BECAUSE I AM HUMAN: CENTERING BLACK WOMEN WITH DIS/ABILITIES IN TRANSITION PLANNING FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE

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DEDICATION

To Black women with dis/abilities at multiple intersections of oppressions, I pray that your spirit, soul, mind, and body is built-up by faith.

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BECAUSE I AM HUMAN: CENTERING BLACK WOMEN WITH DIS/ABILITIES IN TRANSITION PLANNING FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE

There is a dearth of literature about post-secondary transition experiences of Black women with dis/abilities (BWD). In this qualitative study, I explore transition experiences of five post-secondary BWD from high school to college in order to privilege her chronicles and narratives as knowledge. In addition, two urban public high school transition coordinators (TC) participated in the study. Three inquiries guided my dissertation: (1) features of educational experiences narrated by BWD, (2) features of transition services provided to students with dis/abilities, including roles of and approaches as described by the TCs, and (3) how BWD narratives may be leveraged to critique and extend transition services as the TCs described them. I engaged in three semi-structured interviews with six of the seven participants (one interview with the seventh). I drew from Disability Studies/Disability Studies in Education (DSE), Critical Race Theory, and Womanist/Black Feminist Theory and their shared tenets of voice and counternarratives and concepts of social construction and falsification of consciousness to analyze the narratives of BWD participants. I drew from the DS/DSE tenet of interlocking systems of oppression, DisCrit tenet three, race and ability, and constructs of Inputs and Outcomes in work on Modeling Transition Education to analyze the TCs' narratives and in connection to the narratives of the BWD. Across both sets of participants, three themes in the form of Truths emerged; they were terrible and sticky experiences of racial/dis/ability oppression for the BWDs and, imposing of whiteness and normalization within the transition education practices described by the TCs. For the

BWD, those terrible and sticky truths took three forms: (a) Pathologization; (b) Disablement; and (c) Exclusion. Another type of truth in the BWD’s narratives, however, was Subverted Truths: (re)defined identities and radical love, (re)placed competence and knowledge, and (revalued sisterhood and community, the ways of pushing back and resisting the Truths and their effects. I discuss implications for BWD post-secondary transition-planning-and-programming theory, research, policy, practice, praxis, and spirituality.

Kathleen Thorius Ph.D., Chair

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

In this qualitative study, I examine the educational and life experiences of Black[1] women with dis/abilities[2] (BWD) paying special attention to their experiences of transition from high school to college. I explicitly explore the intersections of race, gender, and dis/ability, and in so doing, center (i.e., privilege) her *narratives as knowledge* (Cannon & Thorius, 2013). Historically, the field of women's studies has omitted the experiences of Black women, assuming the "separability of [the] gender struggle and [the] race struggle" (Brown, 1989, p. 611). Yet, even those fields that do center race *and* gender, including Critical Race Theory, Womanist, and Black Feminist Thought (Crenshaw, 1991; Hill Collins, 2000), rarely attend to the intersections of dis/ability or privilege BWD transitional education and experiences (e.g., education and life after high school), including the pursuit and uniqueness of educational attainment for BWD (Cannon & Thorius, 2013).

Simultaneously, I examine how two transition coordinators (TCs) describe their role and work with students with dis/abilities transitioning from high school to college.

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[1] Black here specifically means African women of African descent. "I capitalize 'Black' because 'Blacks, and 'African American' Latinos, and other 'minorities,' constitute a specific cultural group and, as such, require denotation as a proper noun"(Mackinnon, 1982, as cited in Crenshaw, 1991, p. 122). For the same reason, I do not capitalize "white," which is not a proper noun, since "whites" do not constitute a specific cultural group. For the same reason I do not capitalize "women of color."

[2] I use the term dis/ability or dis/abilities throughout this dissertation to delineate the idea that "dis/ability and ability differences are social constructions" (Kozleski & Thorius, 2013, p. 9). I use disability, without the slash between dis and ability to indicate the existence of disability as an impairment or a real predicament (Shakespeare, 2006).

To accomplish this, I feature the TCs' descriptions of the transition services that they provide to students with disabilities in general, as well as their roles in and approaches to transition services with regard to intersecting identities of students (e.g., BWD) in particular. The TC narratives are relevant to my study as I explore underlying contributions to the disparate treatment of BWDs in K-12 and who are with and without Individual Education Programs (IEPs), as well as their treatment in college, coming from the understanding that transition services need to expand and include the assets of cultural and social capital taken from the perspectives of marginalized individuals and groups (Trainor, 2008, 2015).

Guiding inquiries. Three interrelated inquiries guided my study: (1) what are the features of educational experiences as narrated by Black women with dis/abilities, including their experiences of transition and post-secondary education in conjunction with their histories of disability-related services under the Individuals with Dis/abilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004), and emergent themes across their narratives; (2) what are the features of transition services provided to students with dis/abilities, as well as roles and approaches involved in such services, as described by urban public school district transition coordinators, and their accounts of race, gender, and dis/abilities in their work with BWD; and (3) how may the intersecting relationship(s) between race, gender, and dis/ability, and in particular, the narratives of BWD be leveraged to critique and extend transition services as described by the transition coordinators.

Significance of the Study

I describe the significance of the study in two inter-related ways: (1) the importance of centering the knowledge and lived experiences of BWD, particularly given the ways in which existing research has neglected or under-accounted for these experiences; and (2) the ways in which post-secondary education experiences, in the form of transition services for individuals with dis/abilities, may be improved on the basis of their knowledge.

Centering BWD knowledge. Within this study, my main focus is the voices of five BWDs and their perspectives on their own professional and personal post-secondary transition experiences, in order to center their stories and counter glaring omissions, gaps, breaks, and silences in research on their intersecting identities where dis/ability is present (Petersen, 2009a, 2006). Further, I center their stories in their own words to elevate and learn from the African American Vernacular (AAVE)3 (Smitherman & Smitherman-Donaldson, 1986)—the ordinary everyday language—of BWD, which is born out of the survival of oppression and is a powerful (re)presentation of assets that center their cultural community and heritage, including their race and gender identities. Furthermore, I utilize some of what Smitherman describes as the "African American rhetorical

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[3] *Author Note*
African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is a valuable Africanized form of English that reflects "Black America's linguistic-cultural African heritage and the condition of servitude, oppression and life in America" (Smitherman, 1977). It is a tool to realize the vision of talkin and testifyin, in the form of "words, expressions, and sentences" that are reflective of the language that is used traditionally at home or within African American cultural communities (Baugh, 1983; Smitherman, 1977; Young et al., 2014). Thus, I strive to integrate AAVE throughout this dissertation. I am a proud and fluent speaker of AAVE: a grammatical dialect with its own rules. In response to the marginalization of this important aspect of my identity as a Black woman and, whose speech was pathologized in my schooling experiences, I choose to use AAVE in particular places in this manuscript and where it emerges from the BWD chronicle and the researchers positionality, which may appear in structure (e.g., "talkin"; "testifyin"), or past tense verbs without the end (e.g., "focus," "name," and "heighten") as they would be spelled in dominant/standard English.

tradition, whose patterns may be seen in oral as well as written narrative and expository genres (e.g., use of proverbs, aphorisms, Biblical verses, Cultural values – community consciousness and etc.)" (Smitherman, 1977/1994, as cited in Lee, 2004, p. 131). My attention to her narratives reflects my critique of research' about Black women (with and without dis/abilities), instead of with them. In doing so, I account for research itself as "a situated cultural practice" (Arzubiaga, Artiles, King, & Harris-Murri, 2008, p. 309); research with Black individuals and communities places them "at the center of phenomena, [instead of] on the periphery to be described and defined by others" (King & Swartz, 2016, p. 10). To illustrate the problems associated with the former approach, Wilson (1993) argued that the consciousness and behavioral tendencies of Blacks described by Eurocentric research has resulted in what he calls the falsifications of Black consciousness, which "represent themselves and collective habits, tendencies, traditions, emotional responsivities, perspectives, ways of processing information, attitudes and reflex-like reactions to certain stimuli and situations" as pathologization, alienation, exclusion, and oppression (p. 1). According to Wilson, this historical falsification of Black consciousness rationalizes, legitimizes, and supports a social system that serves white supremacy and subjugates Black consciousness across societal and educational institutions (e.g., education and mental health).

Thus, by elevating the stories of five Black women with dis/abilities I aim to center *their* individual and collective consciousness as they describe their matriculation from high school to college [4], and contribute to their, and my own, restorative consciousness and self-definition.[5] By restorative consciousness, I mean the collective healing of the mind, soul, spirit, and body of Black people. Moreover, by positioning BWD as authors of their own stories, I account for the remarkable contributions and approaches of Black women authors before them:

> Black female authors emphasize life within the community, not the conflict with outside forces. In order to give faithful pictures of important and comprehensive segments of Black life, these writers tie their character's stories to the aesthetic, emotional and intellectual values of the Black community. (K. Cannon, 1988, p. 87)

Cannon's work substantiates the continual need to privilege Black women's self-determination and collective community, which Collins (2000) describes in her scholarship as emphasizing the role of Black women's self-definition that:

> Enable(d) them to refashion African-influenced conceptions of self and community. These self-definitions of Black womanhood were designed to resist the negative controlling images of Black womanhood advance by [w]hites as well as the discriminatory social practices in crafting a constantly changing African-American culture fostered distinctively by Black and women-centered worldviews. (Hill Collins, 2000, p. 10)

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[4] The term "high school to college transition" is inclusive of all transitions or movements of BWDs towards furthering their education and illuminating their experiences as either traditional (i.e., attend college right after high school graduation) or non-traditional students (attend college well after completing high school). In some ways, this term is similar to the way that Halpren (1992) defines this transition as "a period of *floundering* that occurs for at least the first several years after leaving school as adolescents attempt to assume a *variety* of adult roles in their communities" (p. 203)

[5] Agran and Wehmeyer (2008) define "the notion of self-determinism [as] linked to the capacity of humans to, in a sense, override other forces or determinants to act based on their own will. That is why the term volition is important in understanding self-determination. Volition refers to making conscious choices or the actual power to make conscious choices, or will" (p. 58).

Black women, emboldened by the conscious and deliberate actions, decisions, and self-definitions of other Black women, continue to battle hegemonic forces threatening to alienate Black womanhood from broader U.S. society. In this study, I pay specific attention to the post-secondary educational experiences of BWD to raise consciousness about transition supports and services provided them under the law (IDEA, 1997, 2004).

The missing voice of BWD in transition planning. Subsequently, BWD do not experience transitional education in isolation, but through schools or transition programs, where transition activities are operationalized under race- and gender-neutral federal and state disability education laws (e.g., IDEA, 2004), enacted by educators in local contexts. Therefore, I also attend to another distinct group in my study: Transition Coordinators. This term is commonly used to refer to special education teachers who have specific roles designated by their school districts to mediate the transition of young people with disabilities from high school to postsecondary experiences. In this study, I include the narratives of two transition coordinators because it is advantageous to my study that I know how the roles and approaches involved in education transition services are relate to and/or account for the stories shared by the five BWD. Through attention to elements (e.g., factors and restrictions) shaping TCs' work and how such work connects to BWD stories, it is my hope that this study has broader implications for transition literature at large (e.g., Trainor, 2008), as there is considerable research that demonstrates oppressions experiences within these process by all students with disabilities. To illustrate, Trainor's (2007) study describes adolescent girls and those from marginalized communities with Learning Disabilities and outcomes of their postsecondary experience:

> Perspectives regarding participation in the special education process has the potential to improve practice (Morningstar, Turnbull, & Turnbull,

> 2005). While the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004) continues to emphasize the importance of including youth with disabilities in decision-making processes, little is known about how youth perceive such involvement. Adolescent females with LD who are also from marginalized groups have rarely been included in this line of inquiry. (p. 33)

Accordingly, Trainor’s (2007) study focused on exploring and positioning “adolescent girls’ perceptions of self-determination that also highlights their postsecondary transition outcomes, which are their preferences, strengths, and needs”; note: transition outcomes *should* represent ones preferences, strengths, and needs, but often do not (p. 33). Likewise, transition researchers and practitioners alike understand that transitioning is a collaborative work that includes individuals with disabilities and those who support and work in programs geared towards college (Banks, 2014; Cavendish & Connor, 2018). Yet, as this excerpt of Trainor’s also alludes, it is important to tease out specific historical oppression of BWD to address their unique and particular constellations of inequitable access, participation, and outcomes in higher education. Other researchers, too, have shown substantial reasons for a need to “focus research investigations on factors and restrictions that influence high school transition for African American students with disabilities” (Banks, 2014, p. 29). The focus on race is an imperative, because although there are programs that specifically target underrepresented students seeking enrollment in college, the definition of ‘underrepresented’ primarily refers to income and ignores explicit attention to race (King, 2009). King’s (2009) review of the literature on college access programs asked two central questions: (1) Who counts as underrepresented? and (2) What counts as access? King found the underrepresented students participating in these programs were most often designated as “low-income”; only two of the 20 studies that King examined mentioned dis/ability and in instances when race was mentioned, it was in passing, or to deficit-based approaches to preparing students for college (e.g. teaching African American students table manners; Howes, James, & Ritchie, 2003). Only Hutcheon and Wolbring's (2012) study on college access called for research that inserts the missing voices of disabled postsecondary students in examining higher education.

Study Rationale

A number of connected historic and current rationales are the basis for my study, most of which are related to issues of access, participation, and outcomes of education for BWD and the inadequacies of current transition practices in redressing these issues.

The consequences of transition inequities for BWD. The compound inequities at the center of limited higher education access for BWD are consequential for a number of reasons. Hutcheon and Wolbring (2012) in their research on ableism and higher education policies suggested, "Experiences in postsecondary education provide a means for the disabled to participate in knowledge-production" (p. 40). Even more often, higher education is framed as a means of influencing and achieving one's life goals (Trainor, 2017; Wehmeyer et al., 2000). But, as King's (2009) literature review revealed, although students with disabilities are increasingly enrolling in postsecondary education, the increase is accounted for primarily by those from 'majority background' (i.e., European American, those with English as a primary language, and those from families with middle to upper class income levels; King, 2009, p. 1).

Unfortunately, many of the above-mentioned inequities continue in higher education access. When these inequities are paired with the dearth of literature on the educational experiences of Black women at the intersection of race and dis/ability, the salience and rationale for my focus within this study is underscored.

Race- and culture-neutrality of special education law. Equitable education is supposed to be guaranteed under the law, ensured through the requirement of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in K-12 for students with dis/abilities, and which includes services that account for these students' transition to post-secondary education or employment. Federal special education regulation requires educators to ensure transition assessment enacted in K-12 schooling guidelines (e.g., knowing what type of documentation is required for postsecondary education) for students with dis/abilities to improve their outcomes (Menchetti, 2008; Sitlington, 2003). According to federal law, transition planning and programming must begin at age 16 (and by age 14 according to some state laws, and if deemed necessary by the transition committee) and students must be invited to their IEP meetings. Within the field of transition often student voices have mostly been unheard; it has become more popular to invite and ask students to lead their IEPs (Flexer, Baer, Luft, & Simmons, 2008; Thoma, Rogan & Baker, 2001). Transition "outcomes for special education students should be related to those identified for students without disabilities…through consensus building and the outcomes-based accountability system developed…on the important to assessment areas for students with disabilities" (Menchetti, 2008, p. 185). According to IDEA (2004), a child with a disability is to receive an IEP in K-12 and, in preparation for further education, residential living, or vocation choices, is to receive transition services. The IDEA regulations apply to all children with disabilities receiving a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) that is inclusive of special education and additional services and that promotes their needs as they transition through school. Consequently, “transitions are numerous [and often]…refers to the movement from adolescence into early adulthood in which noticeable changes are anticipated—changes in human development, activities, roles, and responsibilities” (Trainor, 2017, p. 18). According to IDEA (2004), transition services are to include:

> A coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that—(a) is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child’s movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult service, independent living, or community participation; (b) is based on the individual child’s needs, taking into account the child’s strengths, preferences and interests, (c) includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. However, none of these regulatory requirements address the issues of race-based discrimination accounted for in other special education regulation that recognizes and requires states and districts account for local practices that have contributed to the disproportionate representation of students of color in special education (Thorius & Maxcy, 2014).

The NLTS-2 and non-intersectional representation. The U. S. Department of Education sponsored the National Longitudinal Transition Study of 2012. Its function was to collect information from youths, parents, teachers, and administrates about how students with disabilities are doing as a group, what resources exist to assist them, and who are using those resources. The first NLTS provided statistical analysis on how to prepare youth and young adults to leave high school and prepare for adult life: college, training, or work, and independent living. Successively, the second National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS-2) was "dedicated solely to high school completion of students with disabilities" and reported that both adolescents and young adults had experienced a steady improvement in completing high school over the time since the first NLTS (Trainor, 2017, p. 5). To illustrate Trainor (2017) quoted Wagner et al.'s (2005) report that "the high school completion rate across disabilities improved an average of 17% between the first and second NLTS studies" (p. 5). However, the NLTS studies do not disaggregate for my study's population (i.e. BWD) and their IEP/transition processes.

In light of King's 2009 review and the inadequacies of the NLTS-2 study, the limited availability of racially disaggregated high school completion statistics for students with disabilities require additional clarification about who transitions to college, and how. Broadly, education research concerned with the reasons for inequitable (i.e., exclusion) educational opportunities for students of color, those with dis/abilities, and students at these intersections, has demonstrated the considerable role of educators, including deficit thinking about students of color (Valencia, 2010) and with dis/abilities. Moreover, a considerable body of research has demonstrated the gatekeeping roles of certain educational professionals in blocking access to college and/or limiting students' options in relation to post-secondary education (Erickson, 2014; Gallagher, 2002; Wehmeyer et al, 2011). It stands to reason that these broader research trends have implications for disparities in college access for students with disabilities when race is also considered.

The Eurocentrism of transition services. With regard to students with dis/abilities, certain professionals with backgrounds as special education teachers are often designated as transition coordinators, and one of their roles is to ensure the planning of post-secondary options for youth served under IDEA and facilitating and coordinating transition programs for students with dis/abilities from youth to adulthood. Accordingly, the work of transition planning is typically described as the enactment, and the provision of the regulatory requirements involved in the development and implementation of secondary transition plans and activities for a child with a disability (Thoma & Rogan, 2001). Yet, transition planning has been criticized by scholars within and outside of the field because it privileges Eurocentric norms of individualism, including individual functioning and independence (Cowley, 2013; Kalyanpur, Harry, & Skrtic, 2000; Smith, 2010; Trainor, 2010, 2017). In addition, there is a lack of attention to the intersectional nature of the lives of youth who have dis/abilities, not only within transition, but the broader fields of general and special education (Fine, 1994; Hernández-Saca, Kahn, & Cannon, 2018), increasing the likelihood that transition benefits some students with disabilities, and not others.

Further interrogating of "the good" transition planning: PCPs and PATHs. In contrast to the critiques of transition planning mentioned earlier, "some have suggested that person-centered planning has applications to a broader population of students with disabilities" (Menchetti & Piland, 2001, as cited in Menchetti, 2008, pp. 182-183). Thus, some approaches such as person-centered-planning (PCP) and planning alternative tomorrows with hope (PATH) are meant to be and described as *emancipatory* for people with dis/abilities (O'Brien & O'Brien, 1996, 1998; Pearpoint, O'Brien, & Forest, 1993).

Menchetti (2008) suggests that such approaches include information gathering and decision making, drawing from the individual's assets as well as the resources available through family and other social networks while working toward the individual's goals. At the same time, research on the so-called "emancipatory model" has not accounted for the intersections of race, gender (sex; e.g., which goes beyond traditional gender roles as to biological sex alignment), and dis/ability as they relate to the separate identities and experiences of individuals.

Chapter One Summary

In this chapter, I presented the problem, significance, and rationale for my dissertation. I emphasize the problems of conducting research *on* instead of *with* marginalized individuals, and in particular, Black women with dis/abilities (BWD) as they transition from high school to college, and the need for centering the voices of both traditional and non-traditional[6] BWD participants in transition research. I proposed the significance of intersectional analysis of race, gender, and dis/ability, so to privilege the *narratives of BWD as knowledge,* as historically, the educational experiences of Black women in general and those with dis/abilities are omitted from the educational literature (Peterson, 2006, 2009a, 2009b)—even from fields such as critical race studies and Womanist and Black Feminist Thought. While collectively such fields have

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[6] The terms, "traditional and non-traditional" refers to movement from one place to another. Traditional transition means graduation from high school and immediately start post-secondary education. Non-traditional transition means graduation from high school and not going straight to college. Additionally, it can mean someone who may have started college and did not complete, and is returning. Overall, non-traditional is all others who attended college outside of the traditional way.

problematized race and gender, they have rarely attended to intersections of dis/ability (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2013) and their relationship to the transitioning and accomplishment of educational attainment for BWD.

Additionally, in this chapter, I discussed the significance of centering BWD consciousness, voices, and personal and political perspectives about their transition processes and education experiences to simultaneously privilege *her* stories and counter negative stories by *others* about BWD. Historically, other Black female authors have elevated stories of Black women's self-determination and restorative consciousness in the research literature, but there remains a lack of critical research conducted *with* them. Therefore, I reiterate that research is a cultural practice, while I aim to center the single and collective cognizance of the five BWD's stories about transitioning from high school to college. As this qualitative study also involves two transition coordinator participants, I also explore problems, significance, and rationale for the study about the practice of transition historically, and even in more so-called emancipatory approaches. The assets above of BWD, such as self-definition, self-determination, and self-advocacy—all essential tools to inform their transitional education experiences, are missing from the literature. Why is this so?

Chapter Two Preview

In chapter two, I discuss the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that contribute to my aim of better understanding Black women with dis/ability and emphasizing their story, on their terms, and in their voices. I account for intersecting race, gender (sex), and college dis/ability and oppressions related to these intersections. Namely, in this study, I draw on a theoretical understanding of dis/ability differences as social constructions (Hernández-Saca et al., 2018; Kozleski & Thorius, 2013; Shakespeare, 2006). Moreover, I draw from theoretical and methodological contributions from the fields of Critical Race Theory (CRT), Womanist/Black Feminism, and Disability Studies in Education (DS/DSE) to examine cultural practices developed and enacted in the education field. Subsequently, I draw from a DS/DSE framework to account for discriminations in the form of segregation and alienation of those with disabilities with "the understanding that disability occurs through human expectation and interactions in social context" (Connor, Gabel, & Gallagher, 2008 p. 275; Cowley, 2013; Smith, 2010; Trainor, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2017). Finally, I present Trainor's (2017) work regarding input and outcome models of transition planning as these are central to my consideration of transition processes as described by the TCs. Further, as the TCs' descriptions of their work and roles in connection to BWD require critical analysis on the basis of neglect and race-neutrality of existing transition research, I again draw from DS, CRT, and Womanist/Black Feminism in order to account for interlocking systems of racialized oppression of BWD at her intersections and in connection to the TCs' work and roles in transition education.

Simply put, these theoretical and conceptual tools acknowledge that the experience of BWD at the intersections of race, gender, and disability is complex and rife with issues of power, privilege, and difference. These tools allow us to fight and fight back. Wilson (1993) contends that Blacks need to fight against structures of power that alienate them by

> [their] discover[y] of history [which] is to discover our somethingness (beingness) before someone created us. To come to know ourselves as we were prior to our re-creation by aliens means we will be in charge of our own becoming, the creators of our own consciousness, the creation of

> ourselves as namers of the world, the namers of ourselves which gives us
> the power of self-determination and self-direction. (Wilson, 1993, p. 52).

Finally, I draw from a combination of *theoretical* tools and *conceptual tools* emerging within spaces of praxis and activism, including the social model of disability and the rallying DSE assertion “Nothing about Us without US” (Charlton, 1998) which parallels CRT assertions of the permanence of race and racism and the importance of naming ourselves through voice and/or counternarratives to speak back to the majority or master narratives about BWDs and dominant explanations for their educational attainment. Together, these tools center the impact of dis/ability and race on Black women’s bodies under attack by the hegemonic and interlocking forces of whiteness and ableism within and on educational spaces (Waitoller & Thorius, 2016). Lastly, given the historical moment we are in as a U.S. society, due to the centering of women’s experiences of discrimination and sexual assault via the #MeToo movement and originated by Tarana Burke, a Black woman, it is both timely and timeless that we must center the lives of Black women as a counternarrative to the dominant storylines about women in order to contribute to the revolutionary transformation of society for ALL.

CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Critical Race Theory Womanist/Feminist Theory and Disability Studies

I chose my theoretical framework for this study in order to make meaning of and understand how transition processes affect Black women with dis/abilities and their experiences, and how those experiences connect with possibilities around post-secondary education. The framework draws from sociocultural theories, in particular to the social construction of race, gender (sex), and disability, and the falsification of Black consciousness (e.g., intellectual inferiority) conceptualized from the frameworks of Critical Race Theory (CRT), Womanist/Black Feminist theories, and Disability Studies (DS[DSE]) in education, all with an emphasis on CRT/DS confluence theories (e.g., DisCrit) that allow me to elevate these women's perspectives of their dis/abilities above these power structures.

Each element of my conceptual framework and its underlying theoretical roots provides methodological ways of understanding and analyzing the women's educational transitional experiences utilizing concepts like *counterstories* and *narratives* (CRT) and *voice* (CRT, DS, and Womanist/Black Feminist Theory) to center the perspectives of marginalized and oppressed individuals and groups (e.g., BWD). Together, these conceptual and theoretical tools allow me to bring in Black women's intuition, personal/political experience, stance, and praxis of loving and caring about people, as I interpret the stories of the five BWD participants. These tools also provide me with a frame through which to interpret the stories of the TC participants as windows into the cultural practices of transition education and in connection to the BWD narratives.

A Roadmap to the Chapter

Accordingly, the rest of the chapter highlights the theoretical frames of CRT, Womanist/Black Feminism, and DS/DSE theories. This multi-faceted theoretical framework accounts for the social construction of Black women with dis/abilities at their identity and experiential intersections in educational contexts (Hernández-Saca et al., 2018). It also accounts for hierarchical and institutional norms present in and perpetuated by transition education services that influence the lives of people who are oppressed, and provides tools for my analysis of the subversive ways BWD resist deficit views and structures in their education. First, I give a brief summary of the history of CRT, as it applies to race, racism, and racialized attitudes in general society and then CRT in education. Second, I discuss Womanist/Black Feminism as it relates to theory to practice (e.g., identities, intersectional, and intersectionality). Third, I discuss Womanist theory, and then Black Feminist theory. Fourth, I discuss DS in the context of three models of understanding disability (e.g., medical, social, and emancipatory) to account for how disability was constructed in relation to self and others by both sets of participants and in connection with existing literacy that calls for: (1) a continual (re)assigning meaning of disability and self-advocacy practices, in connection to transition education services and coordinators working with “dis/abled” students in school, and (2) a continued discourse that convergences CRT/DS (Ferri, 2010) in order to expose and subvert racism/ableism in schools. Fifth, I merge these to argue for: (1) a continued (re)claiming of collective selves/consciousness of BW (with and without dis/abilities), and (2) learning and practice of professionals (e.g., scholars, educators, administrators, TCs) grappling with the importance of considering identity intersections to develop understandings and sensitivities that can connect with students who are oppressed at multiple intersections in educational settings. Finally, I discuss transition education as a cultural practice.

Foundations of the Notion of Race and Origins of Critical Race Theory

The notion of race as a category of difference has a social reality. It is a human-created category and “not [an] eternal, essential [category]”; yet, attitudes and beliefs surrounding race “produce real effects on the actors racialized as ‘black’ or ‘white’” (Bonilla-Silva, 2010, pp. 8-9). Accordingly, “racism is not a series of isolated acts, but is endemic in American life, deeply ingrained legally, culturally, and even psychologically” (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1997, p. 52). Racism is practiced as racial attitudes and beliefs held, acted upon, and reinforced in culture, society, and schools (Crenshaw, 2010; Wilson, 1993). Note the implications of racism:

> Because racism is an ingrained feature of our landscape, it looks ordinary and natural to persons in the culture. Formal equal opportunity--rules and laws that insist on treating blacks and [w]hites (for example) alike—can thus remedy only the more extreme and shocking forms of injustice, the ones that do stand out. It can do little about the business-as-usual forms of racism that people of color confront every day. (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000, p. xvi)

Racism takes many forms, and is often intersectional; I present the extreme and shocking injustice of Eleanor Bumpurs’ murder on October 29, 1984. Ms. Bumpurs was a Black woman with a dis/ability who was shot to death resisting officers in their attempt to evict and remove her from the apartment where she lived. Devalued at multiple intersections (a body weight of 270 pounds, Black, dis/abled) this is an example of “racism [experienced] as…an offense so painful and assaultive as to constitute…‘spirit murder’” (Williams, 1997, p. 230, as cited in Erevelles & Minear, 2010, p. 128).

Yet, despite clear enactment of racism and devaluing of human life, Williams argued that this example shows how perpetrators are able to turn the blame on the victims and accuse them of causing the injury and related spirit murder; it is because they are Black, overweight, a woman, and disabled that they must be treated in such an inhuman way. The perniciousness of victim blaming for even the most racist of acts (Feagin, 2000), has many detrimental impacts of the spirit of Blacks and other People of Color.

Accordingly, Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged as a tool for examining and countering the ways in which race and racism function to subjugate and oppress Blacks, and people of color, and particularly African American people. The field of CRT is a “collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among, race, racism, and power” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 2), including the consequences, affects, and outcomes of the social construction of race in the form of acts of hatred practiced on individuals: commonly referred to as racism. CRT has origins in Critical Legal Studies (CLS) and its goal of influencing powerful groups who could change institutions and structures in society via the law (Tate, 1997, p. 198). In Critical Legal Studies (CLS), scholars framed race and racism as *inequitable treatment* and *experiences* of marginalized groups that are racialized in broader society. CRT scholars contended that legal scholars’ failure to provide a just analysis for the racism and white supremacy practices in U.S. laws has assisted in shaping a racialized US legal system (Freeman, 1988; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Tate, 1997; Yosso, 2005).

Extending these ideas, Professor Derrick Bell asserted, “the law serves largely to legitimize the existing social structure” (1980, p. 291). Bell is considered the founder of CRT although there are countless others among the lineage of Black and Chicana feminism, literary criticism, and post-colonial theorists who centered discussions of race in relation to the field of law. Black CRT scholars have a long history of arguing for "antidiscrimination laws" (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 1989; Freeman, 1988; Harris, 1993) and contributing to a "jurisprudence that accounts for the role of racism in American law and that works toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of eliminating all forms of subjugation," (Matsuda, 1991, p. 3331). CRT scholars continue to argue that achievement of race neutral outcomes cannot occur through the laws and structures that have foundations in racism and white supremacy (Crenshaw, 2011). In other words, the permanency and normalcy of race neutral principles (e.g., equality, colorblindness, and merit) are central factors that influence inequalities that Blacks and people of color face daily (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 1995).

CRT scholars have helped to illuminate racial inequity and specifically the connections between Civil Rights and race-neutral ideas protected by laws (Hernández-Saca et. al. 2018). Over the years, some laws have sustained the status quo of white supremacy and, by default, research agendas on the social construction of race in order to explain the inferiority of Blacks: a racial hierarchy embedded in numerous intersecting structures and institutions (e.g., schools, federal legislation, attitudes, and teachers beliefs) in the US (Crenshaw, 2010; Mutegi, 2013). Consequently, dominant cultural "attitudes and beliefs patterns shaped by structural, political, and (re)presentational aspects of violence against women of color," at intersections of oppression do not happen in a vacuum, but are derived from the assurance of racialized patterns embedded in the U.S. system of historical racism and white supremacy (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1244).

Impacts of Racism on the Black-Self: Falsification of Consciousness and the Development of Counternarratives

Among many impacts of the historical and day to day experiences of racism, people of color can develop internalized beliefs about their own inferiority, as well as resist such positioning through critical consciousness and stories that reframe and reject their subjugation and assert their value.

Falsification of consciousness. African psychologist, Amos Wilson (1993) contended for the *falsification* of Black consciousness by European consciousness by arguing, "behavioral tendencies of individuals and societies are to a very significant extent the products of their personal and collective histories" (p. 1). Put another way, the structures of racism are endemic ideologies, which are still visible patterns of individual and collective consciousness in the US with real outcomes. One tangible outcome from the fragmented and repressed history of African people is the *falsification* of their consciousness as it relates to European consciousness.

Critical consciousness. To redress the falsification of consciousness experienced by Afrikan people in response to racism, Wilson suggested:

> the writing of a restorative Afrikan-centered historiography—a critical undertaking—a call for the healing of the wounds of African peoples; for Afrikan unity; for the freeing and expansion of Afrikan consciousness; for the reconquest of Afrikan minds, bodies, lands, resources, and Afrikan autonomy. (Wilson, 1993, p. 2)

In general, Wilson suggests that Blacks can develop critical consciousness in the place of the falsification of their consciousness by intentionally centering their individual and collective consciousness to self-define their identity. Wilson's ideas have utility for the restorative consciousness and self-definition of Black women and Black women with disabilities. As Audrey Lorde (1984) wrote, “For Black women as well as Black men, it is axiomatic that if we do not define ourselves for ourselves, we will be defined by others—for their use and to our detriment” (p. 45). Relatedly, “both types of experiences interacting with current perceptions are utilized by individuals and groups to achieve certain material and non-material ends” (Wilson, 1993, p. 1).

Connecting Lorde’s quote to Wilson’s falsification of consciousness and calls for a restorative consciousness of Blacks, histories of racialized outcomes and falsified consciousness require that Black women (those with and without dis/ability) (re)claim the acts of defining themselves for themselves. Returning to themselves validates the heritage of Black women’s value of knowledge, consciousness, and politics of empowerment from both an individual and a collective standpoint, which is ethically important work.

Counternarratives. Blacks’ development of stories about themselves and their experiences can counter their negative social constructions resulting from hierarchical subjugation of their identities and experiences resulting in their cultural and historical oppression. Emerging from CRT scholarship across legal and educational studies, the methodological tool of counternarratives, allows for analysis of Black and Latino/a people’s resistance to racialized stereotypes they encounter in school (Ladson-Billings, 2012). Jackson and Penrose (1994) argued that in order for one to question and subvert or resist dominant or hegemonic discourse that views race and nation as “common sense” (p. 202), one must first be aware of the socially constructed nature of these categories. CRT scholars make visible the social construction of race and continue to analyze and reject negative categories and devise counternarratives to those that adversely depict Black life (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1997).

Critical Race Theory in Education

The struggle for racial equality, fair resources, and accessible opportunities in education is a historical, current, and with fatal outcomes for Black people because of the systemic structure of racism and white supremacy in U.S. institutions and structures of injustices upheld by law. In 1988, African American education scholar Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings reminded us, “America failed to make good on its promise of racial equality” (1988, p. 1333), including in education, referring back to Bell’s critique that “[i]n this country an inherited and nonviewed merit based on whiteness remains” (Bell, 1980, p. 291). In other words, the hierarchical order in education upholds a merit-based system where whites sit at the top structure of knowledge, have access to education, and create racial subjugations. Soon thereafter, scores of CRT scholars begun to apply CRT to education in order to attend to race-neutral practices in spaces of learning by exploring and providing insights about race-based injustices in the US educational system (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solozano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005). For example, Ladson-Billings (2006) challenged colleagues to extend their education scholarship to be inclusive of thinking about and seeing the educational *gap* as an educational *debt.* Her construct of educational debt gets at the disparities (e.g., discipline, resources, teacher prep) that still exist in our educational system that blame Black and Latino/a children of color, and Indigenous students for lagging behind, instead of policy, cultural factors, and political and racialized practices (Connor, 2017) that contribute to inequitable school outcomes for these learners.

Accounting for Gender (Sex): Womanist/Black Feminism from Theory to Practice

Womanist theory. Emerging in the 1970s and 1980s, Womanists pulled from the personal to deal with the political as a way to legitimize Black women's *voice*. Womanists/Black feminists value of *voice* because it encapsulates the everyday experiences of many Black women's popular and academic life (Hill Collins, 2000; Phillips, 2006). *Voice* is a grassroots representation of the day-to-day dealings of ordinary people's daily lives, explains communitarian, and cares about the collective well-being and people's humanity. Said differently, Womanists/Black feminists value *voice* and an intuitive approach because it is more accessible and applicable to a broader continuum of Black women's interactions with other Black women in informal and formal contexts. It is important to note that the Black feminist movement emerged from the direct oppression they experienced by white, often middle class or affluent, straight, non-dis/abled feminists in the second wave of feminism.

In the 1990s, themes from Black feminist thought "emanating from the history of African American women, [Womanist/Black feminism] emerged as the intellectual and social *voice* and vision of an African American women's consciousness" in particular, and collective consciousness (Hamlet, 2006, p. 213). In accordance with the work of Alice Walker and Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi, Black women's consciousness incorporated "racial, cultural, sexual, national, economic, and political considerations" (Brown, 1989, p. 613). A Black woman's consciousness allows her to perceive her own existence and behaviors in her environment so that the collective moral consciousness from others in their surroundings may envelope her state of being and awareness. Further, Alice Walker explained:

> From womanish (Opp. Of "girlish," i.e., frivolous, irresponsible, not serious.) A black feminist or feminist of color. From the black folk expression of mothers to female children. 'You acting womanish," i.e., like a woman. Usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous or willful behavior. (Walker, 1983, xi)

Walker's definition of womanism recognizes the *legitimacy*[7] of the expression of Black women's love, support and nurture of women and men. Furthermore, Walker (1983) stated a Womanist "Loves music. Loves dance. Womanism loves the moon. Loves the Spirit…Loves herself. Regardless." (Walker, 1983, xi)

Finally, Womanist ideology speaks to the role of spirituality, its practice, and its connection to God, church, faith, community, and the self that is relevant to Black women's every day and collective lives (hooks, 2000; Philips, 2006; Townes, 1995). According to Cook (2004), spirituality is a complex phenomenon in its use and across disciplines, and is mostly situated in Twelve-Step and Christianity, which is also a concept with thirteen different conceptual components of spirituality. Williams (2008) defines spirituality as "speak[ing] of the everyday experiences of life and the way in which we relate to and interpret God at work in those experiences" (p. 97). Spirituality is a major component of Black women's lives and many struggle to balance their spiritual beliefs and practices in academia (Cozart, 2010). Relatedly, Cannon and Morton (2015) agreed and extended Cozart's God Consciousness and spoke of spirituality as God Consciousness enacted, in their everyday living, moving, and having their beings in

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[7] Legitimacy, authority – Experts. The Womanist/Black feminism recognizes the power of self-definition and to name your struggles is liberation and personal ownership of your destiny. Relatedly, CRT scholars (Ladson-Billings, 2012) would argue, the "recognition of the legitimacy and power of narrative." (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 52)

Him–the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. After considering the other ways that spirituality is defined, I perceive it as that of a “force” or “power” outside of and greater than any human’s ability can explain fully. In the Black community, spirituality has methodologically assisted many in our community as they battled or resisted margins and barriers ascribed to them in relation to people in power and (re)affirmed their identity as Black individuals. However, it is important to note that the term spirituality in Womanist Theory has been critiqued for promoting a homogeneous identity in the area of race- and gender-based oppressions (Philips, 2006). Nonetheless, *voice* and *spirituality* behaviors and courageous practices acknowledged in Womanist theory are also recognized in Black feminist theory.

Black feminist theory. Black feminist philosophy was culled from the women’s movement. Considering Black women as doubly disadvantaged, Black feminists pushed to privilege the voices and experiences of Black women from the margin to the center, which they argued was not accomplished in the waves of (white) feminism or within academic scholarship (Alcoff, 1988; hooks, 1990, 2013). Thus, Black feminists argued for making experiences visible that was diffused and hidden, speaking of a gap on larger discourse about feminism (bell hooks, 1990; Hull, Bell Scott, & Smith, 1982). Black women’s feminist contributions, along with those of other women of color in developing countries and of U.S. low-income women, brought attention to Black women’s experiences. We need to hear their *voice* (bell hooks, 2000; Hill Collins, 1996, 2000).

Black feminism is a distillation of what came before and brings together the importance of space, thoughts and articulations involved in Black women’s thought (Collins, 2000, 2003). Black feminist thought pushed forward voices historically silenced from the boundaries of valued discourse and gave them a platform and foundation for which to speak (Giddings, 1984; Hill Collins, 1989, 1996, 2000; hooks, 1990; Hull, Bell Scott, & Smith, 1982). On *voice* in relation to spirituality in Black feminist thought, Collins (1996), argued that spirituality is not merely a system of religious beliefs and not a logical system of ideas. Rather, "spirituality comprises articles of faith that provide a conceptual framework for living everyday life" (p. 11). Overall, *voice* and *spirituality* are key tools from Black feminist thought that provide a lens through which to discuss and interpret Black women's experiences, positionality, and oppression.

Womanist/Black feminism. Womanist/Black feminists have argued that "Black women are at a decision point that in many ways mirrors that faced by African American as a collectivity" (Hill Collins, 1996 as quoted in Phillips, 2006, p. 57). The history of the Womanist consciousness of Anna Julia Cooper, Mary Church Terrell, and Fannie Barrier Williams (Brown, 1989), along Black feminist consciousness have functioned outside of and within the confines of the academy to articulate Black women's positioning on the margins (Crenshaw, 1991).

More recently, Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi, contributed the article *Womanism: The Dynamics of the Contemporary Black Female Novel in English* (1985) and Clenora Hudson Weems wrote the book *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves* from a series of papers she presented in the 1980s; both are recognized for their present-day expansion of Womanist theory. Continued expansion of Womanist/Black feminist thought continues to contribute to a multi-dimensional field of theory and praxis emerging from many other Black women's work and impacting our collective consciousness (Brown, 1989; Cannon, 1988; Hill Collins, 1996; Hull, Bell Scott, & Smith, 1982; Ogunyemi, 1985; Phillips, 2009; Pratt-Clarke, 2012).

Womanist/Black feminist consciousness radically and collectively unveils common challenges met with self-definition and self-determination—intellectual and empowerment of Black women's resilient lives and their fight for gender equality and liberation for their communities (hooks, 2000; Hill Collins, 2000; Smith, 1981). In doing so, we evoke "deeply ingrained traditions of the Black community . . . [the] common sources which illustrate [common] values [and voice] that exist within the collective vision" of Black women in the United States (K. Cannon, 1998, p. 87): there is a collective wisdom, intellect, self-definition, and self-determination of Black women (Hill Collins, 1996; 2000; hooks, 2000; Phillips. 2006; Walker, 1983; Williams & Wiggins, 2010).

Drawing from the earlier discussion of counternarratives, Black women's stories— their collective voice—are inclusive of their cultural persistence as a form of *talking back* to the social constructions of race and gender they face and as a tool to navigate and resist white expectations about how they are to live, act, and talk in broader society (Hill Collins, 2000; hooks, 1989). Debates on whose perceptions have constructed the historiography of marginalized groups in general, and women collectively, in the U.S. mindset continue. Consequently, the neglect of the historical writings of marginalized groups broadly, and on Black women's identity categorically and collectively, highlight historical assaults on their spirit, soul, and minds including the legacy of slavery in the US (Hartman, 2002). Coupled with the dominance of European historiographical writings, Black women are told and shown by those in positions of dominance *whose* *narratives matters* (Morton, 1991). The (re)presentational meta-narratives about Black people in general, and BWD more specifically, must be de-centered and replaced with Blacks' narratives, and respected as the knowledge that matters most in research literature claiming Black perspective (Hall, 1997; Washington, 2006).

Furthermore, gender also is a socially constructed category, traditionally differentiated along human classifications of male or female with expected social and cultural role assignments (e.g., breadwinners, typically males, and caregivers providing 'typical female' work; Frankenberg, 1993, p. 26). At the intersection of race, Frankenberg (1993) further proposes "how constructions of womanhood (i.e., gendered) have always been racially and culturally marked and, in a racist society, even racially exclusive" (p. 9). Therefore, when discussing and defining differences in relation to BWD's race we cannot dismiss gender, and vice versa as we know that biological sexes are (re)defined, (re)presented, and valued differently in culturally dependent ways and enforced by presupposed characteristics of masculinity and femininity.

Identity intersections and intersectionality. Given the inequitable and oppressive outcomes of the social constructions of race and gender (sex), a final tool I use in this study for accessing, documenting, and improving equitable outcomes for Black women experiences is that of *intersectionality* (Crenshaw, 1991; McCall, 2005). Although the social constructions of race, gender (sex), and in this dissertation, dis/abilities, apply to Black women, I understand the scope of an intersectional framework to be broader than that of Black women's oppression. Audre Lorde asserted, "*The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house* [emphasis added]" (Lorde, 1984, p. 112). Lorde's courageous and transformative writings, both personal and political, expand on the differences in the lives of women during the feminist movement, and on the grounds of race, sex, class, and sexual orientation. In Crenshaw's (1991) mapping margins of intersecting oppressions against women of color, she both complimented and complicated Jackson and Penrose's notion of social construction:

> To say that a category such as race or gender is socially constructed is not to say that the category has no significance in our world. On the contrary, a large and continuing project for subordinated people- and indeed, one of the projects for which postmodern theories have been very helpful- is thinking about the way power has clustered around certain categories and is exercised against others. (Crenshaw, 1991, pp. 1296-1297).

Although Crenshaw acknowledged that simply considering the list of socially constructed categories by which people are marked has been helpful in thinking about the ways subordinate people experience oppression, she also recognized hegemonic views of race and gender (sex) identities that thwarted or politicize the violence committed against women of color:

> Race, gender, and other identity categories [that] are most often treated in mainstream liberal discourse as vestiges of bias or domination—that is, as intrinsically negative frameworks in which social power works to exclude or marginalize those who are different. (p. 1242)

It was this recognition that led Crenshaw to conceptualize the concept of *intersectionality* in her legal studies, denoting the "various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women's employment experiences" (1991, p. 1244). Crenshaw's groundbreaking work served to "problematize[s] and theorize[s] identity politics and the dimensions of violence readily intersecting the real, everyday lives of Black women" (p. 1243). Thus, intersectionality is a tool for discussing and examining how these three (i.e., race, gender (sex), and dis/ability) categories affect how

BWD structure their meaning-making and narrative expression of their experiences and oppressions.

Subsequently, McCall (2005) argued that intersectionality is "the most important theoretical contribution that women's studies, in conjunction with related fields, has made so far" (p. 1771). She discussed *how* to study intersectionality, which included three approaches (e.g., anticategorical complexity, intercategorical complexity, and intracategorical complexity) in conceptualizing the intricacy of intersectionality. These approaches can be used to cover the expansion of the multiplicity of "social life [and] categories of analysis" one is attempting to explore and understand (McCall, 2005, p. 1772). Furthermore, according to Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall (2013), "Intersectionality has, since the beginning, been posed more as a nodal point than as a closed system—a gathering place for open-ended investigations of the overlapping and conflicting dynamics of race, gender, class, sexuality, nation, and other inequalities" (Lykke, 2011, as cited in Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013, p. 788). Intersectionality remains necessary as long as oppression "intervention strategies (are) based solely on the experiences of women who do not share the same class or race backgrounds, [which] will be of limited help to women who because of race and class face different obstacles" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1246). Lorde (1984) provided an earlier rationale for intersectionality in her reflection:

> I find I am constantly being encouraged to pluck out some aspect of myself and present this as the meaningful whole, eclipsing or denying the other parts of self. But this is a destructive and fragmenting way to live. My fullest concentration of energy is available to me only when I integrate all the parts of who I am, openly, allowing power from particular sources of my living to flow back and forth freely through all my different selves,

> without the restrictions[8] of externally imposed definition. Only then can I bring myself and my energies as a whole to the service of those struggles which I embrace as part of my living. (Lorde, 1984, p. 121)

The pain of Lorde's experiences rests in the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality, and her articulation of pain at these intersections allows for the connection to be made between her experiences and the experiences of other intersectional oppressions experienced by women of color. She marked her place in a world that was hostile to her multiple identity markers (i.e., race, gender, sexual orientation, disability due to cancer diagnosis, and eventually terminal illness), which is often the case for many other women claiming multiple intersecting identities.

Just as it is necessary to understand the oppressions that occur at the intersections of various categories of identity, it is also necessary to attend to intersectional frameworks that "map the intersection of race and gender [as] essentially [attending to] separate categories" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1244). This is so that we may dispute a society that promotes social hierarchies that are consciously painful. To illustrate, Crenshaw (1982, 1991) contended that society allows one group (i.e., white women) more privilege, while concomitantly marginalizing another (i.e., Black women). For example, Dace (2012) states,

> If white women own the truth in every setting they can and will be 'found innocent' of improper or racist motives, judgments, intentions and actions. Necessarily, since women of Color do not own the truth, we have been 'found guilty' of being wild, untrustworthy, angry, crazy, violent,

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[8] Lorde is a Black woman, but also a Black lesbian woman in terms of experiencing intersectional oppressions. In this speech Lorde is speaking to a division in the feminist movement at that time on the grounds of race, sex, class, and sexual orientation, but not necessarily connecting multiple identities that have been oppressed as very much variables to CRT, DisCrit, and Womanism.

> disrespectful and rude in a world where truth, whiteness, and innocence walk in concert. (p. 42)

Dace helps us to think about the promotion of social hierarchies as she theorizes about whiteness of truth and the presumption of innocence and implicates, “that truth is indeed a wholly-owned subsidiary of [w]hite people” (p. 42). More particularly, the context in which she is speaking is that of white women’s “own[ing] the truth in ways that negate the realities of women and people of color in the academic setting” (p. 42). Relatedly, Fordham (1993) argued that in the context of the academy "white womanhood is defined as culturally universal...in striking contrast, black womanhood is often presented as the antithesis of white women's lives, the slur or ‘the nothingness'" (p. 4). These scholars help us to see that although there are some problems shared by women of all racial backgrounds, the temptation to conflate Black women’s experiences with that of white women dismisses the importance of understanding aspects of Black womanhood that do not share the same experiences of white womanhood (Crenshaw, 1989; Frankenberg, 1993; Hill Collins, 2000). According to hooks (1981) on the socialization of gender, there is “no other group in America has so had their identity socialized out of existence as have Black women” (p. 7). Such socializations juxtaposed with Black women’s identity are often determined by terms defined by white women, thus discriminating against Black women. Crenshaw (1989) suggests, “Black women can experience discrimination in ways that are both similar to and different from those experienced by white women and Black men” (p. 149). According to Brown (1989),

> Such arguments recognize the possibility that black women may have both women's concerns and race concerns, but they [white feminist] insist upon delimiting each. They allow, belatedly, black women to make history as women or as Negroes but not as ‘Negro women.’ What they fail to

> consider is that women's issues may be race issues, and race issues may be women's issues. (p. 611)

The social construction of Black women or women of color's celebration of femininity and their *sexual* categories is inclusive in the conceptualization of the three storylines of race, gender, and dis/ability identities (Anzaldúa, 1987; hooks, 1981). Consequently, a Black woman who consciously counters hegemonic notions of socially constructed race and gender identities is only dealing with partial aspects of her human life if dis/ability identity is also a self-marker and place of intersection. This dissertation extends to a further marginalized group by centering the voices of Black women with dis/abilities, their experiences with how educators and others treat BWD, and as these women articulate how those treatments made them feel and impacted their lives.

Intersectionality categories adding dis/ability to the intersections. Few studies have privileged the narratives of Black women with dis/abilities (for exceptions see, for example, Connor & Ferri, 2010; Petersen, 2006**,** 2009a, 2009b; Sosulski, Buchanan, & Donnell, 2010). Emery, a successful filmmaker and writer in an interview with *TIME* magazine shared how her intersecting identities—disabled, Black and a woman—is viewed broadly from a deficit lens.

> Our existence at the intersection of two marginalized identities—being both female and Black—may lead the world to view us as still less than one, our identities the sum of two societal 'negatives' in conflict with the dominant cultural norms. . . . My gender, race, and dis/ability all contribute to the ways in which I obtain and maintain power—not through my intersectional identity, but through my search to become human in ways not easily codified. . . . If you are disabled, black and female, you are triple-threatened. (Emery, 2016, para. 1, 7, & 9)

To illustrate *how* this materializes, Emery (2016) continued:

> As a woman with a disability, I'm still considered invisible. As a black woman with a disability, despite a long and successful career in the

> creative arts, I'm not even considered. Contrary to the world's perception, most folks who know me call me a force of nature. I've built a creative business identity separate from the body armor people encounter upon first meeting me, but even when I could walk, I never allowed other's perceptions to define my capabilities or sense of self . . . I view myself as a much more complicated and culturally rich human as the result of my body armor. (para. 8)

Emery's viewpoint of her body armor illustrates what Taylor (2018) identified as the power of radical self-love. As a Black woman with a dis/ability, Emery's view differs from that of the society in which she lives, respectively. Emery asserts a liberated stance that positions her to (re)claim her body armor and her humanity as radical self-love that is collective, productive, and expansive compared to what society has conceptualized as less than and unskilled.

One of many concepts in Taylor's (2018) book is the idea of a "default body" measured by and aligned with the idea of "normal" is usurped by her concept of the radical self-love and unapologetic body (p. 22). Taylor's book challenges us all to rethink how we see our bodies. She argues, "proposing that humans are all the same leaves the idea that the default body un-interrogated in our subconscious and firmly in place in our world, forcing other bodies to conform or be rendered invisible" (Taylor, 2018, p. 32). Taylor's argument challenges us to think about a radical love that goes against structures and institutions that have profited from sorting individuals by differences. She further challenges us to rethink about what freedom means, expression means, and love for oneself means and not from a self-condemning way, but using the questions to set a different context than the one has been raised and socialized within broader society, and I add, within disability models.

Disability Studies (DS) and the Social Construction of Disability Models

As another crucial theoretical field from which I draw in addressing my dissertation inquiries, Disability Studies (DS) in education (e.g., Disability Studies in Education [DSE]) delineates between dis/ability and applied approaches, such as special education, through an interdisciplinary approach to research and scholarship. The Society for Disability Studies defines DS as:

> recognize[ing] that disability is a key aspect of human experience, and…has important political, social, and economic implications for society as a whole, including both disabled and non-disabled people, through research, artistic production, teaching, and activism, disability studies seeks to augment understanding of disability in all cultures and historical periods, to promote greater awareness of the experience of disabled people, and to advocate for social change. (Society for Disability Studies, n.d., as cited in Ferguson & Nusbaum, 2012, p. 71)

The overall concern of DS is the fight against multiple forms of disability-related oppression, parallel to the central focus of CRT: the fight was racial equity. The National Black Disability Coalition (NBDC), led by Jane Durhamn, Leroy Moore, and others who work to address Black disability issues, emphasize that some of the concepts inherent in both DS and CRT theories are included in the Coalition's stance (Durhamn, et al., 2015). Just as, historically, CRT's approach was useful for exploring race and white supremacy issues, DS scholars' approach to addressing dis/abilities in the context of the social, political, and cultural phenomenon and social construction of disability issues is also a useful and similarly critical method (Linton, 1998).

Furthermore, DS scholars work to deconstruct the medicalization stigmas of dis/ability by critiquing the pathology of people with dis/abilities and reassigning meaning of dis/ability through the stories and lived experiences of people with dis/ability

(Linton, 1998, p. 146). Linton stated, “DS’s social justice approach fights against a divided society of oppression, discrimination, and marginalization” (p. 139). For example, Davis (2013) and other scholars’ research challenged the normalizing practices of society that exclude people with disabilities (i.e., physical and mental) and use deficit language and labels as subjective determinations about the intelligence of people of color (i.e., Blacks and Latino/a; Dudling-Marling & Gurin, 2010). Other DS scholars’ work pertain to social and political tensions associated with the exclusion of individuals (i.e., racial and cultural segregation and labels of inferiority; Artiles, 2003; Artiles et al., 2011; Harry & Klinger, 2006).

The social construction of disability models. Throughout history, those with power, who work in institutions of power, and make decisions about others because of their differences have mistreated disabled individuals and groups. Consequently, “the birth of institutional power” and “because of institutional practices that shaped early disability organizations, the ‘isms’ in our society seeped into these disability institutions which created roadblocks for ‘others’ to enjoy the benefits that came out of these organizations” (Moore, 2015, para, 15). For example, historically people with disabilities have fought to survive sterilization and institutionalization in state-run “asylums” and like African Americans; they were often considered less than human (Davis, 2013; Gill & Erevelles, 2017; Washington, 2006). Bell (2011) argued that there is no such thing as “medicalization of identity or impairment,” but there are real and pathologized social constructed categories of dis/abilities, which I briefly outline next.

Medical. The medical model of disability posits that particular kinds of individual differences (e.g., physical, cognitive, behavioral, and emotional, etc.) are diseased or disordered, and as such, should be diagnosed, cured, or medically treated. The primary focus of the medical model of disability is rehabilitation of the disability and therapies to fix the problem; special education is widely considered to be a strong example of the medical model (Thorius, 2016). The model compares physical, psychological, and emotional differences of an individual to a set of norms in these domains, informed by the claims and behaviors of a particular group of people (e.g., white men) against which all others are measured (Gill & Erevelles, 2017; Washington, 2006). The result is that the individual with different manifestations of behaviors or characteristics from these norms is perceived as abnormal, and thus disabled (Murphy, Hunt, Zajicek, Norris, & Hamilton, 2009).

Social. The social model posits that particular individual differences become dis/abilities and disabling consequences of social exclusion stem from the way that society views these differences (Stevenson, 2010). Additionally, the sociopolitical perspective of dis/abilities not only involves how society views particular individuals but also how societal structures make particular types of differences more or less dis/abling. The primary role of the social model is to generate attention to and removal of barriers (e.g., social, academic, or environmental) that hinders individuals from full participation in their own lives. Dis/ability is thus seen as the consequence of a dis/abling environment (Davis, 2013; Finkelstein, 1998).

Emancipatory. Unlike the models above, the emancipatory model of disability accepts differently abled bodies and claims disability as an identity (e.g., Deaf Identity). Precisely, the emancipatory model defines disability as “a marker of the identity that the individual and group wish to highlight and call attention to” (Linton, 1998, p. 13). In the past, the emancipatory model, once referred to as the minority-group model, “g[a]ve people with dis/abilities and those able-bodied individuals and institutions committed to social equality—those others who care—a framework in which to envision change and feasible ideas for bringing it about” (Linton, 1998, p. 66). A couple of years later Goodley and Moore (2000), raised issues about the need for education research to value difference in emancipatory ways that could advance individuals labelled with deficit categories (e.g., learning disabilities). Today, the emancipatory model of disability promotes inclusive knowledge of about disabilities and disability, and in relationship with psychology and creative ways that promote the emancipatory rather than the deficit models of disability (Goodley & Lawthom, 2005; Nielson, 2012). I draw from all of these models to interpret the stories of both sets of participants, and the emancipatory model to help me connect what the BWD participants shared to the possibilities for transitions to college and beyond.

Bringing it All Together: Adding Disability to Exploration of Race/Sex

Intersectionality in schools. Just as CRT emerged in the US to address differences on the basis of race inequalities across disciplines, so too did DS surface from the protests and growing self-advocacy of ordinary people treated differently because of their disabilities in the 1970s (Fine & Asch, 1988; McDermott & Varenne, 1995). Yet, years later in schools throughout the US,

> despite the critical special education and DSE community’s efforts towards understanding how disability is inextricably linked with ideologies of race, gender, sexual orientation, and other markers of difference, most theories of inequity within the educational landscape have ignored disability in its analysis. (Artiles, 2013; Ferri, 2010; as cited in Hernández-Saca, Kahn, & Cannon, 2018)

Disability studies reflected the efforts of scholars with dis/abilities (and nondisabled colleagues) to conceptualize and interpret the common complaints about the different treatment of people (i.e., Blacks, other groups, and those with dis/abilities) and their families (Lynn & Dixson, 2013; Shapiro, 1993). Artiles (1998) addressed the combination of forces in the dilemma of differences by taking a critical perspective on enriching discourse through theory and context, inquiring about philosophical and ethical perspectives that brings context to research, and acknowledging issues related to ethnicity, race, and language backgrounds in our society. He argued for including the perspectives of investigators and people of color within research in order to contextualize and appropriately respond to differences in schools. Up until recently, was "the sporadic and often unconnected work of isolated researchers and theorists" (Ferguson, & Nusbaum, 2012, p. 71). The Director of the National Black Disability Coalition (NBDC), reflecting on the development of Black disability studies, emphasized "authenticity and commitment" in the work of helping "one another learn what we need to know to assist students in their discovery" (Durhamn, 2015, Para 6).

The structures of inequitable schools, the lack of resources, and other challenges in institutions of learning, special education, and classroom practices are also normalizing practices, as they are racist (Patton, 1998; Thorius & Stephenson, 2012; Thorius & Waitoller, 2016, 2017).

However, as it is with the movement for disability rights, disability culture continues to have trouble reaching people who have little access to resources or higher education. In secondary education settings, disability is treated via practices that disconnects and marginalize disabled students and their parents. It is mostly segregation, seclusion and restraints that separate disabled students from other students. (Moore, 2015, para, 16). This is problematic for Blacks, Latinos/as, and other subgroups, when structures in our schools and our teaching exclude, racially segregate, and lack resources for students to succeed. It is germane that discussions of such interchanging of ideas from critical DS scholars involve educators and policy makers who are behind the operations of learning structures such as schools and colleges (Durhamn, et. al., 2015; Waitoller & Thorius, 2016). More and more scholars starting out in the traditional field of special education have developed critical work addressing the pathology of students of color with dis/abilities and those receiving special education services (e.g., Artiles et al., 2011; Artiles et al., 2010, Danforth & Taff, 2004). A growing group of critical special education, DSE and CRT scholars are taking to task special education for pathologizing youth of color and those with dis/abilities (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2013; Artiles, 2015; Blanchett, 2006, 2010; Connor 2013; Ferri, 2000; Patton, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Tate, 1994; Thorius, 2009; Waitoller & Thorius, 2016). Some of these scholars operate at the borders of DS and CRT communities to contribute to the disruption and deconstruction of oppressions in schools for students of color with dis/abilities (Valencia, 2010) including the support of their access to college and equitable post-secondary outcomes (Castellanos et al., 2017; Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2012; King, 2009). With all of the aforementioned theoretical tools in mind, let us turn to see how adding disability to our analysis of intersectional oppression plays out as we focus on education.

CRT & DS and racism/ableism. The interlocking oppression of racism and ableism throughout our society and schools affects the educational movement and experiences of Black, Latino/a, and other subgroups of students by contributing dis/ability to them and pathologize their bodies (Annamma et al, 2013). While intersectionality of oppression at multiple identities perpetuates discriminatory practices, even those of disability, ableism oppression is specific to the functionality and pathologization of the physical body of Black and Latino/a people and adds to existing theorization of their differences (Annamma & Morrison, 2018; Baglieri et al., 2011; Erevelles, 2000; Smith, 2008). For example, practices in schools related to whose discourse style counts as "proper grammar," codified through teachers' grading of written work, have consequences for students' access and sense of entitlement to resources and benefits and contribute to a more systematic recognition of certain forms of cultural capital over others. But these practices also have implications for who is considered disabled in schools (Dunhamn et. al., 2015; Waitoller & Thorius, 2016, p. 372).

Waitoller & Thorius (2016) extended existing work by Paris & Alim (2012) on Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP) and by Rose & Meyer (2002) on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) via their cross-pollination of "loving critiques" and extensions of these two asset pedagogies. The purpose of UDL is to provide "students and teachers multiple pathways and various and flexible means to engage in a meaningful interrogation of ableism and racism" (2016, p. 374). Such work is necessary to interrogate the troubling nexus that emerges from individuals of color traversing educational spaces and at the intersections of differences in their pursuit of knowledge. Relatedly, another prospect of asset pedagogy is that of Black disability studies (e.g., NBDC) discussed in collected writings that focuses on the US and throughout the African diaspora (Durhamn et. al., 2015). Their mission statement contends, 'to create a space for inquiry within universities that brings together faculty and students […] to consider Black disability issues within broad-based social, cultural and historical contexts" (Durhamn, et. al., 2015, para, 1). Inclusive in the development of Black DS is a charge to incorporate Black/Africana Studies by competent scholars with knowledge of disability studies (para, 6). The relevancy of NBDC prospect of a Black DS is applicable to the need to develop a pedagogy incorporated into Black/Africana so to address and discuss race and ableism dialogues and anti-racist training from the positionality of those who are directly impacted. Additionally, this work continues the decentering of Eurocentric ideologies of racism and white supremacy through the falsification of the Black consciousness (Wilson, 1993, 1998). In consequence, the next couple of paragraphs is the result of several theorizing sessions with one of my committee members about racism and ableism effects on Black and Latino/a students.

Ferri (2010) called for a difficult but necessary dialogue between CRT and DS scholars. Ferri argued that without this dialogue, neither CRT scholars' ignorance of dis/ability issues in CRT nor DS scholars' ignorance of race issues in DS diminish. According to Ferri, one example of an overlapping problem in both CRT and DS scholarship is the overrepresentation of Black students in special education. To illustrate, CRT scholars argues that Black children experience excessive discipline and suspension practices in schools, which removes them from classroom instruction (Ladson-Billings, YEAR). Similarly, DS scholars argue that an erroneously ascribed dis/ability label placed upon Black and Latino students' results in their disproportionate placement in special education classrooms (Artiles, 1998; Patton, 1998).

Accordingly, not only are CRT and DS theories appropriate to privilege the BWD narratives in this study but so is Womanist/Black feminism, which affirms the cultural beliefs and voices of the marginalized women in this dissertation, whose life experiences and transitional educations been ignored and or silenced at the intersections of their race, gender, and dis/ability markers and “disrupts traditions of ignoring the voices of traditionally marginalized groups and instead privileges insider voices” (Annamma et al., 2016, p. 21). Thus, the focus of this dissertation is in the spirit of privileging BWD experiences as they transition from high school to college. Subsequently, BWD does not go through their education in a vacuum but should have an IEP in their secondary education that includes appropriate, measurable postsecondary goals, which should also be updated annually. This work is often conducted by transition coordinators who work with students to enable them to make smooth transitions from high school to postsecondary. For this reason, the two TCs narratives are relevant and vital to this study. Similar to Thorius’ (2016) work and how her conceptual framework provided her with a lens to analyze “professional identities and work in relations to the people with dis/abilities” (p. 1332), I utilized DS and DisCrit in relations to the two white non-disabled transition coordinators to discuss how they described their roles and featured themselves and their transition practices.

Transition education as a cultural practice. The “examination of race, sex, class, national origin, and sexual orientation, and how their combination plays out in various settings…operate[s] at an intersection of recognized sites of oppression” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 57). One such site is our public schools. To illustrate, “students identified as disabled have historically experienced marginalization within the public education system" (Sullivan & Thorius, 2010, p. 95). Accordingly, my understanding and operationalizing of Crenshaw's (1991) intersectional framework includes attention to dis/ability in addition to race and sex.

With the understanding that special education, encompassing of transition services, operate from the medical model of disability, I not only draw from DS/DSE scholars but also from Trainor's (2017) work to consider how transition has been defined and practiced and to analyze intersections of oppressions BWD experience in transition education, and in relation to the activities described by the TC participants. I especially chose Trainor's work as she has worked in the field of transition for several years and is one of the few transition scholars who has conducted transition work inclusive of racial and linguistic differences (Trainor, 2005; Trainor et al., 2008). Trainor argues that more studies in the field of transition education should be inclusive of cultural practices that affect outcomes of marginalized groups.

More specifically, I draw from Trainor's (2017) chapter on *transition education as a cultural practice* in her recent book entitled *Transition by Design*. In particular, her input/outcomes approach to transition work is a useful tool for considering the functions and practices of transition to center Black women with dis/abilities in transition planning. Trainor envisions models of transitions as a set of inputs and post-high school outcomes contextualized of cultural practices (Trainor, 2017) that welcomes marginalized groups' views (e.g., BWD) and accordingly, centers them in their own transition planning.

This framework allows me to center BWD voices in this dissertation, and I acknowledge that this type of work may create some *dis-ease* for people working in the transition-planning field. This dis-ease is warranted. Often enough Blacks and other people of color are discussed and defined in sync with the “*ability line* [emphasis added], which is a dehumanizing process” (Annamma et al., 2016, p. 66). These authors argued that “through *common sense* [emphasis added] ideological systems in which normative ideas (i.e., smartness and goodness) are deployed, race, class, and gender are always central to these cultural processes and mechanisms of dis/ablement (p. 66-67). Therefore, I find it necessary as an insider/outsider (to which I will explain in more detail in the method section), to mention that intentionality in conversation or text does not limit the meanings interrupted (Aronson, 2017).

Chapter Two Summary

In this chapter, I presented a conceptual and theoretical framework that accounts for the separate and interlocking social construction of race, gender (sex), and dis/abilities and laid out three ways that dis/ability is constructed through the medical, social, and emancipatory models. Specifically, CRT, DS, Womanist/Black feminism, and the work of Trainor (2017) provide a standpoint to discuss and understand the inputs of the implementation of transitions from high to college and the consequences, affects, and outcomes of the education and transition experiences of BWD, respectively, from their perspectives. DS associates narratives—counternarratives—as tools for resistance, self-representation, and empowerment for individuals with dis/abilities (Connor, 2009). With regard to gender and disability, CRT’s intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1999; McCall, 2005; Pratt-Clarke, 2010), Womanist/Black feminism (Collins, 2000), disability studies (Charlton, 2005) and, more recently, disability critical race theory (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2013) have all emphasized connections between gender-, race-, and disability-based oppressions. Together, these theoretical and methodological tools mediate my exploration of the stories of Black women with dis/abilities within the context of the literature, as well as the stories of the transition coordinators: the way they described themselves, and their roles in transition education and in connection to BWD with disabilities transition education.

Chapter Three Preview

In the following chapter, I present a literature review of five research studies that underscore the perspectives of Black women with dis/abilities by focusing on their lived and transition education experiences with a particular emphasis on race, gender, and dis/ability. I characterized thematic elements in three ways, and in doing so, I summarize how participants shared their stories, drawing from the thematic elements, which I looked for with the Black dis/abled women participants in this dissertation. Next, I discuss transition-related processes and postsecondary services through Trainor's (2007) work with girls with disabilities, and her (2017) Transition by Design work. Then, I describe Callicott's (2003) person-centered planning's essential, processes, components, and outcomes and the significance of PATH activities that illuminate true representation given the inequalities students with dis/abilities experience that influences change and future goals. Finally, I state the literature review findings and show how they connect with my inquiry areas.

CHAPTER THREE: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literature with Black Women with Dis/abilities

There is a dearth of educational research studies with Black women with dis/abilities (BWD), especially those that privilege their perspective and *longanimity* as a distinct and vital group within U.S. society and educational contexts (Crenshaw, 1991; Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Tate, 1994). In this chapter, I discuss the views of Black women with dis/abilities as presented in five different education research studies that focus on their stories of educational experiences with an emphasis on those at the intersections of race, gender, and dis/ability (Connor & Ferri, 2010; Petersen, 2006, 2009a, 2009b; Sosulski, et al., 2010). I provide a window into the perspectives and consciousness of the study's BWD about who they are, how they viewed themselves, and how others (e.g., teachers, family, and peers) viewed them in the context of their interactions and education. In addition, I discuss transition planning for students with disabilities as a critical part of their secondary transitioning to postsecondary education and in the context of narratives by the other two participants in the study, the white, non-disabled transition coordinators describing their roles and work (i.e., as they relate to BWD educational transitions; also see more explicit descriptions in chapters four, five, and six).

In this chapter, I also present research conducted with transition practitioners who facilitate events for students with dis/abilities, with a focus on the work of Callicott (2003). Accordingly, I consider whether and how students with intersectional non-dominant race, gender, and dis/ability identities are considered or not in scholarships and practices of person-centered planning, and more precisely, the PATH approach to transition education planning. I further discuss transition education and planning, in relation to Trainor's research (2002, 2007, 2010, 2017), one of the few transition scholars who conduct transition work focusing on postsecondary education and intersecting of cultural differences.

Four of the five studies about Black women with dis/abilities had a person-centered *and* an intersectional focus on each woman's lived experiences (Ferri & Connor, 2010; Petersen, 2009a, 2009b, 2006). Covering intersectional literature is significant for critical awareness and a greater understanding of the complexity of separate intersecting identities and their effects on the lives of the women (Crenshaw, 1991; McCall, 2004). The African American Policy Forum draws attention to:

> An intersectional approach [that] goes beyond conventional analysis in order to focus our attention on injuries that we otherwise might not recognize…to 1) analyze social problems more fully; 2) shape more effective interventions; and 3) promote more inclusive coalitional advocacy. (2012, p. 3)

This statement is particularly important given that women's intersections operationalized in society, treatment or behavioral programs, and educational contexts do not often mirror who they really are holistically or how they view their well-being (Holcomb-McCoy & Moore-Thomas, 2001; Nabor & Pettee, 2003).

The rest of the literature review chapter is outlined as follows, First, I provide an overview of the studies I reviewed, and the findings of the BWDs in the five education research articles. Next, I discuss transition literature by Trainor, in doing so, I unpack an exemplary model called Person Centered Planning (PCP), as related to a set of educational inputs and post school outcomes and in PATH activities (Callicot, 2003; O'Brien, Pearpoint, & Kahn, 2010; Trainor, 2007).

Studies of Black Women with Dis/abilities

First, I examined how the participants in five studies (Connor & Ferri, 2010; Petersen, 2006, 2009a, 2009b; Sosulski, et al., 2010) framed their educational experiences and multiple oppressions as Black women at the intersection of race, gender, and dis/ability. In limited cases, the women framed their experiences in connection to race-based oppressions; however, for the most part, women identified how power structures contributed to their educational experiences and related their oppressions to two or more identity markers. Based on all five studies, I characterized these oppressions in three ways: those related to *limited educational opportunities*, *normative educational experiences*, and to *lowered educational expectations* placed upon them by others because they were *Black women with dis/abilities*.

BWD limited educational opportunities. Connor and Ferri's (2010) study focused on the perspectives of young urban working class females with disabilities on life in and out of school and how they understood and countered intersections of positioning and resisted constraints as a student with a special education label. Their work was informed by Black feminist studies, disability studies, and class studies in a study with five young women of color. They also focused on privileging the voices, understanding, and the negotiating of multiple oppressions and restraints of the participants. Two participants were African American females, ages 18 and 20 who had received special education services in K-12 schools. There were several findings similar to the other discussions of BWD lived and educational experiences. First, "being female shapes the experiences and understandings of young women of color labeled disabled in schools" (p. 105). Second, "Participants shared various strategies for countering what they perceived as intrusions into their privacy" (p. 108). Third, there were feelings of alienation, dissing of others with special education labels, and gendered stigmas.

One female participant, Precious, a Black, 20-year-old female who was labeled with a Learning Dis/ability (LD) in elementary school, expressed her perspective on race and ability in the following way:

> Being Black and Latino is hard these days because we do not get taught like how White people get taught. I notice that they live in a better world than we Latinos and Blacks do. It is more job opportunities for them and better education . . . I notice that Black people—it's really hard for them in learning and everything—and White people they . . . it's that they know everything, it seems like, They're smarter in everything . . . [but] nobody's born that way . . . Most White people, they're in private school, they learn more stuff, they get taught differently because they have better books, it seems like. They get better education (Connor & Ferri, 2010, p. 114-115)

Precious's internal struggle with her racial identity compared to those of her white peers resulted in her questioning Blacks' and Latinos' *capacity for smartness*. Parts of Precious' narrative communicate intersections between whiteness as property and dis/ability, the notion of smartness and goodness as school *property*, and street smartness versus book smartness in the lives of marginalized, urban youth (Broderick & Leonardo, 2016; Hatt, 2016; Leonardo & Broderick, 2011). Additionally, Precious' statement that "nobody's born that way" further communicates a *master narrative* about the racial hegemony of smartness. Her statement resonates with Hernández-Saca's (2016) examination of master narratives and hegemony practices through an emotional lens, as communicated through the voices and experiences of Latina/o students with learning dis/abilities.

Another study, Petersen (2006) examined the unique and nuance experiences of an African-American woman, Krissy a 21-year-old Black woman who was labeled as having a learning disability, at intersections of her identity and school experiences. She addressed her experiences in schools and how those experiences were theorized to offer new understandings of and ways of empowering individuals with labeled identities. She found that Krissy did not accept the label of learning disabled, felt isolated and experienced anxiety, which made her angry and resisted the message of inferior because she was in a resource room. I illustrate Krissy's perspective of her racialized, gendered, and disabled experiences as limited educational opportunities at the intersection of her race, gender, and dis/ability. At the time of her interview—when she was labeled with a learning dis/ability—she identified herself as a "transplant" (Petersen, 2006, p. 724). She used this medical term to express how she felt when her parents removed her from a neighboring school to plant her in a white middle-class university lab high school in hopes that the transplant (i.e., move) would *fix* her intellectual struggles.

Relatedly, in another study by Petersen (2009a), she explored the lived and educational experiences of four African American females at the intersections of oppression, and found that these four women' responses to dominant ideology was to develop a critical consciousness and either rejected or resisted deficit messages. One participant, Tasha, grew up in a neighborhood segregated by race, was labeled with a learning disability (LD) in elementary school, and had attended a community college at the time of Petersen's study. Limited educational opportunities were central to Tasha's narrative of disability. She shared, "If it weren't for my LD, I wouldn't have to be in this class. I could be with my friends doing what they do" (Petersen, p. 434). Tasha's narrative speaks to how the manifestation of behaviors that deviate from the "norm" are perceived as disabled, and how Tasha addressed the dissonance she felt from her friends because of a perceived deficit— an LD that put her outside of acceptable normal interactions and experiences (e.g., with her friends).

BWD normative educational experiences. In Connor & Ferri's (2010) analyses of female participants' narratives, Chanell, an African-American, 19-year-old young woman who was diagnosed with an LD on the basis of high-stakes testing, talked about her education as a normative experience. Chanell's stories of oppressions divided her and grouped her within particular norms in schools as barriers to access, materials, and resources that are often maintained by white non-disabled individuals and withheld from her because of her isolated identity markers (i.e., race, gender, dis/ability) of differences. Such were "natural, acceptable, and ordinary" thus, further normalizing privilege and power in education classrooms" (Baglieri & Knopf, 2004, p.527). According to Chanell, "People have told me in the past, you know you are slower, and the other kids are normal" (Connor, 2009, p. 455). She continued, "I guess they want you to think like them. It's like they want you to be like everybody else, that's what they give you those tests for" (p. 116).

Shana, another participant in Petersen's (2009a) study, who was born with Cerebral Palsy, labeled with multiple, severe dis/abilities as a toddler, and later diagnosed as learning disabled and as having a visual impairment, also centered in her narrative the normative experience of her education (Foucault, 1977, 1980). Normative processes typify attempts at regulating human beings and populations according to practices that divide and group them under particular norms, including the identities they assume or accept (Petersen, 2009b). Shana attended and completed a segregated special education residential school, and her narrative reflected several examples of the normative function of schooling in connection with her race, gender, and dis/ability (Petersen, 2009a). For example, the white staff made her wash her hair every night in accordance with white, normative hair care practices, imposed on her as the only Black girl in her segregated special education school, despite the damaging effects of this practice on Black hair. Furthermore, Shana’s narrative revealed that the primary goal of physical therapy (a special education-related service) as determined by her physical therapist was for her to walk, despite her comfort and efficiency with crawling and the sensitive nature of the exercises aimed toward this goal. In this instance, non-disabled mobility norms centered on walking dominated Shana’s experiences with educational physical therapy.

Another normative educational experience highlighting the intersection of race, gender, and dis/ability is revealed when analyzing the narrative of another Black woman participant in Sosulski et al.’s (2010) study. The authors’ narrative analysis via feminist methodologies contextualized a Black woman’s experiences with mental health by centering her life history. Maria, a 36-year-old Black woman diagnosed with multiple psychiatric dis/abilities, believed her dis/ability was hereditary, derived from her family’s mental illness history and hidden from her at a young age. Consequently, no matter how much she looked for “women who look like her” and who may be living lives differently than what she had been living, she could not find them (Sosulski et al., 2010, p. 42). Maria’s context prevented her from being able to find a community of Black women with mental illnesses with which she could identify.

Familial and communal connections matter, particularly as noted by those who identify with historically marginalized groups. In a Canadian context, Menzies, LeFrancois, and Reaume attested to community connections mattering as they critiqued the field of psychiatry in Canada and elsewhere stating, “mad matters and so does the study of madness and psychiatrization, and so too does Mad Studies, an area of study that argues for an alternative community” (Starkman, 1981, as cited in Menzies et al, 2013, p. 1). Further, in such communities of *mad* people, liberation and spaces of resistance function to contest deficit views of disabilities/mental health disorders (Erevelles, 2015).

We see the implications of this mad studies scholarship in Maria’s narrative. Although Maria’s history of her mental health experiences supposedly has roots in her family’s normative genetic nature and restricted portions of her consciousness, she still was able to realize that she could have learned more about herself and (re)claimed her experiences with a mental health diagnosis if it was not a secret. Hiding disability in Black communities “was mainstreamed,” according to Moore (2015). Maria authenticates her experience as she imagines being a participant in a study similar to Sosulski et al.’s (2010) when she was younger, so that she could have accumulated a compilation of stories about her mental health experiences and that her stories could have been included within the pages of an article or a book. She said,

> I could have got into that. Nobody ever told me that I could do certain things. So, I’m 34 years old, and I wish I could go back, knowing now what I know because I would’ve been successful. Especially like that . . . books and stuff. (Sosulski et al., 2010, p. 43)

As Maria conceptualized her own experiences with mental health, she talked about how her mental health has affected her four children, all of whom had been diagnosed with an Emotional Disturbance. Maria’s daughter was struggling to understand her own psychotic episodes stimulated by stress, and Maria’s reply to her daughter signaled her perception of her illness: “we’re just different, that’s all . . . I tell her our brain just doesn’t work like other people’s [brains], because that’s just the truth of it all” (Sosulski et al., 2010, p. 47). Ostensibly, Maria normalized and affirmed her family's genetic disposition for mental illness. In addition to these normative educational experiences discussed by the BWD in the five studies, there were also lowered educational expectations at the intersections of BWD education.

BWD lowered educational expectations. Lowered educational expectations at the intersections of race and ability were revealed by several participants across four of the studies (Connor, 2009; Petersen, 2006, 2009a, 2009b). For example, Channell, who was diagnosed with a Learning Dis/ability (LD), revealed how race mediated others' expectations of her and others like her:

> Being a Black person in this world means, you have to work harder to get what you want. Also, being a Black woman, people expect to see less in you, so your expectations are supposed to be high in wanting to achieve in life. I think all Black people supposed to want to set their expectations high because according to our history . . . In art class, my teacher . . . there were White kids, and everything, and he's White himself, and he's spent more time with them than? The Latino or Black kids. That's really unfair. I saw it and I felt it and it felt really bad. You're nothing . . . You'll not amount to anything. (Connor, 2009, p. 455)

Channell experienced a double standard as a Black woman with a dis/ability, as reflected in her sharing about her educational content and her experiences in the classroom where racial inequities existed. Krissy in Petersen's (2006) study also continued to counter lowered expectations, as expressed by a school-based physical therapist.

Shana's narrative is included in two studies by Petersen (2006, 2009b). Shana explicitly accounted for her dis/ability status. Born with cerebral palsy and a visual impairment, Shana attended and completed a segregated special education residential school, and shared stories of her educational experiences that emphasized learning discrete simple skills related to daily living, self-care, and future employment. Despite her desire to engage in more complex learning activities, and her intellectual capacity to do so, this form of instruction was characteristic to that which she experienced her entire educational career. Shana also shared her displeasure with being rebuffed by her physical therapist whenever she suggested incorporating her favorite activity of swimming into the sessions (Petersen, 2009b). The physical therapist suggested that she might serve as the team manager. She also described cooking activities in which she was limited to prepared food like boxed macaroni and cheese and completed “boring” menu worksheets, despite a love and talent for cooking more complex dishes at home without even needing a recipe. Shana further protested, “We always had to cook whatever they [the teachers] chose. We never could choose our own food, and we couldn't experiment like I like to” (para. 4).

Similarly, another Black woman in Petersen’s 2009 study, Courtney, had a diagnosis of pseudo tumor cerebra and intracranial hypertension. At the time of the study she was close to graduating with her master’s in communication and, I would argue, had also experienced lower expectations at the intersection of race and ability. To illustrate, according to Courtney, her guidance counselor tried to steer her away from college because of his implicit and explicit biases towards her and her educational ability. She stated, “He wouldn’t let me go on any college visits because he didn’t think college was for me. He looked at me and saw just another young, single, poor, black woman. A woman going blind at that!” (Petersen, 2009a, p. 433). Collectively, Channell’s, Shana’s, and Courtney’s stories illustrate intersecting racial and ability identity and poverty and lack of intellect are co-equal oppressions, operationalized by teachers’ and therapists’ lowered expectations of them educationally and otherwise (Thompson, Worthington, & Atkinson, 1994).

Maria, unlike Channell, Shana and Courtney, who had experiences with others having lowered academic expectations of them, experienced lowered expectation for her ability to live life “in healthy ways” as presented by others in her community—at work, at school, at church, and her family (Sosulski et al., 2010, p. 42). Maria’s desires were frustrated, as she sought an understanding of herself, her genetics in connection to her grandma and mental diagnoses, her behaviorisms and experiences, including spiritual ones, and the reasons for not finding other Black women who had shared similar mental health diagnoses or lived experiences, all factors that lowered her chances and or ability to pursue a healthy life as a woman with a mental health dis/ability.

From a different perspective, Courtney discussed her K-12 experience and how she “refused to internalize the message” (Petersen, 2009a, p. 437). Her narrative included her post-secondary education as well and she shared how her ideas were being discounted by her peers, while at the same time, a professor that she called “mean . . . believed in [her], and [she] could not let her down” (p. 437). Social structures in society can be more disabling for individuals with dis/abilities then their disability diagnoses are, and these structures influence their interactions with others.

Literature review discussion. The participants’ understanding and negotiation of their labels in Ferri and Connor’s (2010) findings is similar to those in Petersen’s (2009a; 2009b; 2006) participants’ perspectives. The narratives of the Black women participants in Ferri and Connor’s (2010) study (Channell and Precious), in Petersen’s (2009a) study (Courtney, Kiesha, Tasha, and Shana), and Petersen’s (2006) study (Krissy) rejected the definitiveness of their intersecting categories (i.e., woman, and with a dis/ability). Their rejection of others’ perceptions about their separate identities further serves as clear evidence about how the power of oppression from teachers, therapists, schools, and institutions contribute to the educational experiences of these seven women.

All five studies included in the literature review are conducted from a person-centered stance (Ferri & Connor, 2010; Petersen, 2006, 2009a, 2009b; Soluski et. al. 2010). One study did not investigate the experiences of a BWD from an intersectional lens (Soluski et al., 2010); instead, in this case the authors used a life-history methodology to investigate and chronicle the participant's (Maria) comorbidity—bipolar and depression. Within all five studies, each woman framed her life as an asset not as normative, limited, and lower than what is expected of respecting the human dignity of all people, which highlights how each woman conceptualized her unique experience as a Black woman with dis/abilities. Movement from deficit-minded findings to living life from an emancipatory perspective requires re-envisioning dis/ability as an asset. In other words, *pausing* the taking in of pathological ideologies that permeate our broader society about Black women, requires responding to the varied needs and preferences of BWD and *replacing* them with a sense of agency to conceptualize who they are above the imposed identity marker they are assigned.

Although the women in the five studies were oppressed by individuals in positions of power, through their voices these women embodied whole persons as they sought well-being (i.e., body, soul, and spirit), concomitantly, rejecting the sociohistorical oppressions they experienced in the context of unhealthy interactions with peers, family, teachers, and educators. Thus, although in the current study the two TCs did not describe PCP as a part of their role, it is imperative that this study explores ways that BWD transition and education could envelop an emancipatory approach to Person-centered Planning (PCP) that incorporates students reaching their future goals with hope. Therefore, I turn to transition education as a crucial element that should be implemented in the educational experience of Black women with dis/abilities transitional experiences at their intersections of race, gender and dis/ability.

In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss transition education and outcomes for youths with disabilities post high school through the lens of Trainor's (2017) book, *Transition By Design*, with her emphasis on sociocultural approaches to transition and research—transition education as a cultural practice—expanded models, of educational inputs and postschool outcomes (Trainor, 2017). I also explore both Trainor's (2007) and Callicott's (2003) work with person-centered planning and activities (i.e., PATH) utilized in the context of culturally distinct communities. In doing so, I consider whether and how students with intersectional non-dominant race, gender, and dis/ability statuses have been considered and described in person-centered planning and, precisely, the PATH approach to transition planning. I also acknowledge the ways that person-centered planning and transitioning could align with Black women's narratives (Calliott, 2003; O'Brien, & Lovett, 1992; O'Brien, Pearson, & Kahn, 2010; Trainor, 2007).

Transition-Related and Postsecondary Literature

Transition education as a cultural practice, inputs and outcomes. The notion of transition education as a cultural practice is taken from the perspective that dominant groups' transition practices and NLTS-2 research have not always reconciled with the paths that other students with disabilities experience at multiple intersections of oppressions and in their trajectory to adulthood (Trainor, 2017). Thus, when thinking about input and outcomes of transition education, that is, "what is valued, by whom, and to what end," Trainor (2017) sought to understand resources that are "pooled, distributed, accessed, and used by all involved participants" as well as privilege and power that advantage or disadvantage groups (p. 4). The trajectory to postsecondary education has clearly marked-out paths for the dominant group. Consequently, for other groups, an examination of transition education itself must be accomplished through a cultural lens that considers the "historical marginalization associated with race/ethnicity, gender, home language, immigration, and so forth, and the systemic challenges associated with both general and special education systems" (Trainor, 2017, p. 4).

Not only is there a complexity of disability, diversity, and equity in the transition to adulthood for marginalized individuals and groups, but in the NLTS-2 report, the "system of complex inputs and outcomes with multiple paths from high school to adulthood" (p. 46) plays a part in "what is valued, by whom, and to what end" (p. 4). "Inputs" that drives instructional experiences (school programs and services, such as vocational classrooms, other types of environments, support services) lead to "outcomes" (e.g., situated success, postsecondary, GPA, work-study, or failing grades, etc.) that impact students with dis/abilities within secondary and postsecondary transition education experiences. Self-reflection and identity development of marginalized groups' (e.g., BWD) inputs and outcomes inclusive of sociocultural contexts in secondary to postsecondary education leads to the disposition of self-determination. I move from Trainor's (2017) work to discuss her work with adolescent girls with LD regarding self-determination and postsecondary transition planning. Her work fits with this study in that three of the five women in the study had a LD diagnosis.

Self-determination in postsecondary education. Self-determination has occupied a noteworthy part of transition education (Trainor, 2017). Trainor's definition of self-determination comes from the work of Wehmeyer and colleagues (2003), who suggested "autonomy in exercising choices and making decisions, setting goals. Assessing progress, and realigning goals with one's strengths and weaknesses" (Wehmeyer e al., 2003, as cited in Trainor, 2017, p. 113). This work recognizes the importance of countering negative perceptions of individual and group self-sufficiency and acknowledging those who are oppressed at multiple intersections of their humanity.

The researchers of The National Center for Education Statistics (2005) reported that females comprise 32% of those identified with LD, or that females with an LD label comprise 6% of the public school schools (Trainor, 2007, p. 32), yet little is known about gaining

> access to instruction and opportunity for self-determination during postsecondary transition . . . . in the decision making process . . . and how youth perceive such involvement. Adolescent females with LD who are also from marginalized groups have rarely been included in this line of inquiry, (Trainor, 2007, p. 33)

Using grounded theory, Trainor analyzed the narratives of seven racially/ethnically diverse young adolescent girls with LD. She found that the women perceived themselves as self-determined girls, but this was not readily apparent in their narratives about post-secondary transitions. For example, Missy, a Black girl, 18 years of age, and who self-identified as gay, was indecisive on employment and educational goals and lived with her mother and friends. When she consciously took an account of her decisions she stated, "I was like, what am I doin'? I am supposed to be at school. The next semester I was doin' all that I had to do … made me pass to the 10th" (Trainor, 2007, p. 37).

The second findings refuted the first finding of self-perception by “revealing key self-determination components in need of development” (Trainor, 2007, p. 38). For example, Tanya, an 18-year-old Black girl was indecisive on employment and educational goals and lived with her boyfriend and children. She perceived herself as strong, and defended herself in school during a verbal dispute that led to a physical fight. The school administrators did not see Tanya as strong but instead, “. . . they told my mama . . . ‘Tanya needs to control her attitude, she needs to learn how to just listen and just walk away when somebody come up in her face.’ And I don’t do it” (p. 38). Unfortunately, the author stated, “The prevailing attitude in the focus group, which, Missy and Tanya seemed to be [in at] that school was a tough place where students had to defend themselves, sometimes at the expense of receiving an education” (Trainor, 2007, p. 38). In other words, although arguably, both young women were bringing attention to inopportunities to learn, which ended up being masked by actions of fighting back, and in doing so, each woman was at risk of being separated from educational opportunities.

Transition Planning Related to IEP and Post-secondary Transition

Finally, transition planning was not a central part of the participants’ high school experience (Trainor, 2007, p. 36). For example, Clarissa, a 16-year-old Black girl whose educational goals were to be an entrepreneur, lived by herself and with friends, did not know what it meant to have a transition plan or what is involved in the process. She said, “I didn’t have that in my [IEP meeting] yet . . . they wasn’t doin’ all that. . . . Basically they focus on what I done did” (Trainor, 2007, p. 38). And, Tanya added, “and when they say that … something about going to college after school it goes over my head” (p. 38). These findings in Trainor’s study are relevant to my study, as they focus on the self-perception and the self-determination of the girls, and explore their consciousness of their experiences (e.g., not experiencing transition planning in their Individuals Education Plans (IEPs)).

The special education IEP process for student with disabilities meant to guide their K-12 education is not always transferable to their postsecondary education. That is why specifically, transition IEPs should include:

> appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annual updated and based upon an age appropriate transition assessment, transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals, and annual IEP goals related to the student's transition service's needs. There also must be evidence that the student was invited to the IEP Team meeting where transition services are to be discussed and evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency was invited to the IEP Team meeting with the prior consent of the parents or student who has reached the age of majority. (IDEA, 2004, http://www.doe.in.gov/special/indicator-13-secondary-transition-iep-goals)

Three primary domains must be addressed when students with IEPs transition from high school to post-secondary education: residential (housing), vocational (employment), and postsecondary education (http://www.doe.in.gov/).

In this dissertation, I focus on the domain of college for all five of the BWD participants, and connect this to transition as described by the two TCs. It is my hope to expand transition-related planning PATH planning activities for future research. Research shows "transition-related needs, strengths, and preferences of the individual" are beneficial practices for students with disabilities (Trainor, 2007, p. 92).

Person-Centered-Planning and PATH Activities

Person-centered-planning (PCP) facilitators of PATH work to empower people with dis/abilities to reach their dream, the ultimate—North Star—goal (O'Brien et al., 2010). Over the past 20 years, the history of PCP has evolved through several different names: Individual Service Design (Yates, 1980, p. 2), Personal Futures Planning (Mount, 1992, 1994), Lifestyle Planning (J. O'Brien, 1987; J. O'Brien & Lovett, 1992; Wilcox & Bellamy, 1987), The McGill Action Planning System (Vandercook, York, & Forest, 1989), Essential Lifestyle Planning (Smull & Harrison, 1992), Outcome-Based Planning (Steerer, Wood, Pancsofar, & Butterworth, 1990), and finally, Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (Callicott, 2003; Pearpoint, O'Brien, & Forest).

As the list reveals, PCP has been around for a while. Its initial purpose was "to change community life and service practice" (O'Brien, O'Brien, & Mount, 1997, p. 5) for students with dis/abilities, but its mission has evolved. PCP is used in high schools to assist students with developmental dis/abilities in transitioning to adult living, and with adults with dis/abilities as they plan their future. PCP is about the individual—about his/her lifestyle in their community. It is about taking responsibility for one's life achieving one's purpose and advocating for oneself. It is also about setting goals (i.e., NorthStar goal), gathering resources and supports, and meeting aims (O'Brien, Pearpoint, & Kahn, 2010). Typically, the focus of most transitional goals are practical, such as the accomplishment of a particular job, educational attainment, and/or relationship status. Ultimately, PCP involves centering *the self's achievements*. Accordingly, Callicott (2003) stated that "students with dis/abilities and language or cultural differences are at [a] particular disadvantage and at risk for unequal representation in traditional service-provision meetings" (p. 60). Nevertheless, it is worthy of mention that when we speak of students with dis/abilities and language or cultural differences, it is imperative that we question terms such as "at risk" and explanations of "disadvantage." Traditional framings of “at risk” and “disadvantage” (i.e., poor, and non-educated) presumes that the problem lies inside the individual/their families, which shows no justice to students with dis/abilities. Furthermore, I underscore the importance of what Callicott (2003) is advocating: for true representation of who students are, their histories of experiences (including those of injustice), what they want, and what they value as individuals and members of groups who have experienced collective triumphs and struggles within oppressive systems. In the next section of this review, I explore how PATH utilizes processes and components to strengthen the outcomes of an individual’s PATH (Callicott, 2003) and influences change in finding a way towards a healthy and functional everyday life (O’Brien & Lovett, 1993).

Essential processes. According to Callicott (2003), essential processes of PCP focus on four things: First, comes the individual’s *mindset*, their worldview. Second is a *teaming* of members in mapping one’s vision and a path to achieve personal goals and desired outcomes. Further, the *ontology* of an individual’s belief system plays a critical role in being delivered ‘from barriers to places of creativity,” which in turn develops and supports the evaluation of their self-determined pursuit of their destiny (Callicott, 2003, p. 64). Third comes *facilitation* of PCP led by skilled professionals meeting individuals and building trust in relationships. Finally, PCP accounts for *assumptions* about the future—one’s desires cannot be fully realized until they are thought of across domains of life (i.e., housing, vocation-career-job, recreational activities, community activities). The individual determines the only measure of success across domains, which is a necessary component of PCP.

Essential components. The components necessary to facilitate PCP are meeting, developing a profile, constructing a future vision, development, support, and evaluation. At PCP meetings, individuals identify strengths, differences, and/or weaknesses discussed and worked on from the perspective of the individual. Finding a way toward everyday lives within ones community can be a collective pursuit of essential outcomes for PCP (O'Brien and Lovett, 1992).

Essential outcomes. Effective outcomes of PCP include presence and participation in the community, positive relationships, respect, and competence (Callicott, 2003, p. 65). The individual strength perspective for transitions allows for building one's self-advocacy, self-determination, and self-sufficiency apart from professionals' views (i.e., Individual Education Plans ([IEP]). PCP employs the strength space perspective, which is different from the IEP process in K-12, which details what impedes student learning and what they need to work on to succeed in education. Strengths based approaches, as related to self-advocacy and self-determination (Trainor, 2007), are favorable for students with dis/abilities in post-secondary education. Trainor (2007) suggested "little research has examined what if any, effects sociocultural interactions have on self-determined practices of young adults with dis/abilities" (p. 32). The goals of setting and making decisions during post-secondary transitions are vital to self-sufficiency.

However, while PATH focuses on pragmatic aspects of individual growth and strength, there is no focus on the power of *collective experiences* (i.e., several individuals sharing their experiences). The current emphasis is on a student body that is considered underrepresented, but nothing exists that centers on a *collective and intersecting strength*.

Students with dis/abilities transitioning from high school to college do not do so in a vacuum, but with the hope of receiving resources and services similar to what was in place in secondary education. Thus, there is a need for transition-related services for the student in special education that extends to postsecondary spaces, including resources that assist students with dis/abilities in matriculating, at the very least, during their first two-years of college. PCP relates in several ways to my findings from the BWD stories about their educational experiences although the two TCs did not utilize PCP.

Implications at the intersections. Limited educational experiences at the intersection of race and dis/ability and in accordance to Krissy and Tasha's narratives illustrate how race is often an indicator of educational superiority (e.g., white education), especially when students of color are afforded access to private educational resources. Equally important is how normative educational experiences at the intersection of dis/ability and gender emerged from the narratives of the BWD in the fives studies. In part, this is what Maria's narrative is conveying, expressively. Maria's experience with race, gender, and dis/ability identity is essentially resisting implicit normalization processes in fighting against the psychiatric authority over so-called "mad" people.

Shana's narrative illustrates the necessity to alert non-culturally responsive teachers in school and transition activities about students' funds of knowledge. The premise of funds of knowledge is that "people are competent, they have knowledge, and their life experiences have given them that knowledge," which is documented through firsthand experiences of the competency and the knowledge that people possess i.e., in Shana's case, cooking without a cookbook (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2006, p. x) and that they bring to school activities. Positive outcomes such as Shana's counternarrative opposes her Euro-American teachers and their cultural ways of being and doing (i.e., patterns of cooking).

The findings of limited educational opportunities, normative educational experiences and lowered educational expectations that cut across the Black dis/abled women's stories in most instances could extend to include person-centered PATH activities. For example, across the studies, Krissy, Channell, and Courtney experienced limited educational opportunities and lowered educational expectations of their ability and intellect. Further, in connection to essential processes, Krissy's, Channell's, and Courtney's mindsets revealed self-determined destinies, challenging skilled professionals as they expressed limitations and lowered expectations of the young women's abilities by making assumptions. Person centered essential components that require professionals' use a cultural lens for interacting with these women, (i.e., cooking skills and shampooing hair) would have provided essential outcomes that reflected positive relationships and respect among the professionals and these three women. Stereotypes, such as a lack of intellectual ability come out of a dominant narrative about Black women in general, and more specifically about Black women with dis/abilities, who "continue to find their intellectual capabilities doubly discredited" (Morton, 1991, p. xii).

Through normative educational experiences, both Channell's and Shana's narratives could have a *collective* strength that could had been aligned to a process of self-definition and self-determination (Petersen, 2009a; Trainor, 2007). Third, a person-centered tool such as PATH in Maria's case could have led to implementing an action plan that charted ways to build strength, identify achievable goals, and chart actions to put those goals in place (O'Brien et al., 2010). Fourth, unlike Maria, one of Petersen's

(2009a) participants, Kiesha, was labeled with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in her K-12 experience. She could have had an action plan that included achievable goals to better prepare her for graduating from a Midwestern university at the time of her interview (p. 431). Collectively, in addressing the limited educational experiences at the intersection of race and dis/ability about Precious, Krissy, and Tasha, in a person-centered-planning-transitional way, which could had of also helped them reach their desired and expressed goals. They, too, could envision goals geared towards a particular job, educational attainment, and relationships while avoiding the experience of *exclusion*.

Chapter Three Summary

Throughout this chapter, I sought to understand the narratives of Black women at the intersections of race, gender, and dis/ability and their educational experiences with an emphasis on five different studies participants' educational experiences. The findings revealed how the women framed their experiences in connection to race-based oppressions encountered in instructional spaces, which included explicit and implicit racialized objectification. In addition, the Black women in the five studies identified hegemony that contributed to their educational experiences and related oppressions at the intersections of two or more identity markers. In other words, based on all five of the studies, the women experienced *limited educational opportunities, normative educational experiences*, and *lowered educational expectations* "imputed" upon them by others because of who they were: *Black women with dis/abilities*.

Thus, this literature review of the five studies of Black women with dis/abilities, combined with the transition planning study with three individuals, shows the need to discontinue research studies *about* Black woman with dis/abilities for more research studies *with* Black women with dis/abilities. BWD's perspectives of transition education add new knowledge to implementing cultural transition education and person-centered-planning that disaggregates not only for race but also for gender. In doing so, such studies would highlight cultural assets that respect and honor self-definition and self-determination and favor the strengths of BWD. Furthermore, there is a need to describe more thoroughly the transition planning aspect of the IEP to some Black girls and subgroups who may not understand the process. The systems of oppression play a part in how BWD experience transitions from high school to college, respectively. By focusing on the three research inquiries, Chapter four introduces and discusses a qualitative methodology that best situates the transition education experiences of BWD lives in this study.

Chapter Four Preview

In the next chapter, I present my methods for this qualitative study. I discuss the research design and key inquiries and introduce the methodological tools of counternarratives, a CRT tenet, voice, a DS and Womanist/Black feminist tenet, and spirituality: the Womanist tenet that I used to help me to analyze what emerged from the women's narratives. I aim to show the strength of BWD shared experiences with oppressions at intersections of identity (Crenshaw, 1991) by providing the intuition of BWD and the relevance of identity politics in their stories. Their stories illuminate authenticity about how the damaging past oppressions and histories revealed in the interlocked properties of each separate identity. I also discuss how Trainor's (2017) chapter on education transition as a cultural practice is inclusive of her discussion of input and outputs approaches to transition education, as well as how I analyzed the two white non-disabled transition coordinators' input, output, and input/output transition approaches. I also discuss my positionality and reflexivity as a researcher and any connections my story has to the women in the study. The chapter outlines my research access to the participants, data source, which was interviews, and data collection procedures. Additionally, I discuss the data analysis procedures and trustworthiness (e.g., detailed description, peer debriefing, member checking and limitation) of the study. Finally, I end the chapter with the family and educational background of the seven participants.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODS

Research Design and Inquiry Areas

In this qualitative study, I explore the experiences of five Black women with dis/abilities (BWD) with a focus on their transitions from high school to college. In doing so I explore the intersections of race, gender, and dis/ability of these women, and privilege their narratives as knowledge (Cannon & Thorius, 2013). I also explore the work of two Transition Coordinators (TCs), and the relationship between the narratives of both sets of participants. The primary purpose of including these two groups was informed by the recognition of the collective historical struggle and strength of the Black woman with disabilities and its connection to the transition coordinators' descriptions of their roles and their work. Three inter-related areas of inquiry guided this study:

1. What are the features of and themes across educational experiences as narrated by Black women with dis/abilities, including their experiences of transition and post-secondary education in conjunction with their histories of disability-related services under the Individuals with Dis/abilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004);
2. What are the features of transition services provided to students with dis/abilities, as well as roles and approaches involved in such services, as described by urban public school district transition coordinators, and their accounts of race, gender, and dis/abilities in their work with BWD?
3. How may the intersecting relationship(s) between race, gender, and dis/ability, and in particular, the narratives of BWD be leveraged to critique and extend transition services as described by the transition coordinators?

I employed qualitative methodology because of its practicality in examining the dynamics of human interactions. Further, I chose interviews because it allowed me the closest "look" at the experiences of both groups of participants: "when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them" (Merriam, 2009, p. 88), interviews are a way to "explain concrete experience of people" (Seidman, 2013, p. 7). Further, conducting a series of in-depth interviews with each participant, as I did, provides the researcher with opportunities to obtain rich descriptions of participants' experiences and perspectives (Seidman, 2013).

Methodological Tools

Critical race scholar Delgado (1989) asserts that, "stories provide members of outgroups a vehicle for psychic self-preservation" (p. 1073). According to Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) in their seminal piece that brought CRT into the education research field, an "exchange of stories from teller to listener . . . can help overcome ethnocentrism and the dysconscious conviction of viewing the world in one way" (p. 57). Building on these ideas, I draw on CRT's counternarratives/chronicles methodology because it accounts for experiences of individuals and offer reasons as to why something happened. CRT's tenet of counternarrative/chronicle is appropriate for focusing on the subjectivity and the making of self-identity (Taylor, 1989). By situating the chronicles of BWDs as the main source of data for this study, I emphasize the politics of recognition of the individual and collective inner voices and codeswitching of the BWD[9], which also

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[9] Access to multiple English dialects, African American Vernacular English (AAVE), Academic English, and Standard English, all of which code-meshing/switching are ways of broadening formal speech (Young, Barrett, Young-Rivera & Lovejoy, 2014) and

includes this researcher, and contribute to the *legitimacy/ authenticity* (Taylor, 1994) of the study. I chose excerpts from the interviews for each chronicle that reflected explicit, unapologetic attention to identity in the selection of participants and illustrates methods in critical research, as I hope to have achieved, is a form of identity politics and moves beyond simple "inclusion" of missing voices in research that remains unchanged with regard to inattention of issues of power, privilege, and history of how research has been applied on and against certain groups. It is about demanding respect for one's difference and history of treatment because of such differences. According to Kruks (2001):

> What makes identity politics a significant departure from earlier, pre-ideation forms of recognition is its demand for recognition [based on] the very grounds on which recognition has previously been denied: it is *qua* women, *qua* blacks, qua lesbians that groups demand recognition. The demand is not for inclusion within the fold of 'universal humankind' on the basis of shared human attributes; nor is it for respect 'in spite of' one's differences. Rather, what is demanded is respect for oneself as different. (p. 85)

Counternarratives/chronicles. Counternarratives allows for the politics of human differences and respect of differences to be recognized in the BWD stories. I draw from the CRT tool of the counternarrative (e.g., chronicle) to amplify the need for identity politics research connected to the experiences of social groups that are oppressed. In this study, I aim to illuminate "the strength of shared experience[s]" between marginalized women (Crenshaw, 1991) by providing insight into the relevance of identity politics and storylines as I center the perspectives of the five Black women with

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intersect with my experiences as a BWD. The outcome of my socializations at home, in school, and broader society has affected both my written and spoken language (e.g., enunciation, tense, and syntax).

dis/abilities. Additionally, I heed those critical women of color scholars who demand authenticity in exposing the damaging past oppressions and histories these women revealed to me as they shared the interconnected effects of each separate identity in their storylines (Anzaldúa, 1987; Crenshaw, 1991; Lorde, 1984). Relatedly, I chose to use CRT narrative methodology because it allowed for me to engage in reflective research in the writing, acting, and sharing of experiences and common goals as expressed by oppressed individuals (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000). More specifically, I chose counternarratives because of their promise in serving these various purposes: (1) to expose neglected voices and experiences of the oppressed; (2) to challenge ethnocentric worldviews; and (3) to understand race and racism by listening to the views of the people it affects (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Tate, 1994).

Moreover, the counternarrative methodology I employed in this dissertation study allowed me to examine BWD revelations about, the resistance of, and emancipation from deficit paradigms present in their lived and educational experiences (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Thus, my use of counternarratives/chronicles emphasizes BWD's resistance to stereotypes encountered in school (Ladson-Billings, 2012), and privileges their *voices* and experiences transitioning from high school to college, as they tell and retell us their stories over a series of interviews (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Mishler, 2004). In Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) work on the function of stories/narratives in re-storying dominant narratives about groups' experiences in education research, they asserts that "education and educational studies are a form of experience . . . [that] narrative is the best way of representing and understanding experience" (p. 18). Moreover, the stories of the two TCs about their roles and work allow me to examine how they describe and represent their approaches to social and institutional patterns of transition education (e.g., processes and activities) that include identity and power inequalities.

Researcher's Positionality

I must account for my research as a situated cultural practice within which I, the researcher positioned herself in relation to the social status of my study's participants (Arzubiaga, Artiles, King, & Harris-Murri, 2008). I realize, in many cases, marginalized groups (e.g., African Americans, individuals with dis/abilities) are studied as if they are subjects, rather than centered in, or the co-participants in inquiry, resulting in researchers' (mis)representations of their experiences and neglect of their voices in data collection and analysis (Arzubiaga et al., 2008). Hence, since I also identify with a dis/ability, in addition to being a Black woman, my positionality embodies separate intersecting identities that I must discuss individually, collectively, and contextually from my perspective. To do this well, I must disclose my biases and share my positionality as both an insider and outsider to the BWD participating in the study (O'Conner, 2004).

In this qualitative research study, I am an insider/outsider to the BWD participants and as the researcher, my reflexivity about the research that I am conducting is vital as a Black woman with a dis/ability label. I work in the Midwestern United States (US) in a dis/ability services office on an urban university campus. I consider myself of a mature age, researching with Black women with dis/abilities ranging from 21-to-51-years of age. Therefore, any biases that I brought to the study can be seen as both a limitation and an asset, as I analyzed and made sense of each woman's story (Givens, 1999). Therefore, as a Black woman with a labeled dis/ability (i.e., Speech and Language Impediment [SLI]), with access to multiple dialects (as mentioned in a footnote on page 80), I too am impacted because of my SLI dis/ability category. Thus, at these intersections my experiences not only allow me to hear my participants' authentic voices, but they shape the ways that I articulate my understanding of my participants voices that also show up in my tenses, syntax, and long sentence structures.

On another note, I also recognize that along with the Black women in this study, I carry two identities often viewed from a deficit lens (Valencia, 2010). Therefore, I struggled with taking on another identity that is viewed in broader society from a deficit lens (Cannon & Morton, 2015). To illustrate, when I began my Ph.D. program in the Fall of 2013, I was confident in the value of my life from a spiritual lens. However, as W.E.B. DuBois's (1903) notion of *double consciousness* taught us, "there is an inverse effect of knowing the value and importance of self while living in a society that continuously minimizes your value or importance" (p. 151). This double consciousness is something that Annamma et al. (2016) also discussed in their work on the ability line in the context of DuBois's color line—the history invention of race—the Black race as the Nation's problem (p. 66). However, although I knew my worth spiritually and educationally, I felt what DuBois words illustrate. A "peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (DuBois, 1903, p. 3, as cited in Cannon & Morton, p, 152). Therefore, I wrestled with the thought of adding another label - SLI to my identity.

> My inner inquiries left me wondering whether I should embrace my memories ' label or not. Gold and Richards (2012) argue it is " not advantageous and can even be counter-productive" to label African American students (p. 144). Existing stereotypes of African American

> children can hinder their educational progress by weighing on their identities and implying a sense of inferiority. Thus, "dis" implies lack of, and "dis" coupled with "ability," asserts the lack of ability to learn (Gold & Richards, 2012). I was experiencing a crisis at the intersection of my spiritual and educational identity. The label of my perceived speech dis/ability threatened to shape the rest of my educational experiences such that they would resemble deficit ideologies (Valencia, 2010) assigned to African American women in the academy. (Cannon & Morton, 2015, p. 149-151)

Thus, I am as the researcher of this study, in a position of power that is responsible for valuing and privileging the *voices, counternarratives/chronicles, spirituality* and *intersections* of BWD that was unearthed from their perspectives. Additionally, in this study, BWD are the expert witnesses to the [re]construction of their earlier to current transitional educations. In tandem, I as the researcher [re]created my previous educational experiences and life circumstances (Seidman, 2013) as a *continuum* of who I am currently and during all the participants' interviews. Dillard (2006) suggested, "It seems almost inhumane to just sit and listen without sharing [your] own experiences in dealing with similar issues in [your] own academic life" (p. 66). Thus, I disclosed my positionality with my participants, and to expose any biases I had upfront and those that arose during the study (Charmaz, & Belgrave, 2012).

Reflexivity frequently materialized throughout this study, and from my disclosure emerged a new consciousness about my understanding of socially constructed dis/ability categories: in particular, my early elementary dis/ability label of SLI. My SLI label instinctively resided within me but was buried in my consciousness until five years ago. Once the memory was extracted, as an adult, I immediately found myself challenged with learning to (re)member the things I learned to forget (Dillard, 2011), particularly, the multiple oppressive identities that clamorously suppressed and which clouded my consciousness. I found that the unfolding of a hidden consciousness about my dis/ability label is not only a liability but also a strength. As a Black woman with a dis/ability, I share a commonality with the five Black women with dis/abilities in this study in a way that may cause them to open up to me more as well as allow me to have a better sense of what questions to ask of them. Through my experience and the wisdom that emerged from those experiences, I was able to empathize with each participants' responses and desires as I continued to self-disclose my narrative (i.e., BWD). My role as I enter into this scholarship as a novice researcher spans personal and political spaces as a BWD who is also an insider and outsider, respectively. My own experiences as a BWD and my connection with the BWD participants shapes my response to both the BWD and the TCs' narratives. Within the context of this study's theoretical and conceptual framework I am able to highlight the importance of my experience, I am who I am, and how this study is shaped by my experiences as a Black woman with a dis/ability, who is also analyzing and interpreting the words of BWD and two non-disabled transition coordinators. By sharing their own words, though, I hope to provide the kind of transparency to allow the reader to interpret from my theoretical frame and come to similar analyses as those I present in a subsequent chapter.

I think of a famous speech given by Anna Julia Cooper in 1892. She definitively proclaimed, ONLY the Black woman rightfully can say, “When and where I enter, in the quiet, undisrupted dignity of womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there the whole race enters with me” (Cooper, 1892, as cited in Giddings, p. 13). This statement was made in tumultuous times in U.S. history. Cooper, while fighting for fair, just, impartial, unbiased, and a coherent more egalitarian society, boldly and courageously claimed the place when and how she entered her culture that spans from personal to political spaces. Likewise, as a novice researcher, I too began my social science trajectory with a passion for a successful progression of human life.

However, I was met with external and internal opposition at multiple intersections of identity (e.g., race, gender, dis/ability) especially when I recalled a dis/ability label from my youth. I wrestle with taking on another, and to come face to face with the personal and political spaces that intersected with others (e.g., faculty, peers, and staff). Those interpersonal interactions resulted in viewing myself from a deficit lens (e.g., internally and academically) that temporally interrupted my overall academic and human progression (Cannon & Morton, 2015). To illustrate,

> My internal struggles with deficit thinking w[as] threatening my educational health. At the intersection of my race, gender, and presumed dis/ability, I thought, something must be wrong with [me] because I am having so much trouble articulating my thoughts [on paper]. . . . I was struggling with my academic life and with others' [in the academia] insinuations regarding my speech and intellectual competencies. [While trying] to write a course-assigned blog entry I continued to struggle, I began to say things to myself like, "You are so stupid. You cannot even write a sentence. You need to quit [college] and go back to doing hair." I began to cry. Then I did what I had done [consistently for twenty years] when I felt hard-pressed and confused by life; I prayed. (Cannon & Morton, 2015, p. 151, 153)

I had no idea that I had viewed myself from the medical model of disability, because my speech and enunciation of words and syllables were difficult and due to this, I struggled grammatically with my written articulation. Therefore, as a BWD with an SLI label, I hear differently the passion, drive, and desires of both the BWD and the two TCs to help others with dis/abilities. Additionally, it is important to center the BWD, who are enacting a critical consciousness as they enter and make a difference in education, in their community, and beyond (i.e., Black Women’s Roundtable, 2017).

Given the “presumed incompetence” of Black women’s intelligence and ethics, and that of other people of color and those with dis/abilities within the academy (Gainer, 2010; Gutiérrez y Muhs, Niemann, González, & Harris, 2012), I argue that BWD *voices* must be centered in their lived and educational transition. As a BWD, I come from a personal and political space that also connects to the collective experiences of other BWD, in which I too recognize the signals and codes that both BWD and non-disabled white TCs enacted, and for the TCs, demonstrated deficit ideologies in personal and political spaces of power. Accordingly, I also am centering, in my own voice, my peculiar language shaped by my experiences and the effects of my SLI label; this also means that throughout the study, I attempt to position BWD voices over and above all other exclamations. I found joy in reading the BWD stories in the studies within my literature review chapter, and hearing the BWD participants’ views about education and transition experiences as they shared with me, and with you through me, their life, future hopes, and desires. I was able to appreciate how all the Black women shared particular situations, factors, and circumstances that they faced to propel them towards the change they wanted and look to forward to seeing manifest in their lives.

Relatedly, my matriculation from high school to college was inclusive of many transitions before I could begin to quench my thirst for change. Change, which, for me, required a cup of responsibility, a glass of humility, and a pitcher of wisdom before I could discern and understand when and where I was to enter as an ethical scholar matriculating alongside my BWD contemporaries. In application, my lived and educational experiences with transitioning back into postsecondary education served to quench some of the thirsts I had for knowledge, understanding, and wisdom that God placed in me, which has since afforded my life some changes that included centering the significance of voicing my experiences post and in-between high school and my non-traditional college experiences. Since my return to college in 2008, my exposure to, study and acceptance of new methods, ideas, and experiences are all-reflective of when and where I entered, and I have new and intentional intellectual and spiritual pursuits geared towards my own PATH: planning (for) alternative tomorrows with hope.

My initial transition from high school to college is a part of my experience. As I listened to the women share their stories, I often thought of my own transition story that started at the age of 18. I, too, was not prepared for college. As I listened to the BWD share their stories, I [re]constructed my first few weeks of school from back in the fall semester of 1981. I recalled how I felt about dropping out of college because I did not know what I was supposed to do with my life then, and instead, I chose to live every day as it came and away from post-secondary school. Thirty years later, my return to post-secondary education is contextually connected to and intertwined with the 30 years of lived transitioning experiences that included marriage, having children, and 20 of those years involved my entrepreneurship, operating and servicing women's hair care as a cosmetologist. My experiences may have also influenced the approach and interactions I had with the BWD and with the TCs in discussions around person-centered planning and continual support and resource (PATH activities) that could be extended in post-secondary education.

Throughout this study, journaling my thoughts and feelings helped me to be reflexive of and open to sharing my lived and educational experiences with the BWD participants. In particular, in re-storying my life, I found value in journaling and connecting to my personal and political views as a BWD transitioning through life and educational experiences (Cannon, 2016; Cannon & Morton, 2015). One outcome from my transitioning back into post-secondary education resulted in [re]constructing earlier challenges that I situated as stemming from inside myself, to my current academic social, emotional, and spiritual encounters in which I have reframed my competence and now recognize the systems of oppression within which my earlier challenges emerged. Another outcome of engaging in this research was my growing in critical consciousness about when and where I too MUST "enter" and *how* to satisfy my thirst for change that was both provocative and transformative. For example, my heightened awareness and understanding of socially constructed intersections of race, gender, and dis/ability compelled me to "seek the change I wanted to see" and seeking the resources to assist me in my pursuit (for more detail, see Cannon, 2017) of this degree. To illustrate, because of my faith, which is foundational to who I am, I am not ashamed to proclaim the gift of faith that God has given me to understand and embrace freely the Lordship of Jesus Christ, His Son. This change started in my life during my transitioning back to academia 10 years ago and still influences my matriculation through my educational trajectory. Another outcome is the support of others: Black women both in and outside of the church, the countless opportunities from my master's degree graduate advisor, the rigorous scaffolding and challenges from my dissertation chair and committee members, notwithstanding, other faculty in my Urban Education Ph.D. program, and colleagues at the university where I work. Still another outcome of my transition back to postsecondary education was giving up working as owner and operator, for over 20 years, of *Just for You Hair Salon* to pursue other aspects of my (w)holistic development. I decided to enhance the spiritual and entrepreneurial integrity I had developed and the informal education that I engaged in every day, with formal training, and relatedly, *academic integrity*. The pursuit of my Ph.D. is a part of my educational development.

Data Sources

The primary research was with five Black women with dis/abilities who attended five different large universities in the US. Specifically, four of the colleges were public, and one was private. All four schools were located in the Midwestern region of the US. Relatedly, I also engaged with a second group of participants: two Transition Coordinators who worked in separate secondary schools in Midwestern U.S. urban communities.

Researcher Access to Participants and Recruitment

Black women with dis/abilities. After receiving approval from the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB; see Appendix A), I provided a recruitment script letter to the Director of The Disability Accessibility Office on my campus, where I also work as the Associate Director of Outreach, Compliance, and Services (see Appendix B for a copy of the recruitment script letter). I also provided the text for the email to participants (see Appendix D) and summarized the purpose of the study, including statements about confidentiality and the voluntary nature of potential participation, including the right to withdraw from the study at any time (see appendix E). I requested that the director send out the recruitment letter to a disability listserv. I am not on the listserv and was not aware of the universities that received the invitation. I also did not know what colleges the BWD participants attended until they disclosed that information when we met.

Transition coordinators. I recruited the TCs by meeting with one of my committee members who is a professor, former special education teacher, and previous transition coordinator, to request if she would put me in contact with any transition coordinators or directors. She gave me a list of transition directors who work with special education student services in urban schools or districts in a large urban county in a Midwestern state. I contacted individuals on this list about participating in my study. I also recruited Transition Coordinators (TC) by contacting the Director of the Office of Disability Services again to request that another email be sent out to the listserv of Directors of Disability Offices with another script that invited TCs who are working in urban school(s) or district(s) to participate in the study (see Appendix C). Although the invitations went to universities all over the US, those who responded to the message were all in the Midwest. The selection of the two TCs is explained in more detail later in this chapter. Thus, the data sources for this dissertation are interviews with five BWDs and two TCs.

Details of Participants and their Recruitment

Preceding this study, I had no relationship with any of the seven participants in the study. Below, I detail how they came to be engaged in my research.

Black women with dis/abilities. The five BWDs (e.g., Alice, Diana, Karen, Tammy, and Zora) are all college students. Once I received email responses from the BWD, I asked them to confirm via email if they agreed to participate in the study (Appendix G). Once individuals responded with a willingness to engage, I emailed those participants requesting additional information and to set up individual meetings. I provided a written recruitment document accompanied by an oral explanation of the research study (Appendix H). I also asked all of the potential Black women with dis/abilities the following three questions: 1) How do you identify racially? 2) Do you have a documented dis/ability? And 3) Are you a student enrolled in college? (See Appendix I) Once individual women agreed to participate, I set times to conduct the first interviews.

The ages of the BWD participants in this study ranged from 21-51. Four of the BWD came from single-parent households, and one was raised in a two-parent family. The BWD housing situations included three who lived on campus and the other two commuted. All participants identified as heterosexual. Three of the participants were diagnosed with a Learning Dis/ability (LD), and one out of the three was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy. Two of the women were diagnosed with anxiety, and one out of the two had a "comorbid" diagnosis of Bipolar and Asperger Syndrome. Additionally, three of the BWD participants were on traditional college tracks (e.g., came straight from high school to college) and two, non-traditional (e.g., was older in age when they went to college or returned to college later in life). Four of the five BWD had IEPs in K-12 schooling.

Transition coordinators. Similarly, the detailed recruitment of transition coordinator participants involved contact from a member of my dissertation committee whose scholarship is in the area of transition services. Once I received responses from prospective TCs (see appendix F), I secured the commitment of one white male (Ken). It is important to note that during Ken's second interview, two of his colleagues (i.e., Ashley and Wilma), both white females, who also work with students with dis/abilities transitioning from high school to college, joined our interview session and gave their approval for their narratives to be shared in my dissertation. Although I include some exchanges with Ashley and Wilma in presenting interview data from the second interview with Ken, I remain focused on Ken as the primary participant. In August 2017, I met one more TC who agreed to participate in the study. She is a white female (Lucy), from a different urban district and school. Neither of the transition coordinator participants identified as having a dis/ability. Ken had been as special educator for eight years, but working as a transition coordinator for one year, while Lucy had been working as a TC for 15 years.

Data Collection Procedures

Interviews. I conducted a series of three semi-structured interviews with each participant, except one. All seven participants were interviewed for at least 45 to 90 minutes each per session. The interviews totaled about 1,800 minutes or 31 hours. Interview data revealed the multiplicity of the BWD human interactions and were "rich in describ[ing] people, places, and conversations," and centered participants' perspectives as urged by disability scholars (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006, p. 2). I utilized real-time-audio-recording for the interviews.

I interviewed each participant three times not only because it allowed me to capture the participants' stories, but to indeed witness how these BW/D "reconstruct[ed] from their earlier" experiences in connection to who they are currently" over time (Seidman, 2013, p. 21). Similarly, I engaged in this way with the TCs to learn how they implemented programming for students with dis/abilities transitioning to college, but more specifically for BWD transitioning to college.

Accordingly, the three-interviews in this data collection process centered on the following topics, sequentially: 1) life history, 2) the details of participants' experiences, and 3) participants'[10] reflection on the meaning of life (Seidman, 2013). Interviews were conducted by phone with three of the BWD participants (Alice, Diana, and Karen). One BWD (Zora) and one TC (Lucy) were interviewed in person at the university campus where I work (in the Disability Office), while I interviewed the other TC (Ken) at the urban high school where he worked. I was respectful of where the participants wanted to conduct interviews, so one of the three-interview series also took place at the home of one BWD participant (Tammy).

Although the participants' profiles were derived from each person's first interview, the other two interviews focused on the details and life reflections about either their education or their overall lived and educational transitions. In the second interview, I focused on stories about each participants' detailed educational experiences. I focused also on specific and nuanced details such as how much time they took on a particular detail, to what degree they shared, and the outcomes from the detailed experience that pertained to answering the three inquiry topics. Doing so positioned me to analyze the lived experiences of these women in such a way as to gain a comprehensive and multi-dimensional understanding of each BWD's transitioning processes, her life-story, and education progression (Seidman, 2013). In the final interview, I focused on the BWD's big picture meaning-making; According to Seidman, in the final interview of a three-interview series, the researcher should ask participants to reflect on the meaning of their

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[10] All of the participant names are pseudonyms.

life—specific to this study, I asked them how they perceived transition in their lives and education. In the last interview I utilized the stories and perspectives that emerged from the participants' previous two interviews, which was central for me to not only to make sense of the BWD's lives but also to answer the three inquiries. Throughout each interview and as I felt connected to the women's stories, and listened to the TCs' narratives of their interactions with BWD, I disclosed my own experiences as a BWD with lived and educational transitions, and repeated or rephrased for clarity what I thought I heard the women and the TCs shared to let them know that I was listening.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis is the foundation of the process to making meaning from the collected data, concomitantly to the writing and analysis of the data collected. As I detailed in Chapter Two, Disability Studies (in Education), Critical Race Theory, and Womanist/Black feminist theory provided frameworks for data interpretation. I transcribed verbatim each of their first interviews, and added line-numbers to the interview transcripts. Although I enjoyed transcribing those first five meetings, the work became very demanding, and due to some family illnesses and pressures from my full-time position, I no longer was able to transcribe the interviews. Instead, I hired a professional transcriber. The paid professional transcriber transliterated all of the remaining interviews of Alice, Diana, Karen, Tammy, Zora, and all three of Ken and Lucy's interviews. In my decision to use a paid transcriber, I also developed explicit instructions for the transcriber to ensure conformity of the transcription undertaking (Kvale, 1996; Strauss, 1987).

My data analysis included jotting memos from the data collection that explained what I saw, heard, and felt from the BWD’s discussion of the transition processes from high school to college and the transition processes enacted by the two transition coordinators discussed in their interviews. In the finding section, as both the reporter and the interpreter I selected of all of the participants chronicles and their corresponding interview data as I attempted to represent through 24 hours of interviews the amplified *voice* of the five BWDs, and while making connections across the two non-disabled white TCs roles and description of transition work. I conducted 21 interviews across seven participants, three interviews per participant that lasted 45 to 90 minutes per interview, which totaled 7 hours to 10 hours per participant. All the participants but Zora (who only had one interview session that last 90 minutes) completed all three interviews. During all the interviews, I required thoughtful and attentive listening (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) to build relationship with the participants, privilege their views, and not interfere with their authorial (i.e., expert) voice, presence, and power in what they chose to share (Sandelowski, 1998).

Once all of the first transcriptions were completed, I began the first round of coding all seven participants’ interviews by listening to and reading along with the recordings. I read paragraphs of text and coded by the three focus topics “classifying” them (Seidman, 2013, p. 127), then themes, noting, sorting, and labeling what I saw and heard in the data (Glaser & Strauss, 2009). I paid particular attention to “what” the women focused on in each interview and “how” they responded to what others said about them—and how they countered those things said that were untrue. I created codes by employing grounded theory and divided the coding into meaningful units of analysis immediately after each data analysis session (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). I conducted multiple readings of the data (e.g., forty or more reading of all seven interview data). My coding process was a line-by-line method.

My process of descriptive coding involved the creation of a matrix that indexed the data by categorical heading and columns: what stands out, inquiry one (BWD), inquiry two (TC), inquiry three (BWD; TC), memo, discussion/implication, counternarratives, voice, intersectionality and, desires and future goals. During round one of coding, I coded what stood out. During round two, I focused more on the areas of inquiry related to each participant group. In subsequent rounds, I looked for themes across participant groups and made note of particular excerpts to include in both participants overall chronicles.

I spent about four hours weekly for six to eight months developing and analyzing the material, which served to isolate themes and patterns discussed thoroughly in the findings, and through which I also “clarify[ied] and link[ed] analytic themes and categories” through integrative memos (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 143). Memo-ing served as a part of my interpretation of the participants’ narratives and helped me to see when counternarratives were integrated into the BWD stories. I concluded my analysis by reflecting on the BWD voices and the themes that emerged across their stories. Riessman (2008) stated, “all narrative inquiry is, of course, concerned with content—“what” is said, written, or visually shown—but in thematic analysis, content is the exclusive focus” (p. 53).

Trustworthiness. I utilized several processes to strive for trustworthiness—reflexivity, thick-detailed description, peer-debriefing, and member-checking—to ensure my empirical findings as they related to the study, and I included ongoing progress reports of the research to participants and solicited their feedback (Brantlinger et al., 2005). I engaged in ongoing assessment to ensure that the research tools (interviews) and the processes for the data collected were noninvasive, carried out promptly, and protected the confidentiality of the participants. Although the data collection was only for a period of six months, I was able to build trust with all but one (Zora) of the participants through reflexivity, thick, detailed description, peer debriefing, and member checking. I describe each of these processes and provide examples of each, below.

Reflexivity. Along with disclosing my positionality as the researcher to the BWD participants and the TC participants, I engaged in the process of reflexivity. I would read through the data of all the participants and reflected upon the various features in the research process, while understanding the entire research process (problem questions, framework, and positionality, review of the literature, finding, and implication). In so doing, I "attempt[ed] to understand and self-disclose [my] assumptions, beliefs, values, and biases (i.e., being forthright about position/perspective)" (Brantlinger et al., 2005, p. 201).

Thick, detailed description. After several readings of the transcripts and coding, I created a data matrix of the generated themes, which assisted me in identifying individual patterns, relationships with others, and common characteristics in the data I collected (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). As Coffey and Atkinson (1996) perceived, "the generation of ideas can never be dependent on the data alone. Data are there to think with and to think about" (p. 153). A part of my writing process was thinking about what the women and TCs shared in their interviews and writing out my thoughts about what they said, which helped me in my preparation of the data matrix. The data of the events and individuals in the study (e.g., BWDs and TCs) was what I intentionally gave my attention to, specifically the Black women with dis/abilities and how they [re]constructed earlier high school education and interactions (e.g., when Tammy talked about her K-12 experience with others and how it related to, or connected to, her learning in high school). This process assisted me in understanding the need to advance the current person-centered individual approach to incorporate interrelated collective experiences.

Peer debriefing. Researchers, including the late critical special education scholar Ellen Brantlinger have suggested **“**having a colleague or someone familiar with phenomena being studied review and provide critical feedback on descriptions, analyses, and interpretations or a study’s results” (Brantlinger et al., 2005, p. 201). These people included, but were not limited to, my dissertation chair and committee members on different occasions and throughout the entire dissertation process. I met very regularly with my chair, and we also had a four day out-of-state retreat during which time we talked extensively through my data analysis process and formulation of findings. I also received critical feedback from peers within my research community who are working on their own dissertation analysis and also from social scientist colleagues from inside and outside the field of Special Education and Disability Studies that read my work.

Member checking. I sent the participants transcriptions of their interviews to ask for clarification or extensions of their statements from the previous interviews (i.e., member checking). Once they received the transcripts, I asked them to review it before we met again and either send feedback or give it when we meet for our next meeting. For the most part, all of the women read their transcripts and agreed to the data recorded in text form. Other times, small changes were requested, such as birthdates or names of individuals like parents or siblings. Tammy made corrections about data shared concerning adoptions to be changed or removed from use. Alice sent an email affirming she agreed to the data transcribed from our interviews and gave her approval of my use of all the data gathered. Throughout the study, all of the audio recordings of participants' interviews were kept in an electronic file stored on my computer that was password protected. I protected the confidentiality of all the participants' identities.

Limitations. There are a few limitations for this study. One limitation was the sampling method. The invitation to participate was sent via listserv. By relying on the listserv, there was no way to determine who received the email or if the email was shared with people outside of the listserv. Therefore, where the emails went may have minimized how many people might have known about the study. Another limitation of the study was the small sample size for both the BWDs and the TCs in the study.

Profiles of the Black Women with Dis/abilities: Family/Education Background

Karen. Due to Karen's geographical location far away from me as the researcher, I conducted and audio-recorded her three interviews over the phone. Karen is the younger of two other siblings: a sister and a brother grew up in a Midwest state and lived in the suburbs for some portions of her childhood. Karen is a vibrant and passionate 21-year-old Black woman with a dis/ability.

Karen revealed that she was diagnosed with a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) in school; with a focus on math. She received her first IEP in middle school and remained in self-contained special education classes throughout her high school educational experiences (this is of note, as it is not typical practice to segregate students with math

SLD labels, but when data is disaggregated by race, such patterns emerge). Karen had some dissonance when it came to her participation in her IEP process. Although she was diagnosed in middle school, no one talked to her about her dis/ability in middle school, but she had a guidance counselor who got her into the cosmetology program at the Career Center at her high school. Karen had a significant car accident the summer after graduation from high school, and she had to learn to walk again right before and into her first year of college. At the time of data collection, she was in her second year of college.

Diana. Due to Diana's geographical location, I conducted and audio-recorded all three of her interviews over the phone. She is the middle-child of two siblings: a brother and a sister. She grew up in a Midwestern state and has lived there since childhood. Diana is a vivacious and determined 21-year-old Black woman with a dis/ability whose education background includes a Learning Disability diagnosis specific to reading. When she was in second grade, she received an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and remained in self-contained (i.e., segregated from non-disabled peers) special education classes throughout the rest of her elementary, middle, and high school experience. Again, this is highly unusual across aggregated data about where students with SLD receive their education, but when data is disaggregated by race, such patterns emerge. Diana participated in her IEP process. At the time of data collection, she was a junior in college, and providentially, she works in the office of Disability Services at her university.

Tammy. Due to Tammy's geographical location, I conducted and audio-recorded all three of her interviews in person and in her home, since she felt that would work out best. Tammy is a dispirited 35-year-old Black woman with a dis/ability who professes her faith as her source of endurance. Tammy was born with Cerebral Palsy. She grew up in foster care since birth to the age of 16 when her foster parents adopted her. She has a sister from her birth mother. Tammy also has a child of her own. He is 7 years old. I met Tammy in the emergency waiting room at a local hospital; she introduced herself to me, and said, *"I believe God wants me to talk to you."* Tammy's introduction took me by surprise, as I was concerned with my younger brother's emergency coronary triple-bypass surgery. I listened as Tammy talked about why she was at the hospital and the conversation organically developed into sharing my research interest with Tammy. Afterwards, Tammy asked if she could participate in the study as a college student with a dis/ability, and I told her, with excitement, she could. We exchanged information and went on our way.

Tammy has Cerebral Palsy and a Learning Disability (LD) diagnosis. She received an IEP in K-12 education and did not participate in her IEP process. She attended school and graduated from high school with her class when she was eighteen and was adopted two years before her graduation. Tammy lived with her adopted parents until she decided to move out at the age of 25. Tammy's educational background includes her attempt to remain in college as she deals with being in *a wheelchair* and fighting for custody of her son from the guardianship of her adopted mother. At the time of data collection, Tammy was in her second year of college.

Zora. Due to Zora's close geographical location to the researcher, her interview was in the researcher's office. Zora is the oldest of two younger siblings, a sister and a brother. I met Zora when one of the affinity group leaders on campus brought her to my office and introduced her to me. This woman shared my research study topic with Zora, and Zora wanted to meet with me and learn more about my research. After I explained the study to her, she asked if she could participate and I said, “Yes!” Once we met for her first interview, I learned Zora’s conundrum about her perspective on life and death. Suicidal ideations are in Zora’s history, since she feels no one understands her hurting heart. Zora only completed the first interview; she was unresponsive to emails to schedule the other two additional interviews. Zora was seeking mental health stability. In my only interview with Zora, she came across as an astute yet unsettled 21-year-old Black woman who has a dis/ability.

Zora’s educational background revealed her diagnosis of Bipolar and Depression. She also has a diagnosis of LD, specific to speech and reading experienced in the fourth grade. Zora’s educational background in high school included earning a spot in an English AP (Advanced Placement) class. Zora is still a student, but she is not enrolled in classes. Instead, she is in mental health recovery.

Alice. Due to Alice’s geographical location, I conducted and audio-recorded all three of her interviews over the phone. She is the oldest of four siblings with two brothers and two sisters. She grew up in the Midwest and has lived there all of her life. Alice is an out-spoken and assertive, 51-year-old Black woman with a dis/ability.

Alice’s has an Asperger’s Syndrome diagnosis, along with comorbid diagnoses of obsessive-compulsive disorder and bipolar disorder. She did not have an Individual Education Program (IEP) in her K-12 education, although she believed that she had some mental health symptoms since childhood, while her teachers described her interactions with them as behavioral problems. Alice did not spend much time in K-12 schooling because of continual mental health issues. Alice educational background includes achieving her GED in prison in 2013 and immediately transitioning from prison to a community college. In the fall of 2014, Alice started her undergraduate degree in psychology. At the time of data collection, Alice was a senior; she has since graduated.

The five profiles mentioned above of the BWD reveals both an individual and a collective foundational view of the five BWD participants in this study. I felt the profile section was relevant given the little we know overall about BWD transitions from high school to college presented from their perspectives.

Profiles of the Transition Coordinators: Family/Education Background

Ken. Ken is a man married to a woman and with two young daughters. He grew up in a small town outside of Columbus, Ohio, and has an older sister. His mother worked in public service—a librarian all of her life. His father was a "self-made business man". His grandparents were educators, and the catalyst to his interest in public education couched between generations of his family as public servants.

Ken studied special education in college. His experiences coaching high school soccer contributed to his decision to pursue becoming a special education teacher. He had students on the soccer team with Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autism diagnoses. Immediately after graduating from college, he landed a position to teach special education in a high school. Ken returned to college to attain his master's degree and his administrative license, which opened up more opportunities for him. A little over a year ago, he applied for a position as a high school Transition Coordinator (TC) in an urban school district where his wife taught elementary school, and he accepted the position.

Lucy. Lucy is a woman married to a man and with two adult children: a son and a daughter. Her only sibling, a brother, passed away when he was 7 years old. Lucy's mom had a mental illness, which Lucy describes as related to the death of her brother. I met Lucy when she brought a student to college to sign up for accommodation services. During the process, she talked passionately about the students and her position as a TC. After I finalized the students' intake, I decided to share with Lucy my research interest. Afterwards, she talked about her son just finishing his Ph.D., and how much support he received from his committee and participants. At that moment, I decided to offer the invitation for her to participate in my study, and she agreed.

Lucy has her master's degree in special education. Lucy still lives and works as a TC in the small town where she was born, raised, and went to K-12 school. She has worked as a secondary teacher and as a TC (e.g., ran case conferences and worked on IEP's) for the last six years. Lucy retired in 2017.

Chapter Four Summary

In this chapter, I explored qualitative interviewing method to understand the lived and educational experiences of Black women with disabilities (BWD) as they transitioned from high school to college and the transition processes that were utilized by two Transition Coordinators (TC) for a student with dis/abilities, in particular with BWD. In each of the first interviews, the BWDs revealed their personal and systemic oppressions, which I analyze and explore in the next chapter. In particular, I unpack how their stories might account for intersecting markers of differences and oppressions. As well as the TC's supporting narratives about the transition processes in two different urban schools. Contextually by connecting research methods and inquiry (e.g., CRT, DS, Womanist/Feminist approaches), which is the task of balancing descriptions, analysis, and interpretation (Wolcott, 1994). I center (i.e., privilege) the five BWD distinct from the two TCs, but account for the BWD's interrelated and collective counternarratives, or voices, and the TC's descriptions of their work and roles, which is all addressed in chapter five. I also discussed how my story as an insider/outsider fits within this dissertation and especially in connection to the five BWD participants. In addition, I discussed analysis of both distinct groups of participants for this study, the trustworthiness, reflexivity, details and description, peer debriefing and member checking. Followed by an introduction to the BWD participants and family background. Finally, I provided a profile of all seven participants, including their family and education backgrounds collected during the first interviews.

Chapter Five Preview

In chapter five, I present the findings of the study in a CRT *counter-story/chronicle* approach (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2013) with emphasis on BWD *voice*, which is also a DS tenet, and I put emphasis on BWD *voice*, *spirituality* and *community*, which are Womanist tenets. Part one of chapter five presents the chronicles of the five Black women participants and the themes that emerged from their interviews. Immediately following is part two, the analysis of the five women's interview data that addresses research inquiry one and the emerging themes from the data collected for the study. Then I present part three of chapter five, which include the two chronicles of transition facilitators. Taking a chronicle approach allows me to tell the women's stories by utilizing their words, which represent the legitimate power of their narratives. The approach also allows me to present the transition facilitators narratives, which focus on the processes and procedures that they utilize in transitioning Black women with dis/abilities from high school to college and the outcomes. In addition, I analyzed the narratives guided by the three inquiries and my conceptual and theoretical frames, and the chapter summary that includes a discussion of similarities and differences between the narratives.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS

I begin this chapter by sharing the chronicles of each of five Black women with dis/abilities (BWD). This chronicling approach allowed me to "recognize the legitimacy and power of [their] narrative" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 52). Each chronicle is an abridged version that I created from each woman's story and perspectives as shared with me, within which I have edited out some peripheral details, as well as some of the intense pain that they expressed, for the sake of their dignity. It is important to note that such edits were intended to avoid the exhibition of the pain and loss experienced by these women (Bamberg, 2004; Scott, 1997). Notwithstanding outcries of their pain that comes from society's treatment of them, which is deeply personal, this should not detract from the understanding that these chronicles do in fact express resistance (Erevelles, 2014; LeFrancoise, Menzies, & Reaume, 2013): resistance to stereotypes, to oppression, to school-to-prison pipeline, deficit labels, and more broadly, to all deficit discourses garnered against BWD. In this chapter, the participants' experiences are often characterized by negative encounters and outcomes in direct relation to their dis/ability diagnoses and at their intersections of identity (e.g., race and gender); however, I attempt to privilege their knowledge as assets, as I cull from their narratives and analyze their stories through the lens of the conceptual and theoretical framework of this study.

The rest of the chapter follows this outline: First, I present the individualized and abridged chronicles of all five BWD and give a brief analysis at the end of each, making relevant connections to the study's conceptual and theoretical framework. Next, I introduce and explain the theme *Terrible, Sticky Truths* and the subsequent three related Truth themes: *pathologization, disablement*, and *exclusion*, substantiating these themes with examples from the women's chronicles. Then, I explore each woman's abridged chronicle in relation to the study's first inquiry area: features of educational experiences as narrated by Black women with dis/abilities, including their experiences of transition and post-secondary education in conjunction with their histories of disability-related services under the Individuals with Dis/abilities Education Act (i.e., IDEA, 2004), and emergent themes across their narratives. Next, I present a second set of Truth themes that I call Subverted Truths: (Re)defined identities and radical love, **(**Re**)**placed competence and knowledge, and (Re)defined sisterhood and community, and analyze them through the conceptual and theoretic framework.

Next, I present the abridged chronicles of the two Transition Coordinators (TC) and explore each through the lens of the study's second inquiry: features of transition services provided to students with disabilities, as well as roles and approaches involved in such services, as described by urban public school district transition coordinators, and their accounts of race, gender, and disabilities in their work with BWD. I analyze their narratives through DS/DSE theory and its third tenet—*social construction*—and the psychological impact of being labeled, as well as being the label-er, with regard to the TCs. I also consider connections to Trainor's (2017) description of transition as a set of educational *inputs* and postschool *outcomes* in relation to those transition experiences described by the BWD participants. Finally, in this chapter I explore the study's third inquiry area, the intersecting relationship(s) between race, gender, and dis/ability, and its/their role in shaping the other two guiding inquiries, with a focus on how the narratives of BWD participants may be leveraged to critique and extend transition services as described by the transition coordinators. I conclude the chapter with a summary of how both groups converge and diverge in their chronicles before previewing chapter six.

The Chronicles of Black Women with Dis/abilities

In the following section, I present each chronicle in the order in which I conducted the first interview with each participant, beginning with Karen's story, followed by Diana, Tammy, Zora, and finally, Alice. Each story is abridged and presented in each woman's own words that shine light on how others (e.g., medical, social, and academic professionals and family) treated them, how that treatment made them feel, how the outcomes of the treatment manifested in their lives, and, finally the decisions that they made and connected to those outcomes. I briefly analyze each chronicle according to relevant elements of the conceptual framework (i.e., social constructions and falsification of consciousness) and the theoretical framework (i.e., CRT, DS/DSE, and Womanist/Black feminist theories) utilized in the study.

Karen's chronicle: "I need to live my purpose . . ." Karen's chronicle captures her response to my first interview question, in which I asked her to tell me about herself.

> I grew up in Cincy. I love to read. I grew up in the church, and now that I'm at college I go to a church that's right down the street from us. I go with my other two friends, and we go every Sunday. I am a Christian, that's very important to me, my faith, and I need to live my purpose. Oh, yea! My roommate is my friend. We both push each other to go to class and study and stuff like that. We help each other if we need it. Um, for as far as I can remember I always had like difficulty with math, per se, all the time that I was going to school [I] us[e] my IEP. I would say in middle school, around that time, I don't know exactly the age, is when I noticed math was getting particularly worse. So, yea, that's pretty much where mine is, a math disability. I started meeting with the social worker of the school I was going to, and we set up basically a plan of action for me based on the Learning Disability that I had which is the reason why I started getting the one-on-one tutoring and taken out of the math classroom. And so I guess it was basically Special Education Class. I was with a tutored that like helped me with my math and then, it just

progressively got worse when I got out of high school. At first, I felt like bad because I felt like I can’t learn, then I start realizing well maybe this is just something that I will have to um get used to it. I was a little afraid to transition from high school to college because it was not familiar territory and I did not know how to use my IEP in college. Some of the stuff I was told in high school I did not know how to transfer that into college until I actually started using the services at my job I work at currently. So, I just feel like I did not know how to transfer the services over, you know like in high school is very different than college. Since I been in college I gotten use[d] to it. I had, like, [a] Psychology major and I ha[d] to change my major because that um - the Math, You can take an alternative class and then they’ll just replace it, but I had to change my major because I could not do the math. They were talking about a Math base program and I’m not good at math. You had to take a math class to learn but not for credit. You just have to take it and you either pass it or not. I had to petition my school for a math alternative class. [I] changed my major and then now they just approved [that] I will not take math again, I will see how this goes. I’m basically navigating how to do my IEP in college credit. I have to figure out what’s best for me. So, in time I had one updated diagnose[s] with disability - A learning disability, specifically in math. I mean math was extremely difficult. I would forget. I just would; I don’t know, would shut down. It was too big, and I wouldn’t get it. I could remember I was really good at science and reading and stuff, but math has always been hard. Well, I also took like a class where cultural class [and] I passed that class with a C but it was really hard. So I have to learn how to basically use my disability to my advantage in college as much as I used it in high school. So it was how to figure out how to do that. I also get support from the people I work with as well. So never felt like I didn’t have peer support. My major is Tourism, and I have a minor in African American Studies. This degree program really will work for me because it’s more, it’s like you could be outdoors, and you meet a lot of different people. I’m a junior. I am in an intellectual course, its Black Intellectual. We watch many shows and then, we read stuff in this class we watch many videos and then have questions we have to answer. Once we watch the videos in the module, he gives us a test over what we learned from the videos and then that just … answer all the questions then we discuss in class. I learn a lot of stuff I did not know before this class. It’s not a big class, the majority is African Americans and then there is like two white people. I work with people with disabilities [on campus]. Yes, if they have disabilities - students take their exams there. I take my exams there. You can take your exams in a quiet space or you can have people read the exam to you if you don’t feel comfortable reading it yourself you have an assistants who do that. And then you also have note-takers that’s provided for coordinating notes to you like, if you don’t feel comfortable like, writing down notes they’ll actually take the notes for you and then just drop them off at the office and you can come pick them up. Then we have

> counselors at my job. I'm also receptionist, and I meet a lot of Business students, and we have like, a lot of different students that use our facilities and four or five hundred that use our services. I mean, you just never know what another person is going through. And because it just gives me a different perception [of] people, so you have to understand where they're coming from. I did feel real misunderstood. I mean, so many people just assume that you know, Black women, they get this stigma that, Black women we just, I don't know, like, I don't know, it's a stigma around Black women. It's, I don't know. (2/12/17)

As the reader will notice, Karen emphasized how her special education IEP services connected to her college transitioning and learning experiences. Karen's chronicle illuminates the interdisciplinary conceptual and theoretical frames of this study whereby the social construction of being a Black woman with a dis/ability label has historical roots and related oppressions that are still experienced in the present (Anamma et al., 2016; Bell, 2011; Davis, 2013; Phillips, 2006).

On the one hand, Karen's chronicle powerfully validates a Womanist/Black feminist unique voice and spirituality in her love for learning, people, and faith (hooks, 2000; Phillips, 2006; Williams, 2008). She talked back to myths about Blacks' presumed intellectual inferiority generated from Eurocentric social thought (Wilson, 1998), and she gave back to the community of disabled students receiving services from the disability office where she worked by encouraging students who received accommodations. On the other hand, her narrative assumed a faint voice when explaining and describing her experience with her LD label, which was reflected in her loss of words to convey the stigmatization of Black women.

Diana's chronicle: "Just be yourself." Diana's chronicle answers my first interview question, as well.

> Hello, my name is Diana. I'm very close to my family. I love being around my family. Um, I thought that I had an IEP when I was about in second

grade, Um, I didn't even know that I had to get one, um I didn't even know that I had it. Well actually, the way we found out is because my mother had to have a meeting with my teachers. They were saying I needed to be there because I was kind of behind in my work, a little bit, and um, the level of reading wasn't at the same level as the other children. So, they put me in there to see if it will help. I ended up staying in there, from my second grade all the way up to my senior year in high school. I'm going to tell you the honest truth. Well, my first day I cried. I didn't feel like I was a part of my peers. I was really shy. I didn't want to be there! You know being little you don't understand that type of situation until you get older, I remember being so upset and crying and um I did have a friend that I was actually in the same class. She helped to open me up and so did the teachers were here to help you and trying to make me better with my education. I understood this better as I got older. I would come to school and drop my bag off, From second grade to sixth grade I would drop my bag off at my locker and go to my regular classes and then at the end of the day I would return to the main class and get dismissed. Once I got to 7th and 8th grade, it was somewhat the same but some classes I would be there just for math and English I would be in with the other kids unless I have a special class like Spanish, science, Psychology, or social studies. After my sophomore year, I did not have to take math. I passed my math to get out of there and I didn't have to do math my junior or senior year. But I actually stayed in there more for English. It think it wasn't really that bad for math; it was more so with the reading. I am not the best of a speller or the best of a reader, so that's mainly why I [was] in there. And you know every time I had to read in class I would ask to go to the restroom because I would get so nervous. Actually, while I was in there, I feel like I depended on them too much and really didn't give myself a chance and put myself out there to really say, hey I can do this on my own. But my senior year I was able to apply to college and g[o]t accepted for over three colleges. But I feel like I am doing better in college. They are very helpful here, and I'm learning more as I go, and this is just the beginning for me. Last semester I passed three out of my five classes, and two of them was A and B, but I did not pass the other two. It's hard because I remember I had a psychology class last semester, and I didn't pass the class, and it was hard. Well, I was like, well, is it me? Am I not as smart as others? So, it's hard but I try - I did not know the answer and somewhat that others did. White people ask me about African Americans not being the smartest. We are not as smart, and you know being in college as an African American and surrounded by different races, Caucasian, Mexican, and Puerto Rican is not easy at all. I talk to my teachers for information and the things we go over in class. But I know I will get there by the end of the semester if I put my mind to it and keep pushing. My GPA is currently at a 2.6, and I feel like that's very good because my goal was to get to a 3.0. It is not that bad, but last semester that's really how I kind of felt. (2/14/17)

Diana emphasized “being yourself,” which, according to her mantra, is inclusive of her determination to not to be spoken for or about (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2016). Diana learned how to maneuver and counter stereotypes about Blacks’ intelligence, but she also claimed that her experience was not that bad (Wilson, 1993). Diana’s internalization and self-doubt left an imprint on her psyche that she was not smart enough to compete with her white peers.

Tammy’s chronicle: “I long to be normal, and to walk . . . One day God will lift me out of this chair . . .” Tammy’s chronicle responds to my first and second interview questions, in which I asked her to tell me about herself and to tell me about her education.

> I’m Tammy. I have Cerebral Palsy. I would like to know what CP is all about. Um, they said it is not hereditary, they say it’s from either the nurse or doctor who did not get you out of your mother’s womb properly. I really want to get more knowledge of what I have. I use to be able to crawl on the floor, and I use to be very mobile crawling on the floor, but in foster care, [one] foster parent did not like me to crawl on the dirty floor. So, she seen a family surgeon where I can get surgery and did not have to crawl on the floor. Now I cannot even crawl on the floor anymore—people would complain that they had to pick me either up or do stuff for me. I started resenting people for that because they use to say “I don’t want to do this for her or I don’t want to take her anywhere.” I thought after having all these surgeries, I could just get up and walk, and it’s not like that, I don’t know why I thought that I was going to walk I don’t know where I got that from. I just thought I could be human. I started being angry with God and myself for putting me in this position. Now, sometimes I know why God put me in here, not because I know I can’t get up, but one day God will lift me out of this chair. When I get ready to walk back into it. Being a minister—well, me being in a wheelchair who would listen to me preach or pray for them. That type stuff, it’s hard, being Black period, but being in a wheel chair and a minister, even from my family, sometimes I feel like it’s hard for people to receive from a person with a disability. I have to be effective for people with disabilities. I can’t tell somebody something, and I am still hooked on the hurt and the pain. I just have to figure out how I’m going to deal with it. [Long pause]. People would tell me to accept me the way I was. I’m one of those people that would not accept myself being in the chair, [emotional—a pause—

> starts to cry a little—then continues] because they look at us [people in a chair] like we can't do anything for ourselves; so, I long to be normal, and to walk and I just long to be normal. It took me a long time to accept [took a deep breath] being in a chair. I had my biological mother who also resented me being in a chair because my biological mother, she could not stand for me to be in a chair. She would lie to me and tell me she's coming to pick me up and won't. Since I get hurt a lot, I pour my heart out. I try to help people, and they run over me like I'm just nothing. And it hurts when you give your heart, you give your soul to somebody, and they just break it into pieces. Whether it is your family, the person you like and want to date. Whether it's your friends, I know a lot of my friends, or some of them as me so I take medicine because I guess people with disability take medicine, but I don't. I don't even like taking medicine when they tell me to take it. I am not a medicine taker, never have been. It's a stereotype thing, they think just because you have a handicap you take medicine for your disability, and that's not always the case. People with disabilities get stereotyped, a lot. They get misused, they get lied on a lot, and they get talked about. There is a lot of hurts I need to figure out how to share without being depressed, hurt, or angry. Family and friends think you just can't do nothing for yourself. You can't have a life. You don't know how to function, and that's not true at all. You can be anything that you put your mind to, it might be a little slower than other, but if God gave you the desire to do something then, he will make a way in the means and give you the education, the funds, or the resources. I feel like people with disabilities always have to prove themselves. I just don't want people with disabilities to go through this same pain of rejection. (2/18/17 and 3/18/17)

Although Tammy advocated for herself and defended her views, which countered the falsification of her consciousness and responded to notions of normalcy (Wilson, 1993), she also grappled with this falsification because she was made invisible and neutralized as a woman in a chair (Finkelstein, 1998). Simultanuously, she attempted to make sense of God, family, and social (Williams, 2008) and medical services from her position as a BWD in a chair.

Zora's chronicle: "Black people actually go to therapy?. . . We're not supposed to be depressed; you supposed to be strong because you are Black." Zora's chronicle also responds to the first interview question.

Hello, my name is Zora, I go by Zae. I'm really a cool person. A lot of people think that I'm mean, but once you get to talk to me, I open up, I'm like, really funny. I have a really big heart and, people, genuinely like that about me because I'm such an outgoing person. I mean, I have days where I [am] really outgoing, [and other days] I'm really down and depressed, but those days, I'm still going to try to cheer anybody up because I hate seeing other people down and depressed like me. And if I could change someone's day or their mood, I feel better about myself. And that's why I feel like with anybody with a disability whether, like, what race you are or what gender you are, if you prefer a gender or not, just wake up, it's like, take a deep breath and continue on with your day. Even though it's going to be very, very hard, you just have to continue. And if you believe in God, pray. If you don't believe in God, whatever [you] meditate [on] - whatever keeps you calm. So, in society, Black women are told not to have problems. We're not supposed to be depressed. It all over Facebook, how, like, a Black woman will say, I'm like really sad, I'm upset. Someone will comment, just anybody will comment, you're not supposed to, you supposed to be strong because you're Black. But when a White person does it, it's like, oh, I'm here for you if you need to talk, call me. I don't understand that. We all women, we all are people - we're humans. We all go through the same thing and why is it okay for one race to be okay to have problems, and another one can't? And that bothers me because when I tell people that I suffer from depression, it's just like, what? You're Black. Black people don't go through that. Yes. A lot of Black people do go through that, actually. They just afraid to step and say something because they're going to get put down because, yeah, you're supposed to be strong because you're Black. When I tell people that I'm having a bad day, they think, oh, you're just PMS'ing. You're just being a girl. No. Being a girl and with depression is just all bad altogether. Because I do have emotional, like, emotions for being a girl, and I get that. But it's deeper than that. So, imagine me having to mood swing for being a girl and just having a mood swing because I'm depressed, or because I'm being, have my bipolar episode. It's like, really a big problem for me. And no one understands, and everybody just thinks, like, oh you're just being a girl. Just stop it. You're probably having your period, so stop it. I'm just like, no, I'm not. I'm really going through some things. I go to therapy. And I have [a] boy [as a] best friend, I told him I go to therapy. He was like, what? Black people actually go to therapy? I never heard of that. And it's just like, what? I'm a person, like, just because I'm Black doesn't mean anything. Like, you hear about all the White celebrities go to therapy, it is okay. But, a normal Black person can't go. That's stupid to me. So, it's okay for celebrities to be depressed, but not a normal person. I just find that really stupid. My therapist, she's really a nice person, and I feel like she genuinely wants to help me out, but she's got her comfort zone - she's White, and I'm Black. I, like, expressed to her before that being Black in this society is really hard and she's like, "Well, I don't

> understand that because I'm not Black and I don't have to go through what you have to go through." So I tried to explain it to her, but it's, like, you're not going to understand it unless you go through it [this] type of situation. And she's like, "Oh, I'm sorry that you have to feel like that and you have to go through that in today's world because I don't want to make you feel like that," and then she asked me does she make me feel like that? And I told her no. And she said, "Well, that's a good start." So, I feel like she really trying to help, but there's like, that boundary that she can't cross because she doesn't understand. I have built up, and there's so much, like, with these emotions, and you have to go deeper, and there are only 55 minutes to talk about everything is not enough time. So, she really just tries to condense it, and she tries to, like, make sure that I'm not like, suicidal or I want to act on my suicidal thoughts. And she just, that's her main concern is to keep me safe. And once she realized that I am okay, in a good spot, she will go on to a different topic, but most of the time we spend on me just staying calm and just focusing on, like, the future and focusing on how I can make things better, if I could make things better. (4/4/17)

Zora's chronicle related to her societal, parental, and personal views about being a Black woman with a disability and the physical and psychological pain that she experienced in her lived and educational transitions. Zora advocated for her smartness but also felt depressed. She argued that "a human experience" is something that many people go through by being Black, a woman, and having a labeled dis/ability, in which one not only fights for one's own experiences as a woman but as a Black woman represented by false assumptions (Hill-Collins, 2000; Wilson, 1993).

Alice's chronicle: "I'm very, very vocal on anything that I believe hinders me as a Black woman." Alice's chronicle captures her response to my first interview question.

> My name is Alice. I have a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome, along with comorbidities, which in essence means I have many other diagnoses besides that. My interest is vast, I own about 5,000 books, and I have probably read almost all of them. I love to read and to do research. Growing up was a little bit different, probably, from most student? I was not fond of school whatsoever, and plus, my mom, we kind of bounced around a lot from school to school. Family dynamics for me are very

different; we did not have the pleasure of having a father figure with us. I really gravitate to my mother a lot. When I was about 12 or 13, is when the symptoms were just way out of control, so my mother, you know, my mother was like, “I cannot take this” because I started acting very aggressively at home. Black parents, they’re not so in tune, maybe now they are, but at that time, you don’t hear about these things in the Black society because you’re just acting out, or just, you know, need to be disciplined, you know, that’s why they’re acting like that. Blacks do not attribute the children’s behavior as a mental illness. I've been in prison three times. I always have long intervals between going back—all these intervals are when I'm taking medication. When I stop taking medication I resort to street drugs. When I resort to street drugs is when I make very deliberate, intentional bad decisions. And I say intentional and deliberate because the narcissistic mind that I have, when I'm under the influence of recreational drugs tells, me, ahhh, I'm not killing anybody, I'm not being violent, surely I'm not going to get in trouble for this. Not a big deal. I’ve been diagnosed with a compulsive disorder, also, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and bipolar disorder. You know, I have been schizophrenic, but I don’t exhibit those behaviors anymore. But I’m sure if I wasn’t on medication perhaps I would. I’ve been hospitalized probably a little over 22 times for, you know, they use to call it a nervous breakdown back then. I’ve had shock treatments and many different medications. Today I’m grateful to say I’m only on two medications. Yeah. From 12 to two. That is a great blessing! The drugs that they had me on were causing me to lose my memory . . . and my goal was to get off of medication. So slowly but surely, and for the last few years, I’ve only been on two. The doctors and psychiatrists, they will continue to push drugs on you. As long as you’ll take them, they’ll give them to you. It was causing me to forget, and I knew that I could not do college under the influence. I like to be where I am supposed to be, part of it is because of my difference, my diagnoses. So, I will never be out just around, just kicking it around. So, for a Black woman with mental illness, without a higher degree of education, society says, throw them away. As a student I’m very well known, it’s the attitude . . . not in a negative way. I never miss school, and I hope to God I don’t have to. I have been in school two and a half years, and I’m already getting ready to start my masters, so that shows you how hard I do everything to excess. I’m very, very vocal on anything that I believe hinders me as a Black woman or the Black population in general. I will not sit in class, and listen to a professor speak about statistics and every time you open your mouth, “Well, statistically Blacks are boom boom boom boom boom.”…Excuse me. No, no, no, no, no, today, let’s talk about you and your race of people. I have given you a pass to see exactly how many times that you felt it appropriate for me, the only Black student in your class, to sit here and listen to you negatively impact the Black community with your statistics when there’s no need for it. You need to talk across the board because trust me, I feel very disrespected. And this is what [they]

> tell me. “Well, Ms. Alice, I’m not trying to do that,” but you are because you know exactly what you’re saying, you’re a doctor, remember? So, you must be very intelligent, so you do know what you’re saying. Correct? “Well, yeah, I know what I think,” I said. “And so do I.” So, then we have our little, you know, they'll be a little huffy, you know, and after class, and "Oh, Ms. Alice, I'm sorry if you felt that way." Well, it's not that I felt that way, it is that way. (Alice, 4/4/17)

Alice’s chronicle illuminates the emancipatory transformation that accompanies a *claimed* disabled identity, as opposed to the disability identity that has been conceptualized and imposed upon by others as deficits. In this chronicle, Alice’s contention with being over-medicated and presumed intellectually inferior juxtaposed against the hegemony enacted by professionals with whom she had contact warranted her self-advocacy, self-determination, and self-identification (Annamma et al., 2016; Davis, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2012).

Part Two: Terrible and Sticky Truths

Inquiry One: Features of educational experiences as narrated by Black women with dis/abilities, including their experiences of transition and post-secondary education in conjunction with their histories of disability-related services under the Individuals with Dis/abilities Education Act (i.e., IDEA, 2004), and emergent themes across their narratives.

I analyzed the interviews and subsequent chronicles to illuminate the shared experiences and meaning making of these women related to their silencing and marginalization. Overwhelmingly, the Black women with dis/abilities (BWD) experienced many instances of marginalization that, at the core, brought into question and negated their intellect and knowledge, their value and worth. In other words, I overwhelmingly found that these five women shared experiences consistent with the three *terrible and sticky truths* I call *pathologization, disablement,* and *exclusion*. I developed these three themes to highlight the tension between what the BWDs were told or described as true about themselves by others and what the five BWD considered as truth about themselves and the impact such tension has had on their lives, as illustrated through their stories. The simultaneous terrible-ness and stickiness (i.e., leaving residue) of these truths have made lasting impacts.

The first terrible truth of pathologization. *Pathologization* emerged across the BWD chronicles, and the truth of shared experiences as encountered dominant others who viewed and articulated their differences at the intersection of race/disability as deficits. For some of the women, although to varying degrees, some outcomes of pathologization manifested as negative psycho-emotional outcomes that threatened their well-being (Annamma et al., 2016) and took the form deficit thinking (Valencia, 2010), alienation, self-doubt (Charleston, 2002), and the appropriation of identities with intellectual or other inferiorities based on pseudo-scientific claims (Thomas, 1996) about incompetence at various intersections (e.g., race and sex) of oppression (Reid & Knight, 1996) that has psycho-emotional results. For example, Karen shared in her chronicle, “I had to change my major because I could not do the math . . . I had to petition my school for a math alternative class” (2/12/17). First, I must acknowledge that Karen really did have a difficult time learning a particular type or level of math, which is the case with many students who do not have a dis/ability label. In following this frame of thinking, we must also consider that Karen’s words of her struggle to do math be connected to the course, instruction, lack of supports, or issues with the curriculum, among many other systemic oppressions that historically marginalized people may encounter in higher education contexts, particularly at race/disability intersections (Pearson, 2018). On another note, Alice stated,

> Men are very resentful of a woman like me because, whether you're a man or not, that does not mean that I'm not going to be hurt. And you're not smarter than me because you're a man. And trust me, any men that are in my presence absolutely know that. I don't even have to tell them. So, but I'm aware that they're probably resentful of that. I have professors that are resentful of that. (4/4/17)

Alice's discourse on being a woman is not attached to her race but to her unashamed self-perception and Black intellectual womanhood (Hill-Collins, 2000; Hudson-Weems, 2006). Relatedly, Zora stated,

> I'm really smart, I might be smarter than you. And that make them upset, like, they were happy thinking that I didn't know anything, but when I showed them that I knew something, they got intimidated by it and they looked at me even more with disgust. And I feel like, why? There is no point of that. It just really, just stupid to think like that, we all are equal, we are all created the same way. We are capable of doing the same thing, so why do I have to be looked at differently because I am Black? (4/4/17)

Zora endorsed her smartness in comparison to her white peers. Unfortunately, the burden on BWD to prove themselves to their white counterparts is a source of both advocacy and fatigue for Zora. She used this burden as a platform to push back against others' definitions of her, but unfortunately, she succumbed to the fatigue of that battle (Smith, 2004).

Accordingly, the terrible truth of pathologization was also illuminated through Karen's chronicle. She shared that she "had *it*," a Learning Disability (LD) in math, and had to go "in there" (i.e., the special education class). The reality that Karen had "something" that resulted in segregation from her peers brought about an emotional and psychological response that impacted her consciousness, filled her with thoughts of not measuring up to her peers, and resulted in her shedding tears. "I was really shy. I didn't want to be there! You know being little you don't understand that type of situation until you get older, I remember being so upset and crying" (2/14/17). Another example of pathologization in Diana's chronicle is her comment, "I'm going to tell you the honest truth. Well, my, first day I cried. I didn't feel like I was a part of my peers" (2/14/17). Like Karen, Diana's experience with segregated special education structures affected her sense of belonging, one outcome of which was her emotional response of tears.

In still another example, Tammy expressed her tensions with *pathologization* when she conveyed that she just wanted to be normal. "I thought after having all these surgeries, I could just get up and walk and it's not like that, I don't know why I thought that I was going to walk I don't know where I got that from" (2/18/17). Tammy wanted to walk instead of using to a wheelchair and equated her use of a wheelchair with many depictions and descriptions of people with physical disabilities as less than human. She shared, "I just thought I could be human . . . Family and friends think you just can't do nothing for yourself. You can't have a life. You don't know how to function, and that's not true at all" (2/18/17).

Zora, too, described the impact of pathologization aligned with her experience of race and gender in the context of societal thoughts of "Black women…We're not supposed to be depressed…Being a girl…With depression [it] is just all bad altogether . . . I have emotions for being a girl, and I get that. But it's deeper than that" (4/4/17). Zora reflected on the emotional impact of disability, gender, and depression: "I'm depressed, I have my bipolar episode…No one understands, and everybody just thinks, like oh you're just being a girl" (4/4/17).

Finally, Alice's story also illustrates the pathologization she experienced in her relationship with her mother, who was concerned about the perception of Alice's disability within Black society:

> When I was about 12 or 13, is when the symptoms were just way out of control, so my mother…My mother was like, "I cannot take this" because I started acting very aggressively at home. Black parents, they're not so in tune…You don't hear about these things in the Black society because you're just acting out, or…Need to be disciplined…Blacks do not attribute the children's behavior as a mental illness. I've been hospitalized probably a little over 22 times for, you know, they use to call it a nervous breakdown back then. (4/4/17)

Overall, all five women were pathologized by others' deficit thinking, beliefs, attitudes, and practices, and to counter these experiences in varying degrees all the five BWD's responses across the chronicles and in relation to those others (e.g., their white professors, and peers) presumed incompetence of the BWD abilities To demonstrate, on several occasions in Alice's chronicle, she defined her smartness the following way:

> And, so, you give me that IQ test that will recognize from all races that are prevalent for all the races, along the same standards – [to her professor] I'd believe anything you say. Because your're White. The IQ says that my IQ is 142. We need to recheck that. Recheck it how you want to. You want to give me another one? Yes, that's what it says. 142. This must have been a mistake. [Professor's response]. Well, why is it mistaken? Can you tell me why that's mistaken? Because I'm Black? Is that what you're saying? [Professor] Well, no, I'm not saying that. Yes, you are saying that. So, these are the reasons that these people [professors] do not want to be recorded. (Alice, 4/4/17)

Alice experienced pathologization though her white professor's trivialization of her intellectual knowledge and demands respect for herself and that of her people (Hudson-Weems, 1993). In sum, these women's chronicles were full of examples of their experience with pathologization, and the sticky truths of *disablement* as they transitioned through life and their education, as narrated by BWD, that impacted and lingered in their psyche.

The second sticky truth of disablement. *Disablement* emerged across all the BWD narratives and is another word for experiences with ableism. Ableism, like disablement, usually involves an experience with and understanding of disability in which society disables the individual and/or body (Taylor, 2018; Thomas, 1999) and impacts their perceptions and cultural arrangements about the meanings of disability (Shakespeare, 1996; Wolbring, 2012) and the historical constructions of identity and ability (Annamma, et al, 2016). Disablement means being made unfit and disabled due to disability diagnoses and to structures and environments dominated by non-disabled people, who are more disabling than those who are supposed to be disabled (Davis, 2013). For example, Alice shared,

> Today I'm grateful to say I'm only on two medications. Yeah. From 12 to two…The drugs that they had me on were causing me to lose my memory…And my goal was to get off of medication…I could not do college under the influence. (4/4/17)

After consulting with her doctors, Alice "slowly but surely" rejected to continue taking medication that suppressed her consciousness and ability to make decisions, resulting in favorable outcomes once she countered medical treatments and advocated for her own plan with her doctors. Furthermore, the medication was a barrier with outcomes that also disabled Alice and constrained her academic forward progression.

Karen's chronicle provides testimony to the various forms of disablement that she experienced in relation to not being told about her own IEP and rights to services. In school, those decisions were made about her—without her. "I was a little afraid to transition from high school to college because it was not familiar territory and I did not know how to use my IEP in college" (2/12/17). Further, Karen's story suggested that her secondary school had failed to explain that an IEP is not utilized in postsecondary education in the same way as it was implemented in her secondary education. She also shared that her employment at the university was the reason she became aware of her rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act: "until I actually started using the services at my job I work at currently" (2/12/17). Karen worked in the disability office on her college campus and learned how her IEP was used as a form of documentation of a disability in K-12 that the disability office staff examines in order to apply contextual assessments of her diagnoses for them to determine her post-secondary education disability-related accommodations.

Another BWD, Tammy, shared in her chronicle that "I use to be able to crawl on the floor and I use to be very mobile crawling on the floor" (2/18/17), As an adult woman, Tammy recalled a painful, disabling experience during her childhood when she was rendered powerless as her mobility was restricted by a caregiver who did not approve of her crawling. She stated, "in foster care, [one] foster parent did not like me to crawl on the dirty floor. So, she seen a family surgeon where I can get surgery and did not have to crawl on the floor." Although this parent thought she was doing what was best for Tammy at the time, Tammy's perspective is blatantly different, and she grieved the outcome and how she was treated and made to feel by others. "Now I cannot even crawl on the floor anymore—people would complain that they had to pick me either up or do stuff for me" (2/18/17).

Although in the previous example, Tammy's disablement appears related to her disability alone, Zora, whose experiences with disablement in connection to intersections of identity and symptoms of depression, connects such disablement to race/disability intersections:

> We all go through the same thing and why is it okay for one race to be okay to have problems, and another one can't? That bothers me because when I tell people that I suffer from depression, it's just like, what? You're Black. (4/4/17)

In her frustration she contends with the Black and white binary and female gender, while refusing to let others disable her through inequitable opportunities—alluding to her knowledge that to be understood in a matter that she perceives as occurring for those homogenous peers (e.g., white women) does not happen for Black women.

The third truth of exclusion. *Exclusion* emerged across all the BWD narratives and the word is understood as segregation, alienation, and discrimination against students of color, and at the intersections of differences (e.g., race, gender/sex, disability and other identities) that occurs across society and has a history of adverse outcomes (Artiles, 1998, Annamma et al., 2016; Trainor, 2017). In particular, these exclusions can be seen in schools and classrooms, particularly in what Reid and Knight (2006) refer to as "institutionalized systems of disadvantages" (p. 21). Diana revealed her truths of *exclusion* in her chronicle, beginning with the memory "I thought that I had an IEP when I was about in second grade" (2/14/17), Diana was diagnosed in school with a Learning Disability (LD) at a very young age, and she viewed the suddenness and manner in which she and her mother were "told" about her exclusionary need; "I didn't even know that I had to get one, um I didn't even know that I had it. She "voiced" a dissonance with her understanding of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and her diagnoses. She shared:

> Well actually, the way we found out is because my mother had to have a meeting with my teachers. They were saying I needed to be there because

> I was kind of behind in my work, a little bit, and um, the level of reading wasn't at the same level as the other children. (2/14/17)

These early experiences of exclusion continued and increased throughout Diana's remaining K-12 years. She remained in special education through the end of 12th grade without a clear understanding of her IEP: "they put me in there to see if it will help. I ended up staying in there, from my 2nd grade all the way up to my senior year in high school" (2/14/17). As Diana understood, it was her teacher's assessment of her reading ability that resulted in Diana's segregation from general education classes from second grade through 12th grade.

Moreover, the other four BWD also experienced exclusion at various intersections of their life and education, albeit in different forms that came from feeling misunderstood, stigmatized, or limited in physical access by others' decisions. For example, in her chronicle, Karen stated, "I mean, you just never know what another person is going through, I did feel real misunderstood." She dealt with invisibility because of race and gender. She continued, "I mean, so many people just assume that you know, Black women, they get this stigma that, Black women we just, I don't know, like, I don't know, it's a stigma around Black women. It's, I don't know" (2/12/17). Alice said, "I like to be where I am supposed to be, part of it is because of my difference, my diagnoses. So, I will never be out just around, just kicking it around" (Alice, 4/4/17). Concomitantly, Diana felt both excluded (i.e., segregated) and racialized (i.e., stigmatized). Similarly, Tammy felt excluded because she was forced to use a chair, which she viewed as keeping her from access to community and human acceptance: "they [people] look at us [people in a chair] like we can't do anything for ourselves; so, I long to be normal, and to walk and I just long to be normal" (2/18/17). Tammy mentioned her biological mother in her chronicle and expanded on how her use of a wheelchair resulted in her being excluded from her mother:

> I want my life back, to walk like you, I am sorry. I had, my biological mother [who] also resented [me] being in a chair because my biological mother, she could not stand for me to be in a chair. She would lie to me and tell me she's coming to pick me up and she said her car would be broken. My [adopted] mother said she never down talk me. Then after I had my baby she listened to everybody else instead of uplifting me, she hurt me with my own child. Then, when I can do stuff for my child and for myself, she wants to help the daddy [who] don't care. How in the world am I supposed to deal with this…you know your mother supposed to have your back. (2/18/17)

Tammy attempted to make sense of how she was made to feel excluded by both her birth mother and her adopted mother who rejected her Cerebral Palsy diagnosis. In court, Tammy defended her right as a mother to be included in her son's life and to have him live with her. Ultimately, Tammy's moms were "disabling subjects" with differing powers to subjectively determine and discuss Tammy's disability in incapacitating terms. Her adopted mom's testimony to the court successfully reflected Tammy's "inability" to take care of her son, which resulted in her granted custody. In spite of Tammy's self-advocacy, subconsciously she wrestled with how she internalized the betrayal and rejection of her moms, which was shakenly painful. Further, Zora, attempted to make sense of how she was made to feel excluded by the way that "white people brainwash Black people:

> Uh-huh, like, I have. And I learned just to be quiet and let them think what they're going to think. Because I get really upset when it comes to race. Just with anybody that's, I feel like most of the Black people are brainwashed. I feel like the White people brainwashed all these Black people to believe that we're nothing, that we would never accomplish anything that we can't succeed in life. And it makes me mad because Black people really believe that and the follow everything a White person does just to be accepted knowing they will never be accepted by them. (4/4/18)

At this point, I have presented these common themes: *pathologization, disablement*, and *exclusion* along with analysis guided by tenets of Dis/Crit, CRT, and Womanism/Black feminism. At the heart of their chronicles, these five BWD is calling into focus what Womanism/Black feminism discusses as unbearable (Hill Collins, 2000; hooks, 1996) and what DS/DSE scholars call into question about racialized practices in personal and professional concepts (Connor, 2017), which excludes people from spaces, from competency, from self-worth and worth apparised by otherss, based off of perceived differences. Accordingly, I take a second walk through these truths to demonstrate their *stickiness*—the residue of oppression and related negative consequences and feelings these truths have left on the BWD participants and which reflect Wilson's notion of falsification of Black consciousness (1993).

Part Two A: Stickiness of the Truths

Stickiness of disablement. The impact of *sticky truths* are manifested in the residuals remaining from the *terrible truth* of *pathologization* that negatively stuck in these women's consciousness and identity development. Like the quick-setting adhesiveness of superglue, which binds things together, *terrible truths* of *pathologization* bonded to the women's interpretations of their own self-worth and competence in relation to adverse outcomes in these women's lives due to their differences (i.e., race, gender, and ability). Through the lens of the BWD chronicles and overall interview data, the disablement practices endemic in our social and political institutions (e.g., schools, universities, hospitals, prisons, families, and the likes) become "norms" that are seen and respected as the official authority to strive for and to obtain. One illustration of a sticky truth that emerged from the BWD experiences with disablement is a desire to be "normal."

Desire for normalcy. Several of the women expressed their desired to be *normal*. For example, in the third interview with Tammy, when she was talking about getting out the house more, she stated, "I want to walk like you, I am sorry I am a little upset…I am emotional, and since I get hurt a lot when I pour my heart out. I try to help people and they run over me like I'm just nothing" (5/22/17). Tammy's words reveal her position of vulnerability to me the researcher and my nondisabled appearance triggered her own desire to walk, which she sees as a normal function of the human body—one in which she cannot participate. According to DS, "the constellation of words describing this concept 'normal,' 'normalcy,' 'norm,' 'average,' 'abnormal'—all entered the European languages rather late in human history" (Davis, 2013, p. 1). Thus, the varied use of the word carries with it the pressures to conform to a set of norms.

To illustrate another example, in my second interview with Alice, when answering the question for her to tell me about herself; she began a conversation about how her white psychology professors used statistics to show the disablement of Blacks:

> Well, these statistics are put in the book for the reason that they always, you know, say, well, Blacks are, they're more likely to be substance abuse[r], born addicted, or malnourished, and all of these negative attributes that they give to Black children the reason they do this isn't, it's so that they can get more resource for people of color. But you know what? What about, if they're being made to look good by these things. (6/15/2017)

Alice's words also highlights *ability profiling* as a deficit response—a disablement of Black and other people of color compared to whites (Hill Collins, 2013). Such racialized practices of disablement and normalcy have been a burden that Blacks and other people of color continue to bear. Alice counters the idea of these statistics being good,

> if they mean good, then I’m not understanding why that they’re not taking into account the poor Whites, then. Why aren’t you statistically writing the data for poor White children that don’t have access to medical care, they don’t go to school, that are severely abused, they are being sexually abused, psychologically abused and all of that. I don’t understand why these children aren’t included in the statistics. (6/15/17)

Alice not only answered her own inquiry and gave credence to the terrible truths she experienced but countered the way her white professors’ treated her and people who look like her and in response erases the struggle of poor whites by denigrating poor Blacks. She continued, angry by her white professor’s use of “statistics [that] are not there to help Blacks. They are there to continuously keep us separated from the norms. That’s what I tell them” (6/15/17).

Alice discussed the residual of *terrible truths of pathologization* that is seen in *stickiness of disablement* and *racialized* practices, and at the same time addressed not meeting the supposed *norms* according to the statistics her professors’ shared. Reid and Knight (2006) study showed how historical issues can penetrate current practices when they examined how labeling students of color as Learning Disabled affected their college admission. They argued, “ableism, intertwined with the ideology of normalcy, is the assumption, rooted in eugenics, that it is better to be as "’normal’ as possible rather than be disabled” (Baker, 2002 as cited in Reid & Knight, 2006, by, p. 18).

Doubting ability. Perceivable in several of the women’s interviews was the rejection and insurrection of the subversion of doing what they felt was best for them. For example, in Alice’s narrative, she counter-revolted, when she took a risk and reduced her medications from 22 to two. Differently, Zora counter-revolted against her perception of her peers' terrible truths about her and her group membership. Zora shared,

> And coming to [this university], everyone's here is mostly white. And it's like a handful of us that's, like, from different places. I experienced that in classes where my, you know, classmates would just talk to me like I'm, you know, stupid, they try to make everything, just, I don't know, it's just really ignorant of them. (4/4/17)

Zora's "classmates'" superior and intellectual attitudes towards her caused her anguish. CRT scholars argue for centering the counternarrative, perspectives, or viewpoints that help society come to consciousness about the permanence of racism and white supremacy (Alexander, 2018; Bell, 2008). The protection of a non-racial-identity for whites comes with the notions of supremacy and ableism that continues to bolster their elevated position in society. DSE scholars also argue that racialized and disablement practices continue to exist in social and political institutions (Connor, 2018). For example, in Alice's second interview she talked about her only request for academic accommodation, to tape record class lectures, which she felt was a reasonable accommodation. However, denied the accommodation request, Alice stated,

> When I asked them and told them I really wanted to record my classes, [professor]"Oh, no, you can't record psych—very few Psychology classes will let you record them because there's sensitive information?" I don't have anything to do with that. I don't know what you're referring to. This is supposed to be academic learning. What type of sensitive information are you referring to? It can't be any more sensitive than the curriculum that is taught at any major university. So I should be able to record the classes. Because recording helps me in my learning process. (6/15/17)

Alice's inability to tape record the lectures lessened her opportunity to gain the same result and benefit of her program that her non-disabled student peers had and prevented her from reaching the same level of achievement that she might have had if tape recording were integrated appropriately into her educational setting.

Similarly, in Karen’s second interview, she talked extensively about taking a math class four times before she disclosed her disability to the disability office (where she worked and received accommodation services). She shared with them that she could not pass her math requirement and requested a reasonable accommodation. In high school, she had an Individual Education Plan (IEP), also known as a Summary of Performance (SOP), but in college, she did not know how her IEP would apply to her college education. She stated,

> So I got updated testing that basically confirmed what I had all along, a math disability, well a Learning Disability but specifically in math. I had to get two letters from the guy who tested me and a letter from the lady in my office and both of these letters were saying that they are in support of me taking alternative courses. Fast-forward all of that, they sent me a letter of rejection, they did not approve me to take the alternative class because I was in a field which is heavily math base, so I change my major. I went through the process again, and they approved me. I can say my disability worked in my favor. (2/21/17)

Karen’s story is a familiar one; many students with IEP’s in K-12 do not necessarily know what it is, or its use in a postsecondary educational setting. Nor do they clearly understand they are a qualified individual with a disability (QID), and eligible to receive accommodations in college (Banks, 2014) under the American with Disability Act (ADA) of 2008. Although Karen ran into an obstacle in her college trajectory, she “continued” to seek an accommodation that would “allow” her to progress in college and eventually attain an undergraduate degree. Karen, as a BWD, had affiliates (e.g., staff who could do a disability assessment and others in the disability office) who collectively supported her as she continued to fight against *sticky truths* of disablement and validated her experiences as she transitioned and navigated her educational context. The scaffolding of others, coupled with Karen’s labor of determination, “opened” up a space for her to continue forward progression in her education that supported and “validated” her ability. However, this is not always the case.

Isolation and loneliness. In Tammy’s second interview, answering the inquiry for her to tell me about her experiences, she shared, “I started resenting people from that because they used to say, ‘I don't want to do this for her,’ or ‘I don't want to take her anywhere’" (3/18/17). Thus, the failure of others to support her during various transitions throughout her lived and educational experiences as a woman in a chair have left an imprint on her heart—one of isolation and loneliness, and a determination to self-protect. “Oh—it’s like, that is, He’s [God’s] opening doors but at the same time it’s hard for me to trust Him because so many people have hurt me” (3/18/17).

Tammy’s words are reflective of the CRT tenet of counter-storytelling (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012), whereby she used her unique voice to tell the story of her childhood experiences living in a community (e.g., home and family) of able-bodied individuals and coming to terms with her other identities, (e.g., Christianity) in emancipatory ways so as to affirm her “dignity and self-understanding” Eiesland (1994, p. 21). The *sticky truths* of Tammy’s experiences with pathologization left Tammy trying to negotiate her multiple stigmatized identities.

Other BWD’s views of their ability also involved pushing back and rejecting *sticky truths* oppressively (e.g., dis/ability labels) ascribed *upon them*, which affected their legitimacy as Black women. For example, Zora stated,

> Black women are told not to have problems. We’re not supposed to be depressed. And I see it all over Facebook, how, like, a Black woman will say, like, oh, I’m like really sad, I’m upset. And someone will comment, just anybody will comment, like, oh, you’re not supposed to, you supposed to be strong, because you’re Black. You’re not supposed to have problems. (4/4/17)

In a space where labels of strength might be considered antithetical to disablement, for Zora, the label of a strong Black woman imbrued her with many cultural assumptions (Townes, 1995) and became a disabling factor (Davis, 2013).

Further, Zora's story demonstrates that the "strong Black woman" label prevents her from being seen in a vulnerable and in a painful space. She authentically seeks to know the purpose of her existence—anyone under such conditions would be/feel vulnerable. Tammy also talks of isolation, as she shares her hopes of winning her son back and breaking the cycle of foster care:

> It's just, all these years. It hurt me too bad. I thought I was going, thought the curse was going to be broken with me and it wasn't, that my child wouldn't be in foster care. I wanted to ask God, or my pastor, how in the world do I get over this . . . I can't even talk about it without being angry or crying." (3/18/17)

Tammy is conflicted because of the pyscho-emotional pain that she experienced due to her disablement (Goodley & Lawthom, 2006). She discussed how she sees herself as impaired in one or more of her daily functions and how she connects the pain that she is experiencing to the judgment of the court to grant her adopted mom the right to provide foster care for her son. Tammy struggles with her identity as a woman in a chair and that of her son's adoption through the "institutional power," and "right now it is a tender spot" for her to work through. Relatedly, Zora struggled with her identity, ultimately deciding the fight remained hers to take on:

> Even though right now I'm having a really big struggle trying to figure out who I am and what I want to be in life, I want to continue to do what's best for me. It's really hard, it's very, very hard having depression and anxiety and also being bipolar. So, every day when I wake up, even though it's a struggle, I'm going to continue to push through it because at the end I feel like it's worth it. (4/4/17)

Both Tammy's and Zora's quotes include "real talk" geared towards Black pain—how they feel it and how others perceive it, as if Blacks are not hurting (Williams, 2008).

These BWD tossed *others' terrible truths* of pathologization of them on their heads and uprooted the scum from the *sticky truths* of disablement.

> The presentation of truth in new forms provokes resistance, confounding those committed to accepted measures for determining the quality and validity of statements made and conclusions reached, and making it difficult for them to respond and adjudge what is acceptable. (D. Bell, 2008)

Part Two B: Subverted Truths

In the next section, I demonstrate how elements of the BWD narratives countered-reconfigured-resisted-re-authored-talked-back to the *Terrible, Sticky Truths* they had experienced in their interactions with people, and in social and educational structures. I call these counters, *Subverted Truths,* of which there are three types*: (Re)defined identities and radical love,* ***(Re)****placed competence and knowledge,* and *(Re)valued sisterhood and community***.** The epithet at the beginning of this section summarizes how new epistemological antitheses to acceptable norms causes disturbance to a racialized structure of systems of oppressions.

Similarly, through a one-on-one correspondence, I show where one or more of the five BWD in their narratives reinterpreted pathologization, disablement, and exclusion—*terrible and sticky truths* reached and projected upon them by others—through *subverted truths,* as I analyzed their stories through the conceptual and theoretical framework. Subverted truths serve to acknowledge and validate their perspectives on their overall lives, transitions, and secondary to post-secondary educational experiences. Through retelling others' (e.g., social and educational professionals, family, and peers) treatment of them, and how those treatments made them feel, these women voiced their perspectives on who they are in the context of life's transitions and education. I now turn to the reinterpreted views of *terrible and sticky truths* through the transformative concepts of subverted truths.

(Re)defined socially constructed identities and radical love. Constructing and negotiating identities, especially multiple ones, is not only complex, but require the considerations of "sociocultural and historical contexts in which individuals develop" (Jones, 2009, p. 287). Jones' work is useful to my study in that the subverted truths of these five BWD (re)define their self-authorship and intersectional identities and disrupt the imposed social constructed identities categories described. Walker encourages us to "say with conviction that anything we love can be sheltered by their love. . . . They have to make their love inseparable from their belief. And both inseparable from hard work" (1997, p. 49).

Subverted truths support and validate these BWD's experiences, as CRT and DS/DSE scholars would agree, "because of their unique perspective in the world" (Annamma et al., 2016). The effects of socially constructed identities are substantial: deficit labels are "baggage" "too heavy to carry" (Gold & Richards, 2012, p. 144). When this is the case for Blacks in general and Black women, in particularly, something greater is necessary to assist in carrying the load – a radical love.

A radical love rooted in what one believes about oneself shows up in the ways that he or she loves, take actions towards self, and are reflective in the way he or she treats others (Taylor, 2018). Relatedly, "radical love…results in a steadfast commitment, unwavering trust, and, in some contexts, a daring that defies current dominant reason"

(Dotson, 2013, p. 2). Radical love contends that viewing people's differences in the same way that one would respect their own, and requires one acknowledge their own worth before one can radically see and love others (Taylor, 2018). We can see Tammy's engagement in radical love as a *subverted truth* that talks back to the load of her experiences with *pathologization, disablement, exclusion.* Even though these truths are sticky and leave residue in her psyche and consciousness, she dares to defy it through her recognition of what she has achieved and through her love for her son and for God, despite all she has been through:

> Being angry at myself and God and for putting me in this position. But now sometimes I know why God put me in here. Not because I know I can't get up . . . but it is to encourage people that are in a wheel chair. I've been told I have in the recent years and months blessed them. Praising God [and then there was a long pause] and that I go to school and I try to do everything for my son. (5/22/17)

Tammy made sense of her experiences as she (re)defined herself and her interactions with others in the midst of her holding on to her faith and struggling with how she viewed her body.

Diana expresses a radical love in her third interview, when I asked her to tell me how she sees or makes connections or sense of her education experiences as a BWD and her perspective on her reading dis/ability.

> Reading's going to be with me forever and ever, so, you know, if I really want to be somewhere and get something done, I have to tend to my business, then, you know, read it. So, you know, from then and now I just learn how to deal with my fears, in order to get over your fears you have to actually deal with them. (2/14/17)

This radical love shows up as Diana's counternarrative of her response to reading difficulty is illustrative of the fourth tenet of DisCrit, which argues against a "passively accepting injustices" for a "strategic maneuver" of pushing-back fear to restore what has been lost to educational experiences (Annamma et al., 2016). She continued,

> Because if you don't ever deal with them then you're going to be afraid forever, if you ignore them. That's really pretty much how I handle situations nowadays. I'm not perfect, no one's perfect, but, I know how to deal with it now and I've prepared myself that everywhere I go I have to read and, like, if I have to read something I actually like, skim through it, just to make sure I have understanding and most of the time I be like, wow, this just really not that hard. That's really not that bad. It's not like it's going to you know, attack me or anything. It's to help me, you know, better myself you know. Because if I want to actually be someone in life, you know, I have to be educated. So, in order to be who I want to be in life, I have to you know, deal with it. (7/13/17)

When facing her struggle with reading, Diana's isolation and loneliness in her pursuit of learning was subverted by her willingness to (re)define her identity, and therefore, better herself. Using Taylor's representation of radical love applied to Diana's situation, we see that she too (re)storied herself by taking full responsibility for a *disabled* identity and no longer apologizing for how the world sees her—as faulted.

In Karen's third interview, when I asked her to tell me how she sees the future, and possibly make some connections to what she has told me about her childhood, her experience with a disability, and her education transitions to post-secondary, she shared,

> So, I think I want to be a counselor, maybe it's like I'm the person that they meet with maybe once a week, twice a week, and talk about like, their problems, some childhood stuff, like that, and then I interpret it or help them, not necessarily cope with it, but maybe counsel them through it. And it could be kids, older people, young people. And don't think there's a specific age range, just people who need counseling. But for right now I see, that's what I see myself doing that. I'm a good listener so, but it could change. I mean, I'm not done with school yet. (4/25/17).

Karen's openness and hopefulness for a future that encompasses her giving back to individuals, communities, and others who need a smile and a soft word of encouragement and to hear, me too, I've been there where you are, and I am here now is inseparable from the history of what Womanist calls a “total community” (Gilkes, p. 151). When considering the importance of restorative truths that redefine identity to a place that is meaningful and appropriate, Karen seemed to have found the right fit to reflect her competence and knowledge—the place to which she had arrived at that moment in her identity.

(Re)placed competence and knowledge. Black women with disabilities subverted the sticky truth of *disablement*—doubting their ability experiences in education and (re)placed competence and knowledge. For example, in Alice’s third interview I asked her to reflect on the meaning of her educational and lived experiences as a BWD seeking a terminal degree as one of her future goals. In a portion of Alice’s chronicle she redefined her identity through her knowledge of what her body was telling her when she challenged the medical doctors about the effects of the prescribed drug treatment related to her mental health diagnoses. In doing so, she (re)placed their pathology about her with competence and knowledge to make decisions about her health and well-being.

Likewise, Zora’s subversion of her intellectual and racialized identity countered the experiences with the ways that her peers treated her in college because of their presumed incompetence of her abilities.

> Because I’m smart. Well, I believe that I am very smart, and I believe that I deserve to be here just like anyone else deserve to be here, regardless if I’m Black, I’m white – whatever color I may be. And it really makes me mad because, like, they really, like, just thought I was dumb, like, no, I’m really smart, I might be smarter than you. (4/4/17)

Zora’s counternarrative exclaims an asset-based understanding of who she is and her ability to stand and propose liberation and emancipation from the residuals of sticky truths that lingered on her overall identity and consciousness, and from outcomes that excluded her from full participation in her education transition experience.

Relatedly, Diana, in her second interview, shared about the segregation of her English class. She explained that while her white peers sit on one side of the room, Blacks and other students of color sit on the other. She then discussed how her white teacher favors the white side of the room, and when addressing her side, he dismisses her, and this makes her want to *fight* as a student with the right to participate in the class. Diana stated, “the only time I’ve had to fight is when it came to like, me, at school you know, if I, like had to read something, you know, if I don’t understand it . . .” (2/28/17). Diana’s use of the word *fight* is a rejection of how the professor made her feel, and a mechanism to protect herself against internal feelings of irrelevance. In the moments that the teacher did address Diana’s side of the class, she perceived him to be dismissive and ashamed of her as a member in the class:

> And I feel like he try to like, connect with that side of the room more than like my side of the room. And then like, if he does connect to the side of my room, he’s talking mainly to the Puerto Rican girl. And like asking her questions. And I feel like that’s not fair, you know? (Diana, 2/28/17)

Talking to the Puerto Rican girl, Diana, said, “You know he always calling on you instead and answering my questions, [and] she’s like, I don’t know why he always calling on me, you know” (Diana, 2/28/17). The professor failed to forge a connection between himself and all the students in the class, and the exclusion of one student, if not more, reveals the personal and professional irresponsibility of the professor. Diana’s calling this out demonstrates her subversion of any truths that have positioned her as incompetent at the intersection of her identity markers.

(Re)valued sisterhood and community. These Black women revalued their sisterhood not only because of a shared Blackness but they also grappled with understanding their intellectual ability, self-definition, and self-determination as valuable, as well as their familial strengths and resources (i.e., spiritual activities, family, community, and friends), which they viewed as healing processes (Mitchem, 2007). Revalued sisterhood and community is about women who esteem their lives and practices as much as possible individually but all the more collectively as they involved themselves in church activities and services, speaking at women's centers, and overall working in a community of others with dis/abilities while pushing back on terrible and sticky experiences by revaluing how they see themselves and community (Ferri, 2015; Petersen, 2009a). For example, during Tammy's second interview I probed to know more about transitions in her education, and the overall life that she sought after she shared a premonition given to her by God about loving herself, her baby's father, and her adopted mother, all of whom Africana Womanism identifies as having great importance (Hudson-Weems, 1998). Tammy asked me, "Do you believe what I'm saying" (Tammy, 3/18/17)? With this question, Tammy asked whether I believed her premonition from God: whether I believed her is a way to enter into a genuine sisterhood. She continued, "God, he's opening doors, but at the same time it's hard for me to trust Him because so many people have hurt me" (3/18/17). Tammy was looking for her identity, and to me as a sister, and she looked to me to help validate her significance and worth.

Community. The recognition of a Black women's cultural identity is essential to making connections to our history as sisters and solidarity co-partnering in the struggles against oppression experiences and their residuals in our lives and community. To illustrate, Diana moved toward me as her "peer," and although the conversation was short, and despite her internal feelings of depression, she also forced herself to (re)store a space of worth and hope within our conversation as sisters, despite how she felt and in the context of her education and a world of barriers and obstacles in her path (e.g., her bipolar and LD diagnosis).

> Because you never know what's going to hit you. I feel like it's worth it [to] figure out who I want to be and if I keep letting myself just out [and] open up to people more, I will [have] better connections and better ways to understand the world. (4/4/17)

Zora's strategy and approach hinged on her focus in our one interview of ways for her to move forward, even in situations where she felt excluded and omitted. Alice strived to get off of 22 drugs, Tammy sought affirmation while fighting off feelings of isolation and distrust of others and God, and Zora charged us to stay in the fight, to be who we are, including embracing our belief in God *or not*, and to do so despite our fears of exclusion and for our safety.

> If you believe in God, pray. If you don't believe in God, whatever meditat[ion] you [chose], whatever keeps you calm, do it. Just make sure you stay safe. Like, that's the biggest thing. You have to talk to somebody. Because no one's going to know that you're hurting if you don't open up…you have to continue to fight. (4/4/17)

In the midst of Zora's educational trajectory was her description of how she is hurting and why, and the importance of reaching out to others as a form of fighting for oneself; but she did not stop there, she also challenged others to do the same, all in the midst of struggling to work against self-defeating internalized thoughts of pathologization.

Relatedly, Alice was bummed-out that she might never get her record expunged, which is what her old counselor told her right before she had to speak at the place she received her GED. Alice stated,

> I spoke to the peer employment training class there, at the 143rd class - I graduated from that organization. So, this man has basically laughed in my face when I asked him, well, how long I have to wait before I can apply for my record to be expunged here in this state. He said “It'll be on your record for 99 years”. You have to wait 99 years. And I was like, wow, really? You know, because I knew he was being smart alecky. You know, honestly, I did not feel like going after that news. I didn't, you know, to be very honest with you. One thing about my commitment to change is that I do what I say and when I say that I'm going to do it. Now, you know, that's what people do that have integrity, that's what normal activity says that you do. So, that day I did not want to go. Really. I was like, oh, my God, how am I going to appear at, you know, be so great with these people when I don't even feel great myself. (7/28/17)

In the midst of Alice’s disappointment and commitment to keep her word despite her disappointment, her authentic voice called on God in her inner spirit to intervene and empower her to engage in community, even if she did not feel great: such engagement renewed her spirit. Alice continued the story,

> As I walked in the room, it was just, oh, my goodness, I hadn't seen some of these people that I worked side by side with for two years. And then, oh, the hugs and the warmth and some of these individuals that I had mentored and they had gotten a GED and then they had graduated from peer employment training. I was just overwhelmed and I was glad I had came. And as I went up to the podium and I told them that, you know, I told them never listen to a prediction that does not empower you. Because I used to tell them all the time, I told them, I've met so many people, so many people tell me that I cannot achieve my associate's degree in one year and move on to my bachelor's. I said I am going to be a doctor of something. (7/28/17)

Alice gave back, despite how she was made to feel, and experienced a community of people she knew and spent time with and felt the warm reception and heard their hope. I now turn to see the ways that transition education can disrupt and or reproduce these terrible truths of *pathologization*, *disablement,* and *exclusion* and where opportunities for really hopeful and promising subversions incorporated into transition processes, as described in the conceptual framework. For example, since the two transition coordinators in this study are non-disabled white female and male, although they may have thought that their narratives conveyed one message, the BWD voices may say something entirely opposite than what the TCs may had intended. In the next section, I turn to another distinct group of participants in this study, the two transition coordinators, and present the chronicles of Ken and Lucy, respectively.

Part Three: The Chronicles of Two Transition Coordinators

Ken's chronicle: "Special education [is] about building relationships, getting to know individual students, helping them on their own continuum." Ken's chronicle answers the first interview focus inquiry: Tell me as much as possible about yourself in light of the topic of transition.

> I appreciate that you're doing this study. I think its important work. My whole life, I've been surrounded by public servants. Early on, I just realized the importance of being a servant and a good steward of all the joys and opportunities that I've been blessed with. I attend a Christian church up on the north side, and, part of the Outside the Walls team. And, the best way to lead and to get people on is to be relevant, to be real, and to show that you're not perfect. To just offer unconditional love and support. I gr[ew] up in this tight knit safe environment, but then my parents are both born in [mid-western city] - they grew up in really diverse area. So, it's interesting where my mom associated with like, Italian - so that's her, like, nationality. That's her heritage. Her grandparents were the ones that came over from Italy. So, she grew up in a pocket of Italian immigrants but there were all these other pockets where there wasn't hostility. It was like a mix and celebration and a respect of cultures and traditions. There was a big Puerto Rican population, African American population, and there was just this vibrancy that when I'd go to their, like, they have an International Festival. It's my favorite event ever. I would go mainly because of the food – I'll be honest – and the music, but, it was just to see this celebration of, I don't know, because I don't want to say, like, everyone's unique, so it's not that, but, it's almost like just, an outward expression of kind of your – I don't know how you say it. Like, people would kind of hold on to those traditions and associate and say that, yes, I am Italian, yes, I'm Polish, yes, I'm German, yes, I'm Nigerian. But they would then be like, but I am [mid-western city]. Like, I'm American, you know, so it's like I'm part of this bigger culture, this movement and I love and respect all these cool things, these quirky things, these wonderful

things about where I come from. I mean, I don't know how to say it. This is hard for me, because I, obviously, like respect and value all the cultures, but to me it was more so, it wasn't like flaunting or boastful or saying, like, you know, we've contributed more to society or not. Like, people would kind of hold on to those traditions and associate and say that, yes, I am Italian, yes, I'm Polish, yes, I'm German, yes, I'm Nigerian. But they would then be like, but I am [mid-western city]. Like, I'm American, you know, so it's like I'm part of this bigger culture, this movement and I love and respect all these cool things, these quirky things, these wonderful things about where I come from. I won't forget those, but, it's just given me a great perspective that I think adds value to then, this world I'm living, or this space I'm living it today. I'm like, because people are racist, like, it's obvious to me why he's not getting a fair chance [speaking about a Black mayor], or, you know, you'd have just, riots or race-related issues. At the time I don't think there was much gender-related issues or anything like that, but I would still recognize that like, the climate. And I was like, well, it's interesting and kept always thinking, like, if I don't go into teaching I'd love to go into urban planning. Because, to me, I'd want to create spaces and just environments where people could come together to just enjoy each other's company, to respect each other, to, make it, just, yeah, a good positive environment. Definitely value education, my mom worked in public relations her whole life. My father, just a self-made businessman, and my grandparents were educators. I got to go to their churches and their schools and just get to see them working with kids and kind of get me in the mix, and it was fun. He [his grandfather] was a principal of an elementary school. I decided pretty early on that I wanted to pursue education. I didn't know for sure what area. I loved all my subjects. Loved learning. So I just enjoyed being [in] the classroom. Had some great teachers early on, I mean, like kindergarten teacher, my fourth grade teacher, and they all stand out. And then just some subject-specific teachers, my US history teacher, my AP English teacher, that was just great growing up and having all these people just give me these pearls of wisdom, where I went Wow! like, that's incredible. The world out there is so big and just kind of want to go explore it. I went to a university, and I decided to study special education because it's just more person centered. And there were a couple of reasons why. One was, when I coached soccer while I was in high school I'd have students that had, or players that had ADHD or autism. You know, just, there weren't a lot of opportunities for students with more severe and profound disabilities. So, yeah, I volunteered for an adapted program, started an adapted soccer program. It was before I really had any exposure to any of that stuff, but I was just eager to learn more and to help these families out and to give those children great experiences. People said, "You might be really good at that," because for them, and more people were telling me, special education is about building relationships, getting to know individual students, helping them on their own continuum. My first job as a Special

> Educator as a new teacher, I kind of rotated every year. It seemed like I got a new responsibility, and I feel like I did a good job, so maybe that's why they kept adding responsibilities, but, just continued to grow and to get to work with really diverse students and just try to ingrain myself in the community, helping and serve as much as a I could. And, yeah, it was a great time. And then I got my Admin license. And that's what kind of opened up some other avenues. And my wife worked in [an urban environment], which is actually where I am now. I got to see the work that she was doing and that's something that I always had a passion for, so, [I] applied for a position as the transition coordinator. I'm here at the high school mainly. I'm seen as an administrator, but I feel like my most common duties are more of a counselor. So, really, though, specific to helping students with disabilities. That's my strength, that's what I loved doing - working with Ninth Graders as they came in, helping them set a four-year plan, plus, and then helping them as they were kind of exiting, get everything tidied up, answer questions, ease their anxiety, and that sort of thing. I have a wide variety of responsibilities: developing programs and giving scholars experiences, professional development with teacher to [ensure] students experiences in the classroom are really valuable or individualized. But none more important than connecting with individual students and their families and making sure that they're on a great pathway that will extend beyond just their senior year, or their exit year. And get our students in front of [college staff] so they know who they're emailing, who they're talking to, they get it directly from the source, they get to see the facilities, get a little bit excited about things and realized that asking for support or receiving that support is possible. I just try to keep a pulse on kind of what's going on. (5/19/17)

Upon my first examination of Ken's story, and based on some of his responses, I applauded Ken as an educator and administrator with a passion for the work that he conducts. He characterized his lived and educational experiences as "pearls of wisdom" that he gained from his family's hard work and modeled public service, and he identified the students with disabilities that he served as scholars. However, at the same time, it is easy to overlook the problematic situation of his position, and not dismissing his caring intentions within his work and toward the students and families he worked with, but as Milner and Laughter (2015) discuss, good intentions are not enough.

We see in his narrative discourse that signals that he conceptualizes his role as a *helper* grounded in a medical model of disability, although his role is to provide information that is helpful to students transitioning from high school to college I found his narrative to read as the students MUST depend on him to succeed. Other comments about service and passion, while at first read it seemed benevolent, which actually have been critiqued by many disabled and DS scholars as problematic because they situate the person with a disability as in need, an object of pity even (Shapiro, 1994), and the special educator as the provider (e.g. Brantlinger, et al., 2005; Thorius, 2016). Furthermore, in relation to the troubling and tangled history of racism and ableism in white non-disabled positioning of people of color as disabled (Waitoller & Thorius, 2016) we also see in Ken's narrative a reliance on whiteness. In particularly the idea of whiteness as property (Harris, 1993) and whiteness and smartness as property (Leonardo & Broderick, 2011) that Ken as a white non-disabled TC provides access to or for his students. Upon a more critical analysis, drawing from the conceptual framework of DS, CRT, and Dis Crit, the connections to the BWD's narratives of *terrible and sticky truths* of *pathologization, disablement, and exclusion* became apparent. For example, Ken likens himself to a servant and connects his servitude to a religious higher purpose. He identifies himself as American after grappling with race, heritage, and cultural transition in his describing people claiming their heritage. He positions himself as savior, a white, non-disabled savior, in a position where others have cautioned "whites use as a unique position to uplift, to edify and strengthen" (Straubhaar 2015, p. 384). Thorius (2016) has also demonstrated how special educators view their jobs as diagnosticians, magicians, and fixers of disabled students. Within these contexts, I interpret the unconditional love Ken mentions not as a radical love like that the BWD are grappling with; it is a love that depends on Ken's superiority and passion to help those, he, even with good intent, views as inferior. Later in my analysis, I will discuss how Ken and his two colleagues impose their whiteness and normalization processes into an interaction they have with a BWD.

I realize research is a situated cultural practice and as a BWD researcher, I interpret what this researcher considers as aligned with Trainor's inputs but as more than just an input and intersect whiteness and ableism. I now turn to Lucy's chronicle.

Lucy's chronicle: "Students in need, it's always been a part of my life . . . I've always been intrigued by special needs students." Lucy's chronicle also responded to the first interview focus inquiry: Tell me as much as possible about yourself in light of the topic.

> I was raised as an only child. My brother passed away when he was 7. He passed away five years before I was born. So, because of that my Mom had some mental health issues. So, we always stayed either next door or across the street from my grandmother. She was kind of the stable force. So, we went to the neighborhood school two blocks away. It's where my mom went to school, it's where my grandmother went to the school - across the street. It's where I ended up teaching 25 years. So, two blocks from where I grew up. It was more the lower income side of the city. I've always grown up around students in need. It's always been a part of my life. I wasn't a child in need. My dad acted like we - I was raised poor, but we weren't. I graduated from high school. My parents had not - my dad had done a couple little business classes, had gone to the services, WWII, but, neither one of my parents had gone on to college. I was unaware of a lot of things I needed [when]I went [to college]. So, I think that gives me a passion for student that, especially the parents don't have a clue about college, what you need to do. So, two years in college, I met my husband, got pregnant, got married, and transferred back to State [University] my major was called human relations. I switched to elementary education because they did have a special ed minor, but I did elementary education. I had started subbing in the system where my husband taught. I had the most subbing days of anybody in the system. So, in that time [I stayed] home with my son, of course this is 1977, 1978, they started talking about learning disabilities on TV, on the talk shows. Before Oprah, was the Phil Donahue show. And I used to, Phil Donahue had talked about learning

disabilities all the time and, I watched it all the time. It kind of sparked my interest, yeah. Basically that was when the law, just started. I think that was 1978 or 1979, I believe? I don't remember my special ed law that well. But, PL-94142 was like the first special ed law, and I was intrigued by that. The Guru of the State knew Indicator Thirteen and how to be compliant with the state on transition. In the beginning, I had a couple of resource classes, but as my job kind of evolved, kind of the transition case conference coordinator, more case conference coordinator. Transition was just evolving, you know, I’ve seen it really evolve since that first meeting. I ran more case conferences for my teachers because at that time, gosh, we probably had nine special ed teachers on our staff. And so all the administrators really didn’t want to be bothered with being the public agency representative of the case conference. So, basically, I was that. Because they didn’t really understand the services that, you know, when we talked about transition, we talked about our school to work program. I'd always been intrigued by special needs students. I think I always kind of wanted to be a teacher but everybody wanted me to be a teacher, so there was a part of me that didn't want to be a teacher because all my family wanted me to be a teacher. So, you know, I can remember the books I checked out were stories about special needs children, you know, when I would read on my own. So I was intrigued by that and I thought, well, it was State. Back then you had to get your master's within five years after completing your bachelor's. So I thought well if I'm going to get my master's I'm not going to get it in elementary ed. I'm going to go ahead and do, then I could just do a learning disabilities major at State [University]. So I really enjoyed my college classes, my master's level classes. Well, things just kind of all fell into place. And I started my first special needs job, it was a wonderful position. I was a resource teacher at three different elementary schools. Mondays was always for the LD, for any kind of testing. Because at State [University] at that time LD was more about identifying, all right, so you're thinking 1979, 1980, so the school psychologists would do the IQ tests, but there were so many that there was about two or three of us, because we had, still a large school system. If parents got a student with a disability, especially a learning disability, sometimes the parents do, too. They’re scared, think well, “I’m stupid,” or there’s some parents that just check out. I mean, it’s sad but it’s true. Most of the students that are going to college function pretty much on their own . . . you have to think about kids in poverty – you learn how to get by. I looked at my list of all my seniors, I have a few girls, I’m going to say, is that a system of how tests [are given], what teachers look for because I think women with disabilities are overlooked a lot. I think they go unreported. They don’t act out. They kind of get smooth over. I understand, students should go through some kind of interventions before you label them disabled. Totally get that but sometimes I think too much of that is more of a proces that takes too long and then our students don’t go through the whole process and the teachers give up on it and won’t

> continue identifying students. It’s the loud boys that cause these problems that they [the teachers] want out of the class who gets identified. That’s personal opinion, not anything proven, but, 37 years of teaching that’s what you’ve got. You know, sometimes a groups comes in that are just low – you have more mild cog students that need more support – we’re talking 77, 78, IQ, one was a dwarf – great personality. He would be an amazing front desk person. (08/01/2017)

Lucy, a first generation college student, credentials herself in her chronicle as understanding poverty, although her family was not poor, because of her proximity growing up to those who were poor – it was this proximity that Lucy says led to her “intrigue,” as she describes her feelings, with “special needs students”. Like Ken, I too see on the surface Lucy’s good intent as a “helper” who positioned her work as important because of her role in helping “those kids” whose parents sometimes just “check out”. However, we must consider words of wisdom on how people growing up in oppressed communities interpret help. For example, Gorski (2017) suggested,

> Growing up in poverty, I learned some hard lessons about life. These lessons were taught to me not by my family but rather by system ‘helpers.’ I learned that being poor offended people. I learned people had rage and anger toward me and others like me. I learned that people thought being poor equated to lacking intelligence, creativity, motivation, and desire. I learned that people felt sorry for me. In the process, I also learned to be weary (and warry) of helpers. (p. 46)

Using the critical theoretical frames I bring to this work, I also raise issue with Lucy’s characterization of city kids from low income households as having to get by entirely on their own, as if their parents and families do not care. This deficit framing of youth of color, and/or urban students is a familiar trope that has been debunked repeatedly by critical education scholars (e.g. Valenzuela, 2010). Further, Lucy, unlike Ken, emphasized her role as appraising students with disabilities, who she has decided are “sometimes…just low”, and in reference to the “dwarf” “having a great personality”.

Never mind the fact that the dwarfism terminology is long since outdated (people of short stature is considered appropriate; Little People of America, n.d.). Her casual reference to IQ scores-a tool sticky with the residue of the eugenics movement (Dudley-Marling & Gurn, 2010)-signals the medical model of disability upon which Lucy relies to appraise her students, some of which are "amazing" and others "just low".

In these ways, Lucy's interviews, as illustrated in her chronicle also relate to the BWD narratives of *terrible and sticky truths*: *pathologization, disablement, and exclusion*. In her other interviews, although Lucy gives attention to girls "in need" and who go unnoticed, she frames boys with dis/abilities as the problem: "it's the loud boys that cause these problems that they [the teachers] want out of the class who gets identified while the girls may not.

Analyses of TCs' Chronicles

I explored and analyzed Lucy's and Ken's narratives in relation to how they described their roles and transition services and in relations to those they provided to BWD who transition from high school to college. Lucy's and Ken's chronicles, although well-meaning and well-intending, imposed frames of whiteness and ableism. In other words, Ken and Lucy participated in the terrible truths revealed by the BWD in their narratives. Throughout history *terrible truth* have been used by people to revile and oppress others at the intersections of identity markers, but also as a way to position the truth teller as superior to these others (Dace, 2012). In the case of the TCs, the *terrible and sticky truths* they described imposing on students with disabilities including different BWD they had served in the transition process, which I will speak of in the following section.

Next, I present my analysis of Ken and Lucy's interview data to determine the ways they conceptualized transition programming.

Part Four: Transition Coordinators Roles and Services

Inquiry Two: Features of transition services provided to students with dis/abilities, as well as roles and approaches involved in such services, as described by urban public school district transition coordinators, and their accounts of race, gender, and disabilities in their work with BWD.

To come to these findings, I drew from DS/DSE scholarship and Trainor (2017) description of transition education as a set of *inputs* and *outcomes*. *Inputs* of transition programming include instructional experiences and services coordination between special, general, and vocational education; and school contexts (e.g., school programs and services, courses taken, choosing and setting courses, and other services). *Outcomes* are results "that required coordination between special, general, and vocational education" (e.g., school performance, dropout rates, and group memberships; p. 42).

The inputs, outcomes, and inputs/outcomes of each TC. In Lucy's interviews she described the following *transition inputs*: students' geographic location, poverty (income), "checked-out" families, student IQ, student diagnosis, school programs, and students' personality. She describe the outcomes of *transition* as *getting a job* and *postsecondary education.* Similarly, but with some differences, in Ken's interviews he described the following transition inputs: as student diagnosis, students "disadvantage" or lack of access. He described outcomes of *transition* as exposing dis/abled youth to experiences, higher education, dorm living, and specifically mentioned student race in his description of some students, but did not communicate how students' intersectional identity or historical factors that shaped his consideration of student inputs to be considered in transition planning or outcomes toward which to work. Ken's transition coordinator inputs, outcomes and inputs/outcomes themes reveal his situation within U.S. society and institutional hegemony. Contextually his chronicle speaks to what counts as power, how power plays out even when providing so-called "service" within special education, and how it can reproduce historical inequalities. Thus, transition coordinators and their conceptualizations of their roles are critical for efforts at systemic change that promotes an inclusive climate for all, but especially those at the margins such as Black women with dis/abilities.

Across Ken and Lucy's chronicles and additional interview data, they revealed and considered about the students with disabilities is basically, where they are from, for example, the city as Lucy talks about, their IQ scores, and their personality. There is nothing about race, or resources and that their families do not care about them. There is nothing about spirituality, histories of oppression, who students with disabilities are and particularly, nothing about their recognition about the importance of identity and history of Black women with disabilities. Outcomes was about get them a job and get them in college. For Ken, inputs were more helping kids with mild cognitive disabilities and their parents with plans after high school since they do not have access to run their own lives. Outcomes for Ken was similar to Lucy's, although different, get them to college, a job or a residential placement.

Ken and Lucy's passion. Now I will discuss briefly my analysis of how both Ken and Lucy's descriptions of their own positionality influenced their professional work as transition coordinators with emphasis on their description of their work as *a passion.*

Ken's gives us some history on how his passion for his work emerged:

> As a quiet listener and observer I took my cues from my wife. She taught me two common threads how to be *passionate* and *help* others. I got to see just the work that she was doing in a more urban environment and I realized that was something he] always had a passion for. My whole life. I've been surrounded by public servants. I feel like that's been a major charge earlier on I just realized the importance of being a servant and a good steward of all the joys and opportunities that I've been blessed with…I attend a Christian church up on the north side. And I just see how many opportunities there are to just lead by example. (5/19/17)

His passion for working with urban kids is problematic because it speaks to the white helper/servant mentality even though many white teachers and teachers of color are in it for the student as public servants. Next, Lucy gives us some background to how her passion for her work emerged:

> In college, a lot of things I was unaware of [that] I needed. So, I think that gives me a *passion* to, for students that, especially the parents don't have a clue about college, what you need to do. I wanted to go to a small Christian school. My dad wanted me to go to the State college, because it was much cheaper. But I did prevail on that. [In sharing about her son and sick mother] Everything in your life, all your experiences add up to your passion. There's people that do their job and there are people that are passionate about their jobs. (8/01/17)

Lucy's description of how she came to work with students with disabilities has a connection to her mother who struggled with bipolar and is inclusive of a white helper/servant mentality. Lucy continued,

> I'd always been intrigued by special needs students. I think I always kind of wanted to be a teacher but everybody wanted me to be a teacher, so there was a part of me that didn't want to be a teacher because all my family wanted me to be a teacher. So, you know, I can remember the books I checked out were stories about special needs children, you know, when I would read on my own. So I was intrigued by that and I thought, well, it was State. (8/01/17)

Lucy also takes the mentality of a fixer, puzzle solver of “special needs students”, which is a term that DS scholars takes opposition with for its medicalization of impairments as needing fixing, curing, accommodated or endured (Baglieri, et al., 2011). Lucy asserts her education, teaching, and transition planning and programming from an acritical one: that helping is non-problematic and therefore, does not account for issues of power, privilege, and difference that historically marginalized families and youth experience on a daily basis. Privilege and white innocence has no sensitivity to disability-relations between abled and non-disabled bodies and how dis/abled folks or the intersections experiences at multiple forms of oppression given the hegemony of normal that results in helping. Lucy positions the students as in need and herself as the giver/helper—the one who will solve the puzzle—the problem of the child. In her narrative there is no recognition of systemic systems of oppression such as what Thorius (2016) discusses in the figured world of special education teachers. Both Lucy and Ken’s as givers/helper and servants will be discussed in more detail in the discussion and implication sections.

Imposing whiteness and normalizing practices. The most prominent theme I captured as emerging from the TCs’ descriptions of their transition practices was their assertion of frames of whiteness and frames of normalization processes by positioning themselves as fixers and helpers – blessed by God to do this work. For example, in Ken’s first interview he shared,

> Blessed, to me really, it’s God’s grace and blessings that I feel like I’m really lucky and placed in a great opportunity to make a difference. Just opportunities that have opened up in front of me and I know it’s a little bit based on, like, my skills or my hard work, but also that, you know, I’m grateful that it’s worked out this way. (5/19/17)

Whiteness and normalizing practices are problematic because the lack of critical praxis and self-awareness in the TCs' language reflects power in society and reproduces it in unjust ways along hegemony (Aronson, 2017), and these dynamics guide the ways that the two white non-disabled professionals interacted with the BWD in their narratives. As educators promoting inclusive educational environments for all student in schools and classroom the ability to couple critical reflection and action provides a space for us to continuously engage in further self-awareness and other conversations that focus on accounting for issues of power and privilege.

In Ken's second interview he stated,

> I've kind of written my own job description. So, the biggest charge, are supporting students with disabilities as they make that transition or exit from high school. I work with students that [is] on [the] certificate track. Aren't going to be earning a diploma, so we need to explore alternative options for extended training, education or direct entry into the workforce. But I did focus heavily on what's life beyond graduation. So, that was always my mentality going into it, just do my training programs and personal experiences of, I can help you get your diploma or whatever credential that you might need, but what are you going to do with it? (6/16/17)

Although some of Ken's approach to his work lines up with two regulatory intentions of the IDEA in transitioning secondary students out of high school: training (vocation) and education (college), his narrative does not necessarily recognize students' ability to reach graduation. Instead and again we see how he gives—showing his white privilege helper/fixer mentality (i.e., his own abilities and accomplishments)—by determining who "gets . . . what [they] need" and in the same breath he questions what will come of his giving (i.e., the outcomes) will be for the student's autonomy of making decisions about what life will look like after high school. He continued describing his role and work,

> Yeah, this role of transition coordinator's, it's, it's a lot because it includes developing programs and giving students experiences. I do a lot of vision planning, vision building, that's singular, like, me just kind of focusing, reflecting, reading literature, but then also group wide, just either polling stakeholders or holding meetings and things like that so that we get a lot of input as to what that might look like. (6/16/17)

Ken explained how he approached his work and the importance of how his approaches are implemented singularly and collaboratively with others from the community. Then, he shares what is most significant about conducting his work,

> I should say the most important part - getting to know students where they're at is the most important thing and then also connecting with the families. That is the bridge to everything that ultimately then, okay, now I know what experiences to kind of line up what's going on. (6/16/17)

Ken’s description of his work started with him, his training and preparation, then it moved on to others and the necessity of connecting to community partners and ends with the student with the disability and connecting to their family. Ken’s narratives asserts white privilege as he and his accomplishments are centered in the narrative, when he should have begun with the last (students and parents) desires, while not forsaking the other portions (himself and others) so to not risk what the student and their family concerns not being centered in his transition practices.

Moving on to Lucy, who describes her work. She stated,

> I was a part of this [States] School to Work collaborative. There were five schools in the state for our students that are not going to college that maybe graduated with a general diploma, or a certificate that are capable of doing a job and so what we've done is, we give, we work with Vocational Rehabilitation and employment provider and give them free job intern opportunities (i.e., JAG program – jobs for American graduates). I also [conducted] study team coordinat[ion]. We look at all our struggling students and one of my jobs was to see if they'd been tested or not tested [as a person with a disability] or had RTI - Response to Intervention. I had a student study, usually the first step of a student study team when you identify a student struggling academically, you meet as a team so you can gather ideas from other teachers. And you kind of pull

> yourself together. We have what we call a war room. And every principal is in charge of that grade in the war room and we do war against poor grades and failures. And basically we develop strategies to help those students. (8/01/2017)

Lucy's narrative of her transition coordinator work started with centering her own story, as well, and trickled into how she drew resources from community organizations and federal government programs. However, she did not make any mention in how she included students' perspectives or attended to parent interactions in any of her transition activities. Rather, she continually asserted her engagement in processes of normalization by anchoring her role and the role of educators more broadly with and others take center stage in *helping and fixing* students with disabilities. Lucy stated,

> I first was introduced to person-centered planning when I did autism training. Because I think students, especially students on the spectrum, need as much support as they can. It is a wonderful idea. But in my population, in a very poor, disconnected, socio environment, the people doing it would be myself and other special needs teachers and it doesn't really include family member. Very seldom do I have a family member that wants to be part of person-centered planning. And that's what it's all about, you know? (8/01/17)

Although what Lucy described aligns with what are person-centered practices (e.g., students with disabilities receiving individualized academic attention), her narrative asserts frames of whiteness and normalization in the coded language of racism and ableism she uses in reference to the students (e.g., *war room, struggling, poor, and failing).* Lucy's includes the family in her description of her work but unfortunately the parents are position in a deficit perspective: they check-out.

Lucy continued:

> When we talked about Academy, we talked about different colleges, and then it became readily apparent, the more I was at the high school that when our students asked for accommodations for ACT and SAT, they weren't receiving them to when our counselors submitted those

> accommodation requests. The worst kind of disability to get accommodations for SAT was a student with emotional disabilities that did not see a doctor anymore, you know, so we had a young black man who was basically on his own. He used his accommodations to pass the state required tests, but I think I submitted nineteen pages of paperwork for him to get, finally get accommodations for the SAT. Because they wanted you to see a doctor and do all that, and he just couldn't - he didn't. He didn't do that. But I had documented his tests, I had documented when he used accommodations for this test and when he didn't and I sent all that in and that was finally approved. I thought that was very interesting. (8/01/17)

Lucy positions herself as the conduit-the missing link- who gets her students' request for accommodations approved, which also centers her ability and position over "her students".

Transition of Black women to college. In Ken's second interview, where he invited two of his colleagues, Ashley and Wilma –white women[11] who also worked with transitioning students from high school to college but in more administrative roles than Ken's. Ken and his colleagues could talk extensively about their roles and transition education practices, programs, and activities their school and district uses to transition individuals and those with dis/abilities' to college (e.g., IMPACT, schools the students are a match (i.e., match of their test scores or GPA), or is a safe (i.e., financial), and academically okay (i.e., BUILD or STEP, which are programs with additional charge but specialized classes for individuals with disabilities, like learning disabilities). Once they finished, I asked "what about Black females" that you transitioned to college? Wilma, and Ashley shared separate interactions that they had working with a Black female

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[11] These women worked in a capacity of transition services at the school and in the district where Ken worked.

student with an Emotional Behavior Disorder (EBD) diagnosis. Ken's conversation around the student's concerns with going to college will be shared in more detail in the next section on performance and cultural competency. Ashley said. "I've been a part of them. I'm thinking of *our girl* that's at State [University]—I should pull up her picture" (6/16/17). This statement is loaded with deficit language "them", and her language "our girl." Ashley continued,

> And I'm remembering when she came in with her mom to do her FAFSA and mom, I think, was annoyed to be here a little bit. Like, she was, right in front of the student she said to me, "I can't believe this is really happening." Do you know what I mean? It was almost like a, if I was the student, it, what do you mean? Like, how about "You've made some mistakes but I knew all along you could do it?" And I don't think that's necessarily a cultural thing, but for this student, I think, behavior is part of her disability and I think there was a misunderstanding, maybe, between behavior and disability that she's internalized, and I do worry about what that, how that's going to affect her. And I don't think it was just from her mom. I'm sure she got, she gets it a lot. (6/16/17)

In discussing her work with Ken, Ashley's narrative socially constructs and disables the student's identity in relation to "subjectivity as goodness" (Annamma et al, 2016, p. 58). As Ashley pointed out how dis/ability-related oppression came from the student's mom, but missed her own discursive and racialized practices. Wilma picks up and says,

> I had several concerns about an interaction that she had with the student and her mother—mainly about the student's behaviors, and if the behavior was influenced by her dis/ability, or her mother's "dissin" of her ability, or if it was from the mother's frustrations from not knowing how to fill out forms for college and housing. (6/16/17)

Ashley chimed back into the conversation and shared her response to the BWD's concerns and fears about sharing a college housing unit with a white female.

> What is that like, and how do I navigate that? [Ashley], I was like, well, that's great, right? And we did have those conversations and she'd say,

> [the student] “but I’m loud,” and I was like, but, that doesn’t define you . . . this is an opportunity for you to meet people that you haven’t met or been friends with before. And how do you meet a stranger and what does that look like? (6/16/17)

Ashley's and Wilma’s’ narratives and interactions with the BWD and her mother is illustrative of the *terrible truths* of *pathologiz*ation and *disablement,* and in their responses, they expected the BWD’s conformity to whiteness—to normalcy (Wilson, 1993). Ashley’s reply to the BWD speaks to a dissension between people and communities of color and white people and positions of privilege (Collins, 2000; Dace, 1994; DiAngelo, 2011). Through multi-layered ways, Ken’s narratives spoken of in this dissertation and those of his two colleagues revealed their location within the hegemonic order of whiteness.

Kens and Lucy’s race talk. In Ken’s third interview, I asked about how he sees his work with individuals at the intersection of race, gender, and dis/ability as a white man. Ken stated,

> And when it comes to race relations and things like that, I mean it’s, yeah, it’s, you’re always, paying attention obviously the news always, and what’s going on, because they’re also, always, just that new conflict, I guess you’d call it, that’s just drives it or makes a way to the forefront of the newspaper and you wonder if that ever is going to trickle down? Is there going to be any animosity towards maybe because I’m a white, you know, white male? (7/21/17)

Ken’s sociohistorical experiences and privileges are not benign. They are socially produced and unfortunately sustain the status quo within U.S. society and educational contexts for race relations at the intersections of dis/ability and gender. Different people of color (e.g., critical scholars) within U.S. society and its institutions critique this type of hegemonic interpretation entailing what Ken shared about his whiteness (Annamma, 2018; Annamma et al., 2016; Aronson, 2017; Collins, 2000; Dace, 1994; DiAngelo, 2011; Wilson, 1994). Explaining what counts as hegemony and what that looks likes like within special education can be generative and critical. Ken continued,

> And that's something that I've just recognized I can't control. Just like anyone else can't control you know, their color of their skin, there's no doubt that I think just maybe through my personality, you know, friendly and as just a trusted advisor. That's what I have to convey to them. Yeah, it's interesting. I never go to that immediately, like, I wonder why that person was maybe colder towards me or didn't accept my opinion, so, you know, luckily I have a wide arrange of trusted colleagues and I also have, I'm always working usually in a team . . . and I'm usually invited into the conversation anyway, so, luckily there are usually other people who might be of the same racial background. That's one of the beauties of working in a very diverse staff. . . So, I get that endorsement from another individual, usually that can come with a little bit easier of a path for me to kind of make, yeah, some real, make some progress. (7/21/17)

Social and cultural phenomena do not exist in a vacuum. Ken's statements provide us a window into his life and his role as a transition coordinator. As a part of a team, he explained that if the team has at least one person who can identify with the culture of a student, then as a white male with good intentions, a team's "endorsement" of him helps him feel validated when working with students of color (Milner, 2011; Milner et al, 2015). On another note, Lucy talked about a Black woman that goes to the university where I, the researcher, work broadly. She stated:

> I had one here [at the researcher's university], one Black woman here, and an Hispanic young man at [state university], who did not make it back the second year. And that really bothers me. Really, my job ends at high school. I have a hard time ending my job at high school level, my young man here, a lot of our students and I know this young Black woman that did not make the grade requirement at [the researcher's university]. (08/01/17)

Here Lucy talked broadly about "them" without describing any aspects of their relationship but more about her transitioning of this Black woman she mentioned that went to my university. She found herself teetering between talking about Black females and the Black males. She attempted another approach and continued,

> So that's what I looked at, girls, this year, my seniors, I have one young lady that is starting at IB Tech. And a lot of them [ladies of color] choose to start at IB Tech and then going on to a graphics design program. But what was helpful for her is that she was part of the graphic design program in high school. And won an award for the outstanding student. That's a young lady of color. (8/01/17)

Here Lucy's stays on focus with the Black girls but her language of ownership shows her hierarchical status over her "seniors"—her "girls." This sort of language is problematic because based on the common-sense assumptions embedded in socially constructed cultural norms that have been oppressive and causes of intergenerational trauma. Therefore, this noticeable language and how one understands oneself, as opposed to being tamed is of critical importance and Lucy have uncritically used her position of power based on stereotypical terms or labels, as opposed to using their names. When I asked Lucy "what do you mean when you say 'woman', a 'person of color' or a 'girl' of color? Can you specify what that means? " She said,

> Well, it looks very different. One young lady is part Black part Hispanic part White. Another young lady is Caucasian and African American. Two ladies are like that that were in my program that were not life skill students. It is multiple. I can't really know how to classify it other than I should say mixed race person, maybe. I don't know. (8/01/17)

Furthermore, Lucy's status as a white woman demonstrates her discomfort, or at best, lack of experience with conversations about race, naming people's race, or considering the role of race in any of her work: for "these ladies" "like that", despite her work as an urban educator, undoubtedly working with students of colors. Lucy viewed her own positionality in relationship to the people she served as a professional responsible to enact transitioning services to students with disabilities. In her first interview, I focused on her input as a transition coordinator attempting to engage with a young woman of color to achieve the outcome Lucy desires. She stated,

> Students should go through some kind of intervention before you label them disabled. it is a process that takes too long . . . teachers give up on them . . . that's my personal opinion, 37 years of teaching . . . I've got a young lady of color that is going to stay [home] and go to [the local community college] this year in nursing, even though I tried and tried to get her to go [to a college a little away from home] in nursing, she just doesn't want to leave the boyfriend. You know. (8/01/2017)

Here Lucy normalizes her own whiteness and non-disabled status: her social network, relationships, ideologies, education and instructional experiences—and makes clear her role as a transition coordinator and as a white woman in a position of influence over her students, and in this case, the young woman of color (i.e., Black lady). Lucy's sarcasm of the BWD's hesitation to leave her boyfriend was dismissive of the differences between Black culture and white traditions regarding educational and life transitions from high school to college.

Performance of cultural competency. Transition coordinators attested to cultural competency but intentional efforts to account for people's culture was not evidence in their description of their work despite calls for such attention in transition coordinators' planning processes when working with students at multiple margins of disadvantage (Trainor, 2017). To illustrate, this excerpt from a discussion between Ken and his colleague, Wilma, reinforces what was previously shared about the one BWD and transitioning activities.

> (Wilma) Well, she did have that same conversation with me, because we talked about roommate selection. So one of the things I had spoken with her about is as she was, you know, getting her paperwork, and, you know, you're so proud and you want to come and, so we got down to the point of roommate selection and that was something, and, she was very concerned about what is that like, and how do I navigate that and so, I do remember,

> you know, us sitting down and talking about, now when you meet and you're going to send emails and perhaps texts and you can't judge and you know, and, because she was very concerned about what if I get a white roommate? (6/16/17)

The student's concerns about a roommate was met with Wilma's performance of empathy without substance, to which Ashley responded:

> (Ashley) We did have those conversations and she'd say, [student] "but I'm loud," and I was like, but, that doesn't define you . . . this is an opportunity for you to meet people that you haven't met or been friends with before. And how do you meet a stranger and what does that look like? You know, you and your roommate will have to establish, you know, some ground rules because there are things that you will not like, and there are things that she will not like. And I said but the greatest thing is, you know, being transparent and having open communication. But, we could not have that communication with her because when she was behaviorally upset, you know, you couldn't just get in and she knew, and I said, sometimes you're going to have to come up with a sign where you can let your roommate know, where your roommate doesn't have to say anything to you but it's just a cue to you. (6/16/17)

The BWD' concern and fear about sharing housing with a white female was snuff-out by Ashley and Wilma's conversation with Ken in which they failure to ensure the BWD's concerns were heard and addressed. Ken jumped in on the conversation and stated, "she didn't know me. So she knew who was in my previous role. Another white female" (6/16/17). There was no critical reflection on Ken's part as he made his comments, which reproduced whiteness and gender differences. Wilma interrupted Ken and said, "I think I introduced her to you, I tried to make the introduction and she was having no part of it" (6/16/17). Ken's comment, and the discussion more broadly raises questions about the performance of cultural competency in the midst of ignorance of the physical and emotional safety concerns and or fear that a Black woman may feel when interacting with a white man (Collins, 2000). Rather, the TCs discuss what the woman said about her voice volume. Ken's positionality and male status and Ashley and Wilma's dissing of the

BWD's concerns communicates a discordance between white cultural norms and those of communities of color, especially in the context of racial and human relations.

For example, although what Brianna Brochu's posted on her Instagram account of the disgusting and horrible things she did to the personal items of her Black (i.e., Jamaican) roommate i.e., putting her toothbrush "where the sun does not shine" and so much more, things such as this and others connects to reasons why this BWD would be concern about rooming with a white roommate. Cultural transformation around BWD and more broadly student of color with dis/ability for transition education need to incorporate more knowledge and understanding of racial geography and that of social segregation.

Racial geography and segregated socialization. The racialization of a person in connection to a geographical space has been a historical reality within rural, suburban and urban spaces (Squires & Kubin, 2005). Ken stated,

> She was on my caseload her sophomore year, and wow. And then the anxiety continuum. We went on that trip to Vincennes and she actually saw the dorm room. Because then she realized how tight the space was and how her and her roommate would be cohabitating in a space as big as this office, which is small. Very small. And she was like, "I can't live with somebody in this? Like, this is smaller than, you know, my bedroom." (6/16/17)

Ken's statement "and then the anxiety continuum" reveals his lack of awareness of differences with the racial geography and segregated sociohistorical experiences of the BWD.

On another note, earlier in this chapter I discussed how Lucy's geographical location (where she lived) was close to an impoverished community where the people she "helped" lived, and she distanced herself from connecting to the community other than as a helper. For example, Lucy stated,

> we went to the neighborhood school two blocks away. It's where my mom went to school; it's where my grandmother went to the school—across the street, it's where I ended up teaching 25 years. So, two blocks from where I grew up. It was more the lower income side of the city. So I've always grown up around students in need. It's always been a part of my life [but] I wasn't a child in need. (8/10/2017)

Lucy's critical reflection of where she lived and grew up did not happen in a vacuum; instead, she had validation connections to her geographical location and the supports that endorsed her experiences. Both Lucy and Ken occupy positions of superiority over those whom they feel a need to help- such decisions does not happen in a vacuum.

Unlike Lucy, Ken's geographical location (where he lived, worshiped, and where he taught) was not within the same space initially (i.e., until he accepted the TC's position in an urban school a year ago) as those he served. He stated:

> My whole life, I've been surrounded by public servants. Early on, I just realized the importance of being a servant and a good steward of all the joys and opportunities that I've been blessed with. I grew up in a small town—it was a tight knit community, definitely valued education. I currently live on the north side and attend a Christian church up on the north side. (5/19/17)

Here we see Ken providing us a window into his transition coordinator life. Ken's social and cultural phenomena do not exist in a vacuum, but are constructed not only in his racial geography but also in Ken's religious life. However, he narrated his life in a type of flow that connects to his social network, centered on an intellectual community where he was supported by those social interactions and relationships (Borgatti & Oftem, 2010). My overall analysis argues for the need for white teachers and educators working with marginalized students of color to try to "examine themselves and their practices as potential contributory factors in the successes and failures of the classroom culture and learning that take place (p. 57).

Part Five: Human Dignity and Reciprocal Knowledge

Inquiry Three: The intersecting relationship(s) between race, gender, and dis/ability, and their role in shaping the above guiding inquiries, with a focus on how the narratives of BWD may be leveraged to critique and extend transition services as described by the transition coordinators.

The voices of Black women with disabilities (BWD) are powerful sources of knowledge and tools for designing activities best suited for them in their high school transition education experiences. We have already seen how at several points in the BWD narratives the three *truths* of *pathologization, disablement*, and *exclusion* emerged in their collective and individual histories. Human dignity at the intersections of the BWD (w)holistic selves and in relation to pathologization from educational professionals, family, and peers, and the *terrible truth*s that disabled them also serve to lead them to their subverted truths, at times, with a restorative truth that advocated for their rights to live with their differences in connection to their dis/ability, race, or gender, while contextually transitioning to supportive services (e.g., accommodations) and programs in college.

However, I have to note something that Lucy said that makes an interesting observation about women in general in her first interview as she talked about her work as a transition coordinator. She stated,

> Most of the students that are going to college function pretty much on their own . . . you have to think about kids in poverty – you learn how to get by. I looked at my list of all my seniors, I have a few girls, I'm going to say, is that a system of how test [are given], what teachers look for because I think women with disabilities are overlooked a lot. I think they go unreported. They don't act out. They kind of get smooth over. I understand, students should go through some kind of interventions before you label them disabled. (8/01/2017)

Lucy's observation is not about how Black women are treated, instead, it is that we are missing giving girls (of any race) what "they need" because they go unreported.

Context and accounting for inequitable education and transition processes. Subsequently, context matters when talking an opposition against being treated less than with human dignity and in trying to understand the details of people's lives, especially historically marginalized individuals and groups. Without context, we cannot know, understand, or recognize realistic solutions available to us when we accounting for and advocating against discriminatory and inequitable practices that contribute to or reify transition experiences for disabled individuals. Accordingly, the context of each participant's life and story matters, as well as publicizing how others experience oppression at the intersections of race, gender, and disabilities in U.S. society. Therefore, it is necessary to highlight the individualization of each BWD voice, and connect it to a context, which gives hope for the possibility of what a collective voice of BWD could bring to transition work, as not only receivers but also givers of knowledge.

For example, in Tammy's second interview, she talked about her 15 years of post-high-school life, her new transition back to college, and the various factors that influenced her everyday life (e.g., transportation, court hearings, relationships, social services, and etc.), which I see as knowledge giving. Tammy stated,

> It's a struggle because I am going to have to go to school and I just don't know about that because I think in a way, it kind of affects me, going to school, trying to deal with this [adopted mom and the court's decision], and at a certain time that I had to be back in class. I think God is really helping me through this. (3/18/2017)

Tammy displayed so much self-determination to further her education so that she could take care of her son in spite of barriers that threatened to derail her from what she felt would show her *striving for dignity*, which is a term Rios (2011) uses to help us understand students “demanding the right to be seen ‘as normal’ to be treated as fellow human being, to have a sense of positive rites and not to feel criminalized” (p, 115). In Tammy’s case, she was criminalized through her experiences with her adopted mom in connection to the court’s decision, which impacted her post-secondary academic progression.

Residue of the helper’s mentality. In the midst of Tammy’s story are major issues that dominated her life and weighed heavy on Tammy’s heart; nevertheless she strived to remained hopeful about her future desire to own a business that will “help people with disabilities – by help[ing] them with their self-esteem and find[ing] jobs and different [resources]” (03/18/2017). Tammy identified herself as a helper, and put forth an effort to build reciprocity in her relationships with others that showed she respected other people with dis/abilities (Van der Klift & Kunc, 1994). Otherwise, a helper’s attitude runs the risk of failing to provide equitable opportunities and instead reifies oppressive practices that isolate and marginalize individuals with disabilities from those opportunities. Ken stated,

> So being from what I consider a medium-sized high school, about 800 students, I realized that I wanted to branch out, meet new people. I decided to study Special Education. I coached soccer while I was in high school, so I coached, like, eight year old’s, basically, and I’d have students that had, or players that had ADHD or autism. It was before I really had any exposure to any of that stuff, but I was just eager to learn more and to *help* these families out and to give those children great experiences. People said, “You might be really good at that,”, and more people were telling me, special education is about building relationships, getting to know individual students, *helping* them on their own continuum.

Ken’s idea of a helper was not about building up as he proposes but instead in direct contrast to that of Tammy’s idea of a helper. His approach comes from that of a medical model of disability where individuals need fixing/curing. Consequently, Tammy’s idea of “helper” provides others access to her intimate space where her desires to build her advocacy and identity is supported, and the process is reciprocal as she support others.

In this study the two transition coordinators dispositions were that of helpers who came from a history of family members, friends, and others who were helpers too, “with good educational intentions” that guided them to helping others (Blomgren, 1998). For example, Lucy said, “I’ve always grown up around students in need. It's always been a part of my life. Phil Donahue had talked about learning disabilities all the time and I watched it all the time. It’s kind of sparked my interest, yeah” (8/10/2017). In Lucy’s *passion* for *helping* students with invisible disabilities (e.g., learning) forms part of her helper’s attitude, which is one of *good intentions,* involving a duty to lead individuals with disabilities through their transitional education. Alice questions the real intent of the helper mentality, “the reason they do this isn’t, it’s so that they can get more resource for people of color. But you know what? What about, if they’re being made to look good by these things” (6/15/2017). Relatedly, Ken shared that he

> Decided to study special education, and there were a couple of reasons why. One was, when I coached soccer while I was in high school I’d have students that had, or players that had ADHD or autism. It was before I really had any exposure to any of that stuff, but I was just eager to learn more, to help these families out, and to give those children great experiences. People said, “You might be really good at that,” because for them, and more people were telling me, special education is about building relationships, getting to know individual students, helping them on their own continuum. (5/19/2017)

In both of these narratives Ken and Lucy do not provide a reciprocal space or place where students (e.g., BWD) could also give and not just receive their help.

Residue of labels on BWD education. These five Black women with disabilities (BWD) are teaching us the significance of advocating for themselves by pushing back against historical ways that they have been treated because of ableism ideologies and stereotypes directly related to their dis/ability, race, or gender. To illustrate, in Karen's third interview, while focusing on meaning making of her experiences, she argued, "I'm Black, in college, I'm a woman, I mean, just sometimes labels harm people-they label you but they don't be thinking like, okay, labels come with you" (Karen, 07/13/2017). Through listening to and learning from Karen and the other four BWD's stories, transition work could expand and extend to be a more culturally equitable via a person-centered planning tool that facilitates activities in connection to the IEP's and transition experiences of these women. In Alice's third interview, she began to dream about her future hopes of possibly working in a postsecondary educational space. She said,

> this man [who] has basically laughed in my face when I asked him, well, how long do I have to wait before I can apply for my record to be expunged here in [this state]. [Professor} "It'll be on your record for 99 years". You have to wait 99 years. And I was like, wow, really? You know, because I knew he was being smart alecky. (7/28/18)

Hence, Alice was devastated and felt down, but she had promised to speak that evening at the program where she previously graduated with her GED and tutored others. The *terrible truth* of that man's *disablement* of her ability left a *sticky* residue on her psyche.

> You know, honestly, I did not feel like going. I didn't, you know, to be very honest with you. I'd made, you know, one thing about my commitment to change is that I do what I say and when I say that I'm going to do it. (7/28/18)

I propose Alice's actions illustrates Taylor's concept of radical love at work in the context of education and community in ways that resembled (re)stored and re)valued commitment to her word, and to achieving the professional degree despite that counselor's discouragement, as she also had believed her peers would achieve their desired degrees. Accordingly, given Alice's experiences previously with her professor's racial teaching and his rejection of her knowledge shared in class, in her third interview, I asked her to reflect on making meaning of how she felt about her interactions with her professor and peers and her responses to her transition education. She stated,

> For one thing, because I'm Black. Yes. For another thing, because they know that I have a disability, I tell them I have a special ability, but they know, because they get the little email saying that I might need extra time—an accommodation. (7/28/17)

Here Alice's response on the exclusionary and discriminatory treatment she received from professors once they received notice of her possible need of an accommodations resisted succumbing to their presumed expectation that she would be uneducated—and challenged her professors' assaults on her intellect, difference, and ability—by questioning the integrity of the material that she shared in class. Alice continued,

> So, this is why that I said, you see what they have to learn about me and they learn very fast, I will not make a comment that I have not already researched and I already know the answer. I already know, so when I made that statement and said there's about 100,000 doctors or more that are in some treatment for substance abuse, and then we have nurses that are doing drug diversion. I said this before I even did the presentation. (07/28/2017)

Her professor's response to the initial information was, "*Oh, Alice, I seriously doubt that*" (07/ 28/2017), illustrating what many critical race scholars have called black women's erasure (Wooten, 2017). Alice seem to have expected his response. She continued,

> Gotcha! I loved it. I c[a]me in not only with my PowerPoint, not only with some filming, some video, and with hard-core proof, I could look on his face, I love it. Because I didn't have to say nyah nyah nyah nyah nyah, I just seen everybody's face. I seen the look on my instructor's face. Do not think that I makeup information and just speak out of the side of my neck. (8/10/2017).

Alice culled data from empirical research, which she used to critique the status quo within the medical field. From the presentation, Alice also addressed her professor's presumed incompetence of her ability and his discrediting of her before her peers.

> Because nine times out of 10, well, probably 10 out of 10, no doubt I already checked my information. I'm going to use the same sources you would use, or maybe better sources because I have to make sure that when I say something that it is accurate and true. Because I know that, you would like it very much if the only Black person in this class were absolutely wrong about her information. It's not that I want them to think that I'm criticizing everything, but I want them to know that I have to look to make sure because they're fallible just like I am. So, I can make mistakes, but so can they. (7/28/17)

As research suggests, Alice's resilience is a display of Black women's desire for human dignity, which goes beyond respectability to their intellectual thought as raced women (Cooper, 2017).

Yet, in Karen's responses about meaning making in her third interview, she grappled with her observations of "Blacks not know[ing] how to express themselves-their emotions and our feelings-something that has been going on for years and years" [and] "so they feel like oh, it's not even worth it. I'm not going to say anything."(7/13/17). Karen's view of Black people's ability to communicate their experiences effectively is shaped by the responses of others, which often involves the socialization of rejecting and alienating Black though and intellect because it does not fit the westernized language norm (Wilson, 1998).

Chapter Five Summary

There are divergences and convergences between the chronicles, all of which emerged in the context of data collected. The chronicles converge in the following ways 1) both groups' stories include their childhood, family, and spiritual influence in their lives; 2) both groups had experiences with some sort of special education disability category; and 3) both groups' narratives involved individuals with disabilities within a school context. They diverge in the following ways 1) their backgrounds, age ranges, racial makeup, and gender identities; 2) BWD disability was salient in all five women's chronicles. The two TCs did not identify as individuals with disabilities. Lucy's mother experienced disability-related emotions due to the death of her son, which occurred before Lucy was born. Lucy did not relate any of her childhood experiences with that of her mom or to anything that she experienced working with students with disabilities—this might be due to the privilege of being a white woman. Unlike white women's privilege, BWD oppression involved race relations and overall stereotypes about Black people in the US. Overall, however, both groups and all the participants had a spiritual dimension to their narratives, but God was perceived differently by each person.

The participants' stories are (dis)continuous. All five of the BWD's chronicles indicate how each woman is becoming who she is and healing from the ways that she has been treated by others, and how those treatments have an emancipatory effect on her human and spiritual development. Consciously, their voices have awakened in demonstration of their existence and the various factors that are associated with their transitioning experiences from high school to college and add to the body of literature that privileges their voices as knowledge. These five BWD have filled some of the gap in the literature about the ways that BWD transition from high school to college, even those who utilized special education services and accommodations in college. The BWD emphasized personal, and I would say collective, qualities of resilience, self-determination, and self-definition that exceeds stories that have been written about them without them (Charlton, 1972). They also see themselves through an assets lens of subverted truths, in contrast to the traditional ways they have been pathologized, represented as disabled, and excluded from lived and educational opportunities. Thus, "emphasiz[ing] personal qualities as determinative of success and failure and ignore discrimination and disabling social policies. The real-life stories of people with disabilities interfere with these [deficit-minded] portrayals" (Eiesland, 1994, p. 31).

Chapter Six Preview

To capture the findings of this research study, in chapter six I will discuss the terrible and sticky truths of pathologization, disablement, and exclusion and the subverted truths of (re)defined socially constructed identities and radical love, (re)placed competence and knowledge, and (re)valued sisterhood and community in the lives and educational experiences of BWD. Additionally, I will make connections between the BWD and the two TCs' narratives about their roles and description of their work with hopes of offering implications that addresses the need to improve imposing of whiteness and normalizing practices that manifest in the performance and cultural competency or geographical or segregating practices enacted in special and broader education settings. It is crucial to discuss and create implications for individuals and groups consciousness about knowing themselves (i.e., body, soul, mind, and spirit) better in relationship to healing and their celestial essence and not just through their educational and personal achievements reached (e.g., goals). In the next section, I summarize my findings, connect to the literature, and turn to the implications of the study.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

Healing from the Residue of the Terrible and Sticky Oppression Black Women with Dis/abilities Experienced on their Body, and in their Soul, Mind and Spirit

> Healing requires a critical consciousness, a way of understanding the social world through political resistance that prepares [Black] youth to confront racism and other forms of oppression . . .healing fosters a collective optimism and a transformation of spirit that, over time, contributes to healthy, vibrant community life. (Ginwright, 2011, pp. 36-37)

The primary purpose of this dissertation was to hear the voices of Black women with dis/abilities (BWD) and in so doing, privileging her *narratives* in order to learn from her experiences at the intersection of race, gender, and disability and from her perspective on life and educational transitions. Furthermore, the purpose for including two distinct groups' as participants was to inform post-secondary transition through the recognition of the collective historical struggle and strength of Black woman with dis/abilities and based on the transition coordinators' descriptions of their roles and their work. I contend that the TCs' description of their roles and work shows white complicity and white agency in the context of the BWD's terrible and sticky truths and of the two white non-disabled TCs' abilities to ignore raced/race and to position themselves as the helper/savior missionaries. Therefore, I recognize the signals and codes that demonstrate how BWD talk about what they had experienced in schools and classrooms, and with professionals as well as peers and non-disabled white folks such as TCs, where power differentials exist and whiteness norms are enacted. Moreover, I tried to illuminate the problematic assumptions embedded in transition planning according to the two TCs. As the researcher, I attempted to show how the BWD counternarratives to white innocence interpretations, such as that of Ken's savior narrative (Aronson, 2017). Critical pedagogy approaches and critical theory problematize the positioning professionals as “experts”, especially when we consider the current institutionalized ways that shame and the ways that families from historically marginalized youths and communities are treated as though they are in need of saving (Aronson, 2017). We need to be cognizant of the historical legacies that create vulnerabilities to particular groups, given issues of history, power, privilege and difference. This is critical in the deconstruction of *common-sense* understandings of what counts as “transition,” given the realities of intersectionality that are also emotional, affective laden, and spiritual (Hernández-Saca & Cannon, in review).

Thus, as I listened to the BWDs tell their stories and the transition coordinators (TC) describe their roles and work, I was motivated by Dillard’s (2011) challenges to learn to (re)member the things that we learned to forget: in the instance of the BWD, this is in order to address the terrible and sticky truths: pathologization, disablement, and exclusion by intentionally and as the epithet suggest, purposedfully seeking healing. Thus, the collective optimism of BWD consciously subverting those truths and ultimately pushing back on society’s responses to these women at the intersection of disability, race, and gender is a form of the transformation of spirit. DisCrit scholars also have argued that “race and disability used in tandem. . . . [in] standards such as whiteness and ability lead to viewing differences among certain individuals as deficits” (Annamma et. al., pp. 19-20). One way or another these women illustrated their fight against what Williams (1997) calls *spirit murder*, as women take ownership of her responsibility to campaign against historical exclusion.

Consequently, I am aware that each of these terms, pathologization, disablement, and exclusion, have a history entailing particular negative phenomena with diagnoses that have contributed to the current master narratives of dis/ability (Hernández-Saca, 2016). Accordingly, Wilson's (1993) contends that professionals who are working with individuals with diagnoses need to be careful of the politics of diagnosis.

> Especially when we say an individual is disturbed, we not only indicate that the individual may have problems, but we indicate that we are having problems with the individual. That the individuals is not only disturbed but the individual disturbs us. (Wilson, 1993, pp. 86-87)

From a historical perspective, in acknowledgement of Wilson's warning to professionals working with individuals with dis/abilities, the aforementioned terrible and sticky truths must be pulled apart to prevent inhumane treatment of individuals with dis/abilities as problems that professionals and society must fix. Therefore, the themes in this dissertation stem from my in-depth analysis BWD narratives and the critical emotion praxis I had in interviewing ALL my participants, as explicitly discussed in my methods. Moreover, given that I am the instrument through which the data and interviews were conducted, and from the perspective that race and racial difference matters within social science practices, I present a different evaluation and lens. Therefore, CRT, Womanist and DS/DSE frameworks provided me with these starting points to make such knowledge claims. As a result, the centering of the BWD voices in this study shines a light on the need for healing from the inside out (Thompson, Murry, Harris, & Annan, 2003) so as to replace the residue left behind from the damage that pathologization, disablement, and exclusion have left on the psyches of BWD.

The Findings and the Literature

As Lowen and Pollard (2010) stated, "if disability becomes accepted as a part of the diversity of humanity, then it can become a source of pride, a descriptor, and an identity rather than the source of the problem" (p. 10). The terrible, sticky truths contend with the *impact of disablement*: how individuals and society treated BWDs at the intersection of raced/abled oppression dis/ability and how that treatment impacted their consciousness and led them to grappling with their identity. One such impact on BWD consciousness was the stickiness of *desires for normalcy*; this response was in direct connection to their exposure to and confrontation with familiar and strange others' reactions to their differences regarding the use of their bodies, or to their mental health aligning with the work of Petersen (2009a) and Sosulski et al. (2010). Respectively, this study sought to show a diversity of humanity within the BWD chronicling of their educational experiences and in connection to the two TC's roles and descriptions of transition education and the processes that they utilized. The epithet addresses the need to acknowledge and to accept the diversity of humanity as an asset and as a pathway away from the struggle with identity related to others' deficit views.

Relatedly, all the BWD, to some extent, *doubted their ability* in environments and structures that limited their full intellectual, physical or mental participation, a circumstance that aligns with the work of Ferri & Connor (2010), Petersen (2006, 2009a), and Soluski et al. (2010). The responses of the participants on how they were treated or how they were made to feel as they should be fixed is also consistent with the medical model of dis/ability (Shakespeare, 1996). The stickiness of these terrible truths invoked self-alienation and doubt (Charleston, 2006) in the midst of abelist norms in *disabling context* served to exclude them and is consistent with a social model of disability (Oliver, 1989; Petersen, 2009a).

In contrast, as I noted in my conceptual and theoretical frameworks, I aimed in this study to position disability as a *continuum and intersection* of human experiences, and in a way that is emancipatory – free from the confines or limitations of society and embracive of a disabled identity claimed and enfolded by the disabled individual. In this way, too, I envision the possibility of transition services acknowledged in the literature broadly (Ferri & Connor, 2010; Petersen, 2006, 2009a; Soluski et al., 2010) and relatedly, to this study on the stickiness and terribleness of the truths of these BWDs and how we might learn directly from BWD simultaneous subversions.

As a reminder to the reader, I organized my findings respectively by dividing them into five parts: with two parts containing the chronicles of the two distinct groups of stories and the other three parts addressing the three research questions. In this chapter, I discuss these findings and make broader connections to the existing literature, as well as emphasizing transition education inputs and outcomes that should also matter and be taken into consideration in transition education. I finalize the chapter with the implications for BWD post-secondary transition-planning-and-programming, theory, research, policy, practice, praxis, and spirituality.

Terrible and sticky truths of pathologization, disablement, and exclusion. In relation to my first finding, pathologization, considerable educational research has demonstrated that young Blacks and Black women have experienced many kinds of pathologization and exclusion in schools (Bell, 2011; Blanchett, 2009; Davis, 2013; Harry & Klinger, 2006; Patton, 1998; Peterson, 2009a). For instance, Moore III, Henfield, & Owens (2008) stated, “nearly 20,000 African American male students are inappropriately classified as” Specified Learning Disabled (SLD), which represents a “300% over-classification of this student population” (p. 908). Considerable research focuses on Black males’ overrepresentation in special education and exclusionary discipline is well-founded (Harry & Anderson, 1994; Kearns, Ford, & Linney, 2005; McCray, Grant, & Beachum, 2010).

At the same time, limited research has attended to Black women with disabilities. For instance, although Black females are more likely to be labeled compared to white females and males (Coutinho, Oswald, & Best, 2002), there is a dearth of research that focuses on Black females' educational experiences who experience pathologization and exclusion (Annamma, 2014; Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2013; Connor & Ferri, 2010) in their interactions with others (e.g., teachers, counselors, peers; Petersen, 2009a) throughout their educational experiences (Dace, 1994, 2012) at the intersection of race and gender (Crenshaw, 1995; Pratt-Clarke, 2010) *as well as* ability (Connor & Ferri, 2010; Petersen, 2009a). Accordingly, and similar to the work of Hernández-Saca et al. (2018), the BWD experienced significant negative impact from how others perceived their experiences as being a female, disabled, and mentally "ill."' They also experienced normalizing practices towards their *gendered identities* and experiences (Hill-Collins, 2000). Accordingly, the three impacts of pathologization included self-pathologization, feelings of not being understood, and feelings of powerlessness, all of which were problematic and disabling (Artiles, 1998, 2012; Minow, 1991).

In this study, the construct of disablement demonstrates how these women's stories extended existing research with the addition of dis/ability to the constellation of their identity markers. In particular, the addition of dis/ability emphasizes the pathologization and exclusion that occurred as a result of such disablement, which represents the medical model of disability and adds further complexity to the types of pathologization and exclusion that young Black women experience in schools (Ferri &

Connor 2010; Peterson, 2006, 2009a, 2009b). Furthermore, one BWD rejected the medical model by challenging the professionals who continued to prescribe multiple medications with damaging effects (e.g., Alice's loss of memory). The *norm* of medicating different categories of identity presumed unstable by non-disabled medical professionals is a central concern of the Mad Studies movement, which works against hierarchical power involved in prescribing medicine as a way to maintain socially created barriers and other hierarchies (Menzies et al., 2013; Rogers & Mancini, 2010).

Thus, it is necessary to illustrate a decisive and reflective "honor[ing] of the voice and experiences of disabled people themselves as valid forms of evidence [which] is the epitome of the [Disability Rights Movement] slogan, 'Nothing About Us Without Us'" (Charlton, 1998, as cited in Hernández-Saca & Cannon, 2016, p. 3). Alice's chronicle also highlights what Collins, (2013) calls, *ability profiling* as a deficit response—a disablement of Black and other people of color from resources and equitable education compared to white people. DisCrit Tenet One rejects perceived standards of whiteness or ability as those that everyone wants to achieve (Erevelles, 2000) and instead "talk[s] about the strengths they [disabled individuals of color] have because of their unique perspective in the world" (Annamma et al., 2016, p. 20).

In this study, *exclusion* centered on those who are different then what is acceptable as "normal." As a form of erasure, exclusion involves various factors experienced by Black students who are depressed (e.g., staying safe, non-suicidal). Accordingly, "in American psychological literature the [B]lack child is treated as an after-thought, as a contrast to the white child, never as a subject matter in its own right" (Wilson, 1978, p. 8). Wilson's argument was illustrated in Alice's contention with the one-sided statistics and non-inclusivity of all praxis of her psychology professor. In addition, Alice alluded to this notion of normalization, “the process of using the values of the norm to compare, differentiate, hierarchize, homogenize . . . power-rationing and legitimacy of white folks to that of [B]lack folks” (Wilson, 2014, pp. 104-105), which in action is exclusion and results in *isolation and loneliness*.

Subsequently, while other scholars who attend to race, or race and gender, describe the negative consequences of the impacts on Blacks and people of color’s lives, they do not use the frame of disablement to make meaning of those impacts. I hope to have shown through these women’s stories and the conceptual framework of disability studies in education (DSE) the power of understanding these young and adult BWDs pathologization and exclusion in schools through the lens of disablement (Annamma, 2014, 2016). However, again, even in those instances when Black women who are the authors or subjects of consideration have dis/abilities, those dis/abilities are often subjugated or erased (Annamma, 2013, 2014). In part, this is due to ideas around disability as a medical, intellectual, or psychological abnormality that are still held within critical race and critical or Black feminist communities (Erevelles, 2011). Therefore, in this study we see internalized oppressions around dis/ability even in instances where the BWD are proud of and draw strength from their Blackness or womanhood, or at the intersections of both. The BWD women still grappled with their dis/ability in light of their socialization to the medical model of disability and in their request for postsecondary academic accommodations.

Accordingly, *Guckenberger v. Boston University* (1997) outlined the legal requirement for responding to individuals with disabilities requesting reasonable accommodations. The U.S. Department of Education has guidelines for implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, granting individuals with disabilities "equal opportunity to gain accessibility standards the same result, to gain the same benefit, or to reach the same level of achievement, in the most integrated setting appropriate to the person's needs" (Rehabilitation Act, 1973). Since all the Black women in this study were qualified as individuals with a disability (QID) and enrolled in programs of choice/volition, they are right to question their accommodations and denial of benefits and not be forced to accept their university's decision about whether they would grant reasonable accommodations. In general, QID's often struggle with whether they should request accommodations because they fear the perception of others (e.g., teachers/professors and peers), which often results in feelings of exclusion, as shown in this study. Accordingly, the disrupting and ignoring of marginalized people's voices (Annamma et al., 2016) demands subversions of the *terrible truths* experienced by the five BWD in order to provide them with a chance to (re)define their identity (Lorde, 2007) and (re)place justice in their responses, revaluing themselves, while proclaiming "Nothing about us, without us" (Charlton, 2006, p. 3).

Subverted truths (re)defined, (re)placed, and (re)valued. The second major finding of the study, *subverted truths,* consisted of the following (re)defined socially constructed identities and radical love, (re)placed competency and knowledge, and (re)valued sisterhood and community. The concept (re)defined socially constructed identities draws from research on the immense self-resilience, collective sisterhood, and the strength of Black women. These women also demonstrated in many ways their push-back and resistance against subjugation and oppression in how they connected with me and pushed back on their experiences of pathologization and exclusion. The literature assists us in contemplating how other Black women have replaced, redefined, or revalued themselves, and how they have also been pathologized and excluded at intersections, ethnically misrepresented and misunderstood in broader society (K. Cannon, 1998; Crenshaw, 1991; Petersen, 2009a).

In particular, Williams (2008) argued in her book, *Real Talk for When There's Nowhere to go But Up: Black Pain, It Just Looks Like We're Not Hurting* that the history of the treatment of Blacks has cast a long shadow of unaddressed depression from the history of abuse that needs to be spoken out against so as to restore our lives. Williams discussed the power of faith, self-care, dieting, and exercise in addressing the results of emotional pain on Black lives. Acknowledging the moral character of Black women is another way to push back. One example of pushing back is found in K. Cannon's (1998) work that featured Neale Hurston's morality. Cannon highlighted Hurtson's embraced and learned disposition, stemming from her parents' teachings about broader society and institutions that oppress individuals like herself, which impacted her life and identity development. Her mother's Black Womanist philosophy that she imparted on her daughter was to "jump at de sun" in the midst of the struggle, so to not have her spirit squelched while she was developing, defining, and valuing herself (p. 99). Similarly, in my study, one such way that these five BWD pushed back is that they "noticed" the troubles, the immorality, and the unethical nature of their treatment in the context of their elementary, secondary, or post-secondary classes. Most of them did not just accept those experiences as the way things needed to be, but in some instances, even pushed back within those interactions, which some Black philosophers would chactacterize as radical love.

Radical love, framed through the lens of Taylor's (2018) work, challenges us all to rethink how we see our bodies and argues that "proposing that humans are all the same leaves the idea that the default body un-interrogated in our subconscious and firmly in place in our world, forcing other bodies to conform or be rendered invisible" (p. 32). Her idea of radical love goes against structures and institutions that have profited from sorting individuals by differences, and for the purposes of this dissertation, disability markers of differences (Artiles, 1998, 2013; Ferri, 2010). Another scholar, Dotson (2013) stated, "a radical love not because it is rabid or obsessive. Rather, it is radical love because it results in a steadfast commitment, unwavering trust, and, in some contexts, a daring that defies current dominant reason" (p. 38). Dotson's quote captures what the BWDs sought out: additional information in some instances, and in relation with me as a researcher who disclosed my own limited special education experiences in schools (i.e., pulled out of elementary classes to work with a speech pathologist) and dared to defy dominant reasoning in my development towards or arrival at a space of radical self-love for Black people (Dotie, 2013; Taylor, 2018). This notion of radical self-love, from the perspective of Taylor and Dotie, shares a space with literature written by Black women such as Hamlet (2006): "before one can love others they have to love oneself" (p. 224).

However, I argue that this concept of love has its origins in the Bible, where God commands us to love him, ourselves, and other: "love God and love your neighbor as you love yourself" (Luke 10:27, NASB). This kind of love towards God is an Agape—unconditional and to extend this love towards self and others adds a benevolence—a compassionate sharing and authentic confidence in one's worth in the sight of God. This concept has been valued among the Black community, and it spills over into Black sisterhood, which is built solely on a mutual sharing that is not hierarchical but symbiotic and foundational to our relationship with God (Morton & Cannon, in press). Spiritual sisterhood empowers Black women in general and those in this study to stand tall and proud in our worth, which together with faith, helps us to undergird the most radical love actions possible (Cannon & Morton, 2015) and to work at dismantling systems and institutions of oppression. When we bring disability into the analysis, coupled with these Black women's collective strength and connection to sisterhood and community, it can help us think about the exceptional nature of this self-love despite all the harmful messages and socialization experienced by the BWD in my study.

(Re)valued sisterhood and community is another way that these women responded as they looked for deeper and cooperative relationships within their families and the Black community at-large, and in some instances, with other Black women. Hill Collins (2000) captures the significance of centering Black women's sisterhood activism against "social organizations within which intersecting oppressions originate, develop, and are contained" and reflects group survival—the collective struggle of Black sisterhood and community (p. 228). This is a form of establishing cultural identity as it relates to self-naming and self-defining religious/spiritual experience (Hudson-Weems, 1993; Phillips, 2006). To illustrate, Ross (2011) self-named and self-defined her experiences as a scholar pursuing an electric engineer degree in her third year of college, while attending the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, when she was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). Although her vision was impacted and fear set-in, Ross went on to earn

her undergraduate degree and immediately sought a master's degree. She contributes her success to her faith, which anchored her in the midst of various physical changes, and she completed her master's degree in rehabilitation engineering. Shortly after, Ross narrated her journey in a series of three books, *Successful Suffering,* and outlined how she learned to trust God in ways she had not known before and while in the midst of her fear. Ross's body progressively required her use of a wheelchair, and she found "purpose in the pain" and *walked* in faith. Ross's story in general assists us in thinking about Tammy's chronicle in the sense that she looked to God to substantiate her experience and survival as a woman in a chair.

Subsequently, all of the participants (e.g., BWD and TCs) mentioned either God in passing or in talking about their faith, spirituality, church going, or in their understanding of a higher power. Several of the BWD talked about God extensively; they talked about spiritual dimensions of their identity or of God accepting them, loving them, and teaching them how to love others. Alternatively, in the case of the TCs, God was talked about in the context of them serving others as helpers. Ultimately, the BWDs' experiences and understanding of the pain and oppressions that they have experienced surpassed the realm of humanity and entered the celestial sphere—signaling the need to advocate for individuals who are in pain, so they can move towards identity transformation and away from socially constructed ideologies that oppress at their intersections of differences. These are powerful subversions and serve as detoxes from the poisons that *terrible truth and sticky truths* leave behind on their psyche.

When discussing human interactions and people as agents of change, Womanist/Black feminism espouses the ideas of Black women's care for family and community. These theoretical lenses emphasize how care is more than simple acts of benevolence; these are acts of a radical love that is not afraid to ask (w)holistically and spiritually—who am I—in such a way that reflects a emancipatory freedom that comes from a noncondemnatory love (Ogilvie, 1994), also illustrated in Ross and Taylor's work. Taylor's work goes as far as to challenge the world that sees the *default-bodies* of people as not possibly seeing the whole person and Ross's adversity with MS shares how she gained a better understanding of God's radical love, and in the context of the support she received from her family and community proclaimed a *successful suffering*. Likewise, Cooper's (2017) *Voices from the South* in her book *Beyond Respectability: The Intellectual Thought of Race Women* foregrounds the strength and the tenacity of Anna Julia Cooper *as* her inspiration to work as an activist for Blacks' intellects, families, jobs, and communities illustrating how they have collective survival against the violence and oppression Blacks experience in the U.S. Accordingly, other women scholars of color attest to the invisible oppression of Black girls, especially how they are criminalized and dehumanized at intersections of their race and gender within schools and struggle to survive (Annamma, 2013, 2014, 2016; Morris, 2016). Annamma (2014) stated,

> When girls are already incarcerated, they still fight to be treated with dignity and this came in direct contrast with the tight regulation and control of their bodies. Juvenile justice education, from the girls' perspectives, often ignored their intersectional identities, reinforced their identities as criminals and did not address their academic needs. (Annamma, 2013, as cited in Annamma, 2014, p. 321)

Relatedly, Alice's story about being in prison and criminalized as a Black women connects to the medicalization of dis/ability in a similar way. Prescription drugs in Alice's case resulted in drug addiction and imprisonment for the use of illegal drugs.

Overall, it is necessary that individuals at intersections of oppression (i.e., race, gender, and dis/ability) push back by subverting the terrible sticky truths and the residuals from those experiences, as illustrated by the BWD’s experiences with radical love and intellectual competency, while also (re)valuing sisterhood and community. These women noticed the troubles, immorality, and unethical nature of their treatment in elementary, secondary, or post-secondary classrooms and did not accept the circumstances the way things needed to be, and in some instances, even pushed back within those interactions. These women had shared bonds without ever knowing each other. Their struggle was a foundation for much of their daily acts of resistance. This bond of resistance does not assume that these women overcame everything they went through. There are still messy loose ends within these five ladies’ struggles and their subversions are the cracks, the acts of resistance, of pushing-back and grappling with their experiences in the midst of (re)stored identity and radical love for themselves as they traverse postsecondary education. These BWD’s desire for a greater understanding of all cultures and the specific historical, social, emotional, economic, cultural, and other factors that are at play in life and education.

In sum, even though these women still grapple with pathologization to some extent, in many instances the women were keen to share examples and symbols of their knowledge and competence, in order to connect as well as emphasize their strengths. This study, by giving continual attention to the ways that BW and BWD advocate for themselves through subverting truths culled from historical experiences, stereotypes, stigmas, and deficit thinking, reveals the respectability of their embodied worth, emotional and intellectual thought. Additionally, giving continual attention to BW and

BWD advocacy and self-determination in this dissertation reveals the emancipatory reality of their expert knowledge and competency—valuable work worthy of centering and considering within transition education work.

Transition coordinators' roles and transition education work. Transition education and processes should support the strengths and needs of culturally diverse students with dis/abilities, respectively, and at their intersections, and assist in implementing tools that focus on the desires, goals, and dreams of the individual into the processes and activities, which should also be supportive of family and community (Callicott, 2003). This, however, was not necessarily the case with the two white non-disabled TCs, in whose narratives discussed their work with the two BWD. However, centering the BWD and my own interpretation as the researcher of how the five BWD women were treated and how that made them feel in connection to the BWD that the two white non-disabled TCs discussed, allowed me to illuminate their (BWD) voices given the history of their ontology, epistemology, and axiology subordination since the founding of the country. Thus, this researcher is bringing to bring to the literature a deep analysis of the roles and description of transition work explained by the two non-disabled white transition coordinators. I do this to illuminate what counts as transition and what those whose dispositions directly and indirectly has been the main focused can show us about transition education process and practice. Thus, by gaining access to the narratives and history of those working within the system (e.g., TCs), it is important to understand their roles, their histories, and their conceptualizations of their roles. This is critical for systemic efforts to create an inclusive climate for all, but especially those at the margins such as Black women with dis/abilities. Cultural procedures and processes are often those that we do not question, since culture is working through us. How we become aware of those cultural processes and procedures that are informing our dispositions and activities is a matter of epistemological, ontological, and more importantly axiological praxis—the coupling of critical reflection and action—is necessary so that we can continuously engage in conversations based on inclusion. It is critically important to illuminate the cases of the two white non-disabled TCs, since dominant ideologies are working through them and as a BWD scholar, how do I talk about this without getting the traditional reactions from those at the center of power and privilege? I realized that ideology works through all of us—still, assumptions and beliefs within the dominant ideology of U.S. schools is critical to unpack (Aronson, 2017; Milner, et al., 2015).

Therefore, unless the Black women's stories in the literature review of this study and the study's participants narratives are considered and centered in transition processes and activities enacted in relations to BWD, then transition education services and activities that are so-called person-centered cannot offer any guidance towards charting their future. For example, each transition coordinator, including their embodied temperaments and descriptions of tendencies contributed to ways in which they structured the perceptions of themselves and their duty to serve their students at the transition age, leading to their conceptual and practical understanding of transition. This is problematic in comparison to what we learned from the stories of the Black women with dis/abilities about their transitions from high school to college. Even with the good-intentions of the TCs, the Black women that the TCs worked with did not receive guidance from them that was intentional and applicable to what is considered person-centered and cultural sensitive to the women's concerns, but was more focused on what came natural to the TCs' views and norms.

Although it is very clear that the TCs held beliefs about their good intentions, and in many ways that came through, *Whiteness and normalization* within the transition coordinators' stories illuminates their rationales for and their journeys into the work were very connected to notions of dis/ability as a pathology. The TCs had constructed identities of themselves as addressing issues of exclusion as they worked for young people with dis/abilities and helped to plan their future beyond high school. Overall, their goals were representative of desires for those youths to be integrated to some or a large extent into the community in higher education spaces. At the same time the experiences described by the Black women about their pathologization very much underscored the ways that the TCs described the origins of their work, the reasons for engaging in the work, and their sense of accomplishment and purpose in relation to the work. As much as the TCs demonstrated some appreciation of youths with disabilities, their appreciation was based on their belief that the students were in need of fixing and that they (the TCs) were the ones to do that fixing. The professionals' performances of cultural competency in interview conversations and interactions among themselves and *me* (as this particular BWD disabled her/me) were a form of performing cultural or disability competency with "goodness" actions (Annamma et al, 2016; Thorius, 2016).

However, when we start to add the intersections of race, and to a lesser extent gender, to that of disability we also start to see pathologization when the TCs talk about former students and consider students' race, and in some examples of young black women, students' gender, we see a deepening of their conceptualizations of themselves as helpers. For example, considerating of the transition coordinators (TC) and their colleagues' interactions with the Black women, they all failed to include the BWD's feedback or shared cultural practices that made a difference in the BWD's responses to transition processes, and in the one case, why conformity to existing whiteness and normalizing practices demanded that the BWD see herself housed with a white peer. It is clear that to some degree, the transition coordinator roles were informed by their positionality and the privileges afforded them as white professionals (Annamma et al., 2016). DiAngelo (2011) outlined the notion of *white fragility* in the following way:

> White people in North America live in a social environment that protects and insulates them from race-based stress. This insulated environment of racial protect- ion builds white expectations for racial comfort while at the same time lowering the ability to tolerate racial stress, leading to what I refer to as White Fragility. White Fragility is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium. (p. 54)

According to DiAngelo, it can be argued that both Lucy's, Ken's, and his colleagues' narratives embody whiteness and manifest it in the ways in which they perceive their work with students with disabilities to be of a higher purpose and needed if "these" students are going to have a chance to become somebody. Relatedly, a multidimensional definition of whiteness is applicable here:

> Whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a 'standpoint,' a place from which [w]hite people look at ourselves, at others, and at society. Third, '[w]hiteness' refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 1).

Similarly, Frankenberg (1993) illuminated the nature of whiteness as she centered the role of cultural whiteness that by default comes with a superior privilege over that of a

Black women, and I assert, Black women with dis/abilities, and which in turn normalizes whiteness.

Moreover, transition work can easily exist in the form of *performances of cultural competency*. We see this in the instances of transition coordinators planning processes in working with students at multiple margins of disadvantage (e.g., BWD selection of schools to attend or roommates). Consequently, the role of cultural whiteness normalizes the performance of cultural competency, which, compounded by the effects of pathologization, disablement, and exclusions, consciously or unconsciously placed upon BWDs, impacts their mind and infiltrates racial and socialized places in their lives and education.

When thinking about how *racial geography* and *segregated socialization* connect to transition planning spaces in a way that does not segregate or disadvantage BWD, it becomes necessary to integrate the assets and strengths of this particular community into the transition process. Thus, the input and outcomes that Black women with disabilities bring to transition education matter, especially because we need to address inputs that are about access into spaces that remain unchanged and the outcomes are focus on things like *getting a job* and *going to college*. If the jobs and college classrooms continue to be sites of violence, like Alice, Zora and Tammy talked about, and college visits are oppressive and traumatic, like it was for the Black girl that Ken and his colleagues spoke of, is that enough for transition? Taking inputs and outcomes from a critical stance, there are so many more inputs that BWD bring to transition education. They bring their spiritual connections and their sisterhood, their history of oppression and their strength, but these are not accounted for when we talk about what we consider in transition. If the desired outcomes of transition education activities are to be inclusive of all students then, transition folks cannot "just" get students with disabilities somewhere (e.g., college) to access something they have not had or been to before. Without transforming the system itself, whether the college setting or the classroom or the residential experience, then the BWD are going to continue to experience the terrible and sticky truths in the same or similar ways as described in this dissertation. When you have done nothing to change the college, the college access, and the job site, but have all these women telling us the things that happened to them, that they are threatened, perceived as being threatening, or looked at as abnormal, then they will continue to not have access to their basic rights in educational settings (i.e., accommodations). Consequently, just getting them into college or getting them a job as a "front desk person" is not going to change the way people treat them. In this study the five women demonstrated strength in the form of their subverted truths: sisterhood and radical love. Thus, a richness of resources can be incorporated into the transition processes, organizational connections, career goals, and potential spaces in higher education that has implications for encompassing who may be part of the transition education process.

Intersections of human dignity and reciprocal knowledge. *Context matters—equitable education*—an intersectionality intracategorical framework allows us to focus on a particular social group at intersecting categories such as BWD and also include the structures and historical contexts for the intersection of identity categories specific to their race, gender(sex), and dis/ability (McCall, 2005). These five women in a sense demanded to be treated with human dignity and were willing to show reciprocal respect towards others truth, knowledge, and beliefs. However, there was no reciprocity in the case of these women nor from the Black women's stories in the literature review of this study. Instead, for both sets of women, and for those discussed in the transition literature and by the two TCs in this study, none of the BWD were listened to nor considered for what they knew, and they were pathologized either at their race, gender, and dis/ability, or at times, within all three intersections, without a respect for their truth, knowledge, and or beliefs. Furthermore, the transition coordinators did not acquire appropriate knowledge, understanding, and a portion of wisdom that would cause the TCs to exhibit some empathy, which would have shown a measure of understanding about the details of the women's lives or their education experiences in the context of their membership in a historically marginalized group notwithstanding. For example,

> addressing the inequalities that are connected to the historical marginalization of people with disabilities who also experience poverty, racism, and sex and gender identity discrimination . . . requires a better understanding of the theoretical and empirical connections between transition and larger issues and broader contexts of American society. (Trainor, 2017, p. 60)

Although Trainor's work attempts to recognize and acknowledge, respectively, assets and discusses the need for transition planning to incorporate more cultural transition education (Trainor, 2017), she does not deal with transition processes and planning in the context of disaggregating the oppressive histories of marginalized groups (e.g. BWD). When we fail to identify those who are affected by systems of racism and white supremacy, we cannot know, understand, or practice emancipatory models of dis/ability geared towards a more equitable transition education. Such a model respects human dignity and reciprocity in individuals and collective funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2006) and that is inclusive of their pain, faith, or spirituality that they utilized to navigate their painful experiences.

Residuals from helper mentality. Transition processes needs to incorporate healing and the acknowledgement of pain, and in a sense, compensate for the failure to learn and acknowledge the historical experiences of individuals and communities of color to address transition education through a process that is truly humanizing. Furthermore, transition processes should include techniques that provide a lens to see, hear, protect, and respect the goals and desires and the relationships of the young Black women with dis/abilities. In part, it is about being culturally responsive, fully present, and in acknowledgement of these women, but also, it is about healing and atonement for what we know—it is—unimaginable that a young BWD is graduating from high school without having experienced systemic discriminations and multiple oppressions. For instance, we see this in both Lucy and Ken's chronicling of their input, outcomes, and input/outcomes of who they are and how they have come to their transition work, which are layered with varying contexts and contradictions. On the one hand, they both exemplify what is "right" and wrong with the "care/cure" and service provided to historically marginalized people with dis/abilities specifically, the few BWD in which they discussed in their narratives. The TCs' sociohistorical contexts, experiences, and privileges are not benign and are socially produced in ways that unfortunately sustain the status quo within U.S. society and educational contexts for racialized practice (Connor, 2017). On the other hand, their well-intending and well-meaning transition work unfortunately also reified the systemic systems of oppression at intersections of dis/ability and gender within U.S. society and educational contexts (Hernández-Saca, Kahn, & Cannon, 2018).

Subsequently, in our society and schools, there are many inferences and assumption about people with disabilities, and the focus is not on who the dis/abled person and what they believe about themselves but is on what others told them about themselves, and this leaves no room for the individual’s autonomy or perception. In this study, the two transition coordinators had a helper’s mentality overall, Lucy’s and Ken’s transition habitus was laminated by their “helper mentality,” which focused on their life’s transitioning and role as transition coordinators, and included a passion for learning, self-awareness, intergenerational wealth and privilege, or training from the *guru* of transition, role models, and formal education. In considering the transition coordinator’s (Ken and his two colleagues) interactions with the Black woman when they attempted to transition her from high school to college, they did not include her lived inputs or shared cultural practices and differences, but suggested she conform to existing whiteness and normalizing practices as a college student with regard to her housing. If they had considered her fear to room with a white woman more seriously instead of blaming her behaviors, the outcome for her could have been favorable, and less about the TCs as the “helpers” to steer “these” students in the right direction. According to Blomgren (1998),

> Our desire to *help [emphasis added]* is expressed in terms of diagnosis, prescriptions, assessment, and mediation. Helping as diagnosis, teaching as prescription and learning as remediation and production turns very quickly into an educational dilemma in which the unfixed, unproductive, non-useful individual fail, we begin to accuse the individual for his or her inability to become a useful product. (pp. 242-243)

This quote illustrates that the helper mentality does not maintain equitable outcomes for BWD who are actively redefining, replacing and revaluing themselves. They engage in this work when developing ways to contribute to their cultural practices as experts in knowledge and intellectual thought and building a healthy identity development that promises hope that is regenerative in their transition education activities, practices, and experiences. In order to attend to this, the position I have taken in this dissertation is one of advocacy.

In the next section, I discuss implications for BWD post-secondary transition planning and programming, theory, research, policy, practice, praxis, and spirituality**.**

Implications

> Many are without hope, as they struggle to 'do the right thing' in their own academic lives and find that their good intentions are a poor substitute for the cultural and experiential knowledge that they know they need but don't know how to get. Many are searching for ways to fill their rather empty hearts, having harbored lives full of abuse, neglect, and unloving family situations. Believing that it was their personal burden to bear these stories in silence, many have never dared even to utter them. Worse yet, many have never been invited to utter such stories, to speak their truths, especially in any place that resembled a school, not to mention in endeavors called research or teaching. (Dillard, 2006, p. 66)

The epithet speaks to the passion and the tensions in my dissertation work as I discuss BWD education transition experiences and transition coordinators roles and descriptions of transition work in the context of working with BWD. People seeking identity and purpose—answers to life's dilemmas, as this dissertation sought to show by privileging the voices of the five BWD lived and educational experiences in the context of transition services provided. In this section, I present implications for policy, research, and theory, and for transition education. Given this need, three research inquiries guided this dissertation: (1) features of educational experiences narrated by BWD, (2) features of transition services provided to students with dis/abilities, as well as roles and approaches described by the TCs, and (3) how the BWD narratives may be leveraged to critique and extend transition services as described by the TCs. These inquiries allowed me to center BWD voices and counternarratives in the finding of this study and to illuminate the TC roles and descriptions of transition work in connection to BWD transitioning from high school to college, which points to the inevitability for change. I also discuss reaching the goal of the North Star. Then, I recap about Person-centered planning (PCP), similar to the summary in the literature review section of this study. I also present the implications for practice and praxis and show the need for atonement. Then, I present implications for spirituality and introduce an approach to spirituality in education through a redintegrative hope. Next, I reimagine how to center BWD voices and experiences (i.e., inputs and outcomes they bring to transition education) in transition education by imagining their stories in the context of PCP and PATH activities (to which I explained in more detail in this section). I end the dissertation with a short discussion about the possibility of BWD claiming dis/ability as an identity, and from an emancipatory lens as a possible output in PCP. Finally, I present what I see as an implication for the focus on PCP if BWD claimed dis/ability as one output that can assist in how PCP is facilitated within transition education planning.

Policy, research, theory. Within the implementation of federal special education policies such as IDEA (2004), regulations and compliance requirements are expected to be observed. Thus, one implication for policies should account for disaggregated data about the transition experiences of individuals with disabilities who also intersect various identity categories, gender and disability diagnoses, so to incorporate rules to guard against causing harm. An implication for research is to conduct more studies that consider the input and outcomes that individuals from marginalized communities bring with them to transition education. These studies should also address person-centered planning activities that go beyond individual approaches and goals to incorporate collective plans and goals in which we address the factors that BWD revealed as significant in their lives (e.g., radical love for self and community). Another implication for research with Black women with dis/abilities related to inputs/outputs of transition is to center their perspectives about terrible and sticky truths in order to bridge the gap in the literature and assist in our understanding and knowledge building about BWD transitioning education. An implication for theory is to build an transformative approach to practices and activities involved in transition education that will also assist in our understanding and rational for reasons why BWD have to redefine, replace, and revalue themselves after repeated interpersonal interactions with white teachers/professors. In addition, we need to theorize more on how to transform systemic systems of injustices in our educational structures and environments because of the harm—assaults and—insults on their (e.g., BWD) humanity. In other words, it is imperative that transition coordinators and researchers move transition work from theory to practice in transformative ways that are geared towards healing and will respond to different needs and desires in planning students who are from marginalized and oppressed communities for postsecondary education (Cavendish & Connor, 2018; Connor, 2017; Trainor, 2007). Trainor (2017) challenged transition educators to contend for methodological ways of thinking and conceptualizing within the field of transition.

> The heavy focus on transition as a process that can be implemented and measured in school contexts is central to the field . . . according to Bourdieu's meaning of *field* includes places, structures, and mechanisms in which people live, learn, and work, with an understanding that people are simultaneously producing and being by the values and practices that constitute the rules of the field. (Webb et al., 2002, as cited in Trainor, 2017, p. 31)

A transformative change in the field of education transition and across broader institutions will acknowledge the pain and inhumane treatment of marginalized individuals and groups, and work to take responsibility for healing for all.

Implications for transition education. In terms of healing from the terrible and sticky truths of pathologization, disablement, and exclusion, and the implementation of a radical love and sisterhood for these BWD and for what that brings to bear as a richness of resources can be incorporated into the transition process, I think of what literature has to say about transition education in general. Trainor would agree that a better understanding is needed for:

> Addressing the inequalities that are connected to the historical marginalization of people with disabilities who also experience poverty, racism, and sex and gender identity discrimination . . . requires a better understanding of the theoretical and empirical connections between transition and larger issues and broader contexts of American society. (Trainor, 2017, p. 60)

Therefore, in consideration of Trainor, a postsecondary scholar on transition education, it is the aim of this researcher that the findings from chapters five of this dissertation will be used to inform chapter six on how transition (i.e., postsecondary) from high school to college values healing by incorporating a person-center-plan (PCP) to further the future goals and plans of youth and adults (Menchetti & Garcia, 2003), and with the hopes of exploring how BWD education find support through emancipatory PATH activities that line up with the intent of the IDEA 2004. PATH incorporates activities geared towards reaching the North Star goals.

Reaching the goal of the North Star. One of the outcomes of person-centered transition education is getting to the desired goal(s) set by individuals with disabilities and those who are a part of their transition plan—an outcome that should be a start not the end. Conversely, as the BWD shared with us, there is so much more to their outcomes that goes beyond reaching the North Star, which I will talk more about in the implications for praxis and the redintegrative hope sections below.

Recap of person-centered planning and transition education. At one time PATH's acronym, planning alternative tomorrow with hope, was used, but more recently the acronym represents postschool achievement through higher skills (Lindstrom et. al., 2012). Through an eight-step person-centered planning (PCP) that incorporates PATH activities, disabled individuals reach their North Star goal(s) established upfront by the individual. The initial PATH activities has eight components: (1) touching the dream (the North Star), (2) sensing the goal (for one year following), (3) grounding the now (the here/I am we are), (4) identifying people (who will support your journey), (5) recognizing ways to build strength (for the journey), (6) charting actions (a week, to a month out), (7) planning the next months (working towards the goal), and finally, (8) committing to the first step (what is next to reaching your North Star; O'Brien, Pearpoint, & Kahn, 2010).

PCP is a process-oriented approach individuals with disabilities enact when setting goals (e.g., post high school additional education, vocation training, or residential housing) post high school. PCP implements the eight PATH steps involves individuals with disabilities, along with others who are considered key members of their family, or their community, or persons of network value and who are invited to participants in the planning processes, and together with the individual, they map out the eight steps to reaching the North Star (O'Brien, Pearpoint, Kahn, 2010). PATH processes is a way to achieve healing and progress for BWD to organize their transition education so as to reach their future goals.

In thinking about what it would take to design, interpret, and implement PATH in the community of Black women with dis/abilities. Focusing on the voices heard throughout this dissertation about the *terrible and sticky truths* of pathologization, disablement, and exclusion, how can transition programs yield to these individual and *collective* shared transition and education experiences at the intersections of identity and provide a space for their experiences to contribute to new goals and a new consciousness that are culturally responsive to BWD? Since the IDEA requires compliance in transitioning students with disabilities from post high school, PATH activities for BWD that consider their voices and experiences could improve compliance with the federal law and enhance the planning of individuals of color with dis/abilities transitioning processes reaching the North Star that looks different for oppressed and marginalized individuals and groups.

Implications for practice and praxis: The need for atonement. Part of the healing is atonement—making it right. There are things to be learned about BWD through a process that is truly humanizing and really sees, hears, and learns from the current and future goals, desires, and collective experiences of youth to adult BWD. One implication of course is about being culturally responsive, acknowledging the individual or group, but it also about an atonement for what these women have experienced with terrible and sticky truths and via their subverted truth responses. Trainor suggested,

> improved practices suggest that knowledge of individuals' preferences, strengths, and needs can be enhanced by increasing an understanding of culturally based values and practices. . . . Teachers and other facilitators of PCP should learn as much as possible about the values and beliefs of the families with whom they work. (Trainor, 2007, p. 102)

Transition education folks can benefit from learning about values and beliefs of BWD, which of course, are rooted in their histories. For example, if the TCs had considered the concerns and fears of the Black young woman about rooming with a white woman more seriously they may have taken a different approach such as increasing their understanding of culturally based differences and values, instead of centering themselves as "helpers" and steering this student in the direction that seemed right to them (i.e., Eurocentric).

How do we atone for the failures mainfested in the interpersonal interactions of transition coodinators in this study and more broadly in transition education and what are the implications for transition processes organizational connections, career goals, and potential spaces that Black women could be educated in the context of higher education silos or to live in the community of others with disabilities? One way is by privileging their voices because it takes the voices of the "disabled" students within postsecondary and from an ableism lens that claimed the self – voice of assertion that are functional and experientially unique in how the disabled integrate self and skills proficiency and in instances of vulnerability (Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2012, p. 44). The participants in my study voiced a need for change in several different capacities such as relationships, self-perception, and understanding of disability, request for accommodations, and within given situations they wished for changes to be made in practice and praxis within institutions of higher education.

Accordingly, in instances of what has been shared with us about how simply the two transition coordinators thought (or did not think) about culture and race, or how they think about transitions—then what should the inputs look like? They should consider those terrible and sticky truths. They should aim to look for the beauty—the resources—the collective strength as spoken of in this dissertation of BWD and people with disabilities more broadly. What should the inputs be? They should be all the experiences the good, the bad, the beautiful, the hard things and experiences of these women—they all matters. The transition person planning their transition must think about all the things BWD bring which includes, all the resources of the subverted truths and their histories collectively as a people, as Black women, and in schools. In more than an IQ and a diagnoses—there is so much more and different things that can be considered as we see there, with the women's redefining, replacing, revaluing, ultimately reimaging their lives through radical love, the legitimacy of their competency and knowledge, sisterhood and community, which pushes transition education towards change.

Implications for spirituality: A redintegrative hope. Redintegrative hope is an inner conviction and confidence that unites and combines to make one whole again and incorporates processes of restoration—from being blamed to that of being commended as one renews and reestablishes their mind and consciousness. Hope is important to individuals, and when they unite with others with dis/abilities who are walking collectively towards the North Star, they recognize the limited earthly values and human accomplishments (i.e., attaining additional schooling, vocation, or living arrangements) and seek the boundless spiritual possibilities. Similar to Hutcheon and Wolbring's (2012) work through a body-social-self framework, specifically, their findings that included ways to address higher education policy and ability to account for differences through five themes: hegemonic voice, voice of the body, voice of silence, voice of assertion, voice of change; my conceptualization of reintegrative hope continues the voice of change that journey beyond the North Star and into a celestial-spiritual realm that is rich in corporal/physical/bodily/spiritual spaces of faith and power.

Claiming one's voice involves the last two themes of Hutcheon and Wolbring that is mentioned above. These two are useful to an reintegrative hope because the need to claim the self – voicing assertion to "integrate their [the disabled] experiences into their sense of self; [that] enhance[s] their existing skills or proficiencies" (p. 44) beyond earth bound limitations is identity integration progressing onward and emerging into an emancipatory self-knowledge—a spiritual healing. For instance, Myer (2013) would suggest self-knowledge is a reclamation, reascension, and revitalization of an Afrocentric psychology, which serves "as a restoration of spirit" (p. 259).

To illustrate, a redintegrative hope using my experiences as a BWD, I talked about my own life and how I found strength in a God-Consciousness (see Cannon & Morton, 2015), which I continue to theorize here in the context of an redintegrative hope that enables me to find the best of my cultural heritage and sisterhood. My God-consciousness spiritual striving involves remembering the things I learned to forget, even though it is painful remembering (Dillard, 2008) but it also assists in my understanding of how to reimagine myself born again, with a new attitude and perspective that is spiritual but enacted in earthly spaces. Learning from the past is painful; however, Myers optimal theory offers a healing perspective that compliments the centering of the voices and experiences of BWD transitioning education and utilizing their skills and proficiencies in a way that (re)claims the self (Hutchenson & Wolbring, 2012). I argue that through redintegrative hope processes of healing, faith, spirituality, sisterhood, history, and transformation is sought. And through PATH activities, the outcomes of redintegrative hope processes could illuminates the collective spiritual sisterhood, which is antithesis to the terrible truths of pathologization and its outcomes of disablement and exclusion (e.g., desire for normalcy and isolation and loneliness) experienced by the Black women in this study.

Accordingly, in the context of this dissertation, healing the body, soul, mind, and spirit from *terrible and sticky truths* through the process of *subverted truths* is a non-negotiable implication. One approach to addressing this implication is to include the concept of healing the Black community from Myers (1993) Optimal Theory that emerges from Afrocentric psychology that emphasizes “self-knowledge and human and spiritual networks” to achieving goals (p. 3). Her model of racial-ethnic-identity development builds a positive self-identity that conceptualized the negative “isms” stereotypes of inferiority that other identity development systems are inherently oppressive and frustrating to all ethnic individuals or marginalized/oppressed groups. She stated, “before we can ever grapple with these cognitive complexities, the affective aspects of self-examination must be mastered” (p. 5). In other words, the limitation of Eurocentric worldviews—systems that normally do not account for multiple identity oppressions cannot help Blacks or in the context of this study, BWD to have confidence in their worth.

Subsequently, the voices of the disabled in the context of my study and in connection to a reintegrative hope lifts the residuals of the *terrible truths that disable and exclude*d the BWD because of their intersections of difference (Artiles, 1998; Minow, 1990) and through *subverted truths* these women light their individual paths towards the healing of their body, soul, spirit, and minds individually and collectively.

The effect of the inherently oppressive systems of differences is this: all that are unprotected from it will “have a difficult time developing and maintaining a positive identity” (Myers, et al., 1991, p, 54), leaving them with a fragmented sense of self (p. 56). Unlike such normalizing systems, Myers’s theory of a “holistic conceptual system designed to foster peace and harmony within and subsequently among people is described as optimal” (Myers, 1988, as cited in Myers, Speight, & Highlen, 1991, p. 56). In other words, only a (w)holistic intrinsic worldview of identity development encompasses the material-spiritual-unity historically is a part of Black community development. For instance, “self-knowledge is the basis of all knowledge; in this context [is] the process of spiritually and identity development . . . the people coming to know themselves more and more fully as spiritual-material beings that we are” (p. 57).

Reimagining PATH for Black women with dis/abilities. This study sought to center the five BWD chronicles of their transition education experiences, how those experiences made them feel, and how their responses to the terrible and sticky truths revealed their assets as BWD. In addition, their engaged in *subverted truths*: self-constructed identity and radically love, competency and knowledge, and sisterhood and community practices are emancipatory transformations that are cultural relevant and apply not only to the lives of BWD but to how transition education could expand transition education practices (e.g., inputs and outcomes). Through PATH activities combined with the voices and experiences of BWD, they, and we, can get at what has been lost that needs to be remembered, valued, and treasured and what takes more than accomplishing a goal that is earthbound—the North Star. The point being, the North Star goal is not enough, it is a worthy goal but does not deal with the past, addresses the oppressions, or draws from the collective and community strength of the Black women with dis/abilities. The North Star process may invite a person or two with one or more intersections of race, gender, or dis/ability into the PATH meeting or, as Ken talked about the transition team meeting; yet, it is not enough to account totally for student of color transition experiences at varied intersections of identity.

Transition then that is “culturally responsive” must also atone for and account for these women with dis/abilities, particularly the terrible and sticky truths. That means, ultimate goal of transition is work towards thinking about activities, planning, and processes concerning moving out of high school that will provide them with opportunities to engage in these kinds of practices and remembrances that build self-knowledge and spiritual networks that push back against systemic systems of oppression and that begins at affect (i.e., doing the hard work).

Accordingly, the North Star goal(s) should go beyond reaching an accomplishment of gaining continual education, landing a vocation, and or somewhere to live. I argue for going beyond these limitations, which has to involve hearing and listening to other cultures and experiences with transition education (e.g., the voices of these BWD) that suggest a spirituality and sisterhood component to reaching beyond an educational goal(s). Additionally, going beyond the North Star is inclusive of setting goals around history (healing that accounts for histories of oppression), and some element of the transformation of broader societal spaces. Going beyond the North Star’s eight-step PATH requires the enactment of subverted truths, which can illustrate what I call a *reintergrative hope*. A redintergrative hope promotes the possibility of a new way to see a new start in associations with a negative past, in connection to one’s present life circumstances, and in hopes of a positive future that encompasses reimagined hopes and dreams beyond and through the PATH. Meaning going beyond reaching the North Star's earthly destination and in movement towards a collective, spiritual, and confident existence that claim self-identity and collective worth.

I illustrate how Alice's narrative of her lived and educational experiences and use her story as an example of reaching her north star dream—to go to college. Once she passed her GED exam, she went beyond to also volunteer as a tutor of other Black women in prison who are attempting to pass their GED exams and as a motivational speaker at halfway house for women released from prison transitioning back into society. She succeeded in the eight steps of PATH: (1) touching the dream (set a goal to go to college); (2) sensing the goal (addressing the need to have a focused mind); (3) grounding the now (worked on getting off of 22 medications, which was unproductive for her learning); (4) identifying people (doctors and counselors who supported her journey); (5) recognizing ways to build strength (availability as a tutor for others ladies in jail); (6) charting actions (prepared to take GED exam before release from a halfway house); (7) planning next steps (worked a job and enrolled in a community college); and (8) committed to the first step (completed her associate degree). At the time of Alice's interviews, she had been accepted to a four year institution and has since graduated with a Psychology undergraduate degree and is on her way to an interdisciplinary master's degree and ultimately to earning her Ph.D. While Alice reached her initial North Star goal, she thought of her individual progression and the collective progression of her community and made herself available to tutor and mentor others. She also attempted to make amends with her children, and society in general, from what she calls "bad choices" in order to move towards an emancipatory existence that is spiritual instead of earthly.

Thus, I attempted to illustrate a "reimagining" of the north star through Alice's transition process, a process that moves towards a redintegrative hope and that is stimulated by what she called energy—a language she contributes to how she sees God—meaning power that can manifest positively or negatively and depends on how she chooses to see the situation or circumstance at hand. Alice is honoring a state of wholeness inclusive of subverted truths: a restored identity and radical love that gives back to the community of sisters (BW and BWD) who are still in prison. Ultimately, Alice's overall story encompasses spirituality and sisterhood, which are a part of the collective experience of BWD in prison (Annamma, 2013, 2014, 2016). Her story incorporates the history of a person with comorbidities and commonalities to other BWD (Soluski et al., 2010). Finally, Alice's narrative points to the need for transformation in terms of her professors and peers in the area of their positioning and viewing Black people from deficit lenses. BWD as individuals and members of the collective restored (w)holeness; these women worked through their confidence in their worth, a radical love, and valued sisterhood, knitted together by histories of oppression, while working and advocating for the transformation of broader civilization that is more equitable, fair, and inclusive society. As the north star has served the goals of some disabled individuals through their individualized PCP and PATH activities, a redintegrative hope for BWD grounded in their subverted truths and in the context of postsecondary goals can be seen to (re)imagine a future of PATH activities that is culturally aware and connected to the progression of BWD respectively. Post school transition activities that provide healing of the body, soul, mind, and spirit of BWD should include making connections to offices in higher education for support, including job coaching support, participating in encouraging groups of BWD (e.g., bible study groups, poetic/painting groups, artifacts gathering groups, volunteer groups, research groups and etc.) and living a life radically different. This type of support can achieve progressive healing and collective PATHs.

Further healing of BWD: Claiming dis/ability identity as an emancipatory output in PCP. Another implication and important conclusion to my study is that none of the women, even across the spectrum of their acceptance or appreciation, or identity in relation to their dis/ability, accepted herself as disabled. However, seeing herself disabled from an emancipatory lens can bring healing, and particularly because of the falsification of her psyche with self-doubt and alienation, healing is as important to a (w)holistic identity as her race, gender, and dis/ability. For example, to a degree, some of Zora's chronicle attended to the struggle with being Black, a woman, and depressed—something broader society accepted as a part of a Black woman's life in the context of being a strong Black woman. If Zora could have shared her feelings and experiences with depression, and in return, received support from others in her attempt at an emancipatory PCP experience, one outcome could had of been a forward movement towards reaching a personal goal and future educational desire and beyond.

Claiming dis/ability, a PCP output, and the facilitation of transition education. If PCP transition seeks to partner with existing associations, organizations, and or women events and activities that focuses on the forward progression of BWDs and provides resources and possible mentors, then it may be possible to attend to factors that prevent young BWD’s successful transitions from high school to college. A final implication for focusing on Black disabled communities and representations of Black women and women of color embracing their disabled identities is illustrated by the work of Shelli Ross and an organization called, *Divas with Disabilities* Project https://www.divaswithdisabilities.com/ that empowers women of color. These women’s goals and dreams are showcased in a way that respects the dignity of their whole lives in action and engagement within broader society.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL

To: Kathleen Thorius

EDUCATION

Mercedes Adell Cannon

ADAPTIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

From:

Human Subjects Office

Office of Research Compliance –

Indiana University

Date: January 30, 2017

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION - NEW

RE: PROTOCOL

Centering Black Women with Dis/abilities in Transition Planning from High School to

Protocol Title:

College.

Study #:1509038051

Funding Agency/Sponsor: None

Status: Exemption Granted **|** Exempt

Study Approval Date: January 30, 2017

The Indiana University Institutional Review Board (IRB) EXE000001 | Exempt recently reviewed the above-referenced protocol. In compliance with (as applicable) 45

CFR 46.109 (d) and IU Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Research Involving Human Subjects, this letter serves as written notification of the IRB's determination. **Under 45 CFR 46.101(b) and the SOPs, as applicable, the study is accepted as Exempt (2) Category 2: Surveys/Interviews/Standardized Educational Tests/Observation of Public Behavior Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior if: i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; or ii) any disclosure of the human subjects responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects financial standing, employability or reputation, with the following determinations:**

Acceptance of this study is based on your agreement to abide by the policies and procedures of the Indiana University Human Research Protection Program and does not replace any other approvals that may be required. Relevant policies and procedures governing Human Subjects Research can be found at: http://researchcompliance.iu.edu/hso/hs guidance.html.

The Exempt determination is valid indefinitely. Substantive changes to approved exempt research must be requested and approved prior to their initiation. Investigators may request proposed changes by submitting an amendment through the KC IRB system. The changes are reviewed to ensure that they do not affect the exempt status of the research. Please check with the Human Subjects Office to determine if any additional review may be needed.

You should retain a copy of this letter and all associated approved study documents for your records. Please refer to the assigned study number and exact study title in future correspondence with our office. Additional information is available on our website at http://researchcompliance.iu.edu/hso/index.html.

If your source of funding changes, you must submit an amendment to update your study documents immediately.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact the Human Subjects Office via email at irb@iu.edu or by phone at 317-274-8289 (Indianapolis) or 812-856-4242 (Bloomington).

You are invited, as part of ORA's ongoing program of quality improvement, to **participate in a short survey** to assess your experience and satisfaction with the IRB related to this approval. We estimate it will take you approximately **5 minutes to complete the survey.** The survey is housed on a Microsoft SharePoint secure site that requires CAS authentication. This survey is being administered by REEP; please contact us at reep@iu.edu if you have any questions or require additional information. Simply click on the link below, or copy and paste the entire URL into your browser to access the survey: https://www.sharepoint.iu.edu/sites/iu-ora/survey/Lists/Compliance/IRB_Survey/NewForm.aspx. /enclosures

APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT SCRIPT LETTER TO TRANSITION COORDINATORS

My name is Mercedes A. Cannon and I am a graduate student in the Urban Education Studies Ph.D. Program at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). Dr. Kathleen Thorius, Associate Professor at Indiana University School of Education is my dissertation chair. I am conducting a research study to explore the process of transition to post-secondary education from the perspective of transition facilitators who work in a public school or district. Relatedly, I am exploring the stories of Black women with disabilities who are also post-secondary students about their transition and post-secondary experiences and looking for ways in which existing transition processes address or may be extended on the basis of their experiences. I am recruiting transition facilitators, and particularly, those who facilitate person-centered-planning processes in urban school(s) or district(s). I am asking you to consider participating in this study?

I would like to interview you initially to get to know more about you, and then to get to know more about the ways you facilitate a person-centered transition process. I am looking for participants who plan on attending at least three interviews over a three to six-month period, so in all, I would interview you three times for 60-90 minutes each. If you choose to withdraw from the study, there are no consequences from the School of Education.

I would like to audio record their interviews, which will be kept in an electronic file with password access. I will assign all participants pseudonyms and keep their identities strictly confidential. Recordings, and any notes and written transcripts will be labeled with artificial names only.

Please contact me, Mercedes A. Cannon, if you are interested, have questions, or desire to participate in this research. Additionally, please feel free to share this recruitment notice and information with others who are facilitators of person-centered transitioning PATH to which you belong. My contact information is as follows:

Mercedes A. Cannon, M.Ed.
Associate Director

Chair: Dr. Kathleen Thorius, Ph.D
Associate Professor

APPENDIX C: INVITATION TO BLACK WOMEN WITH DIS/ABILITIES

My name is Mercedes A. Cannon and I am a graduate student in the Urban Education Studies Ph.D. Program at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). Dr. Kathleen Thorius, Ph.D. Associate Professor at Indiana University School of Education is my dissertation chair. I am conducting a research study to explore the transition processes between secondary and postsecondary education for Black women with disabilities. I am asking you to participate in this study.

I would like to interview you initially to get to know more about you, and then more specifically about your life history as a Black woman with a disability. I am looking for participants who plan on attending at least three interviews over a three to six-month period, so in all, I would interview you three times for about 60 to 90 minutes each. We can conduct these interviews at any location you are most comfortable with, including a library, the university you attend, or anywhere else you wish. I would like to audiotape interviews, which will be kept in a locked cabinet in my locked desk at home for one year after the study begins, and then will be erased. All participants will be assign pseudonyms and I will keep their identity strictly confidential. Recordings, and any notes and written transcripts will be labeled with artificial names only. If you withdraw from the study before this time, I will destroy, immediately the audio-recordings of any interviews we have conducted.

As a participant in this study you will be asked several questions that you will need to answer at the end of this email. Additionally, you will participate in a three-interview series. In the first interview you will be asked to talk about who you are—your life history. In the second interview you will be asked to focus on details about transitioning from high school to college. Your final interview you will be asked to make-meaning of your life and experiences. Each interview will last 60-90 minutes. If you choose to withdraw from the study, there are no consequences from the School of Education.

Please contact me, Mercedes A. Cannon, if you are interested, have questions, or desire to participate in this research. Additionally, please feel free to share this recruitment notice and information with others (e.g., friends, family, peers, and or listserves) or organizations to which you belong. My contact information as follows:

Mercedes A. Cannon, M.Ed.
Associate Director

Chair: Dr. Kathleen Thorius, Ph.D
Associate Professor

APPENDIX D: INVITATION TO TRANSITION COORDINATOR

Hello [name],

My name is Mercedes A. Cannon and I am a graduate student in the Urban Education Studies Ph.D. Program at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). Dr. Kathleen Thorius, Associate Professor at Indiana University School of Education is my dissertation chair. I am conducting a research study and I am looking for participants for a study that explores the relationship between person-centered planning transition processes between secondary and postsecondary education and the lived experiences of Black women with dis/abilites.

I am recruiting you, as an employee of IUPUI, and because you work directly or indirectly with students with dis/abilities in post-secondary education. I am requesting if you would connect me to or refer a person-centered transition facilitators or directors of such a programs, and students who experienced person-centered planning (PCP) such as PATH in secondary education to participate in this study. Participants will include two distinct groups: PCP transition facilitators who work in a public school or district, and Black women with dis/abilities who are also post-secondary students. If you know of any PCP transition facilitators who work in an urban school or district, who might be interested in participating in my study, can you please forward this email to them. Please see the attached document providing general information about the study. If they are interested in participating, my contact information as follows:

Mercedes A. Cannon, M.Ed.
Associate Director

Chair: Dr. Kathleen Thorius, Ph.D
Associate Professor

APPENDIX E: EMAIL TO COLLEGES' DISABILITY OFFICES

Hello [name],

I am looking for participants for a study that explores the relationship between person-centered transition processes, between secondary and postsecondary education, and lived experiences. Participants will include two distinct groups: Transition Facilitators who work in a public school or district, and Black women with dis/abilities who are also post-secondary students. Participants' confidentiality is keep and the right to withdraw from the study at any time. If you know of any Black women with dis/abilities who is a student in post-secondary education and might be interested in participating in my study, can you please forward her or them this email. Please see the attached document providing general information about the study. If they are interested in participating, my contact information as follows:

Mercedes A. Cannon, M.Ed.
Associate Director

Chair: Dr. Kathleen Thorius, Ph.D
Associate Professor

APPENDIX F: EMAIL OF INTEREST TO TRANSITION COORDINATORS

Dear [participant’s name]

Thank you for showing an interest in participating in my dissertation study, which explores the relationship between person-centered transition processes between secondary and postsecondary education and the lived experiences, including of transition, of Black women post-secondary education and as students with dis/abilities. As a participant in this study you will be asked several questions that you will need to answer at the end of this email. Additionally, you will participate in a three-interview series. In the first interview you will be asked to talk about who you are—your life history. In the second interview you will be asked to focus on details about transitioning—lived and educational experiences. Your final interview you will be asked to make-meaning of your life and experiences. Each interview will last 60-90 minutes. If you choose to withdraw from the study, there are no consequences from the School of Education.

If this research study sounds like something you would like to participate in, please fill out the questions in the section below and email it back to me as soon as you can. The reason for the questions is for me to appropriately understand if you fit the criteria for the study. I will email you to set up a time to participate in your first interview or inform you that you do not fit the criteria. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions, concerns, or need additional information.

Mercedes A. Cannon, M.Ed.
Associate Director

Chair: Dr. Kathleen Thorius, Ph.D
Associate Professor

APPENDIX G: EMAIL TO BLACK WOMEN WITH DIS/ABILITIES

Dear [participant’s name]

Thank you for showing an interest in participating in my dissertation study, which explores the relationship between person-centered transition processes between secondary and postsecondary education and the lived experiences, including of transition, of Black women post-secondary education and as students with dis/abilities. As a participant in this study you will be asked several questions that you will need to answer at the end of this email. Additionally, you will participate in a three-interview series. In the first interview you will be asked to talk about who you are—your life history. In the second interview you will be asked to focus on details about person-center transitioning processes. In your final interview you will be asked to make-meaning of your facilitation of person-centered transitioning and processes. Each interview will last 60-90 minutes. If you choose to withdraw from the study, there are no consequences from the School of Education.

If this research study sounds like something you would like to participate in, please fill out the questions in the section below and email it back to me as soon as you can. The reason for the questions is for me to appropriately understand if you fit the criteria for the study. I will email you to set up a time to participate in your first interview or inform you that you do not fit the criteria. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions, concerns, or need additional information.

Mercedes A. Cannon, M.Ed.
Associate Director

Chair: Dr. Kathleen Thorius, Ph.D
Associate Professor

APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS PROTOCOL QUESTIONS

Interview #1
Focus question: Please tell me about yourself.

What would you like to tell me about yourself?
Tell me about working with students with dis/abilities and as they transition to post-secondary school.
How did you start working with students with dis/abilities?

Interview #2
Focus question: Please tell me about the details of your experiences.

Can you recreate the details of working with a student transitioning from secondary school to post-secondary?

Interview #3
Focus question: Reflect on meaning.

How do you know PCP transitioning work with students with dis/abilities?
Given what you describe as person-centered transitioning and what you know about activities within person-centered-planning, how do you understand your facilitation of such processes as a student with an or multiple dis/abilities?
In what ways can processes you used in facilitating PATH commits to Black female education?

Mercedes A. Cannon, M.Ed.
Associate Director

Chair: Dr. Kathleen Thorius, Ph.D
Associate Professor

APPENDIX I: QUALIFYING QUESTIONS FOR POTENTIAL BLACK WOMEN WITH DIS/ABILITIES PARTICIPANTS

1) How do you identify racially?
2) Do you have a documented dis/ability?
3) Are you a student enrolled in college?

Mercedes A. Cannon, M.Ed.
Associate Director

Chair: Dr. Kathleen Thorius, Ph.D
Associate Professor

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Mercedes Adell Cannon

Education

2019	Doctor of Philosophy School of Education, Indiana University – Indianapolis, Indiana Urban Education Studies Ph.D., Program, emphasis in Disability Studies. Dissertation Title: *Because I Am Human: Centering Black Women with Dis/Abilities in Transition Planning from High School to College* Committee: Kathleen Thorius (Chair)
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2010	Associate of Continuing Studies, Indiana University – Indianapolis School of Liberal Arts in Continuing Studies

Honors and Fellowships

2017-2018	Advocate For Equity In Accessibility Award, Department of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
2013-2017	Executive Associate Dean (EAD) Fellowship: The Urban Education Studies Ph.D., Indiana University – Indianapolis School of Education
2013-2016	Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Scholar. A scholarship institute-preparing students of color for professorship.
2009-2011	Ronald E. McNair Research Program, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis –Indianapolis. Participated with faculty in research involving the importance of mentor/mentee relationships.
2008-2011	Norman Brown Diversity and Leadership Scholar, Indianapolis, IN

Research

2016-2018	Centering the voices of Black women with disabilities in transition education from high school to college. Chair: Dr. Kathleen Thorius
2011-2012	Cultural Ethnography Project: “Neighborhood of Saturdays Research Supervisor: Dr. Susan Hyatt
2009-2011	Interpersonal Relations Project: Mentor-Mentee Relationships Research Supervisor: Dr. Yvette Perry

Professional and Training Experiences

Current	Disability Law for DSS Directors, Staff, and ADA Officers: Compliance Requirements, Analytical Tools and Solutions. AHEAD: Association on Higher Education and Disability
Current	The Next Chapter: Master Classes for Seasoned Professionals. AHEAD: Association on Higher Education and Disability

Conference Attendance

2017	Cannon, M. A., Hernández-Saca, D.I. (2017). Decolonizing Dis/ability categories of Mental Health at their intersections: A collaborative interdisciplinary Approach. A Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, San Antonio, TX.
2016	Cannon, M. A., Hernandez-Saca, D. I., & Khan, L. (2016). Disability as psycho-emotional disablism a theoretical philosophical paper on education theory and practice. Paper presented at the American Educational Association, Washington, DC.
2016	Cannon, M. A., & Thorius, K. K. (2016). CEC St. Louis.
2016	Buffington-Adams, J., Cannon, M. A., Hernández-Saca, D. I., Vanderbilt, S., & Vaughan, K. (2016, October). *Collective autoethnography and ableism*. Paper presented at the 37th Annual Bergamo Conference on Curriculum and Classroom Practice, Bergamo Conference Center, Dayton, Ohio on Curriculum and Classroom Practice, Bergamo Conference Center, Dayton, Ohio.
2015	Cannon, M. A., & Hernandez S., D. (2015) Community Ethos and the Core Identity of People of Color: Critical Narrative Reflections About Dis/ability and Other Intersections. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.

2014 Cannon, M. A., & Thorius, K. K. (2014). Educational Experiences of African American Women with label with dis/ability. Paper presented at the CRSEA conference at Vanderbilt University Law School, Nashville Tennessee.

2014 Cannon, M. A., & Thompson. (2014). Cross-Agency Partnerships on Empowering School Communities to Resist the Psychological Impacts of Racism through Cross-Agency Collaboration: Racism 101. Paper presented at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis. Great Lakes Equity Center Leaders Institute: Ensuring. Civil Rights in Education, Indianapolis, Indiana

Articles

Cannon, M. A., & Morton, C. H. (2015). God-Consciousness Enacted Living, Moving, and Having my Being in Him. Special Issue: Assessing the Multidimensional Work of Black Women in Education in *Western Journal of Black Studies* 38(4).

Hernández-Saca, D. I. & **Cannon, M. A.** (2016). Disability as psycho-emotional disablism: Atheoretical and philosophical review of education theory and practice. In Peter, M. (Ed*). Encyclopedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory.* New York: Springer Publishing.

Hernández-Saca, D.I. & **Cannon, M. A.** (2019). Interrogating learning dis/ability and speech and language impairment epistemologies: A call for collective dis/ability intersectional autoethnographic projects. Special Edition, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*

Hernández-Saca, D. I., Kahn, L. G., & **Cannon, M. A.** (2018). Intersectionality Dis/ability Research: How Dis/ability Research in Education Engages Intersectionality to Uncover the Multidimensional Construction of Dis/abled Experiences. *Review of Research in Education,* 42, 286-311.

Waitoller, R., F., Thorius, A., K. T., **Cannon, M. A.,** Moore, S., T. (2018). Responsive to what?: Conceptualizations of culture and culturally responsive in literature on culturally responsive instruction in multiple voices.

Book Chapters

Cannon, M. A. (in review). Dis/ability and mental/health labels: Towards an Emancipatory/well-being of Black Women with Dis/ability Spiritual and Educational Experiences. In D. J. Davis, *United We Stand Spirituality and Education*. Charlotte: Information Age Publishing (IAP).

Cannon, M. A. (2017). From homeless to hopeful: Overcoming tragedy to preserver. In Y, D. Ford, L. J., Davis, M. T. Scott, & Y. Sealey-Ruz (Eds.) *Gumbo for the Soul: Liberating Memoirs and Stories to Inspire Females of Color.* Charlotte, NC: *Information Age Publishing (IAP).*

Cannon, M. A., Forthoffer. J., & Townsend. K., (2012). 'Little by little we came': immigration, migration and the making of a multi-ethnic southside. In S. B. Hyatt (Ed.), *The Neighborhood of Saturdays: Memories of a Multi-Ethnic Community on Indianapolis' South Side.* Indianapolis, IN: Dog Ear Press.

Morton, C. & *Cannon, M. A.* (in press). Negotiating troubled waters through "Spiritual Sistering". In Rhonda Jeffries (Ed), Queen Mother's: Articulating the Spirit of Black Women Teacher-Leaders (this title needs to be italicized). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Scheurich, J. J., Phelps, J. A., Williams, N. A., **Cannon, M. A.,** Sosa, T., & Shaver, E. J. (2014). Racism in p12 schools. In K. Lomotey (Ed.), *Contemporary issues for people of color: Living, working and learning in the U.S.: Education: Pk-12 and higher education* (Vol. 1). Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO Books Department.