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### Eliminating Colorism through SEL: Black Boys want to Learn too!


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## TITLE:

Eliminating Colorism through SEL: Black Boys want to Learn too!

## • RELEVANCE:

This proposal is relevant to both the heart and hand stands in a number of ways. For example, how often have we told young Black males to suck it up and that real men do not cry? Black males are often taught to be like robots and to not show emotion. While academic development is vital, a male's social and emotional development is equally important. Yet, males, particularly Black males, are not encouraged nearly as often as girls to express their emotions at home or in schools. Thus, leaving them to suffer in silence, be misunderstood, and unfairly labeled in schools. Therefore, eliminating colorism through social emotional learning (SEL) could bridge the gap in how schools interact with this population. SEL can create an open space to help black males overcome the challenges associated with colorism and stereotypes while also promoting academic success.

## • BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Labels are for clothing, not people! The presentation Eliminating Colorism encourages positive interactions with black males in a school setting. Colorism is defined as discrimination within one group or race, and can negatively impact academics, behavior, and a child's, development, particularly among black males. Schools incorporating Social Emotional Learning (SEL) as a best practice can help bridge the gap with our Black male population.

## • SUMMARY:

Black boys want to learn too! Black males are the least, educated group in the United States making up over 37% of the prison population (Goings, 2015). The school to prison pipeline is one of the barriers put in place targeting young black males. Black males face a one in 1,000 risks of being killed during an encounter with police, in comparison to any other male group (Edwards, 2019). This leaves us to wonder as school personnel what more can be done to support the young Black male population. Black males are often discriminated against and stereotyped due to colorism. Colorism is defined as the within-group discrimination based upon skin color. Black males deal with the issues of colorism and stereotypes which can alter their perception of themselves. Stereotypes witnessed included aggression, excessive use of physical force, and displaying extreme anger. Black males are 4 times more likely to be incorrectly labeled as angry than any other male group" (Edwards, 2019). Phrases that some students say such as "The light skin pretty boy or light and cannot fight", implies that lighter males are less aggressive thus making darker males more aggressive. Jacobs (2019) found that prospective teachers were more likely to judge a behavior as hostile if the child was African American (Black). The goal of this presentation is to help school officials with tools to help eliminate colorism through Social Emotional Learning (SEL). SEL helps students build more positives relationships with students and keeps them engaged. Maintaining a positive relationship with Black males in a school setting can help keep the learning environment positive and potentially lower the number of suspensions Black males receive.

- EVIDENCE:

Halberstadt (2018) conducted a study using participants (Black and non-Black males' students) from an At-Risk school in North Carolina. What she found was that teachers viewed male students' behaviors as hostile if the student was African American. According to Halberstadt (2018), "the results suggest that racialized emotion-related perceptions may enter the classroom with preservice teachers." Relationship building between schools and black males could be a factor to helping with preconceived biases that aid in incorrectly labeling black males. When teachers and students are equally engaged, it can promote a positive school climate. Student engagement can be a robust predictor in student's academic achievement regardless of the student's Socioeconomic status (Klem, 2009). A school-based intervention that could support schools in helping black males to be more engaged and with relationships building is Social Emotional Learning (SEL). SEL teaches both the teachers and the students how to better collaborate and manage emotions. Social Emotional Learning is a school-based intervention that is critical to any school's academic success. Dulak (2011) wrote "students who participated in SEL demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behavior, and academic performance that reflected an 11-percentile-point gain in achievement." The goal of Eliminating Colorism through SEL is to encourage school to use the equity lens. Therefore, this presentation will encourage schools with high suspension rates for black males and low engagement to implement social emotional learning as a framework to improving student behavior, academic engagement, teacher-student relationships and the overall school culture and climate.

- FORMAT:

An Individual presentation to a group of 50–70. It will include a Power Point presentation, case studies, visual aids and handouts will be provided.

- BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

Onel Bascom is a graduate of Clark Atlanta University where she obtained her B.A. in Psychology. She is currently attending Liberty University pursuing her M.Ed. in School Counseling. Onel is a Special Education Teacher in Atlanta, Georgia. Onel has presented research in conferences such as SEPA, and CURC. She is a lifetime member of Psi Chi and Pi Gamma Mu honor societies.

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Dr. TeShaunda Hannor-Walker is a Professor, a Licensed Clinical Therapist/Owner, and author of *How to Raise a Successful Child with ADD*. She served 15 years in the public schools and was named, The American School Counselor Association's "Top Ten School Counselors in America." She is also a National Certified Counselor (NCC), Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), Certified School Counselor, Certified in Education Leadership, and Certified Professional Counselor Supervisor. Dr. Hannor-Walker has presented at local, state, national, and international conferences for over a decade on various counseling and educational topics. She travels the country working on social justice issues related to human trafficking (i.e. sex trafficking and the commercial exploitation of children).