schools must work toward culturally responsive instructional practices that nurture the identity development of all students. As they work toward this goal, they can look to emulate the strategies of OST programs that successfully assist BYMOC in their social and emotional development. Teachers and administrators should look at these practices not as specialized interventions but rather as best practices that need to permeate the school day.

References

Adams, G. R., Munro, B., Doherty-Poirer, M., Munro, G., Petersen, A. R., & Edwards, J. (2001). Diffuse-avoidance, normative, and informational identity styles: Using identity theory to predict maladjustment. *Identity*, *1*(4), 307–320.

Baggerly, J., & Parker, M. (2005). Child-centered group play therapy with African American boys at the elementary school level. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *83*(4), 387–396. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6678.2005.tb00360.x

Benjamin, E., Constantine, E., Richardson, T., & Wilson, J. (1998). An overview of Black racial identity theories: Limitations and considerations for future theoretical conceptualizations. *Applied and Preventive Psychology, 75,* 95–99.

Bernstein, L., Rappaport, C. D., Olsho, L., Hunt, D., & Levin, M. (2009). *Impact evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education's Student Mentoring Program*. Final Report. NCEE 2009-4047. U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20094047

Cross, W. E. (1991). *Shades of Black: Diversity in African-American identity.* Temple University Press.

Deutsch, N. L., & Spencer, R. (2009). Capturing the magic: Assessing the quality of youth mentoring relationships. *New Directions for Youth Development*, *2009*(121), 47–70. https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.296

DuBois, D., Portillo, N., Rhodes, J., Silverthorn, N., & Valentine, J. (2011). How effective are mentoring programs for youth? A systematic assessment of the evidence. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 12*(2), 57–91.

Fordham, S., & Ogbu, J. U. (1986). Black students' school success: Coping with the "burden of 'acting white.'" *Urban Review*, *18*(3), 176–206. http://doi.org/10.1007/bf01112192

Gilgoff, J., & Ginwright, S. (2015). Toward more equitable outcomes: A research synthesis on out-of-school time work with boys and young men of color. *Afterschool Matters*, *21,* 11–19.

Hobson, N. M., Risen, J., & Inzlicht, M. (2017). The psychology of rituals: An integrative review and process-based framework. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, *22*(3), 260–284. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2944235

Kalk Derby, S. (2017, October 13). Know Your Madisonian: Outreach specialist finds success with Natural Circles of Support. Wisconsin State Journal. https://madison.com/wsj/news/ local/know-your-madisonian-outreach-specialist-finds-success-with-natural-circles-of-support/article_07949100-d095-534b-a07d-faa4810d328a.html.

Kozol, J. (1991). *Savage inequalities: Children in America's schools*. Broadway Paperbacks.

Kozol, J. (2005). *The shame of the nation: The restoration of apartheid schooling in America*. Broadway Paperbacks.

Lee, C. C. (1996). *Saving the native son: Empowerment strategies for young Black males*. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED393059.pdf

Liang, B., & West, J. (2007). Youth mentoring: Do race and ethnicity really matter? *Research in Action*, *9.*

https://www.mentoring.org/new-site/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/RIA_ISSUE_9.pdf

Martinez, R. O., & Dukes, R. L. (1997). The effects of ethnic identity, ethnicity, and gender on adolescent well-being. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 26,* 503–516.

My Brother's Keeper Alliance & MENTOR. (n.d.). *Guide to mentoring boys and young men of color.* https://www.mentoring.org/new-site/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Guide-to-Mentoring-BYMOC.pdf

Natural Circles of Support. (n.d.). [home page]. https://www.naturalcircles.org/

Natural Circles of Support. (2017, May 18). [PowerPoint slides]. UW Extension. https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/programdevelopment/files/2016/03/Natural-Circles-of-Support-PPT-SEEP-webinar.pdf

Noguera, P. A. (2003). The trouble with black boys: The role and influence of environmental and cultural factors on the academic performance of African American males. *Urban Education*, *38*(4), 431–459.

Noguera, P. A. (2009). *The trouble with black boys: And other reflections on race, equity, and the future of public education.* Jossey-Bass.

Phinney, J. S., & Tarver, S. (1988). Ethnic identity search and commitment in black and white eighth graders. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, *8*(3), 265–277.

Putnam, R. D. (2015). *Our kids: The American dream in crisis.* Simon & Schuster.

Rhodes, J. E., & DuBois, D. L. (2008). Mentoring relationships and programs for youth. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *17*(4), 254–258. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8721.2008.00585.x

Sánchez, B., Pinkston, K. D., Cooper, A. C., Luna, C., & Wyatt, S. T. (2016). One falls, we all fall: How boys of color develop close peer mentoring relationships. *Applied Developmental Science*, *22*(1), 14–28.

Stancil, W. (2018, March 14). School segregation is not a myth. *The Atlantic.* https:// www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2018/03/school-segregation-is-not-a-myth/555614

Steele, C. (2011). *Whistling Vivaldi: And other clues to how stereotypes affect us.* W.W. Norton.

Stevenson, H. C., Reed, J., Bodison, P., & Bishop, A. (1997). Racism stress management: Racial socialization beliefs and the experience of depression and anger in African American youth. *Youth & Society*,

29(2), 197–222. https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118x97029002003

Struchen, W., & Porta, M. (1997). From role-modeling to mentoring for African American youth: Ingredients for successful relationships. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, *41*(3), 119–123. https://doi.org/10.1080/10459889709603279

Sue, D. W., & Sue, D. (2002). *Counseling the culturally different: Theory and practice* (4th ed.). Wiley.

Tatum, A. W. (2005). *Teaching reading to black adolescent males: Closing the achievement gap.* Stenhouse.

Tatum, B. D. (1997). *Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria? And other conversations about race*. Basic Books.

Yancey, A. K., Siegel, J. M., & McDaniel, K. L. (2002). Role models, ethnic identity, and health-risk behaviors in urban adolescents. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, *156*(1), 55–61. https://doi.org/10.1001/archpedi.156.1.55

Woodland, M. H. (2008). Whatcha doin' after school? A review of the literature on the influence of after-school programs on young black males. *Urban Education, 43*(5), 537–560.

Wyatt, S. (2009). The Brotherhood: Empowering adolescent African American males toward excellence. *Professional School Counseling*, *12*(6). https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759x0901200615