

Cultural Pride Reinforcement: A Protective Factor for Urban African American Youth Mental Health

William M. Bannon, Jr., MSW
Columbia University School of Social Work

Mary M. McKay, Ph.D.

Mount Sinai School of Medicine Dept of Psychiatry & Community Medicine

James Rodriguez, Ph.D.

Columbia University Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

Funded by the National Institute of Mental Health

INTRODUCTION

- In adolescence significant psychosocial challenges threaten mental health
- Urban minority adolescents especially at-risk:
 - Youth mental health need nationally 17%-26%
 - Youth mental health need in inner-city 24%-40%
- Low rates of service use among this group
- Increased need & less service use create a critical need to identify protective factors

BACKGROUND

- Models of risk & resilience provide a framework for examining contextual factors & individual variations in mental health
- Risk factors can be held constant & individual differences related to youth mental health can be examined

BACKGROUND

- Child Mental Health Risk Factors
- Conditions/variables associated with need (more likely to be present in urban contexts)
 - Community violence exposure
 - Drug use
 - Victimization & death of family members/friends

BACKGROUND

- Child Mental Health Protective factors
- Variable/condition with decrease likelihood of adverse mental health outcomes
 - Two-adult households
 - Positive parent mental health
 - Parent involvement/supervision
 - Family support

BACKGROUND

- Cultural Pride Reinforcement
- Minority parents/caregiver explicit & implicit messages of racial esteem & uniqueness
 - Positive racial identity help children cope with racism
 - Little examination as protective factor in mental health literature
 - Ironic, theorists predict enhance psychological well-being

OBJECTIVES

1. Describe the relationship between risk factors & protective factors, including cultural pride reinforcement, in relation to youth mental health
2. Examine the influence of cultural pride reinforcement as a unique protective factor
3. Discuss implications for child mental health service delivery

METHODS

Study Design

- Cross-sectional study
- In Large mid-western city in 1997-1999
- Randomly selected from larger longitudinal study of a sample of African American youth & their families living in a community with many threats to youth
- Data gathered from parent & one child
- All interviews conducted by trained community members
- Informed consent/IRB approval obtained

METHODS

Sample

- $N = 140$ African American youth & their adult caregivers
- 92% of adult caregivers were female
- 77% of adult caregivers were unmarried
- 68% of adult caregivers unemployed
- 71% of were supported by public assistance
- Average annual income between \$5,000-\$9,000
- 80% high school/GED, 20% beyond high school
- Children 9-15 years ($M = 11.8$; $SD = 1.22$)
- 60% of youth were female

METHODS

Measures

<u>Construct</u>	<u>Respondent</u>
Family demographics	Parent
Child risk factors - Family Stress Scale (Tolan, 1987) - e.g., experienced friend's death (0-10 events)	Child
Parent depression - Symptom Checklist-90 (Derogatis, 1973) - e.g., how much were you bothered in the past week by- Feeling Blue ($\alpha=.86$)	Parent

METHODS

Measures (cont.)

<u>Construct</u>	<u>Respondent</u>
Within family support - Family Assessment Measure (Tolan, 1994) - e.g., I listen to what other family members say even when I disagree ($\alpha=.88$)	Parent
Involvement/Supervision - Parenting Skills Questionnaire (Tolan, 1991) - e.g., my child is not allowed to have other children over when I am not at home ($\alpha=.75$)	Parent

METHODS

Measures (cont.)

<u>Construct</u>	<u>Respondent</u>
Cultural pride reinforcement - Scale of Racial Socialization for African American Adolescents (Stevenson, 1995) - e.g., teachers should display signs of Black culture for children in the classroom ($\alpha=.71$)	Parent
Child mental health - State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, 1973) - e.g., Right now I feel- cheerful ($\alpha=.83$)	Child

METHODS

Data Analysis:

1. Examine differences in child mental health by demographic characteristics
2. Determine independent variables associated at bivariate level ($p < .05$)
3. Hierarchical OLS regression used to examine multiple influences on youth mental health outcome

METHODS

Data Analysis (cont.)

- Variables entered by "blocks" : Risk factors, Protective factors, & Cultural pride reinforcement
- Cultural pride reinforcement third step to test unique influences
- SES (i.e., income) controlled for
- Checks for multicollinearity conducted

RESULTS

Child Mental Health did not differ by:

- Child age, $t(100) = .47, p = .64$
- Child gender, $t(111) = -1.07, p = .34$
- Parent education, $t(133) = .51, p = .61$
- Parent employed, $t(131) = -.18, p = .86$
- Public assistance, $t(132) = -.11, p = .91$

RESULTS

Child Mental Health Risk Factors

- Out of the 10 stressful events the average child experienced three exposures (range=0-8; SD =1.64)
 - 16% ($n = 20$) at least one event
 - 60% ($n = 72$) two or three events
 - 26% ($n = 33$) four or more events

RESULTS

Child Mental Health Protective factors

- 23% ($n = 23$) two adult household
- Low parent depression ($M = 20.5$; $SD = 7.54$; Range=13-56)
- High levels involvement & supervision ($M = 60.6$; $SD = 5.58$; Range=41-68)
- High levels within family support ($M = 20.3$; $SD = 3.90$; Range=6-24)

RESULTS

Cultural Pride Reinforcement

- High cultural pride reinforcement ($M = 23$; $SD = 2.70$; range = 17-28)

Child Mental Health State

- Positive child mental health state ($M = 53.4$; $SD = 5.53$; range = 28-63)

RESULTS

Table 1

Intercorrelations Between Subscales

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Child Mental Health	--	-.23*	.20*	.20*	-.26**	.20*
2. Parent Depression		--	-.09	-.18	.16	.04
3. Involvement/Supervision			--	.23*	-.12	.01
4. Within Family Support				--	-.04	-.02
5. Child Risk Factors					--	-.11
6. Cultural Pride Reinforcement						--

*p < .05, **p < .01.

RESULTS

Table 2

Hierarchical OLS Regression- Child Mental Health State

Variable	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3		
	B	SE	â	B	SE	â	B	SE	â
C Risk Factors	-.63	.24	.28**	-.37	.23	-.17	-.38	.24	-.17
Two parent House				1.92	1.15	.18	2.73	1.37	.25*
Parent depression				-.16	.07	-.24*	-.15	.08	-.22*
Involve/Supervision				.09	.08	.12	.08	.09	.11
W Family Support				.13	.12	.12	.18	.12	.16
Cult. Pride Reinforce							.40	.19	.23*

Note.

For Step 1, R² = .08, Adj. R² = .06, df = 84, F = 3.56, p < .05.

For Step 2, R² = .19, Adj. R² = .13, df = 82, F = 2.97, p < .01.

For Step 3, R² = .28, Adj. R² = .19, df = 71, F = 3.30, p < .01.

*p < .05, **p < .01.

DISCUSSION

- Added to understanding beyond risk & protective factors suggesting a unique protective factor for African American youth
- Finding link youth mental health to parents' efforts to instill a positive racial identity & teach strategies to cope with racism

DISCUSSION

- Cultural Pride Reinforcement accounted for an additional 8% of the variance, beyond the 19% accounted for by risk factors (8%) & protective factors (11%)
- Implications that intervention designs be broadened to include strengthening protective factors such as cultural pride reinforcement

DISCUSSION

- Cultural pride reinforcement warrants further study as part of broader approach to influencing African American youth mental health
- Possible construct of importance that has not been considered in studies of this population

Limitations

- Single informant reports:
 - No youth/parent interaction effect testing
 - No testing of youth reports with outcomes
 - No test of how well child internalized messages
- Relatively small sample

CONCLUSION

- Cultural pride teaching may be a unique & influential protective factor for urban African American youth mental health
- Additional research is necessary