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Womanists Leading White People in Intergroup Dialogue to End Anti-Black Racism: An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

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WOMANISTS LEADING WHITE PEOPLE IN INTERGROUP DIALOGUE TO END
ANTI-BLACK RACISM: AN INTERPRETIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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by

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This dissertation, by Tawana Angela Davis, has
been approved by the committee members signed below
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

WOMANISTS LEADING WHITE PEOPLE IN INTERGROUP DIALOGUE TO END
ANTI-BLACK RACISM: AN INTERPRETIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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Yellow Springs, OH

Womanism is a term curated by Alice Walker (2004) that centers Black women's lived

experiences, past and present, encouraging Black women to no longer look to others for their

liberation (Floyd-Thomas, 2006). Soul 2 Soul Sister's Facing Racism program is facilitated by

Womanist instructors, who work with groups of mostly white people to address anti-Black

racism. This qualitative study explored the experiences of white participants who took part in

this program, Facing Racism, which holds Womanism as its central guiding principle. Although

pre- and post-surveys were routinely conducted over the years about participants' experiences

with Facing Racism, this study sought to take a deep dive using Interpretive Phenomenological

Analysis to understand how the white participants made sense of the Facing Racism experience

and the longer-term outcomes it promoted in addressing and ending anti-Black racism. The

interpretive phenomenological analysis explored the experiences of white people who completed

the Facing Racism program. Eight white participants were interviewed using open-ended

questions. The key findings of the study included: a) indications of the transforming impact of

Womanist and intergroup dialogue in anti-racism work, b) revelations of the preconceptions and

biases antithetical to ending anti-Black racism that participants brought with them, c) an

affirmation of anti-racism work that works beyond the intellect and the importance of heart and

gut/soul work, and d) the identification of racial justice work as life-long work. The key

contributions include: a) the verification of a Womanist epistemology as an effective means to

address anti-Black racism, b) the value of Womanist ethos in conducting anti-Black racism work centering Black women and Black experiences, c) the introduction and nomenclature of a love-based revolution to address and eradicate anti-Black racism, d) identification of ways for white people to dismantle white supremacy/privilege/thought for the liberation of the historically oppressed and the oppressor, and e) a way for white people to commit to address and end anti-Black racism in the long run. This dissertation is available in open access at AURA (https://aura.antioch.edu) and OhioLINK ETD Center (https://etd.ohiolink.edu).

Keywords: womanist, womanism, intergroup dialogue, IGD, anti-black racism, racial justice, IPA, interpretive phenomenological analysis, sankofa, ubuntu, storytelling, epistemology, black women, black experiences, leadership, Alice Walker

Dedication

This is dedicated to my late parents, Rose Lee Davis and Edward E. Davis, Jr.

To my Children, Daralyne Kyesha and Erik Lee.

To my grandson, Ethan.

To all of my Black beloveds: my village, my tribe, now and henceforth.

For this, I give G-d praise!

Acknowledgements

I want to acknowledge those who have come before me who have paved the way to become the Black Womanist I am today. I honor the ancestors who graced me with their presence every step of the way. I hope that I am your wildest dream come true. I honor the late Audre Lorde, who succumbed to challenges with breast cancer. As a five-year HER2-positive metastatic breast cancer survivor in indefinite active treatment, I am grateful for the truth-telling liberating words of the honorable Audre Lorde that inspired me every step of the way. As a Black woman, I honor Lucille Clifton, a warrior poet who wrote *won't you celebrate with me:*

won't you celebrate with me

what i have shaped into

a kind of life? i had no model.

born in babylon

both nonwhite and woman

what did i see to be except myself?

i made it up

here on this bridge between

starshine and clay,

my one hand holding tight

my other hand; come celebrate

with me that everyday

something has tried to kill me

and has failed.

professionally, and academically. Donna Ladkin, my dissertation whisperer, you were recommended by the brilliantly beautiful Provost, Laurien, as my committee chair once my anticipated chair left Antioch. I do believe in the saying, "There are times when one must lose to gain." I gained a chair and a friend in you. For two years, we completed learning achievements and an entire dissertation. Can you believe it? We made it. For this, I give G-d praise.

To Soul 2 Soul Sisters, I thank you for believing in this Black woman to bring our seminal work to life through this dissertation. For this, I give G-d praise.

To my grandson, Ethan, who would slowly open my bedroom door and say, "Mema, are you ok?" as I was going through grueling chemo treatment. He would then smile a smile only a loving grandson could render, slowly walk away, and leave my door open.

To my children, Daralyne Kyesha and Erik Lee, who saved my life and gave me reasons to press on and live and not die at the hands of others. Thank you! It does not seem adequate, especially since you had to endure so much and carry it like the divine beings you are. Additionally, it was your unwavering support and faith that carried me through.

I look forward to great things to come.

For these and all things, I give G-d praise.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

I am Tawana Davis. I am the daughter of the late Rose Lee Davis and the late Edward E. Davis, Jr. I am the granddaughter of Dorothy Laverne Whitfield Davis and Alice Mack. I am the great-granddaughter of Katie (Sarah) Anderson and Rosa Lide Mack. Prominent matriarchs experienced shared stories of resilience from young motherhood to escaping domestic violence. These stories often go untold in the public sphere or are told with the utmost secrecy due to shame, privacy, humility, or guilt. I name these women as I present my dissertation that focuses on women leaders, specifically Black Womanist leaders, who have led and continue to lead under the guise of a patriarchal and misogynistic system of oppression to address systemic anti-Black racism.

I identify as a theologian, G-d centered, who believes in and practices Christian, African Traditional, Jewish, Muslim, spiritual, theocentric, or universal G-d centered religions, thoughts, and praxis. Also, I identify as a Womanist who welcomes evolutionary discovery of becoming; therefore, as Womanism evolves, so do I. In the Black diaspora's creative tradition, particularly our story-telling prowess and oral traditions, Womanism pushes boundaries of oppression and marginalization through experiences beyond white supremacy and dominant white thought (Townes, 2006). The Womanist mind creates a space for shared experiences to challenge oppression's status quo (Townes, 2006) in order to cocreate oneness.

In Chapter I of this dissertation, the study's purpose is introduced, along with the context of the problem that was addressed. The chapter presents research question(s), suggested assumptions, delimitations, and limitations (Miles, 2004). Chapter II presents a literature review focused on Womanism, anti-Black racism, and intergroup dialogue, three areas which were especially pertinent to my topic area. Chapter III offers a research process appropriate to the

study through an intensive, meaning-making qualitative research method called interpretive phenomenological analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Chapter IV focuses on the findings of this interpretive phenomenological analysis of the experience of white people who attended a Facing Racism cohort and the findings. Chapter V is a summary discussion on the findings and the researcher's exploratory comments.

In this dissertation I positioned myself as a Black woman who is a Womanist who has led in racial justice circles for ten years and specifically curated Facing Racism with the Soul 2 Soul Sisters co-Founder Rev. Dr. Dawn Riley Duval. Having led numerous cohorts over the years, this dissertation focused on the experiences of white people during and beyond Facing Racism.

In these chapters I have expounded on my stance as a Womanist whose concern was to center the lives and experiences of Black women while I addressed anti-Black racism with mostly white people. Anti-Black racism has been prevalent throughout my lived experience in Wagner Projects in Harlem, NY, as a darker-skinned girl with thick long kinky hair and a slim build. I experienced colorism in my Black and Brown community and was often deemed ugly due to my skin complexion. I first experienced white communities in my late teens. I would often accompany my dad to work at a large telecommunications company where he was the first Black man to lead in various areas, including the first Black man to become director of his particular department. I followed in my father's footsteps and moved through the ranks from associate to management in a few years at the same telecommunications company. I worked at this telecommunications company for 13 years. I resigned in 2008 to leave what I deemed a well-paying toxic workplace, steeped in sexism and racism, to answer my call to ordained ministry. I relocated to Atlanta, Georgia to attend The Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC).

I embraced Womanist theology during seminary in 2008–2010. Rev. Dr. Jacqueline Grant is one of the mothers of the Womanist theological movement. Grant's (1989) work centered on Black women and charged Black women to exist, think, and create independently of white and Black men and white women. After graduating from seminary and working full-time in the church, I experienced *misogynoir*, a disdain for Black women. I could not understand how the church and sexism intersected at a point of marginalization of Black women. There was a subsuming of Black women's scholarship under Black men and white women (Cannon, 1995). I wanted to learn more about Womanism to learn more about myself independent of society's definition. The late Rev. Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon (1995) was one of the mothers of Womanism and Womanist Ethics mothers. Through Rev. Dr. Jacqueline Grant; Rev. Carolyn McCrary, another Womanist and pastoral care professor; and Rev. Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon, I found my voice as a Black woman. After graduating from the ITC, I became an Itinerant Deacon, then Itinerant Elder in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, I worked in congregations in Atlanta and Denver for 8 years.

From the moment I acknowledged my call to ordained ministry, I knew I wanted a terminal degree. Why I wanted a terminal degree was unknown until I found my voice as a Black woman with agency and the capacity to pursue a doctoral degree to teach, write, research, and speak as an unheard and invisibilized Black woman. After a year of my doctoral studies, in 2015, I co-founded Soul 2 Soul Sisters and my positionality as a Womanist was defined. Founded in 2015 during a time of deadly encounters between Black people and law enforcement and the subsequent rise of the Movement for Black Lives, co-founders Rev. Tawana Davis and Rev. Dr. Dawn Riley Duval birthed Soul 2 Soul Sisters to be a Black women-led, faith-based response to anti-Black violence in the United States of America (Soul 2 Soul Sisters, *Our Story,* n.d., para 1).

Instead of being ashamed of being Black, I centered my experience with Black women of the diaspora. I took agency by using my voice for Black liberation and the liberation of the oppressor. The Black liberation teaching at the ITC led me to revere the use of G-d with a capital "G," a dash, and a lower case "d" following the Jewish tradition as a sign of respect and reverence of G-d (Fairchild, 2010). There are no letters that can encompass the Most High's written word, so the dash represents the fullness of G-d in written form. Using G-d and incorporating an additional religion was another way to use my voice and not conform to Christian elitism's status quo. I used Black and Black women as a sociopolitical-revolutionary identity centering the Afro-diasporic race and culture of women exclusive of the dominant culture and narrative. The term African American or African-American centers America as white and African as a part of a white culture we are actively and intentionally dismantling (Davis, 2019, p. 289). I capitalized the "B" in reference to Black people to rebuke Black people's denigration as the color black, honor the diaspora's divinity, and honor Blackness as a racial identity. We are indeed a people, a race, a tribe (Tharps, 2014); therefore, it is pertinent, vital, and necessary to capitalize "B" in Black. Capitalizing the "B" in Black disrupts the denigration, dishonor, and dehumanization of the Black people, particularly Black women. I did not capitalize "w" in white due to the lack of commonalities, shared culture in whiteness, and the systemic injustices associated with whiteness (Miller, 2020). The birth of Soul 2 Soul Sisters by two Black women provided a model to lead the dominant white culture through a love-based revolution to dismantle white privilege and supremacy. We did this work through our Facing Racism (FR) cohorts.

Since 2016, Soul 2 Soul Sisters has hosted FR cohorts annually for a total of 21 cohorts. Typically, pre-pandemic cohorts were made of 20–25, mostly white people. These numbers

increased after the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor in 2020 that gained global attention. During the present wave of the Movement for Black Lives, 2020 FR Fall Cohort had a record of 68 participants.

Toward deepening participants' commitment to lifelong anti-racism work, the programming engages the intellect and the heart. Importantly, FR honors the individual and collective need for healing from racism as we work to help actualize Black liberation and eradicate white supremacy.

Soul 2 Soul Sisters' Facing Racism

Soul 2 Soul Sisters is a nonprofit organization co-founded and led by two Black women. Rev. Dr. Dawn Riley Duval and I co-founded Soul 2 Soul Sisters in response to the sexism and misogynoir in the Black church, racism across our nation, and the marginalization and oppression of Black women's voices. Soul 2 Soul Sisters was born and actualized in response to what Cannon (1988) calls tyrannical triple oppression (Cannon, 1988, p. 4). Townes (2011) calls this the triple consciousness of race, class, and sex (Townes, 2011, p. 38). Crenshaw (1991), who names this triple consciousness of race, class, and sex as intersectionality, illustrates Black women's many experiences that cannot be captured by wholly looking at race or gender separately.

> FR is one of our programs established in 2016. It has become our signature program and the center of the anti-Black racism work by centering on Black women and Black experiences. Each year, Soul 2 Soul Sisters hosts FR online cohorts of mostly white people centering Black Women and our experiences. Integrating spiritual, ritual, and ancestral fields with anti-Black racism education toward action, FR provides
>
> - sacred space for participants to learn and share deeply about race and racism,

- an exploration of self-identity and social awareness as it relates to white supremacy culture,

- space and time for assessment of self and the Facing Racism experience,

- analyses of anti-Black racism and the impacts of white supremacy culture,

- space for discussions about reproductive injustices against Black women,

- Sacred space to explore modes of healing justice,

- a myriad of resources regarding ending anti-Black racism,

- opportunities to develop accountability partners for continued anti-white supremacy culture work,

- an affirming space for participants to develop and implement plans for doing positively transformative personal and collective work to end anti-Black racism.

  (Soul 2 Soul Sisters, *Facing Racism,* n.d., para. 5)

We review homework that includes articles, songs, interviews, podcasts, and think pieces during each session. We also do centering/blessings/smudging for cleansing the space rooted in Africentric Traditional Spirituality and close with a poll, remarks, and benediction at each session.

Soul 2 Soul Sisters Facing Racism Roots

My co-founder Rev. Dr. Dawn Riley Duval and I were preachers with a focus on social justice. In 2015 Dr. Duval and I preached at a combined religious service on the steps of the Colorado State Capitol. The Unitarian Universalist denomination is primarily white and is known for its social justice activism. It comprises coalesced religions that form this denomination. At the end of the service, attendees were approaching us with gut-wrenching tears

while thanking us for our truth-telling about racism and asked what they must do to be active participants in the fight against anti-Black racism.

Dr. Duval and I met the next day and began to create what is now known as Soul 2 Soul Sisters and our most popular signature program, FR. We knew FR had to be different. We refused to guilt people into doing the work required to dismantle anti-Black racism and white supremacy culture. We knew we were called to do something different using the inspiration of Alice Walker, Paolo Freire, and our African spiritual prowess of Sankofa, Ubuntu and smudging rituals. We knew we did not have the capacity nor the desire to mammy white people through this process of ending anti-Black racism. It was important to insert our Black voices into a historic and current narrative that often silences us. There was a need for Black women to cry out for justice against the killing of our Black beloveds. As mothers, we had to find a way to protect our children, community, and self.

Objectives of the Facing Racism Experience

The overall objective of FR is to establish a firm foundation relating to social identity as it is integral to eradicating anti-Black racism. Furthermore, we extend an invitation to explore and implement Sankofa, go back and fetch it, and Ubuntu, I am because you are, which will be defined later. The following bulleted items state our core objectives,

- We extend an invitation to personal and collective release, learning, and implementing new ways of being, behaving, and healing.
- We value self-love, self-esteem, balance, permission to make mistakes, joy, creativity, aspiration, reciprocity, and divine-centeredness. We continue to cultivate a brave space full of introspection, consciousness-raising, and empathy.

- We deepen our personal and collective racial analyses and gain more tools for positive transformation toward lifelong and life-changing self-education, valuing Black people, all people, and developing personal and collective plans for doing transformative racial justice work.

Summary of the Facing Racism Sessions

There are 7 facing racism sessions with a curriculum for each session. The following sessions listed provide a summary for each session:

- Session 1 focuses on deepening self-awareness toward ending anti-Black racism.

- Session 2 creates a space to meet the Womanist Matriarchs of Soul 2 Soul Sisters and does a deep dive in the Movement for Black Lives, why we center Black people, and what Womanism is.

- Session 3 presents an opportunity to deepen the understanding of realities concerning social identity development (Goodman, 2011), White Supremacy Culture (Okun, 1999), and the subsequent realities of white supremacy culture. We encourage participants to move from intellectual reasoning to feelings in the heart and gut.

- Session 4 promotes mindfulness and intentionality regarding the necessity of healing and subsequently applying healing practices in our lives as we end anti-Black racism/white supremacy.

- Session 5 invites participants to envision Black liberation for liberation for all.

- In Session 6 we explore ways in which white people may show up for Black lives. Some of the ways include observers, allies, accomplices, comrades, and co-conspirators. During this session we begin to discuss individual and collective plans to do the work to end anti-Black racism.

- Session 7 is a communal sharing of individual and group racial justice plans and an invitation to join the FR Alumni group.

My dissertation research included interviews with eight white participants about their experience with FR with the aim of understanding those experiences, as well as the impact, outcome(s), and meaning-making resulting from their taking part in the FR experience.

The Problem

Racism is so deeply rooted in our American history and the lives of the oppressor that, according to Sue (2013), there are beliefs (among white people) that they are fair, moral, and decent human beings who are not responsible for inequities in the lives of people of color; that racism is no longer a destructive force in society; and that our nation should be color-blind. On the contrary Alimo (2012) says "Learning about race, racism, and systems of whiteness may provide the necessary information to be able to influence the behavioral choices in the future that contribute to racial justice in society" (p. 38).

The United States of America has a heinous history of racism since its inception (Lavalley & Johnson, 2020). Our history in America is that the balance of power is not on the side of the Black diaspora, while the burden of justice is (Russell, 1977). This reality is mainly related to racism and white supremacy, socioeconomic disparities that impact the Black diaspora in extreme measures, and state-sanctioned, unjust murders of Black women and men across the country. Black people are dying at the hands of systemic racism.

Womanism offers a parallel approach to create spaces of healing: conciliation for white people, healing Black people, and the layers of trauma associated with centuries of oppression while building communities that afford Black people the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness (National Archives, 2020, para 2). Black and Indigenous people were the first to

experience the original system of oppression despite the Declaration of Independence. Furthermore, 400 years later, since the inception of slavery in what is now known as America, Black people are still experiencing oppression, marginalization, and anti-Black racism. Hence the importance of the oppressor leading the eradication of anti-Black racism.

Anti-Black racism has existed since Africans were enslaved, dehumanized, raped, tortured, separated from families, and murdered during the development of what is now known as the United States. Oppression and marginalization through systemic anti-Black racism continues despite efforts to fight for freedom during abolition, equality during Jim Crow, civil rights, and now the Movement for Black Lives. Through the Movement for Black Lives, we are still seeking justice and looking to insert humanity into an inhumane society. Freire (1970/2009) speaks directly to this by suggesting

> [It] is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors. The oppressors, who oppress, exploit, and rape under their power, cannot find in this power the strength to liberate either the oppressed or themselves. Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both. (p. 44)

As I will explore more fully in Chapter II, *Womanism* is the way by which people experience centering and leadership acumen of Black women, which is often dismissed, decentered, and silenced in dominant white thought and white supremacy. Womanist epistemology centers Black women without decentering others and is a way of knowing that goes against the status quo of whiteness. Through a Womanist epistemology and intergroup dialogical experience, FR occurs several times a year to address anti-Black racism with the historically oppressed leading the way. The dissertation research has done a deep dive with FR

participants to explore their FR experience, outcomes, and the impact the program has had on their lives.

Purpose

Soul 2 Soul Sisters' FR experience uses faith as a love-based revolution to end anti-Black racism to form an egalitarian system called radical and counter-cultural sacred work. FR aims to dismantle anti-Black racism, insert Womanist epistemology, and enmesh a Black–White dichotomy ending anti-Black racism through intergroup dialogue. Inspired by Paulo Freire (1970/2009), "[t]he pedagogy of the oppressed, which is the pedagogy of people engaged in the fight for their own liberation, has its roots here" (Freire, p. 53, 1970/2009). FR centers Black lives and Black experiences to liberate both the oppressed and the oppressor.

No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption. (Freire, 1970/2009, p. 54)

A humanist and libertarian pedagogy (Freire, 1970/2009) inspired Black women, particularly Womanists, to develop this FR pedagogy through the praxis of intergroup dialogue while centering the historically marginalized Black women. This study interrogated the method used in FR to explore the experience and its impact on white participants. Although race is a social construct and meaningless when applied to humans, race nevertheless has tremendous significance in structuring social reality such as oppression, white supremacy, dominant white thought, and the marginalization of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (Clair & Denis, 2015). Dismantling racism and building a society that is anti-racist to save lives from systemic racism is why FR does the work to dismantle white supremacy, privilege, and thought.

FR offers a language that is a liberating ideology, not merely a linguistic one (Freire, 1970/2009). As you will see in Chapter II, Alice Walker's definition of Womanism offers Black women a space to dismantle oppressive systems by honoring who we are and who we are becoming. Womanism is a stance, statement, epistemology, ontology, revolutionary lens, and an ever-evolving way to define a just system that transforms and liberates the oppressed and the oppressor. Centering Black women mapped our survival strategies so that the oppressed moral wisdom is communicated and implemented (Cannon, 1995) to liberate both. Womanism is a love-based radical revolutionary act that creates spaces to love beyond measure: measures of racism, judgment, oppression, patriarchy, classism, privilege, and white supremacy. At the heart of this study was the hope that exploring white people's experiences of FR to know of the impact of Womanist epistemology on efforts to eradicate anti-Black racism with mostly white people.

FR's practices are based in the belief that there is value in racial dialogue and the importance of listening to the stories people tell to understand racism, its reproduction, and the possibilities of intervention and anti-racist teaching (D. Bell, 2002).

FR's aim is to raise the consciousness of Black struggle and resilience amid oppression, and intergroup dialogue (IGD) acted as a key method for enabling this to happen. IGD offers a language to address white supremacy and white privilege in personal, professional, political, communal, and congregational settings. In other words, Davis states that "IGD offers tools to do the work required of white people" (Davis, 2019, p. 7). Intergroup dialogue is a revolutionary praxis for all to emulate and inculcate. Described in further detail later, I used a Sankofa approach to document the historical oppression, dehumanization, and degradation of Black women post-abolition. FR is a part of the Black lives' movement because it addresses a gap in racial justice work that includes Womanism and liberation of the oppressed and the oppressor.

Sankofa

We must recognize ourselves in history (Russell, 1977) in order to address the ills of the

past to move forward in a liberating way. FR incorporated Sankofa into its pedagogy and praxis

to name the past injustices and to bring forth the work of past justice seekers to liberate the

oppressed and the oppressor. Sankofa symbolizes learning from the past. Sankofa is an Adinkra

communicator of the Akan culture in West Africa. The communicator is a bird flying forward

with its head facing the rear with an egg in its mouth to communicate the importance of going

back to fetch and connect with our African identity, roots, and values. It is a way to reclaim and

regain what was lost. Both in the American Black diaspora and in West Africa today, the

elements of the Adinkra communicators are too often incorrectly described as "symbols" or

"designs" rather than as "communicators" that express philosophy and ideas about the culture's

values (Temple, 2010, p. 130). Through the enslavement of African people, families were

separated, culture was stripped away, and bodies were dismembered, tortured, and murdered.

The Black diaspora's dehumanization has continued today; Nevertheless, the resilience,

resistance, spirituality, and humanity, from enslavement to the present, kept us alive as a

diasporic group in America.

> Several orientations toward African consciousness influence Sankofa practice: (a) as the
> legacy of natural, cultural behaviors documented in its early usage by enslaved Africans
> who came to the Americas and in later usage, possibly, through epic memory; (b) as the
> resistance concerning rejecting Eurocentric language and world views and insisting on
> the relevance of using African conceptual possibilities to define and characterize African
> life in the contemporary era; and (c) as the symbolic gestures of Diasporan Africans
> interested in general forms of "returning to the source," or psychological steps toward
> Africanness. (Temple, 2010, p. 128)
>
> For FR, it is imperative to acknowledge this Sankofa moment of the healing required for

the oppressed and the oppressor. Black people need healing from layers of historical and current

traumas, while white people have an opportunity to heal from generations of racism. The two

modes of healing of Black and white people must happen simultaneously for new systems of equality, humanity, and justice to ensue for all.

Research Question(s)

The bifurcation of Black and white people has led to the dehumanization of people of the Black diaspora. From unjustified murders, police brutality, and mass incarceration to economic, health, and educational disparities, anti-Black racism has been prevalent since the inception of slavery in the United States and continues in modern times. Black people have fought for human rights as abolitionists against slavery, dismantlers of Jim Crow, marched and instituted a changed policy for civil rights, and created a national Movement for Black Lives.

The preceding discussion illustrates the dialogical and epistemological curiosity that led to the following research question(s):

1. What was the experience of the white participants during FR?

   a. How has the participant made sense/meaning of their experience of FR?

   b. What impact did FR have on participants' actions toward ending anti-Black racism?

<div align="center">

Key Underpinnings of Facing Racism

</div>

The following sections present a brief introduction of Womanism, an epistemological practice informing the Soul 2 Soul Sisters' founders; intergroup dialogue; and anti-Black racism as the critical underpinnings of FR. Outlined in Chapter II is a more detailed look at the key underpinnings of FR.

Womanism

Womanism is a term curated by Alice Walker (2004) that centers Black women's lived experiences, past and present, for liberation from racism, sexism, patriarchy, misogynoir, and

classism. Womanism is a paradigm shift in which Black Women no longer look to others for liberation (Floyd-Thomas, 2006). Womanism centers on the Black woman while building a community for liberation for the historically oppressed and the oppressor.

Intergroup Dialogue

One of the critical methods used in FR to experience an ideological language of liberation is intergroup dialogue. Intergroup dialogue found its origins in social psychology. Intergroup dialogues seem to be an effective means to educate participants about both the individual and systemic factors of discrimination, inequality, and oppression. However, perhaps more importantly, it provides a vehicle for doing justice in a society where relationships are undermined or undervalued (Judkins, 2012).

Anti-Black Racism

The final underpinning of FR is addressing anti-Black racism. Anti-Blackness is a form of racism that focuses on the unique disdain for Black people and emphasizes the unique historical and current experience of racism for Black people. Although ending anti-Black racism may be a means to an end, FR focuses on the education and awareness of anti-Black racism with the goal of ending anti-Black racism. Racism is multifaceted and impacts different cultures in different ways, therefore, FR focuses on ending anti-Black racism in the hopes of liberation for all. As a Black woman who has led the fight to end anti-Black racism and who identifies as a Womanist, it was imperative to insert my voice and experience into the narrative of racism, white supremacy, and white privilege. FR exemplifies how marginalized groups may face racism by magnifying their voice and experience into a narrative that often dehumanizes Black, Indigenous, People of Color [BIPOC].

I am not suggesting anti-Blackness be addressed in isolation or exclusively, but instead FR focused on what Black people of the diaspora have experienced in America including slavery, capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy, misogynoir, and hate due to the color of our skin (Lloyd & Prevot, 2017). Nonetheless, the struggle against anti-Blackness must be inclusive to build a more egalitarian and just society that can be genuinely liberating for all (Lloyd & Prevot, 2017).

Figure 1.1

Facing Racism Cohort Process
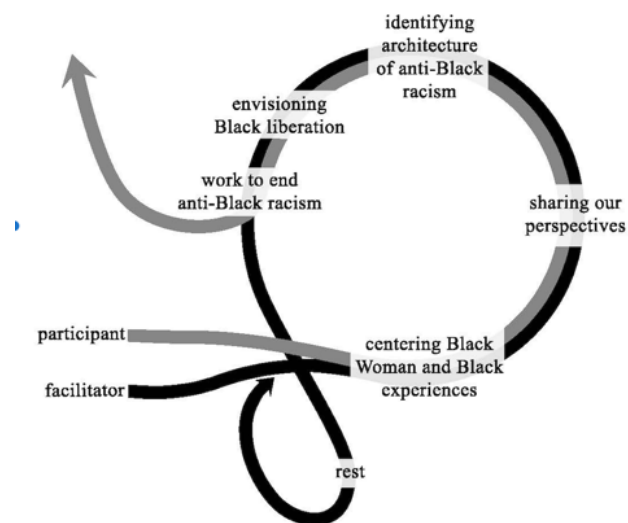
Note. This figure demonstrates the FR process, summarizing significant themes, the importance of rest (Hersey, 2021) for the facilitators, and the participant's ongoing work to do lifelong Black liberation work.

Figure 1.2

Facing Racism and the Womanist Way
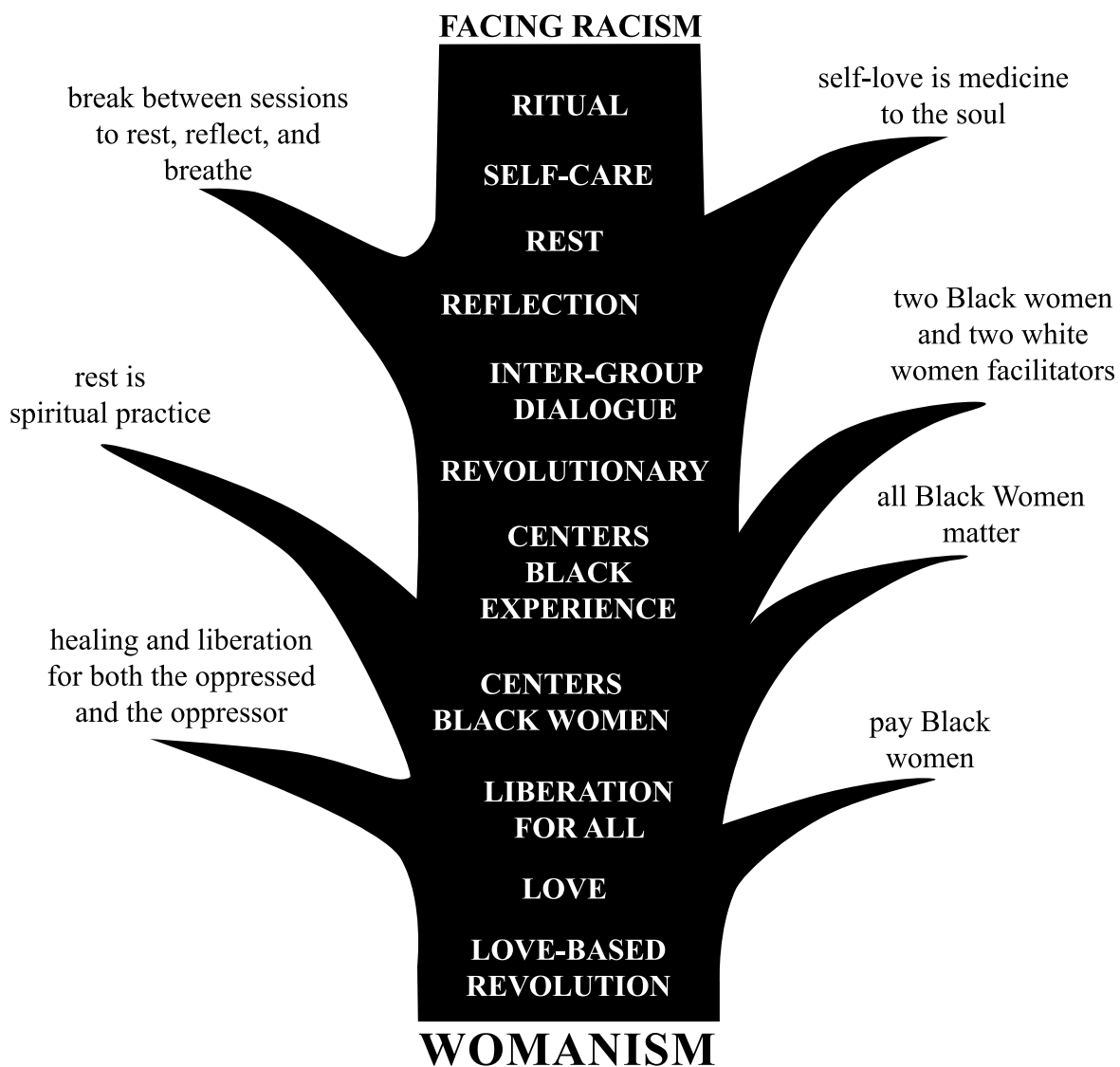
Note: This figure depicts the trunk as the center of Soul 2 Soul Sisters Womanist prowess. The

branches are a summary of the intentions during the FR cohort.

Significance of the Study

This dissertation's significance is to explore the impact of FR by interviewing several white past participants through a phenomenological analysis, which involves deeply listening to the FR participant's experience and the outcomes that emerged for them after the experience. FR intended to offer a way of being and language to white people to dismantle white supremacy, end anti-Black racism, and heal while Black people institute our unalienable right to live and heal from 400-plus years of oppression. Why was this important? Based on my experience, educational prowess, and activist acumen, I hoped this study would add to empirical data in racial justice work, as well as offer a language of dismantling systems of oppression, dehumanization, and marginalization. I hoped that this study would lead others to create spaces of healing that lead to liberation and offer a model for ending anti-Black racism. "Mass liberation" (Russell, 1977, p. 159) is the dream goal of Womanist leaders within Soul 2 Soul Sisters for the oppressed and the oppressor. This dream is a big goal, and for Soul 2 Soul Sisters, it starts with FR with Womanist leaders, intergroup dialogue, and faith to combat anti-Black racism one cohort at a time.

Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations

It is vital to identify delimitations and limitations, along with noting assumptions (Miles, 2004). Delimitations are the factors that prevent the researcher from claiming that the finding is factual for all people in all times and places. At the same time, limitations are restrictions created by the methodology (Miles, 2004). One poignant assumption is that no research is perfect in its design (Miles, 2004). Researchers may make assumptions on how research participants will behave or respond: will interviewees be truthful? Will the researcher ask the right questions? In short, our research projects spring from assumptions; they are beliefs we bring to the study that

we accept as valid (Miles, 2004). During this dissertation process, I have attempted to identify some of the major assumptions that I may bring to this study (Miles, 2004) such as implicit bias, white privilege, and dominant white thought.

Limitations may include the small sample size that is indicative of exploring the experience to be researched. Since my research focused on the experience of white people who have completed one of the FR cohorts, the findings may not have been factual for all things in every circumstance, which opens the door for further study.

Because FR is a deep dive in the lived experiences of Black women and people of the Black diaspora, to name the experiences of white people as lived experiences are often rooted in white supremacy, white privilege, and dominant white thought is critical. FR addresses the destructive nature of anti-Black racism while individual and collective ways of being are provided to address anti-Black racism. Using the ideological language of liberation (Freire, 1970/2009), theological reflections, and philosophical formulas (Cannon, 2011), FR leaders developed individual, communal, and congregational plans as the next steps beyond the FR cohort. These plans must include and envision Black liberation. Some of the previous plans included starting a racial justice ministry in a congregation or something as intimate as talking about race over family dinner. We invite participants to join the FR Alumni group to continue to end anti-Black racism in the community.

Chapter I Conclusion

FR is a program offered through Soul 2 Soul Sisters; a nonprofit organization led by two Womanist co-founders who implement intergroup dialogue as a mode of inquiry to end anti-Black racism. FR offers ways of being, including envisioning Black liberation and liberation for all and a language that is a part of a transforming, liberating ideology. After five years of leading

over 1,000 white people through various cohorts and anti-Black racism manifesting to higher

heights in this lifetime, it was deemed to be time to take a deep dive into white people's

experiences as they journey through the FR program and beyond. Throughout the time in which

we have been hosting FR, we have asked participants to complete pre- and post-attendance

surveys to keep our pulse on what is occurring outside of popular media and how white people

respond to various forms of oppression during the course offerings. The dissertation provides an

opportunity to undertake research in order to understand the experiences of white participants of

FR in greater depth than was possible in these evaluations. Addressing or eradicating anti-Black

racism seems to be an audacious goal. However, if we continue to look at anti-Black racism as

something we cannot address together, the Black diaspora will continue to die at the hands of

this nation's systemic ills. Liberation for all begins with the most systemically, historically

impacted Black diaspora to create a space for liberation for the oppressor within themselves,

families, and community to dismantle the racist systems white people have built. Black people

shall be liberated from these oppressive forces to focus on rebuilding 400 years of splintered

communities.

Writing this dissertation during the Coronavirus pandemic that is adversely and

disproportionately impacting Black people in America is complex and challenging. Conducting

research may be isolating and the COVID-19 pandemic led to this study to be conducted

virtually due to distance and mask mandates, unvaccinated people, and the shut-down of across

the nation with curfews and limited mobility. This study's importance is its potential to offer a

way to dismantle the oppressive systems, including unjust police practices, the perceived

weaponization of Black skin, socioeconomic disparities, mass incarceration, and access to health

care and healthy living. Centering Black women's lives and Black women's experiences

exemplifies a Womanist model that centers the marginalized without decentering another

marginalized group—a wholistic justice agenda (Cannon, 1995).

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter I offered a foundation for this study by considering my positionality, identifying the importance of Womanism to the dissertation, and introducing the research's focus on how participants experience FR. Additionally, the purpose of this study is to research white people's experience with Womanists leading to end anti-Black racism to liberate the oppressed and the oppressor and to address the following research questions:

1) What was the experience of the white participants during FR?

    a) How has the participant made sense/meaning of their experience of FR?

    b) What impact did FR have on participants' actions toward ending anti-Black racism?

The purpose of this literature review is to identify the body of knowledge on Womanism, intergroup dialogue, and anti-Black racism. Chapter II's literature review includes a historical look at Black Women's leadership and the evolution of Womanism. From abolitionist to Feminism, to Black Feminism to Womanist, I offer the importance of centering Black women and Black experiences in eradicating anti-Black racism. By addressing the Black–white dichotomy bifurcation, Intergroup dialogue creates space to invite a better understanding between groups.

Figure 2.1

Facing Racism Venn Diagram
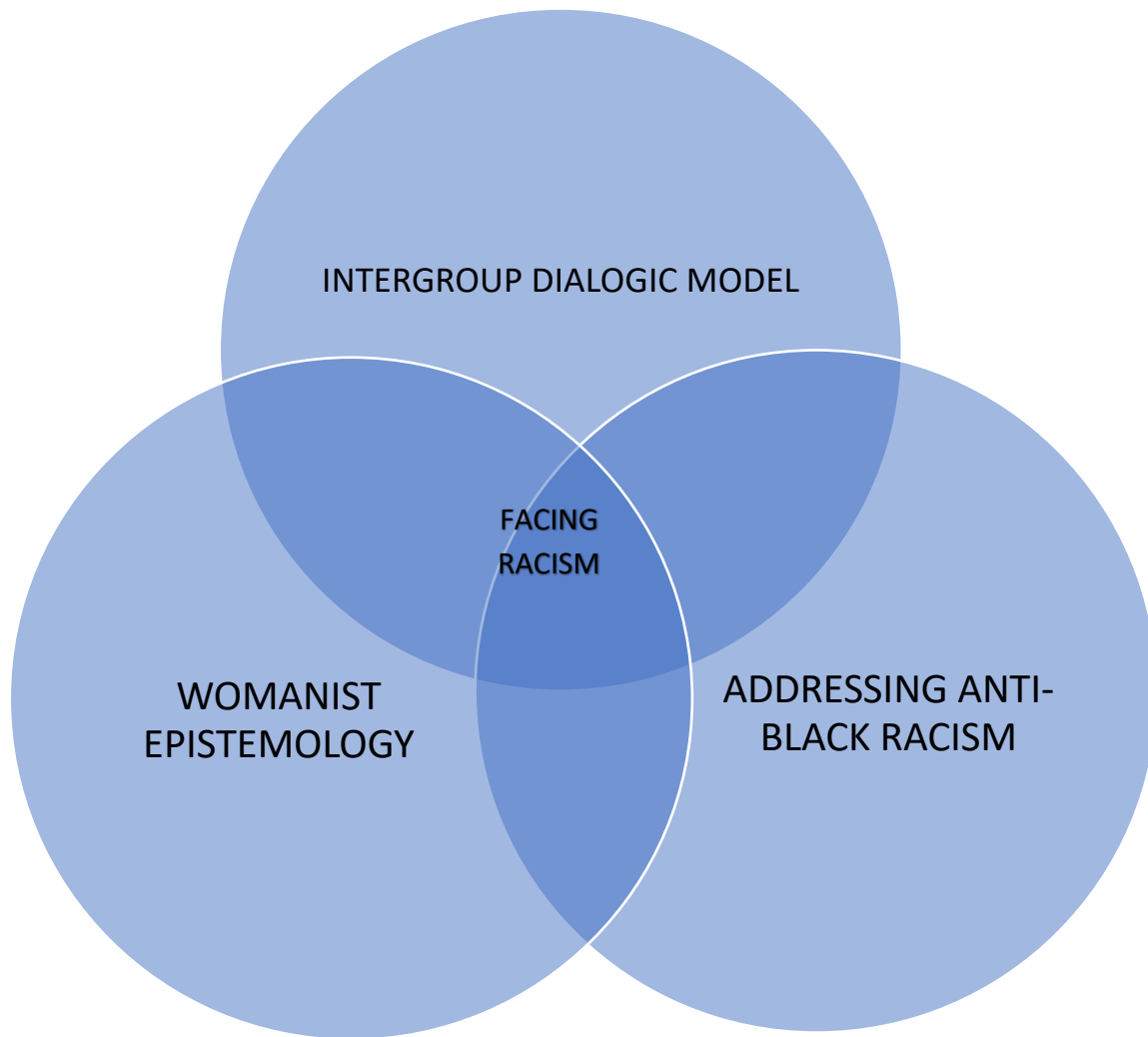
Note. This figure depicts the relation of the three primary aspects of FR as well as bodies of

literature which will be described in this literature review. Although eradicating anti-Black

racism is an outcome, it is also a part of the FR programming because it brings awareness to the

systemic ill of racism, particularly anti-Black racism.

The literature review also examines the importance of a dialogical model of learning and knowing (Freire, 1970/2009). Often, in one pedagogical orientation, one mistakenly transforms Freire's notion of dialogue into a method, losing sight that dialogical teaching's fundamental goal is to create a process that involves theorizing experiences (Freire, 1970/2009). Freire (1970/2009) ascribes to the importance of the oppressed leading liberating work: "Those who recognize or begin to recognize themselves as oppressed must be among the developers of this pedagogy" (Freire, 1970/2009, pp. 9–10).

Additionally, the literature review includes works from those who are scholars in anti-Black racism. Since the literature review expounds on the research statement and questions, it is imperative to imbue varying voices into this narrative to exemplify the wholistic approach to ending anti-Black racism, toward which FR works. I offer convergent and divergent thoughts on anti-Black racism to challenge the status quo, raise consciousness regarding anti-Black racism, and added contributions to this ethical dilemma (D. Bell, 2002) of racism.

In addition to offering theoretical frameworks to inform this research study, included in the literature review is a literature map to help guide the reader with an overall visual of the literature review (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Furthermore, you will find summaries of most relevant articles, think pieces, books, and a summary of the literature review's relevance (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Figure 2.2

Map of Literature Review
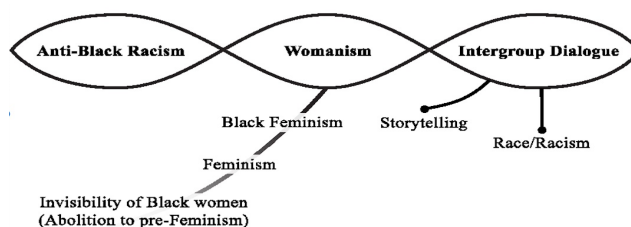
Historical Recapitulation of Black Women Leaders from Abolition to Womanism

The Invisibility of Black Women

Womanism centers on Black women. Before exploring that idea further, I considered many overlooked Black women leaders in history. The overview of Black women in the Civil Rights movement unveils the silent institution of an exemplar of women who led without title, national recognition, and notoriety; yet, these leaders put their lives on the line, and despite these dangers, these women persevered (J. D. Bell, 2018). J. D. Bell (2018) illuminates nine women leaders' three traits during the Civil Rights Movement that resonated throughout Black women's leadership from the late 19th century and beyond: transformational leadership, servant leadership, and adaptive leadership. Rather than focusing on coined terms such as sexism, classism, intersectionality, and the leadership forms mentioned earlier, J. D. Bell (2018) celebrated these women by interviewing them, so they could tell their own stories. The nine women were Leah Chase, June Jackson Christmas, Aileen Hernandez, Diane Nash, Judy Richardson, Kathleen Cleaver, Gay McDougall, Gloria Richardson, and Myrlie Evers. Like other Black women of this era, these women provide inspiration and lessons upon which Womanist leaders in FR can build. "These women confronted American racism with bold resolve" (J. D. Bell, 2018, p. 3).

From a lens of Black Feminism, author Brittany Cooper (2017) offers a foundational approach to introducing us to Black women through an intellectual genealogy and geography of what she calls race women. The women identified were public thinkers whose work has been undertheorized and has led in unprecedented ways to fight against racism. Beyond the frame of great race men such as Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois and Martin Luther King, Cooper (2017) brings to the forefront women who were mentees, contemporaries, and spouses such as

Mary Church Terrell, Anna Julia Cooper, and Pauli Murray, who were often invisible in the Movements for Black Lives.

Crenshaw (2019) takes us through what I describe as a recapitulation of Black women's struggles in America and their fight against propaganda, misogynoir, misnomers, and patriarchy. Patriarchal (white) men and their homogeneous thoughts of (white) male centeredness had not only further marginalized women, Black women in particular, but had elevated a race-baiting, xenophobic narcissist to the office of the presidency in 2016 (Crenshaw, 2019). Crenshaw further states that "We have forgotten Black women's leadership to our peril" (p. 18). Poignantly, Crenshaw goes on to say "We are tired of being the bus wheels and told, 'Thank you, Black women,' because we do not just want your thank you, it is time for us to be in the driver's seat" (p. 20).

Black women from the past and present have formed a Womanist foundation of centering Black women, storytelling, and liberation for all who want to be free. In the next section, I consider several women leaders who are often overlooked in history to name, honor, and state why we bring them into the work of FR.

The Invisibility of Black Women from Abolitionists to Pre-Feminist Movement

An integral role of the Womanist leaders in FR is remembering those who came before us. As described in Chapter I, Sankofa, meaning to go back a fetch it, is used in FR by telling our stories and the stories of those who came before us. Due to the long history of anti-Black racism in America, Womanist leaders in FR must insert the names and stories of those who led before the Feminist, Black Feminist, and Womanist movements. These stories are more than historical positioning through storytelling. These stories represent a theoretical positioning that is influential to the formation of centering Black women's voices that leads to Womanism.

Before President Abraham Lincoln declared Civil War in 1861, Harriet Tubman was an abolitionist who collaborated with Black and White people to free and resettle the enslaved (Crewe, 2006). Freed through self-emancipation from her enslavement, including abuse and near-death experiences, Tubman fled north to freedom. This newfound freedom was void without the emancipation of her family. Tubman began leading groups of people to freedom via the Underground Railroad. Because of her courage and leadership prowess, she was one of the few Black women to serve as nurses in the Civil War. She was also the first woman to command an armed military raid in June of 1863 (Crewe, 2006). Tubman was denied compensation after the war for her military service and her deceased husband's compensation for service (Crewe, 2006). She continued to be persecuted, demeaned, and dehumanized despite her work, particularly during the Civil War. Tubman called Auburn, NY, her home, where she partnered with the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church to build homes for aged and indigent Black people. Harriet Tubman died at age 91 (Crewe, 2006).

Another notable Black woman of the 19th century is Sojourner Truth. Born a generation before Tubman, although Sojourner Truth was enslaved and illiterate, this did not impede on Truth's regal prowess. Born in New York as Isabella, Sojourner Truth led speeches, sermons, and lectures across the Northeast. She embodied anti-slavery, Feminist, and women's rights causes. Truth was eloquent, captivating, and was considered a weird and wonderful truth-teller. Some, including Frederick Douglass, obfuscated her, but Truth, as an itinerant truth-teller, was free to tell her story for the liberation of others. One of the most famous speeches was "Ain't I a Woman," delivered at the second annual Ohio Women's Rights Convention in 1851. Her life reminded us that enslavement was not exclusively Southern. She found the courage and strength

to free herself and others through speaking, preaching, teaching, and storytelling. Truth was considered an Abolitionist and a Feminist.

Posthumously labeled as a Black Feminist, Anna Julia Cooper's life and legacy are captured by Guy-Sheftall (2009). While offering resources relating to Cooper's life as a significant American thinker and theorist, Guy-Sheftall (2009) reminds us of the racism and sexism in the 19th century that kept Cooper from being acknowledged for her literary and scholarly contribution to the fight against racism and sexism.

Hedgeman (1944) highlights various notable women in the postwar world. Women who fought against racism and sexism without accolades or notoriety, for, Hedgeman (1944) purports one must comprehend the Negro woman's role in the postwar to understand the struggle for freedom for and by Negro women. Hedgeman's article (1944) is a useful resource for women who were a part of the proverbial invisible institution of women freedom fighters and leaders in the war for liberation. For the critical literature review's intents and purposes, the invisible institution originally was a term used to define the Black church during slavery. Slaves were not allowed to worship publicly nor with white congregants. I use it to describe women who were silenced and invisibilized during civil and human rights movements, like the fight against Jim Crow laws.

Jim Crow laws in the South were laws to enforce the segregation of Black and white people. During this time, Mary Church Terrell, Ida B. Wells, and Frances Harper started the National Association of Colored Women (Jones, 1982). Ida B. Wells was not only one of the founders but also the organization's first president. She coined the motto "lifting as we climb" to combat racial discrimination in Black women's solidarity and identity, mainly middle- to upper-class educated women (Jones, 1982). As educated Black women, the co-founders of Soul 2 Soul

Sisters use this motto to invite white participants to a higher level of enlightenment, awareness, and curiosity with the intent to build an "epistemological curiosity" (Freire, 1970/2009, p. 19) about the Black experience.

Lerner's (1972) documentary *Black Women in White America* is a recapitulation of history in white America and Black history's erasure, particularly history about Black women. Due to the victimization of Black women by scholarly neglect and racist assumptions, Lerner (1972) realized it was time for Black women to insert themselves into an inaccurate American history narrative and autonomously interpret our past, present, and future (Lerner, 1972). Silenced and forgotten Black women are salient, using themes of racial identity and activism, sense of community, and resilience; hence the importance of Womanists leading in ending anti-Black racism. Black women can no longer afford to be silenced or deemed invisible.

In her article "Most Invisible of All: Black Women's Voluntary Associations," Scott (1990) tells the story of a white man who turns to the author, a white woman, compliments her on her outstanding work, and quickly challenges her to think of how the Black women noted are still invisible to her (Scott, 1990). Scott's (1990) article recapitulates many Black women-led associations and their impact on the community. The author lists numerous Black famous and unsung sheroes across the United States during the 19th century. Scott (1990) honorably mentions Sojourner Truth and Harriett Tubman alongside the likes of Lucy Laney, who was the founder of Hines Normal Industrial Institute in Augusta, Georgia, where she prepared hundreds of young Black students for college (Scott, 1990). This journey through history highlighting Black women leaders served as a resource for identifying ascribed Black Feminists and Womanists before the inception of those terms. Centering Black women of our past offers a Sankofa moment, symbolizing learning from the past. The Womanists who lead FR stand on the

shoulders of Black women who have been silenced, ignored, or deemed behind the scenes. Centering Black women, past and present, is pivotal to our FR work because we are Womanists leading this work in mostly white settings.

Sernett's (1999) work captures a proverbial and liberating intention, bringing to the forefront stories of historical Black women and men who otherwise would be a part of the invisible institution of Black women leaders due to an inadequacy of resources. This inadequacy stems from systemic silencing of Black leaders (Sernett, 1999). Sernett's (1999) anthology captures African American history through a canon of African religious studies for various venues and generations to experience (Sernett, 1999). Because two Womanist clergywomen lead FR, for this literature review, I highlighted a couple of women religious leaders who overcame sexism in the Black church in the face of adversity.

Jarena Lee, a woman preacher in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, was told she could not be licensed to preach because she was a woman. Jarena Lee continued to preach despite this denial and most recently, was posthumously ordained in the AME Church. I also selected Nannie H. Burroughs, a woman Baptist leader who served as the corresponding secretary of the Woman's Convention of the National Baptist Convention and later became president after serving for more than 40 years in the secretarial role (Sernett, 1999). According to Nannie H. Burroughs, Report of the Work of Baptist Women (Burroughs, 1999, pp 376-40 as cited in Sernett, 1999) is a useful resource for stories about women or by women that never made it into the mainstream due to the disruption women caused to the status quo of white men leading in the world and Black men leading in the church.

There was a misconception of judgment from others believing Black women had bad political records and suffragists were afraid of ballot-bartering and vote-selling. The

misconception of Black women leaders from Black men contributed to the fear of competition about women becoming the voice of the moment, particularly in community organizing, voting, and politics and the misconception that Black women's silence would help the cause because their voices would disrupt salient white power. FR not only challenges white power, but FR addresses and offers ways to dismantle oppressive systems of white supremacy, white privilege, anti-Black racism.

Black women are America's most invisible population, silenced more than Black men and white women, and not honored anywhere in a way congruent with their contributions (Lebron, 2016). Most Black women do not stand on ceremony; they do the work that needs to be done (J. D. Bell, 2018). Despite significant contributions to the Black lives' movement, Black women remain invisible to the larger public (J. D. Bell, 2018). FR centers on Black women and Black women's voices past and present to lead in racial justice work. FR centers on Black women to dismantle the status quo of invisibility of Black women.

Even during the creation of moments for women's rights, Black women were not included in the movements. Black feminism emerged as a result of the absence of Black women in the Feminist movement. Womanism emerged after Black feminism as an epistemology for all Black women including those of the Black Feminist movement. The Black Feminist movement was created in response to the anti-Black racism in Feminism.

Feminism

It is essential to note the varying facets of Feminism that led to the emergence of Black Feminism. The first wave of Feminism emerged during the suffragist movement with the National (white) Woman Suffrage Association, which was formed by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, both white women who led in the fight for (white) women's right to vote.

The groups quickly disbanded after women secured the right to vote in 1920 (Iannello, 2010).

The second wave of Feminism emerged in the 1960s and carried on through the 1980s and

included groups such as the National Organization for Women. Later, hierarchical structures

within these organizations became an issue, so organizations believed that patriarchy would be

eliminated if hierarchy was eliminated. Hence, third-wave initiatives developed in the 1990s.

"Third-wave Feminists sought the unique opportunity to explore, experiment with, and focus on

their own personal and career development" (Iannello, 2010, p. 73). Due to second-wave

Feminists, more women reached higher levels in their careers. Third-wave Feminism challenged

each (white) woman to include herself in the dominant male narrative as the centered self

(Iannello, 2010). The evolution of Feminism omitted Black women and women of color in this

narrative of fighting for women's rights, dismantling patriarchy, and inserting self into a

narrative that often silenced or invisibilized Black women.

bell hooks (2000/2015) has written books about love, teaching, and Feminism to name a

few. In her book originally published in 2000 and the second edition in 2015, *Feminism Is for

Everybody: Passionate Politics* (2000/2015), hooks proclaims Feminism as a movement to "end

sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression (hooks, 2000/2015, p. 116). Yet, upon the inception of

Feminism through modern day, Black women continue to be left out, left behind, or included on

a minimal level. hooks attempts to change the narrative of feminism to be inclusive, which is

contrary to feminine thought of "men as the enemy and woman as the victim" (hooks,

1989/2015, p. 20). hooks believed centering sexism instead of patriarchy and misogyny would

shift the focus of Feminism to one that centers women while addressing patriarchy, but

unfortunately, the intersectionality of racism and sexism kept hold of the primary theory of

Feminism. Through several iterations of Feminism and its attempts to include Black women, feminism further marginalized Black women.

Generally Black people do have positive thoughts and attitudes toward Feminism. There are some women and men who ascribe to inserting a narrative of egalitarian roles, political activism, and a critique of gender inequality (Hunter & Seller, 1998). Nonetheless, Hunter and Seller (1998) agree that further studies are needed to explore (Black) attitudes toward Feminism. This study suggested that (Black people) support Feminist ideology that is tied to gender and a confluence of experiences that are connected to race (Hunter & Seller, 2015, p. 97). By inserting a Black liberation lens in an ideology that did not include Black women or men at its inception and throughout the different waves of Feminism (See Appendix A), Black feminism emerged to counter the misogynoir and patriarchy rooted in Feminism.

There is a pattern of suppression of Black women throughout the history of Feminism. "One pattern is that of omission" (Collins, 2000/2009, p. 8). Another pattern of suppression is talking about diversity but doing very little to change practice behaviors or inculcate diversity (Collins, 2009). FR leads a dialogue in the evolution of Feminism to Womanism. The Womanist leaders talk about the omission of Black women from Feminism, which led to the creation of Black Feminism in response to the suppression of Black women's voices (Collins, 2000/2009).

Black Feminism

Collins (2000/2009) introduced Black Feminist thought as a critical social theory. Collins (2000/2009) analyzes Black women and their cultural location as formal and informal intellectuals, centering Black women's lives, and intellectual, creative prowess. From 19th-century intellectuals based on leadership and lived experiences to 21st-century scholars, Collins focuses on Black women's intersectionality whose oppression through race, sexuality, and

gender intersects (Collins, 2000/2009). Collins offers four necessary components of Black

Feminist thought: thematic context, its interpretive frameworks, epistemological approaches, and

its significance for empowerment (Collins, 2000/2009). Collins (2000/2009) emphasized the

importance of empowerment. "Empowerment will never occur in a context characterized by

oppression and social injustice" (Collins, 2000/2009, p. xi). Black Feminist thought centers the

lives of Black women in conjunction with other social justice coalitions; hence, Black women's

empowerment is rooted and centered in identity among different racial and social justice groups

(Collins, 2000/2009).

Will feminism ever center Black women? Will Feminism, Black Feminism, and

Womanism ever connect? Is it time to move beyond names toward a heterogeneity among Black

Feminist and Womanist? Are Black Feminist and Womanist interchangeable? Are both rooted in

privileged Black women? These were examples of questions that arose from the decoding and

the deconstruction of Feminist, Black Feminist, and Womanist thought, belief, prowess,

activism, and self-reflection. This critical summary of the evolution of Feminists noted Black

Feminists as the response to racism in Feminism and Womanism as a visionary movement that is

ever-evolving in rejecting all forms of oppression and reinforcing a commitment to social justice

(Collins, 1996). Collins's (1996) thoughts will be vital in delving into the Womanist movement

to address anti-Black racism to liberate all.

Black Feminism is reclaiming Black women's ideas (Collins, 2000/2009). Reclaiming

these ideas involves discovering Black women's hidden transcripts, analyzing and bringing forth

Black women who have been silenced (Collins, 2000/2009). Like FR, "Black Feminist thought

cannot be developed in isolation from the thought and actions of other groups" (Collins,

2000/2009, p. 21). Black women must be in charge, but this does not mean that others are

excluded (Collins, 2000/2009). FR centers on Black women, not as another elitist group, but to liberate the oppressed and the oppressor to build community with mostly white people willing to address and eradicate anti-Black racism.

Womanism/Womanist

Describing the development of Womanism is one of the critical aspects of this literature review. Womanism is in response to exclusiveness in Feminism as it relates to race, class, or gender (Izgarjan & Markov, 2013). As a Womanist, it was essential to identify how and why I show up in the world as a mother of Black children, preacher, teacher, and consultant centering Black lives and Black experiences as an unapologetic Black woman for the liberation of all. The development of Womanism provided a framework for Black women to center themselves and their experiences for liberation and love for all. Womanism started a movement that looked like the intersectionality and diversity of Black women. Womanism is a space to formulate Black women's policy and agency within Black matrilinear culture (Izgarjan & Markov, 2013).

As Black culture had evolved, so had Womanism since its inception during the third wave of Feminism in the early 1980s by an author, poet, and activist named Alice Walker. Contrary to Black Feminism, Womanism had to be spiritual, concrete, organic, more than women over men or equality for women and men, and affirmed connectedness to community, a praxis of love beyond measure, cultural enlightenment, and understood as the esoteric and existential birthing ground of Black Feminism (Walker, 2004). "Black women took hold of [Womanism] an emerging consciousness, that not only provided a new outlook on life but also ushered forth a new epistemology" (Floyd-Thomas, 2006, p. 3). Though evolving after Black Feminism through poet, author, speaker, and activist Alice Walker, Womanism has become the foundation upon which Black Feminism progresses. As Black Feminism is born in response to

anti-Black racism in Feminism, Womanism offers Black Feminism an epistemological perspective in centering Black women and Black women's experiences. Womanism is revolutionary; Black women look to themselves for their liberation instead of looking to others (Floyd-Thomas, 2006). Womanist discourse engages Black women in a production of knowledge and self-definition necessary for enlightenment, self-determination, liberation, and flourishment rather than a definition of Black women rooted in whiteness and patriarchy (Floyd-Thomas, 2006).

Womanism, a term coined by the literary Queen Alice Walker, is a term, ideology, and epistemology to center, love and honor Black women as we love others (Walker, 2004, pp. xi-xii). Walker (2004) states "Womanist is to Feminist as purple is to lavender" (pp. xi-xii). As stated in Chapter I and for the purpose of this study, Womanism is an epistemology that centers on Black women and Black women's experiences. Womanism is not to replace one elitist thought with another, but aims to create a space that centers Black women whose voices and presence have been silenced, to liberate both the oppressed and the oppressor. The theory and practice of Black feminism attack racism, sexism, and poverty concurrently; this was a political movement born out of a response to racism in Feminism. Black Feminism is embedded between the second and third waves of Feminism. Often research showed Black women would embrace Womanism due to its holistic consciousness as they shy away from Black Feminism because of its white Feminist roots. Nonetheless, "[Alice Walker] provided a basis for other scholars to shape the concept for analysis by implying that Womanism has a greater scope and intensity than Black Feminism" (Taylor, 1998, p. 26).

Alice Walker's Womanist Definition

As a Womanist organization, Soul 2 Soul Sisters creates a space for Womanists leading cohorts of mostly white people to engage in Black-centered storytelling. This approach includes engaging with Black-centered information such as scholarly books and articles, think-pieces, social media, news outlets, videos, art, and vocabulary while building a community of allies, co-conspirators, and comrades. The Womanist mind creates a space for profound experiences to challenge oppression's status quo (Townes, 2006). Womanism is a prophetic voice that works from the margins rather than the central, patriarchal, dominantly white, oppressive spaces toward the divine presence in Black women's real-world liberation struggles through faith (Williams, 1993). Alice Walker (2004), the curator of Womanism, defines it as follows:

1. "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. Wanting to know more and in greater depth than is considered 'good' for one. Interested in grown-up doings. Acting grown up. Being grown up. Interchangeable with another black folk expression: 'You trying to be grown.' Responsible. In charge. Serious. 2. Also: A woman who loves other women, sexually and or nonsexually. Appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counterbalance of laughter), and women's strength. Sometimes loves individual men, sexually and or nonsexually. Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically, for health. Traditionally a universalist, as in: 'Mama, why are we brown, pink, and yellow, and our cousins are white, beige and black?'

Ans. 'Well, you know the colored race is just like a flower garden, with every color

flower represented.' Traditionally capable, as in: 'Mama, I'm walking to Canada and

I'm taking you and a bunch of other slaves with me.' Reply: 'It wouldn't be the first

time.' 3. Loves music. Loves dance. Loves the moon. Loves the Spirit. Loves love

and food and roundness. Loves struggle. Loves the Folk. Loves herself. Regardless. 4.

Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender" (Walker, 2004, pp. xi–xii).

Building on this definition of Womanist, Katie G. Cannon, who died on August 8, 2018,

left this charge: Do the work your soul must have (Cannon et al., 2011) as we birth new things,

shifting the atmosphere to honor us as Black women spiritually and naturally. Even in the

struggle, we must maintain our dynamic, divine, ecumenical, beautiful identities as we critique

the sacred writings, philosophical formulas, and theological reflections we inherited while

remaining true to Alice Walker's poignant definition of Womanist (Cannon et al., 2011).

Importance of Womanism

My colleague and I created Soul 2 Soul Sisters to magnify the Black woman's voice to

speak up and out against injustices, honor those of the past who were deemed invisible, and

present a justice leadership model that includes self-care and rest. There are limited resources

and gaps in Black women's naming in leadership as well as many societal ills we face such as

invisibility, sexism, and racism. Black women cannot afford to respond to these ills without a

clear modus operandi that includes rest and self-care. Rest is a form of resistance because it

disrupts and pushes back against capitalism and White supremacy (Hersey, 2021). Just as rest is

an affirming life-giving imperative for Black women doing justice work, mammying is a

contrary trope of Black womanhood, and its manifestation is problematic.

Mammying is a term to describe a Black woman placing her own needs aside to tend to another. The other person is usually white and expects this hand-holding, loyal, self-sacrificing service. (Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008). Soul 2 Soul Sisters rejects mammying and offers white people ways to go out and do the work while we rest to begin the cycle of liberation for the next group of change and healing agents. In this way, it uses a model that incorporates rest, cares for the Black women leading and facilitating, and provides an antithetical and contrary approach to white-centered justice work. During FR, we pose challenging questions, lament occurs, and participants are given permission to make mistakes, all of which honor the work's fullness while experiencing a communal way to justice work.

The function of Womanism and Womanist Ethics is not to replace one elitist thought with another but to present a "methodological framework for challenging inherited traditions for their collusion with androcentric patriarchy and offer a catalyst for overcoming oppressive situations through revolutionary acts of rebellion" (Cannon, 1995, p. 23). Although Alice Walker's definition is rooted in lay literature (Cannon, 1995), Soul 2 Soul Sisters is a radically faith-based Black women-led organization rooted in etymology, theology, epistemology, and ontology. We co-create a brave space where participants listen and experience storytelling intensely. We do not call this a safe space. Black people may be triggered and feel unsafe by the heinous realities of white privilege and anti-Black racism.

Womanist Epistemology

Womanist Epistemology, a way of knowing, is one of the areas of focus for FR. Womanist Epistemology creates a space to invite people into a dialogue; the process is both "learning and knowing" (Freire, 1970/2009, p. 17). The importance of this method is addressing and ending anti-Black racism. Since Womanism is rooted in Black thought and Africentric

models of community, the space created during the dialogue honors Ubuntu. Ubuntu is African traditional belief that upholds the proverb and philosophy that says my humanity is caught up, inextricably bound up, in yours (Tutu, 1999). Out of deep-rooted African-ness, Ubuntu longs to affirm our humanity in the humanity of another (Boesak, 2014). It purports the belief that 'I cannot be what I want to be until you are what you need to be' (Boesak, 2014, p. 169).

The centering of Black women is not for self-aggrandizement or to encourage egocentricity. It is to define ourselves amid community while loving others unconditionally to do the same. During this history-in-the-making Black Lives Matter movement, it is becoming, at times, painfully prevalent that both the oppressed and the oppressor must do this work with the oppressed leading the way (Freire, 1970/2009). The dialogical model in Womanism is a dialogue that characterizes an epistemological relationship (Freire, 1970/2009).

Womanism continues to reinvent itself, evolving and morphing in response to current modes of oppression while ensuring balance is maintained and avoiding previous mistakes in women's movements (Izgarjan & Markov, 2013). Womanism's dedication is to the struggle against any oppression and behavior that denigrates a community or an individual based on a difference in race, culture, and class (Izgarjan & Markov, 2013), with Black women leading and centering the Black experience.

Floyd-Thomas (2006) goes further and states "[Womanism] sought to deal with moral, spiritual, and political purposes of constructed knowledge to dismantle white and patriarchal powers that compromised Black women's integrity and self-determination" (p. 3). Womanism created frames that took Black women to be agents of their destiny as the norm (Floyd-Thomas, 2006).

Finally, Womanism is about the journey of being and knowing. Womanism moves Black women from behind the shadows to the forefront, inserting their voices in an often-ignored, marginalized, and silenced narrative or changing the narrative altogether. Centering Black women in racial justice work does not minimize or demean another race. Womanism centers Black women as the most marginalized to insert humanity back into the Black diaspora and journey with white people to learn about one another with dignity, honor, and liberation.

Intergroup Dialogue

Facing Racism and Intergroup Dialogue

A critical tool that is used during FR is intergroup dialogue (IGD). IGDs are intended to be constructive, healing, and liberating from oppressive views and actions. IGD is a model of engaging difference for social change (D. Bell et al., 1990). IGD courses were developed in the late 1980s to educate students to forge relationships between diverse peers and confront inequalities that [historically marginalized] groups face (Sorensen et al., 2009). FR uses IGD to engage the bifurcation of Black and white people while centering Black women, Black lives, and Black experiences to liberate all. IGD usually happens in face-to-face settings, but face-to-face in this time of the coronavirus pandemic happens virtually via Zoom. FR re-creates the intimate moments that a physical face-to-face would offer. The keys to face-to-face meetings are the interaction, small groups, storytelling, and engagement. FR is not a curriculum that is recorded and watched in isolation. FR is community building of the oppressed and the oppressor to obliterate racism.

"Intergroup dialogue finds its origins in social psychology and is based on the contact theory hypothesis, which asserts the potential for face-to-face interaction to ease tensions between identity groups" (Pinnock, 2008, p. 22). Intergroup dialogues seem to be an effective

means to educate participants about both the individual and systemic factors of discrimination, inequality, and oppression. "However, perhaps more importantly, they provide a vehicle for doing justice in a society where relationships have been undermined or undervalued" (Judkins, 2012, p. 34). Intergroup dialogue is referred to as the power of dialogue as it relates to race talk. Intergroup dialogue is another salient theme within the empirical articles about race, racism, and dialogue. "The use of dialogue in research is a humanizing speech that resists domination" (Abrums, 2000, p. 101).

Intergroup dialogue is an exchange between two or more social or, in this case, ethnic and cultural groups. Some of these themes emerge in the empirical articles, which are noted to synthesize all identified empirical articles in the literature review. Intergroup dialogue is not a phenomenon (Schoem, 2003, p. 212). It is not just an event or a moment in time but, in fact, an ongoing process and, in this case, an ongoing process to address and combat racism.

Dialogue is not the same as a meeting, lecture, or presentation, nor is it therapy or a moment full of speeches (Schoem, 2003). It involves inquiry and understanding, talking and listening, face-to-face relationship building; skilled facilitators and leaders; and extended commitment (Schoem, 2003). Another salient theme for this introduction is the risk of intergroup dialogue. "Cross-racial dialogues often include a mixture of stock and counterstories, which may function as a source of conflict and silence" (Manglitz et al., 2014, p. 115). Cognitive and emotive faculties—knowledge and emotions—are bound to surface in cross-racial dialogues (Manglitz et al., 2014). FR minimizes these risks through love and faith as the oppressed lead in their liberation.

Although the history of racism has been written about, less examined is how stories, IGD, beliefs, and assumptions connect or disconnect us to address or challenge racism and the racial

status quo. IGD around racism is challenging mostly because of the intellectual depth and emotions involved in the exchange. It encourages the sharing of stories. "While stories about race and racism may derive from individual experience, they also communicate cultural assumptions and thinking habits that transcend the individual and idiosyncratic" (L. A. Bell, 2003, p. 4). If done honestly and transparently, dialogue can be very cathartic, revelatory, painful, and healing.

Contrary to cultural and communal assumptions that transcend the individual and idiosyncratic, "A master narrative of [w]hite dominance and Black dehumanization and marginalization exists personally and systematically … racism among [white people] is subtle, often unintentional, and unconscious, but its effects are systematically damaging to race relations by fostering miscommunication and distrust" (Dovidio et al., 2002, p. 89). An intergroup dialogue centered on race can address and possibly dispel the racist status quo, often causing the oppressor to reflect and look beyond years of racism that, at times, can be conscious, subconscious, or even unconscious. There is value in racial dialogue and the importance of listening to the stories people tell to understand racism, its reproduction, and the possibilities of intervention and anti-racist teaching (L. A. Bell, 2003).

FR participants are adults who operate under group norms that include FR as lifelong, ongoing work. This study explored the impact and outcome of doing this work of ending anti-Black racism through IGD, anti-Black awareness, and a Womanist epistemology. This work must be done in tandem with the historically oppressed and the oppressor to dismantle anti-Black racism truly and create spaces of healing. Black people need to heal from the layers of trauma caused by the enslavement of people of African descent, and white people have an opportunity to heal from the heinous acts of their fore parents and current white privilege and supremacy.

FR is a unique approach to end anti-Black racism in that it is informed and underpinned by Womanist Epistemology, IGD experience, and focuses directly on anti-Black racism. The struggle against anti-Black racism is much stronger than the generalization of diversity, inclusion, or multiculturalism (Lloyd & Prevot, 2017).

Because of the unique approach to end anti-Black racism, it is essential to identify other studies that have used IGD to offer a scholarly context (Bryant, 2004). During the search for anti-racism and IGD articles, I discovered a large number of studies which used college students as participants in IGD. Using college students might enhance validity due to participants' homogeneity, amenability during the study, and samples being more comfortable to compare due to their demographics (Peterson & Merunka, 2014). The possible enhancement of validity in a homogenous setting and amenability may impede on the efforts to truly engage in anti-racism dialogues outside of the college setting. Freire states:

> When students lack both the necessary epistemological curiosity and a certain conviviality with the object of knowledge under study, it is not easy to create conditions that increase their epistemological curiosity to develop the necessary intellectual tools to enable them to apprehend and comprehend the object of knowledge. If students cannot transform their lived experiences into knowledge and use the already acquired knowledge as a process to unveil new knowledge, they will never be able to participate rigorously in a dialogue as a process of learning and knowing. (Freire, 1970/2009, p. 19)
> To further highlight the challenge of using non-random college students,

Sorensen et al. (2009) included students from several universities to address the lack of diversity in using college students. Sorensen et al. (2009) "reviewed empirical evidence on interracial contact" (p. 3). Sorensen's et al. (2009) study focused on interracial interactions in college courses through a critical-dialogic intergroup dialogue model. Critical-dialogic processes are hypothesized to facilitate openness, engagement, and positive interaction with other groups. The participants of Sorensen's et al. (2009) study included a nine-university research collaboration project interested in promoting meaningful intergroup interaction. The nine universities included

seven public and two private schools. Each university involved small groups of 12–16 students.

IGD or intergroup interactions clarify that a hands-off approach does not offer optimal or

effective experiences for students (Sorensen et al., 2009). If ever, rarely does IGD with students

use random assignments of interested students (Sorensen et al., 2009). The random assignment is

contrary to FR. All who attend had some semblance of interest in racial justice and addressing

anti-Black racism while dismantling white supremacy and dominant white thought.

The FR cohort engages all senses in a love-based approach while being mindful of white

fragility, white tears, and mammying. For Sorensen et al. (2009), the intention of IGD is not

clear regarding Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) leading the research and facilitating

study groups to gather data. FR is intentional about Black women leading IGD and with a focus

on ending anti-Black racism. Sorenson (2009) focuses on the communication process and

intergroup interaction in IGD.

A similar study using IGD was conducted by Buckley and Quaye (2016). Buckley and

Quaye (2016) conducted an 18-month case study methodology as an educational intervention

used to foster engagement and promote social justice. Similar to FR, IGD was used as an

intervention with white adults and not between students and facilitators. There were 12–18

participants and two co-facilitators involved in the study, and 8 to 12 meetings were held over a

semester. This study's findings show that students who participated in IGD had a more vital

intergroup understanding, relationships, and increased inclination for intergroup collaboration

(Buckley & Quaye, 2016).

Although "dialogue about experiences can help [people] learn how to understand and

communicate about differences, seeking to know others' experiences does not necessarily fully

address the need to challenge systemic issues of power and privilege" (Buckley & Quaye, 2016,

p. 1121). Buckley and Quaye's (2016) case study argues that IGD may not equally engage all social justice components inherently in tension. FR focuses on the social injustice of anti-Black racism to avoid the ambiguity of the many facets of social justice and the misnomer of addressing all areas of tension through IGD. Similar to FR,

> [s]ome might choose to alter the structure of IGD to elicit a different understanding of social justice than the findings in this study seems to indicate. Although the dialogues considered in this study were rooted in broad ideas of social justice, they did not directly seek to undercut structural inequities (Buckley & Quaye, 2016, p. 1135).

Contrary to Buckley and Quaye (2016), FR chooses adults to focus on anti-Black racism's social justice tension using a Womanist Epistemology to create a transforming space for liberation for the oppressed and the oppressor.

Due to the risk factors and the challenges involved (Sorensen et al., 2009) it is usually thought that intergroup dialogue must happen face-to-face and be led by a facilitator or leader trained in intergroup dialogue; thus, it can be a challenging adversarial phenomenon. Due to the coronavirus pandemic that hit the United States during the end of 2019, FR revised the program to a virtual setting via video conferencing while using the same curriculum previously outlined in Chapter I. IGD may be quite challenging, particularly for the marginalized who have nothing to lose and so much to gain, including liberation from the oppressor; yet, the challenge is somewhat more significant for those who have the privilege and perceived power and do not want to lose it. IGD reveals the ills of white privilege, white power, and oppression, where the revelation may be quite painful and shocking. Judkins (2012) highlights four possible challenges participating in intergroup dialogue:

1. "those who are willing to engage in such dialogue will have different expectations about what they want out of them and what they are to accomplish along with different levels of understanding" (Judkins, 2012, p. 33).

2. "while ultimately intergroup dialogues should lead to social justice on a systemic level, not everyone is ready to engage the conversation at this level" (Judkins, 2012, p. 33).

3. "a belief that intergroup dialogues are simply 'preaching to the choir' and that this is a relatively small part of the population" (Judkins, 2012, p. 34).

4. "few intergroup dialogues ever get to the point of actual systemic change. Most of the projects have been relatively short-term, either because of the limited resources or perhaps exhaustion" (Judkins, 2012, p. 34).

Alimo (2012) presents another challenge of IGD, stating if white people are learning new information and addressing issues of whiteness, it may be understandable that the dialogue would increase awareness but lower levels of confidence (Alimo, 2012). Fletcher (2007) named a challenge as a weakness: A weakness in the dialogue paradigm is that manipulating contact between diverse individuals within a structured context does not consider the power dynamics of everyday social interactions (Fletcher, 2007). Avoiding racial dialogues seems to have a primary function related to denial. The denial of color is a denial of differences. The denial of differences is a denial of power and privilege. The denial of power and privilege denies personal benefits that accrue to white people by racial inequalities. The denial that they profit from racism is a denial of responsibility for their racism. "Lastly, the denial of racism is a denial of the necessity to take action against racism" (Sue, 2013, p. 671).

Race/Racism

Defining racism begins with defining race. Among social scientists, "race" is generally understood as a social construct. Clair & Denis (2015) state "Although biologically meaningless when applied to humans—physical differences such as skin color have no natural association with group differences in ability or behavior—race nevertheless has tremendous significance in structuring social reality" (p. 857).

> Racism is the pattern and practice of systematic oppression and exploitation of one racial group by another, operating at both the individual and the institutional levels. Racism is based on prejudice (judgment of others before the facts) and power (the ability to carry out the judgment). (Abrums, 2000, p. 100)

Race Talk

Race talk and intergroup dialogue were used interchangeably throughout the articles, both using a level of intentional discussions around race and diverse ethnic groups with white people's prominent presence. Race talk may be a risk for all involved, including white people who risk losing their white privilege and people of color, specifically Black people who have lost their lives, livelihood, and even mental health, fighting against injustice. "Another risk is the false notion that people of color appear more comfortable and willing to dialogue on race topics; it is essential to note that social pressures to follow the politeness protocol are placed on them" (Sue, 2012, p. 666). However, it is a risk that should be taken by both the oppressed and the oppressor to alleviate racism and the damaging effects of racists' behavior. For people of color, engaging in race talk exposes them to microaggressions that invalidate and assail their racial/ethnic identities. "For [white people], honest discussions are impeded by fears of

appearing racist, realizing their racism, acknowledging white privilege, and taking responsibility to combat racism" (Sue, 2013, p. 663).

With the complexities of intergroup dialogue and race talk, one must incorporate head and heart for healing and change to occur. "There is a belief that dialogues on race should be purely intellectual exercises; this belief thereby minimizes the expression of emotions in race talk, and an opportunity to explore the meanings of those emotions is lost" (Sue, 2012, p. 666). It is an internal and external approach to race talk to be impactful and effective. The dialogical exchange is about getting to know oneself and others to address and combat racism. The fear and refusal to engage the subject of race and racism in a meaningful way may reflect discomfort with, or denial of, the enduring history of racism in the United States, which brings up pain, anger, and guilt, among other feelings. "The discomfort with addressing racial and class inequities indicate the disjuncture with one of the principal American cultural narratives that if you work hard, you will succeed, which many Americans are invested in" (Cahill, 2006, p. 20).

Nevertheless,

What exactly is race talk? What characteristics form the basis of difficult dialogue on race? What makes it so difficult for people to dialogue about race honestly? If racial dialogues are an essential means to combat racism and discrimination, how can we make people more comfortable and willing to explore racial topics. (Sue, 2013, p. 664)

There is a critical piece looming throughout the literature, and that is this notion of comfortability. The cluster or systematic sampling of college students, other than adults, seems to fall in line with this notion of comfort as one explores racial topics and challenges. Using college students as participants presents a gap in research. Students are used as short-term participants with a level of comfortability. Few studies engage adults as research participants. FR

engages adult participants to build a long-term model using IGD as a method to sit in the discomfort of having a dialogue about racism to address and dismantle anti-Black racism.

With all of its challenges and risks, why is it essential to have IGD or participate in race talk? Answers to these questions were interposed throughout the empirical articles I reviewed and focused on how such groups could foster humanity, dignity, and respect. "For instance, an understanding of racial identity was assumed to be helpful in dialoguing about race or other forms of oppression and understanding people's behaviors" (Henry et al., 2007, p. 164). "Learning about race, racism, and systems of whiteness may provide the necessary information to influence the behavioral choices in the future that contribute to racial justice in society" (Alimo, 2012, p. 38). Race talk is not necessarily polite, nor is it a topic that many would volunteer to experience. Race talk is generally filled with intense and powerful emotions (Sue, 2012). IGD combats negative assumptions about a group of people based on color and culture. Another thing that happens during IGD is that counter-stories are raised, a topic discussed in the following section.

Counter-Storytelling to Dominant Narratives

Dominant stories or dominant narratives are hegemonic, ruling, or dominant in a political or social construct while oppressing and marginalizing others due to race, class, or culture. "The dominant story shapes the 'mindset' from which we observe and interpret the world" (L. A. Bell, 2003, p. 5). Within the reading, a recurring theme was about how the dominant narrative has been a white narrative, and others that were negatively and adversely impacted are those of color; specifically, those of the Black diaspora. The dominant narrative is the stories we are told, lived as the norm, and anything other than this narrative is wrong, unusual, abnormal, fearful,

demeaning, degrading, and dehumanizing. Building on the dominant narrative white privilege can be defined as the unearned entitlement based on the color their skin (Sue, 2013).

IGD is a diverse exchange between white people of the dominant narrative and Black people or people of color who have been oppressed and marginalized by the dominant group. The dialogue is not a haphazard exchange of information and life stories. It involves what scholars call counter-storytelling or counter-narratives. Counter-narrative stories "tell on" or bear witness to social relations that the dominant culture tends to deny or minimize. "It is the consciousness that brings transformative change through empathy, the ability to hear and understand the feelings of others, the capacity to imagine what it is like to be Black" (D. Bell et al., 1990, p. 1043). The personal stories challenge the dominant narrative and bring to light the severe impact of racism and racist behavior. The counter-narratives of race talk are too threatening to white people and our society because they unmask the secrets of power and privilege and how the public transcript of a master narrative justifies the continued subordination of people of color (Sue, 2013). "The hidden transcripts or counter-narratives of subordinated groups serve to confirm their experiences and bear witness to their lived reality in the face of a dominant culture that distorts stereotypes and marginalizes that reality" (L. A. Bell, 2003, p. 6). For people of color, however, their tales represent a counter-narrative, or "back talk," that challenges and disputes the stories told by white people (Sue, 2013).

Backtalk or talking back in Black diasporic culture is a courageous act. Backtalk is to speak up and out when not spoken to or speaking as an equal to an authority figure as intimate as mom or dad (hooks, 2015). For Black women, our struggle has emerged from silence into speech, even if it was behind the scenes or hidden due to patriarchy. The struggle was to change

the nature and direction of our speech, to make a speech that compels listeners, one that is heard (hooks, 2015).

For Black women, true speaking is not solely an expression of creative power; it is an act of resistance, a political gesture that challenges domination politics that would render us nameless and voiceless (hooks, 2015).

Moving from silence into speech is for the oppressed, the colonized, the exploited, and those who stand and struggle side-by-side, a gesture of defiance that heals, making a new life and new growth possible. It is that act of speech, of talking back, that is no mere gesture of empty words, that is the expression of our movement from object to subject— the liberated voice. (hooks, 2015, p. 9)

In summary, although IGD focuses on college students in most empirical studies, FR chose to use IGD for adults and applied the ideology of IGD with some revisions. FR uses IGD but centers on Black women who lead mostly white adults in race talk, Black centered storytelling, and reflective practices.

Anti-Black Racism

FR uses storytelling that centers Black lives and experiences as a counter-narrative that is often depicted in media, dominant white thought, and other negative judgments due to Black skin color. Anti-Black racism is a term that goes beyond the generalization of racism (Lloyd & Prevot, 2017). The general term racism can be very abstract and cause challenges to address racism in specific marginalized groups (Lloyd & Prevot, 2017). The term anti-Blackness draws particular attention to the harms done to Black people, and it points to both the interpersonal and structural dimensions of these harms (Lloyd & Prevot, 2017). The mobilizing power against anti-

Blackness has a critical edge that comes with an explicit, focused struggle for justice (Lloyd & Prevot, 2017).

#Blacklivesmatter (BLM), a hashtag that turned into a mobilizing power, a movement, is a love letter to Black people after the murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO. Three Black women founded BLM: Alicia Garza, a California-based organizer with the National Domestic Workers Alliance; Patrice Cullors, another queer Black activist; and Opal Tometi of the Black Alliance for Just Immigration (Lloyd & Prevot, 2017). Lloyd and Prevot (2017) challenge ecumenical congregations to face the anti-Black racism in their own spaces in response to the digital evolution toward taking activism to the streets and churches. It creates a space for Black, Latinx, white, queer, US-born clergy and laity to go further than the hashtag and articulate how religious spheres speak to their traditions (Lloyd & Prevot, 2017). One of Lloyd and Prevot's (2017) contributors is Kelly Brown Douglas, who is currently one of several salient womanist scholars. Douglas speaks to anti-Black violence through a Womanist lens. She explores anti-Blackness's narrative and its relationship to America's very identity (Douglas, 2017 as cited in Lloyd & Prevot, eds., 2017).

Lopez & Jean-Marie (2021) offer a scholarly account of defining and addressing anti-Black racism. Although their article focuses on anti-Blackness in education, the research is apropos to addressing anti-Black racism in community beginning with the times Black people were enslaved. "Over 400 years of injustice in the United States, Canada, and other Western countries there is a collective rage about social injustices that continue to plague society" (Lopez & Jean-Marie, 2021, p. 53). In order to eradicate anti-Black racism, it "must be named and challenged" (p.51). It is not enough to theorize anti-Black racism. It must be intertwined with actions and "practice espoused as praxis" (Freire as cited in Lopez & Jean-Marie, 2021, p.52).

Because of the veil of anti-Blackness, Black people are over-policed and under-protected (Lopez & Jean-Marie, 2021).

> In [their] continued research on social justice, [their] focus is on integrating anti-racist pedagogy in justice work. This shift is premised on making racialized power relations explicit while also attending to deconstructing the social construction of race, and analyzing interlocking systems of oppression that serve to marginalize some groups while privileging others. (Lopez & Jean-Marie, 2021, p. 61)

In his book *How to Be an Anti-Racist*, Kendi (2019) integrates his lived experiences with his espoused values and ideologies. He defines and refutes the meaning of racism and calls people to choose a side, regardless of race. The author purports that racism is what we do, not who we are, and relates it to supporting policies that disavow one group over another. On the other hand, anti-racism promotes racial equality among all groups. Race, therefore, is a powerful construct of collected or merged differences that lives socially, and this power construct is not exclusive to all white people; therefore, Black people can be racist. He does not conflate racism and all white people, nor does he exclude Black people from racist thoughts, ideologies, and actions. Kendi (2019) goes on to say that stating Black people cannot be racist is a powerless defense. I respectfully disagree. Identifying the layers of trauma and the resilience required to heal and remain in community with those who have oppressed people of African descent is a liberating stance that creates space for Black people to acknowledge the ills of the past and present, hold systemic racist accountable, and heal from a racist stance that has and is killing Black people—mind, body, and soul.

As a nascent Womanist whose work is rooted in addressing and ending anti-Black racism, I found Prevot's academic book (2018) to be a seminal work that will lay a foundation

for further study regarding theology and race. Prevot (2018) brings together multiple voices to create a historical journey through various scholars and their work in theology, ethics, Christology, soteriology, Black theology, intersectionality, Womanism, Womanist Theology, Afrofuturism, anthropology, spirituality, ecclesiology, Black Catholicism, and race. Prevot (2018) created a prose narrative that compares and contrasts various views, thoughts, and lenses to create a pivotal approach to theology and race, embodying these various components while centering Black lives and experiences to address the mysticism of theology and race. Prevot (2108) notes that all questions will not be answered via this body of work but will bring us to a greater understanding of a larger mystery of a G-d who lives among us and gives life to humanity.

"One must face it to fix it" is a saying that resonated with me throughout my seminary journey and beyond. Here we find a similar approach to anti-Black racism and the obliteration of anti-Black racism by clearly identifying which side we are on. One may be racist or anti-racist, but to claim one is not racist is an ambiguous escape from the realities of racism (Strauss, 2019). As a Womanist, it is essential to embody diverse liberating voices in the fight for justice via anti-racism, especially anti-Black racism.

Anti-Black Racism and Misogynoir

Asare (2020) asserts that Moya Bailey (2018) coined the newer term misogynoir to describe "the specific hatred, dislike, distrust, and prejudice directed toward Black women" (para 1). In the Forbes article, Asare stresses the importance of the awareness of anti-Black racism as well as misogynoir. Both need to be disrupted and ended; hence, Womanist leading FR to center Black women and Black experiences. Asare recommends books and articles for readers as a resource to learn more about misogynoir. Among her recommendations is the book *Hood*

Feminism: Notes from the Woman That a Movement forgot by Mikki Kendall (2021). Kendall is a Feminist who called out the whiteness and elitism in Feminism, particularly as it relates to misogynoir. The Feminism rhetoric is rooted in biases like misogyny and "works against marginalized Black women and against any concept of solidarity" (p.338).

According to Moya & Trudy (2018) the term was relatively known phrase from 2010-2013. 2013-2014 was called the pushback phrase because misogynoir is rooted in misogyny. Misogynoir centered Black women's experience with misogyny and was not well received in mainstream including music, churches/congregations, movies, and social media. Moya is calling for Black women to turn inward for their healing and stop the harm Black women cause one another.

Love (2013) covers similar ground to that which I am interested. "The purpose of this study is to examine how race influences the activities of Black women in search of political, social, and economic justice" (Love, 2013, p. iv). Black women's clubs and civil rights movements have led to resistance against racial discrimination, sexism, and classism (Love, 2013). A total of 183 (Black) women participated in the study via interviews, focus groups, and a survey (Love, 2013). Across the various modes of study, the ongoing emergent theme was race as a relevant issue, and gendered racial stereotyping remains a problem in the Black community and broader society (Love, 2013).

Love's work was unique and detailed. The study included interviews with participants from various generations, and the results were divided by generations of Black women. For brevity, I have noted themes related to FR and themes that occur across all cohorts. Race and racism were themes in which the generation of cohorts all strongly disagree with the statement that race is no longer a relevant factor in the life of Black people (Love, 2013). For all three

generations, baby boomers, millennials, and generation x, all participants disagree with the statement that since slavery and Jim Crow are in the past, it serves no purpose to continue to discuss the past (Love, 2013). The importance of acknowledging the past is Sankofa, looking back to move forward. All three generations tend to disagree that (Black people) must lose part of their racial identity to become part of mainstream America.

The interview respondents agree that it is essential for Black leaders in the Black community to understand the lived experiences of Black people (Love, 2013, p. 158). It is crucial for white people to understand Black people's experiences to address misnomers about Black people, insert humanity back into the dehumanization of Black people, and envision Black liberation that will lead to liberation for all.

To summarize anti-Black racism literature, "The movement-mobilizing power of anti-Blackness is arguably much stronger than that of diversity, inclusion, and multiculturalism (Lloyd & Prevot, 2017, p. xxv). Gendering anti-Blackness is misogynoir, a disdain for Black women. As two Womanist co-founders of Soul 2 Soul Sisters' FR, leading as Black women in an age where we are historically and presently oppressed, marginalized, and silenced is pivotal to break the silence and the anti-Black racism.

Chapter II Conclusion

Some of the literature gaps identified in this review include the lack of published works of Black women, Black-centered ideologies, and anti-Black racism. The literature review named Black women who were invisibilized, silenced, and not acknowledged for their work. FR supports Black women's leadership and invites mostly white people to journey toward transformation and liberation for both oppressor and oppressed. Womanism and IGD address the anti-Black racism that is experienced by Black women every day. It is imperative to identify

anti-Black racism separately from racism because racism in different races is experienced differently. Identifying anti-Black racism highlights the historical, structural, and communal ills that impact the Black community, specifically Black women.

The examination of this scholarly work lays the groundwork to address a gap in addressing anti-Black racism in literature. The discovery of a literature of compartmentalized aspects of Womanism, IGD, and anti-Black racism is prevalent throughout academic literature. The hope is to identify a method to address anti-Black racism with the oppressed and the oppressor for liberation for both. The next chapter expounds upon the methodology to explore the experiences of white people during and after the FR cohort.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Ontology is a concept that deals with the nature of one's being. Ontology is key in racial justice work. Black people of the diaspora have and still have to fight for their humanity. Womanist Ontology seeks to rediscover this apprehension of Black life in the United States (Cannon et al., 2011 as cited in Townes, 2011). Being is physical and spiritual. Womanist Ontology rejects dualism and argues for wholeness. The task of a Womanist Ontology is to illuminate, question, and begin eradication of radical oppression and devaluation of the self and the community in the context of structural evil (Cannon et al., 2011). Both Womanism and phenomenology consciously explore the lived experience of the phenomenon.

While ontology is centered on being, epistemology is about knowing. Epistemology is not a method but a way of "creating a process of knowing and learning" (Freire, 1970/2009, p. 17). FR creates a space for a cohort of mostly white people to experience the ontology of Black people and embrace an epistemology that is lifelong learning of another through sacred spaces, storytelling, active listening, and reflection.

Previous FR surveys prompted me to delve further into the experience of white FR participants. The surveys helped ensure the participants walked away with a semblance of the importance of racial justice and the dismantling of oppressive dominant white thought. The previous surveys also helped update and enhance the FR curriculum to ensure we remain relevant, ending anti-Black racism.

A previous FR survey showed a favorable response to FR's pedagogy and praxis during the 2016-2019 sessions:

> Black women conspicuously lead the way while creating a cyclical, emerging movement. The participants create a community of like-mindedness and face racism with a new, transforming, and liberating lens and heightened awareness of injustice. From here, the

participants lead racial justice work to dismantle the individual, collective, systemic racism in their homes, jobs, communities, and selves.

Soul 2 Soul's pre-and-post studies show that out of 160 participants,

- 95 percent report that the information learned during the study sessions helps them more deeply analyze racial justice issues concerning Black people;
- 95 percent report that since participating in the Facing Racism training sessions, they have a better picture of how one can center Black people and Black liberation and connect that work with the liberation of all people;
- 92 percent report confidence that they will take action toward raising awareness and educating beloveds, colleagues, and congregants about racial justice issues concerning Black people; and
- Seventy-seven percent report confidence that their congregation or religious group will raise awareness and educate congregants about racial justice issues concerning Black people. (Davis, 2016, p. 283)

Although we have a FR Alumni group led by white people and for white people, I, as a Black woman and Womanist facilitator, wanted to dig deeper into white people's personal FR experience. A phenomenological approach enabled me to better understand the experience of those who had taken part in the FR program.

Figure 3.1

Phenomenological Methodology Outline
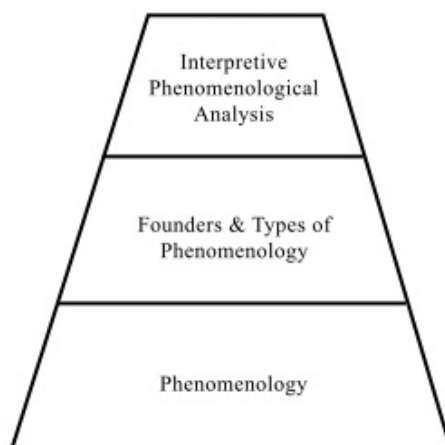
Note. This figure is a summary of the overview of the foundation of the methodology of phenomenology to the methodology of interpretive phenomenological analysis.

I chose a phenomenological method that I believe is sensitive to the thoughtfulness required in contingent, moral, and relational situations similar to racial justice work in a Womanist method (van Manen, 2007). Hence, I have chosen interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Before delving into IPA, I offer an overview of phenomenology to better understand IPA and why I chose it as my research methodology.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology should or could connect us with our everyday experience (Smith et al., 2009). Soul 2 Soul Sisters' FR cohort connects participants with everyday experiences, encouraging the dismantling of oppressive systems and experiences while building just, liberating lived experiences for all. Gill (2014) posits that:

> Phenomenological methodologies are a family of approaches, related through five interrelated commonalities. The five interrelated commonalities include a shared foundation of phenomenological philosophy, explicit interest in the meaning of individuals' experiences, attempting to grasp the point of view of the "experiencer," homogeneous sampling, and thematic analyses that necessitate creativity and imagination. (p. 128)

Phenomenological approaches address the experience and not the story of an experience (Gill, 2014). For FR, phenomenology explores and analyzes how things or experiences show themselves as we address anti-Black racism.

Unlike other specific qualitative methods, such as grounded theory, where the intent is to create substantive theory (E. Holloway, personal communication, July 27, 2016) or specific narrative strategies that rely on written and spoken words, the phenomenological method requires a deep dive into the experience of a particular phenomenon. "Phenomenology seeks to

make explicit the implicit structure and meaning of human experiences" (Sanders, 1982, p. 354). For FR, using a phenomenological method enabled the exploration of the experience and the feelings that participants had while attending the program.

The practicality of phenomenology of practice should not occur in instrumental action, efficiency, or technical efficacy. In other words, Bradbury-Jones et al. states:

> From the literature, it appears that the primary advantages of the phenomenological focus group are twofold: the enrichment of data as a result of participants reflecting on and sharing their experiences, and clarification and checking for understanding both among participants and between participants and researchers. (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2009, p. 667)

Founders and Key Leaders of the Phenomenological Movement

There are different types of phenomenological philosophy. While researching the best research methodology for this study, I reviewed various types and the founders associated with phenomenology types. IPA is a newer phenomenological approach to research. In my Sankofa approach, looking back to move forward, as I recapitulated Black women's stories in history from Feminist to Womanist, I used the same recapitulated approach to understand why I chose interpretive phenomenological analysis as my research methodology by beginning with a historical view of phenomenology.

Edmund Husserl

Edmund Husserl is known as the founder of phenomenological philosophy (Gill, 2014). Husserl developed a method known as descriptive phenomenology. Descriptive phenomenology identifies the human experience's core structures (Smith et al., 2009). Husserl's philosophical method stated that one should adopt a phenomenological attitude to let the phenomenon show its

essence (Giorgi, 2008). Furthermore, Husserl suggests one should have a free imaginative variation to determine the essence and carefully describe the discovered essence (Smith et al., 2009).

Martin Heidegger

Martin Heidegger, a student of Husserl, developed his phenomenology type that differed in terms of both subject and method. Heidegger inspired "hermeneutic" or "interpretive" phenomenological methodologies (Gill, 2014, p. 120). Hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). In interpretive phenomenology, interpretation is not a choice but an integral aspect of research (Gill, 2014). "Heidegger's interpretive approach to studying human existence denies the possibility of fully detached reflection and thereby disputes Husserl's idea of bracketing presuppositions to articulate an essence" (Gill, 2014, p. 120). Husserl developed bracketing as a phenomenological method to identify the human experience's core structures and features (Smith et al., 2009).

Max van Manen

For Max van Manen, hermeneutic phenomenology emerged within the pedagogy discipline, which marked a clear departure from other phenomenological types by straddling both descriptive and interpretive phenomenology (Gill, 2014). "For van Manen, phenomenology is an artistic endeavor and a poetizing project that seeks to speak to the world rather than of the world" (van Manen, 1984 as cited in Gill, 2014, p. 124). Van Manen rejects the idea of bracketing and states that researchers should acknowledge their assumptions because presuppositions may creep back into our reflections (Gill, 2014). Van Manen in common with IPA, draws on and connects phenomenology and hermeneutics (Van Manen, 1990 as cited in Smith et al., 2009).

IPA is fairly new in phenomenological research. For the reader and other researchers, it was helpful to present a historical glance of the key founders of phenomenology to understand Smith's development of IPA. As a bourgeoning researcher, it was also important for me to choose a methodology that would align with FR.

Jonathan Smith

Johnathan Smith's IPA is a recent phenomenological and qualitative inquiry approach (Gill, 2014; Smith et al., 2009). IPA is committed to examining how people make sense of their significant life experiences (Smith et al., 2009). IPA's idiographic nature is committed to the detailed examination of the particular case in detail to explore what the experience for the subject is like and what sense the subject is making of what is happening to them (Smith et al., 2009). IPA uses a relatively small sample to examine convergence or divergence in some detail (Smith et al., 2009).

The process of conducting IPA parallels the way FR operates. Both attempt to make sense of lived experiences that include the researcher and the researched or, in the context of FR, the cohort and the facilitator's journey to make sense of their experience with anti-Black racism and the major transitions happening in their lives. This approach is a double hermeneutic, where the researcher/facilitator tries to make sense of the participant, who is trying to make sense of what is happening to them (Smith, et al., 2009). A closer look at IPA is pivotal in identifying the right methodology for a particular phenomenon.

IPA Methodology

It was essential to choose a methodology capable of exploring the white participants' experience in FR. "A phenomenological researcher's epistemological and ontological assumptions should inform their selection of a particular methodology" (Gill, 2014, p. 127). The

methodology involves intellect, heart, and gut using an iterative process beyond process, discourse, systems, and organizational research. IPA is a qualitative research methodology that "can tell us something about people's involvement in and orientation towards the world and about how they make sense of this" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 46).

IPA is a recently developed and rapidly growing qualitative inquiry approach (Smith et al., 2009). IPA is a research approach examining how people make sense of their significant life experiences, but it is phenomenological in that it is concerned with exploring experience on its terms (Smith et al., 2009). IPA includes a detailed examination of a life event or phenomenon, includes a small sample size, and incorporates semi structured interviews. (Smith et al., 2009).

In phenomenology, there are guidelines or recommendations for getting started rather than strict, rigid processes that do not leave room for the participant to recapitulate the experience and the researcher to witness, document, and observe the phenomenon's experience as shared by the research participant. IPA is an approach to doing research and how one makes sense of the studied phenomenon. IPA's key advantage in relation to my study is that it enables the researcher to focus on FR's meaning and sense-making for white people who have shared in the FR experience (Smith et al., 2009).

Reviewing the literature showed that IPA had a salient synergy with FR. IPA's idiographic nature, iterative double hermeneutic, interpretive approach, and meaning-making aligns with the FR's approach in racial justice work. Using IPA as my methodology enabled me to take a more in-depth look at white participants' experience and outcomes in FR. By electing IPA as my methodology, "This extrapolation of experiences of the subjects may provide meaningful information to others" (Bryant, 2004, p. 26).

IPA invites the participant to expound on their experience of FR. The three prompts were as follows:

1) What was the experience of the white participants during FR?

    a) How has the participant made sense/meaning of their experience of FR?

    b) What impact did FR have on participants' actions toward ending anti-Black racism?

IPA Theoretical Underpinnings

Before I expound upon the IPA research process, it is important to expand on IPA's theoretical underpinnings (Shinebourne, 2011). Theoretical underpinnings inform the research methodology. Shinebourne states there are three theoretical underpinnings in IPA. The three theoretical underpinnings are phenomenology, idiography, and hermeneutics. IPA is one of the nascent research methods in phenomenology, and it comes with questions of validity and quality. The theoretical underpinnings serve as a tool to make IPA accessible to those who do not have a philosophical background and link existential-phenomenological research to the studied phenomena (Shinebourne, 2011).

- **Phenomenology** in IPA is the uncovering of meaning and sense-making of participants in the same phenomenon. IPA is an iterative process that examines the data analysis of lived experiences (Smith et al., 2009). "Phenomenology is seeking after a meaning which is perhaps hidden by the entity's mode of appearing" (Shinebourne, 2011, p. 19). Meaning-making in IPA aims to explore how participants make sense of their personal and social world and the meanings particular experiences or events hold for participants (Smith & Osborn, 2008). FR takes an interest in mostly white people's experience with white privilege, white supremacy, and racism. One of the dissertation proposal questions is "What was experience of the white former participants during FR?"

- **Hermeneutics** is the "theory and practice of interpretation" (van Manen, 2015, p. 179). "Originally, hermeneutics represented an attempt to provide surer foundations for interpreting biblical texts" (Smith, et al., 2009, p. 21) and have evolved to include historical, literary, psychological, and research methods. Hermeneutics is an interpretive methodology because it claims there is no such thing as uninterpreted phenomena (van Manen, 2015). "Interpretive is a part of the analysis process to move me, the researcher, beyond the descriptive and superficial" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 90). Interpretation is a deeper dive into the phenomenon to make meaning or sense of what the participant is experiencing. Interpretative analysis may move away from the participant's original text and move one closer to an interpretation inspired by and arising from the participant's words and experiences (Smith et al., 2009). Another aspect of this study is what arose from the experience of FR. How did the experience make meaning of the action(s) post-FR? Specifically, one of the research questions is "How has the participant made sense/meaning of their experience of FR?"

- **Idiography**, the third theoretical underpinning, is concerned with the particular distinct from the general. Instead of looking at the general status quo, an idiographic approach focuses on the specific experience (Smith et al., 2009). This sense of detail should not be conflated with focusing on the individual (Smith et al., 2009). Idiography is uniquely embodied and offers a personally unique perspective on the relationship to or involvement in phenomena of interest (Smith et al., 2009). The discovery of a process or one's experience during a phenomenon is one of the salient things that separates IPA from other phenomenological methodologies (Smith & Osborne, 2008). The phenomenon

is white people's experience with FR. FR interrogates the micro and macro level of anti-

Black racism, or the individual to the systemic.

Other Principles of Interviewing from an IPA Perspective

Additional principles of IPA include an iterative process, double hermeneutic, and inductive

analysis. A brief explanation is listed below:

- **IPA's iterative process** is a repetitive approach to collecting data, improving the

  questions during each participant's interviews. The iterative process may create a deeper

  understanding of the participant's experience. The researcher may start with an idea of

  questions that may develop and change through the interview process and again after the

  initial interview (Smith et al., 2009). The iterative process is the repetitive steps of the

  interpretive analysis.

- **Double hermeneutic** is where the researcher makes sense of the participant, making

  sense of the phenomena (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher is trying to make sense of the

  participant trying to make sense of their personal and social world (Smith, 2004). The

  researcher is like the participant. On the one hand, as the researcher, I am not the

  participant and only have access to the experience through what the white former

  participant of FR reports about the phenomenon (Smith et al., 2009). I am also listening

  and reflecting on my experientially informed lens (Smith et al., 2009).

- **Inductive analysis** is an approach to gathering information from the participant's

  experience(s) to understand the phenomenon and develop a theory from the interviews

  and emergent themes. FR does not conclude our experiences. As a Black woman in

  America, I have biases, racialized trauma layers, and adverse experiences with white

supremacy. IPA offers a methodology to honor the researcher while exploring, listening, and reflecting on the participant's experience after attending FR.

Data Collection

Participants for Research Study

White FR participants, who completed the course, were selected because they can speak to their experience of FR (Smith et al., 2009). In IPA, participants are selected purposely rather than through probability methods (Smith et al., 2009). Sample sizes are generally small in IPA. I selected eight white participants who had completed the FR cohort. The participants were chosen through the database of the recent FR participants along with recommendations from the FR team.

IPA Data Collection to Address Research Question(s)

The selected white FR attendees were invited to participate in a semi structured interview to give a first-person account of their experiences (Smith et al., 2009). Using IPA, I aimed to design data collection using the three core questions to invite participants to share stories, thoughts, and feelings and offer an opportunity to speak freely and reflectively (Smith et al., 2009). The semi structured interviews were conducted via Zoom and were scheduled in advance for 90 minutes. The interview questions are open, and the participants were invited to talk at length and as descriptively as possible (Smith et al., 2009).

In addition to the previous research questions, other questions arose while conducting the interviews, for instance, "How did this moment make you feel?" and "Please, say more." I transcribed each interview before conducting the next interview. The immediate transcription left room for any subsequent questions with the current participant.

Bryant (2004) highlights points to gathering data for IPA. Through the gathering of data from FR white former participants the following prompts were included:

1. "Identifying knowledgeable subjects" (Bryant, 2004, p. 99). The subjects were chosen from among white FR participants who have recently completed the cohort. An email was sent to the white cohort members asking for participation if one has completed the full FR cohort within the last 3 years.

2. "Gaining entry into the field" (Bryant, 2004, p. 99). As a cocreator of FR, a former facilitator, and a current guest facilitator, I have entered into a field of 400 participants over the last three years.

3. "Earning trust of subjects" (Bryant, 2004, p. 99). FR has existed for five and a half years. Each cohort has been filled to capacity without significant marketing and with word of mouth. Trust has been developed through Soul 2 Soul Sisters' involvement in the community, exuding a love-based revolution by preaching and teaching in various churches and offering a sound, reflective, informative truth about the inception of racism and anti-Black racism. FR has earned the community's trust and has attracted willing participants, some of whom became subjects of the study.

4. "Achieving adequate exposure to the field" (Bryant, 2004, p. 99). FR is a seven-session cohort with an in-depth reflective curriculum saturating participants with diverse opportunities to learn, reflect, and act. FR exposes participants to the field of racial justice with a focus on anti-Black racism by offering scholarly articles and books, think pieces, music, African traditional rituals, definitions widely used in racism, and other means that are not shown in mainstream media.

5. "Asking probing questions" (Bryant, 2004, p. 99). In IPA, a small number of participants and a few questions prompt the subject to share their experience in a personal, reflective, open, and truthful manner.

6. "Strategizing how to build on existing data" (Bryant, 2004, p. 99). In IPA, analyzing the data, pulling out themes, and noting the researcher's findings, thoughts, feelings, and biases are all parts of building on existing data to make meaning of the findings.

7. "Recording information" (Bryant, 2004, p. 99). Due to the pandemic, interviews were conducted via Zoom, recorded, and transcribed line by line with pauses and other nonaudible expressions. Data coding was completed after each interview. Each interview was 60-90 minutes with a second interview scheduled if necessary. The researcher used field notes. Transcription, iteration of the analysis, and review of the curriculum were used to check the data's accuracy.

Analysis of Data

Smith et al.'s (2009) IPA has four key stages of inductive analysis which I operationalized in the following ways:

1. I read one transcript closely and then looked for emerging themes, noting significant points.

2. I clustered together connected or related themes.

3. I used the emergent themes from the first transcript to analyze subsequent transcripts iteratively. A final table was constructed with themes once all transcripts had been analyzed.

4. I noted the analytical process's outcome in a narrative account (Gill, 2014, p. 126). A researcher's analytic interpretation is presented in detail with verbatim extracts from participants (Smith et al., 2009, p. 4).

Inductive analysis in IPA research employs fluid techniques to allow unanticipated topics or themes to emerge during analysis (Smith, 2004). An inductive approach is bottom-up rather than top-down (Reid et al., 2005). Additionally, IPA can employ observations, focus groups (Smith et al., 2009), and data collection, which usually occurs through semi structured interviews (Gill, 2014).

Themes

Developing emergent themes may be complex and may involve analyzing large amounts of data, including the original transcripts and initial notes (Smith et al., 2009). If the initial exploratory commenting is done using the iterative, reflective process and done comprehensively, the notes will be closely tied to the original transcripts (Smith et al., 2009). Exploratory commenting helped to identify themes for each participant that may lead to a connection of common themes between all of the participant's experiences (Smith et al., 2009). For example:

Emergent Themes	Transcript of Participant's Response	Exploratory Comments: Conceptual
Black Women	Charlie: I have never had a Black woman teacher/ facilitator	It was disheartening to hear of the invisibility of Black women in leadership and teaching positions. The integral part of Womanist/Black women leading is challenging the status quo of whiteness, knowing our worth, and leading accordingly.
White Supremacy Culture (Article)	Gia: What is white culture? It is not collective. I knew that	White people have a supremacist culture they are

	it was going to have to be a deep dive into self and I am so glad that this is the direction Facing Racism went.	not aware of. This is problematic to the Black diaspora since we are negatively impacted by it. Dismantling the culture does require a deep dive and understanding of white supremist thought.

Please note, conceptual exploratory noting is focused an interrogative and conceptual level (Smith, et al., 2009, p. 84). It is also important to note that the interpretation may move away from the original text; therefore, the researcher needed to interpret the data from the data itself and not any external influence (Smith et al., 2009)

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was used for participation in data collection (Smith et al., 2009). In the informed consent process, it was essential to let the participant know the topics to be covered, explain what they could expect from the interview, and discuss the likely data analysis outcomes (Smith et al., 2009). Interviews were conducted and recorded via Zoom. The recordings were password protected and shared with the transcription service. Pseudonyms were used to protect the participants. To further protect the participants, at any moment that the participant needed a break due to overwhelming emotions, we took a break, rescheduled, and made room for the participant to regroup. The participants were given a disclaimer to opt out at any time.

Limitations

Limitations are restrictions in the study. An example of a restriction is the use of a small sample size, which is indicative of IPA. Small sample sizes allow the researcher to do a deep dive in the lived experience of the white person who attending FR but limits the number of theoretical perspectives. For the purpose of this study, the number of research participants were

not only small but I had a homogenous group with favorable experiences. The one person who initially volunteered to participated did not have a favorable experience with FR but later decided not to participate for reasons unknown. Another limitation is the ambiguity and lack of standardization of IPA (Tuffour, 2017). Tuffour also points out that IPA is mostly descriptive instead of interpretive. Questions have been raised whether IPA can accurately capture the experiences and meaning rather than the opinions of it (Tuffour, 2017).

Chapter III Conclusion

Using IPA for this study created an opportunity for me to make sense of the participant making sense of the experience. Listening to each participant share their personal experiences related to the Black experience gave me access to experiences that are not readily available in everyday experiences between Black and white FR participants. The research participants expressed gratefulness for the opportunity to reflect on the FR experience. Reflection-act-reflect is a model used in FR. When new information, particularly from Black women, it is essential to reflect on what new, transformational, liberating information is received.

CHAPTER IV: IPA Findings

Chapter IV focuses on the findings of this interpretive phenomenological study exploring how white research participants experienced *Facing Racism: Womanists leading white people in intergroup dialogue to end anti-Black racism*. As the researcher I will illuminate and interpret the data pertaining to how the participants made sense of the FR experience.

Research Questions

This study investigated the following research questions:

1) What was the experience of the former white participants during Facing Racism?

   a) What impact did Facing Racism have on participants' actions toward ending anti-Black racism?

   b) How has the participant made sense/meaning of their experience of Facing Racism?

Participants

The eight research participants were former attendees of a recent Facing Racism cohort experience who identify as white. These participants of Facing Racism attended a seven-session experience that centers Black women and the Black experience in America. The participants were chosen through the database of recent Facing Racism participants. Their participation was voluntary. With the intent of getting a broad range of participants with different viewpoints, the Soul 2 Soul Sisters staff recommended former white participants for this study. The staff recommended possible participants based on total attendance during the Facing Racism cohort, participation during the entire sessions and the breakout sessions, and engagement with homework assignments.

The following eight participants identified as white and completed the Facing Racism Cohort between 2017 and 2020. Each participant has a pseudonym. In this text, I use the term "they" to identify each of them to protect the participants' identities further.

Table 4.1

Participant Demographics

Name	Occupation	Age range	Completed FR
Matt	Pastor	60–79	2017 & 2018
Gia	Business professional	20–39	2020
Cam	Faith leader	40–59	2017
Jewelz	Educator	40–59	2019
Sam	Free spirit entrepreneur	20–39	2018 & 2019
Randy	Educator	40–59	2020
Windom	Educator	40–59	2020
Charlie	Musician	20–39	2019

As I mentioned in Chapter III, data collected through interviews with these participants were analyzed through Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), a qualitative approach to collecting and analyzing data. Figure 4.1 is a diagram that depicts the IPA process. "The IPA researcher should have the following qualities; open-mindedness; flexibility; patience; empathy; and the willingness to enter into, and respond to, the participant's world" (Smith et al., p. 55, 2009).

Figure 4.1

Iterative Process in IPA
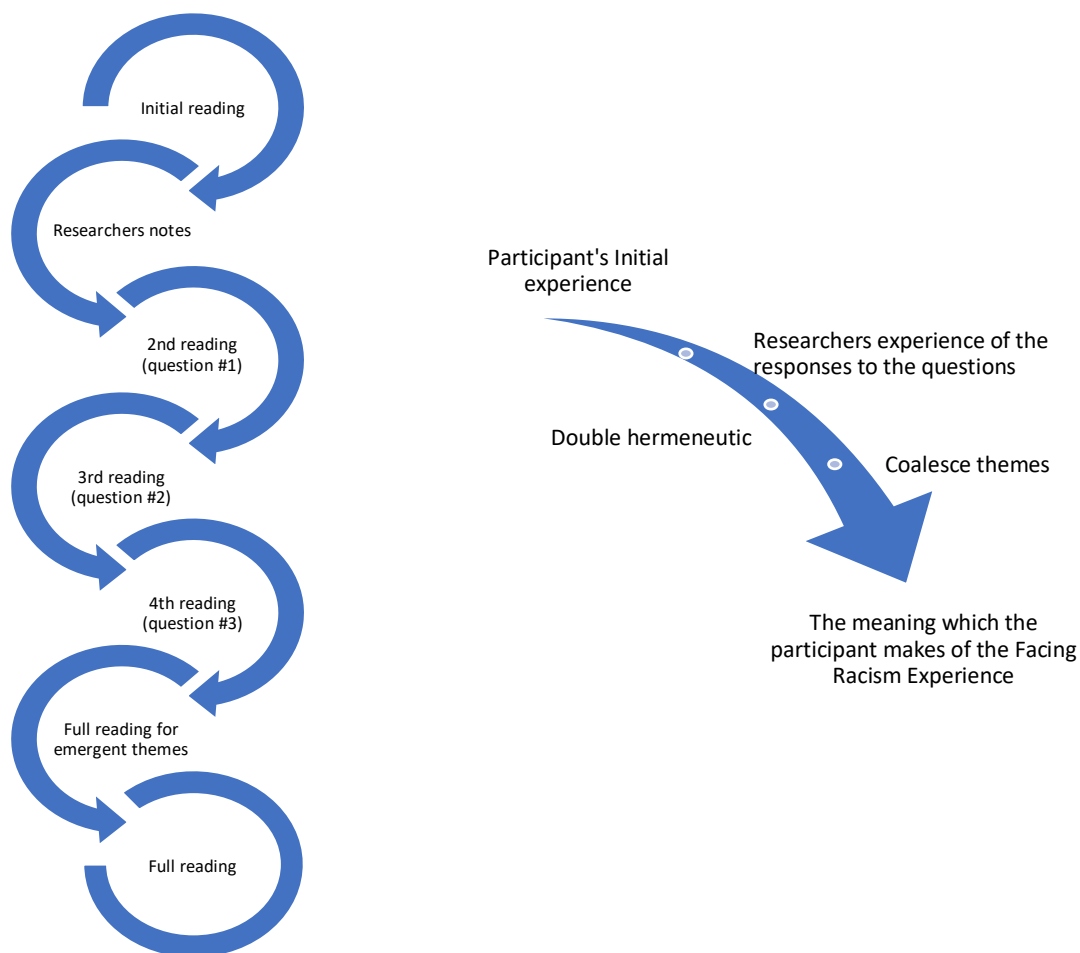
Note: The IPA idiographic process is iterative and inductive. Figure 4.1 is an example of the IPA process and the researcher's approach to analyzing the data.

IPA seeks to highlight the participant's perspective and uses a psychological focus to understand personal meaning-making (Smith et al., 2009, p. 89). I conducted eight interviews via Zoom and recorded the voices of the participant and myself for analytical purposes. This approach allows for data to be analyzed, first by making initial comments on the transcript, as one works their way to the final structural themes (Smith et al., 2009). Thus, the researcher's

perceptions, conceptions, and processes are essential in the interpretive and iterative process (Smith et al., 2009).

Each interview was listened to independently of each other while the researcher took notes making initial comments. Data were then analyzed question by question while noting possible emergent themes. As described in Chapter III, once all interviews were analyzed, emergent themes formed a final structure of themes and subthemes for the researcher to further analyze meaning-making.

Findings

The following sections present the preconceptions and biases that participants reported before they began FR, the emergent themes that emerged, the outcomes they reported, and a summary of how the findings address the research questions. Noting the research participants' preconceptions and biases before experiencing Facing Racism is in part a "nuanced analysis" (Smith et al., p. 37) of the participant's willingness to experience Facing Racism with an epistemological curiosity (Freire, 2009) about anti-Black racism.

Preconceptions and Biases

As a researcher using IPA, it is essential to note participants' biases, preconceived notions, and assumptions before experiencing Facing Racism. As the participants' data were analyzed, preconceptions and complicit/implicit biases emerged as a prominent theme. Each research participant had a preconceived notion about racism and their experience before Facing Racism. Some did not know what to expect, and others believed they were already doing the work necessary to be anti-racist.

> I did not know what to expect. I thought I was doing the work. How did I think things were racially better? I was ashamed and embarrassed. Deciding to engage with Facing Racism caused me to realize I did not talk about race. I had a fear of the unknown. (Matt)

So, I came into Facing Racism with two questions: what is white culture because it is not collective. I did not know how to articulate that until I started engaging and listening to Black leaders, and it was not the norm for Black people to lead and white people to listen and learn. So, I knew that it would have to be a deep dive into myself. I am so glad that was the direction Facing Racism went. However, at the same time, I wanted to see the collective community function as leaders in front of me and hear the privilege that I was in. (Gia)

Once they surmised there was so much more to learn and do beyond being submerged in dominant white culture, each participant joined to learn more from two Black women leaders using a love-based revolution and spiritual foundation pedagogy.

According to the white participants, many did not talk about race or racism before participating in the program. Racism, like religion or spirituality, was one of the taboo subjects on the job, in family settings, or communal events.

I could not talk about race or racism outside of diversity and inclusion. I never talked about my spirituality or religious beliefs in public. I did not have the language or the wherewithal to discuss anti-Black racism, particularly as it relates to white privilege. (Charlie)

The willingness to be pushed to move from individual to collective, head to heart, and listening more and talking less is hard to experience and implement for a white person. The willingness to be told about the racist behavior of white people or the heinous history of white people since the inception of the United States of America is a challenging task to take on willingly and voluntarily. Kendi (2019) states:

Some white people do not identify as white for the same reason they identify as not-racist: to avoid reckoning with the ways that whiteness-even as construction and mirage-has informed their notions of America and identity and offered them privilege, the primary one being the privilege of being inherently normal, standard and legal (p. 38).

Kendi's (2019) view is exemplified by Gia's statement that, 'White people muffle themselves, and when we muffle ourselves, we do not feel.' (Gia)

The research study showed that white people who attended Facing Racism brought with them the

desire for a space to learn more about anti-Black racism and what white people may do to

address it.

Most of the participants signed up and attended Facing Racism due to word-of-mouth or

some interaction with the co-founders, leading them to want to know and learn more about

ending anti-Black racism from the stories told from Black women. Signing up for Facing Racism

gave white program participants the first step to be pushed and moved to dismantle white

privilege and white supremacy with the Black women who shared their personal experiences and

the systemic injuries against the Black diaspora. The FR experience introduced antithetical

stories of oppression that shook white people to the core, moving them to listen, learn, and make

plans to impact systemic change. This can be seen in the following quotes:

> I had never understood racism was in my field because, in music, we often think that
> music is a universal language; you know, we are kind of emotional when we are seeing.
> We feel connected with people I travel the world over and sing with other people, so I
> have never understood the racism within my field. (Charlie)

> I was afraid. I was the one doing the talking, facilitating, and teaching. I was not aware of
> white Supremacy Culture (Okun, 1999). The tenets of white supremacy culture made me
> realize my privilege, which I was unaware of. (Randy)

There are times when one is embedded so deeply in a belief or experience that it is

impossible to see beyond their experience. Therefore, life-transforming dialogue must dismantle

white power/supremacy and oppression (hooks, 2003) to bring awareness to anti-Black racism.

Cam realized there was more work to bring awareness to white supremacy culture and decided to

experience Facing Racism to go beyond other approaches steeped in whiteness.

> You have to know that you are sick and seek help, or you have to deal with your stuff
> internally which thus far has not worked for white people. (Cam)

Bringing awareness to how much white privilege is killing Black people while white people benefit requires a willingness to give up one's privilege so that Black people may live and not die at the hands of systemic ills like racism.

> Before Facing Racism, I did not have an inkling of understanding how inextricably bound was my liberation and Black liberation (Jewelz).

In summary, this study revealed the preconceived notions of individualism, white privilege, intellectual processing, and implicit bias of the research participants and the importance of naming these assumptions prior to the work required to end white supremacy and anti-Black racism.

Emergent Themes

Using IPA's idiographic commitment (Smith et al., 2009), themes across each research participant emerged from general, open-ended questions which enabled me to delve into each participant's experience. Table 4.2 depicts the grouping of themes in three sections: *Program Attributes*, which includes the characteristic of the FR pedagogy; *Program Content* which refers to the subjects or units presented in the FR curriculum; and *Program Nuance*, which captures the feelings that emerged for participants during the FR experience.

The highlighted themes were the result of common responses to the research questions. In IPA themes are experiences that are commonly revealed during the interview process. For this study, an emerged theme was a commonality among five or more research participants as noted in Table 4.2. The responses to the research questions are research participants' attempt to share and make meaning of their experience (Smith et al., 2009). Table 4.2 shows the Themes which arose from my analysis. I then go on to describe each in more detail.

Table 4.2

Emergent Themes

Themes and subthemes	Occurrence
Program Attributes	
Black women	7 of 8
Taught by	
Listening to	
Led by	
Storytelling	8 of 8
Program Content	
White Supremacy Culture	7 of 8
Article	
Privilege	
Reparations	5 of 8
Anti-racism/Racism	6 of 8
Program Nuances	
Hurt/Harm	5 of 8
Shame/Guilt	6 of 8
Love	8 of 8

Program Attributes

Black Women's Leadership

The research data show that seven out of eight research participants had not experienced teaching or leading acumen from Black women prior to attending the program.

For instance, Randy stated that, 'This is the first time in my life that I have learned from Black women.'

> I have never had a Black woman teacher, I have had Black women friends, I have had Black women, colleagues, I have never had a teacher in a setting that was a Black woman, I have had Black men teachers, but not a Black woman and I did not. (Charlie)

The nation has seemed to have forgotten Black women's leadership to the nation's peril (Crenshaw, 2019). Listening to the experiences of the research participants was disheartening concerning the stories they told of the invisibility of Black women in leadership and teaching positions. Within FR, an integral part of Black women's leadership is that it challenges the status quo of leaders being white. By centering Black women and Black experiences, white people are invited to sit with the discomfort of hearing the heinous stories of the oppression of Black people, particularly Black women, and embark on a healing journey together.

Matt was humbled by the love of two Black women facilitators leading a discussion about race and 'loving us [white people] enough to teach the ways of being needed to dismantle racism'.

As noted in the literature review, the dehumanization of the American Black diaspora continues to oppress Black people and erase Black people from history due to the heinous acts against Black people. Facing Racism is intentionally led by a Womanist to change the narrative of dominant white thought and intending to create a courageous space for white people to dismantle the racist systems they created. In addition, the study revealed that Facing Racism pedagogy intentionally created a space for Black women to lead, no longer deeming Black women invisible as discussed in Chapter II, resulting in an indelible impact Black women had on the white participants.

Although Matt expressed varied emotions prior to and during FR, I was surprised that

Matt expected to feel a sense of panic by experiencing FR, but instead was eager to learn. I will

address this comment in more detail in Chapter V.

> I felt many things [like] overwhelming gratitude, realizing how much love it takes for two beautiful Black women to come into a group of people who are, you know, sometimes unwitting oppressors with hundreds of years of legacy of that and choosing to love us. I just thought your pedagogy was the way I was drawn in. Through your guidance, I did not experience panic. Instead, I was eager to learn what I thought I already knew. You gave us such a powerful experience. (Matt)

> So, throughout this class, I realized the spiritual depth of at least the Black women leading this the Facing Racism that I did. I had never experienced that before.
> Furthermore, with the women leading that way and with such a spiritual depth, it just moved a piece of me that had never been before because it was not in my head anymore. It was not intellectual. (Charlie)

It was painful to hear stories of the invisibility of Black women in leadership and teaching

positions for people generally in my generation. However, given the nature of white supremacy

and privilege, it is a fact that most white folks are rarely, if ever, in a position where they must

listen to Black women lecture them (hooks, 2003).

The integral part of Womanist work is challenging the status quo of whiteness, dominant

white thought, and white privilege that demeans, oppresses, and marginalizes Black women

while centering Black women deeming Black women no longer invisible. The value of this is

evident in comments such as:

> I need to believe in our world where white men of privilege see value in hearing the voices of Black women, and I either need you to feel that intrinsically or if you do not, I am just asking, please go. (Jewelz)

Storytelling

In this study, a theme of storytelling emerged as a key attribute of the program according

to the participants. As mentioned in the literature review, storytelling is not a haphazard

exchange of information and life stories. The Womanist facilitators exemplified the power of storytelling to challenge the dominant narrative of white privilege and white supremacy culture. Storytelling is one of the critical attributes of FR. According to the study, the research participants experienced the storytelling of the facilitators as a means to experience Black women's stories and the stories of Black people. In addition, mimicking storytelling by the research participants seemed to be a way to explore and explain their experience in a way that is contrary to the dominant narrative. Storytelling's importance and power are explained by Hammond (2013) in this quote:

> Activating the RAS (Reticular Activating System of the brain) is critical in a culture structured around an oral tradition where you transmit information from one person to another. Unfortunately, it is located in our older, emotional brain and does not respond well to words or verbal commands. That is why one cannot simply tell a student to pay attention. Instead, you have to entice the brain with something that makes it curious or emotional (in a positive way). (Hammond, 2013, para. 9-10)

Attracting an epistemological curiosity (Freire, 2009) is why call and response (storytelling) may be lively and energetic. It activates our RAS and helps us generate mental energy and focus (Hammond, 2013). All eight research participants told stories of community, spiritual prowess, and liberation from dominant stories that historically oppress, marginalize, and dehumanize persons of color, particularly Black people. From creation stories to road trips to tapestry's imagination, sharing stories was part of the research participants' experience.

As the researcher, I have learned the process of storytelling and story-linking for liberation, one of the main pillars in FR. Inspired by Anne E. Streaty Wimberly (1994/2005), "[S]tory is a powerful part of human existence" (Streaty, 1994/2005, p,3). Stories may engage the listener with a familiar story, with one's faith story, stories of the Black experience, to form ethical decision making (Streaty, 1994/2005). The following are examples of how participants shared experiences through the art of storytelling.

Cam chose to tell the story of G-d's breath and how it brings meaning to the work of antiracism.

> The facilitators would cause us to pause and ground ourselves in the breath. In the faith tradition of Christianity, I was brought up that God breathed life into us that Ruach, breath, is this holy creative power. Furthermore, that breath is in between that from creation we came forth. Moreover, how do we ensure that we do not return to dust before living out that divine breath? So, for me, that has been the meaning. [If] I do not do anti-racism work; I am genuinely [and] literally taking the divine breath out of others. (Cam)

Sam previously expressed 'they are non-linear', in that their responses tend to be abstract stories to engage the listener in envisioning and imagination of Black and white doing work to end anti-Black racism together.

> I just keep visualizing the threading of a tapestry and a blanket of the tapestry. I think about lines of people in braiding hair. I think about these rhythmic repetitions of being in a constant tapestry of moving from the heart's mind to the body with the Facing Racism stories. The way spaces held the way specific like Black orient like a Black centered story—lived experiences [of] systemic patterns [of] history, current, [and] past. (Sam)

Storytelling has deep roots in African culture through oral history. Storytelling promotes thinking and not just from an intellectual standpoint; it should move the listener to listen with a curiosity that involves mind and body (Hammond, 2013). The transformational prowess of storytelling is similar to painting a picture through experiences exemplified above. This study found that storytelling which centered Black lives and Black experiences for the liberation of the oppressed and the oppressor (Freire, 2009), was impactful throughout the Facing Racism experience. The research participants told stories of complicity to stories contrary to the dominant narrative of whiteness. The stories served as awakening through the research participants' courage to tell their stories of whiteness and the changes made to center those harmed by anti-Black racism. For example, Gia shared:

> When preparing for the road trip, I recognized I needed to work with a Black farmer. At the time, I was working with many farmers, and I was already very concerned about the

marginalization involved with farming. I need to meet farmers, and I would like to meet Black farmers. If I can, particularly generational farmers, I want to hear their stories. Furthermore, very quickly, if the Black farmer became an object to me and that was a huge wake-up, it did not take long for me to recognize what was happening because it did not feel right. I was like, and this is not the point of what I am doing, you know, like white "saviorism." That is shitty. That is a shitty feeling. (Gia)

The research participants shared stories of mistakes and mishaps in their educational institutions (Windom), musical choices that lacked diversity and activism (Charlie), doing equity work rooted in dominant white thought (Randy), and how FR helped them to see through a new lens. As each research participant shared their experiences, it was moving and refreshing to hear counter-narrative stories toward liberation as mentioned in the literature review and as an attribute of FR. The research participants' storytelling exemplified the impact of storytelling during FR to the point of incorporating storytelling during the sharing of their experiences without being prompted to do so.

FR program attributes, (i.e., having Black women leaders and incorporating storytelling as a key learning opportunity) set the intentions for the group. The research study revealed the manifestation of some of the experienced attributes during FR. The expressions of each participant's experience differed in context but coalesced into themes within the framework of FR. Program attributes were vital parts of the FR pedagogy. Each element pointed toward the experience of Black lives told by Black women for white people to experience. Dominant white culture often omits those of the non-white race. FR program attributes are antithetical to elitist behavior but present a shift to liberate those from oppressive behavior by inserting humanitarian acts into an inhumane nation.

Program Content

Program content emerged through shared experiences of research participants during discussions around white supremacy. Participants reported three topics introduced in the program

as particularly critical to their experience: the notion of white supremacy as described in Okun's

(1999) article, ideas around reparations, and information about anti-racism/racism. Each is

described in more detail below.

White Supremacy Culture

In her article *White Supremacy Culture*, Tema Okun (Okun, 1999), named white

supremacy as a culture and listed its attributes. The attributes include: perfectionism; sense of

urgency; defensiveness; quantity over quality; worship of the written word; paternalism; either/or

thinking; power hoarding; fear of open conflict; individualism; progress is bigger, more;

objectivity; and right to comfort (Okun, 1999). According to the research participants, the *White*

Supremacy Culture (Okun, 1999) article was one of the most powerful experiences provided in

Facing Racism. Some of the research participants were familiar with the article, while others saw

it for the first time as participants in FR. It sparked a level of curiosity. Cam stated, "The impact

was a huge piece and probably the most significant experience that started to untether self—this

realization of white supremacy." Windom did not realize that these elements, like perfectionism,

defensiveness, sense of urgency, only one right way, or power of the written word, power

warning [were a part of white supremacy culture.]

White supremacy and white supremacy culture were used interchangeably during the

research participant interviews. Unprompted, seven of the eight participants shared the impact of

being introduced or reintroduced to the article and how difficult it was to hear it again, but for

the first time by Black women. (Charlie) The research participants had to realize their conviction

of the necessity for the struggle. This conviction can only be reached by their involvement in

white supremacy culture, criticizing it, and having a desire to change it (Freire, 2009).

> Thus, I came in wanting to know what white culture was because I had no damn idea. I knew that it would have to be a deep dive into self, and I am so glad that that is the direction Facing Racism went. (Gia)

> I have experienced the *White Supremacy Culture* article in other things that I have done, and it is tough to read through that as a white person, knowing that is a culture that I embody and continue to hold up as valuable. Then to experience *White Supremacy Culture* in Facing Racism, where I had Black women telling me I have experienced this. The experience became personal for me. So, I couldn't just I could not analyze it anymore. (Charlie)

Participants reported that realizing the elements of white supremacy culture is a step. Naming and calling out the oppression and marginalization is the action that is needed to dismantle white supremacy culture. However, dismantling the culture requires awareness and a deep dive, and an understanding of white thought. The importance of this is evident in Jewelz's comment: I have been doing the wrong work. My work has essentially let us ensure that Black folk had access to white supremacy culture and equity. I was wrong.

W.E.B. Du Bois (1994) talks about "double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's (Black) 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" (p. 2). The liberating work begins when the oppressed does the liberating work for all to be liberated from being the oppressed and the oppressor. When the oppressor leads from their lens of individualism, power, and privilege, the work Jewelz refers to becomes a form of further oppression.

On the other hand, Charlie began to feel defensive as they represented a white culture that they inherited and is reaping benefits. Nevertheless, they stated, this is the truth, and it is a culture that we have all been a part of for a long time. Gia shared that, "white supremacy was introduced on day one during the FR experience like 'bam,' and we are about to do this. It was brilliant because the facilitators shared that this is what it is, and we will heal next week."

Other research participants shared their 'ah ha' moment regarding white supremacy and mentioned their transformation, such as Sam who shared, "Facing Racism made the connection for me of [the importance of] dismantling white supremacy."

> So, through facing racism, we had a cornerstone as a family around what was to be anti-racist before that; we just knew we wanted to dismantle white supremacy and not be racist but not being racist is different from being anti-racist. (Cam)

In these ways, research participants shared their understanding of the importance of dismantling white supremacy and being anti-racist. According to Kendi (2019), an anti-racist is "[o]ne who is expressing the idea that racial groups are equals and none needs developing and is supporting policy that reduces racial inequity" (p. 24). To take this quote further, I seek stories and actions related to equity versus equality as a researcher. For equality leaves little room for forgiveness, compassion, and recompense for past injustices. Equity may create space to acknowledge injustices; hence, reparations are a way toward forgiveness and compensation for financial and racial inequities.

Reparations

Reparations are a crucial pillar in the FR experience because they identify the ills against Black people and attempt to restore humanity in inhumane and unjust systems of inequality, oppression, and marginalization. Facing Racism expounds upon the undertaking of reparations as a way to go a step further, reach the masses through individual acts, and invite white people to participate in the healing process. FR defines reparations from the micro-level during the experience of FR and uses the macro definition as a foundation as we move from macro to micro. [F]or all Black people in the United States of America to evidence genuine acknowledgment, apology, and compensation for the horrors of enslaving Black people for

centuries and the subsequent anti-Black violence and wealth chasm. Reparations must be a

reality right NOW. Facing Racism bases its understanding of reparations on the works of Berry

(2005), Forde-Mazrui (2004), and Coates (2014). From his Article in the Atlantic, Coates writes:

> Reparations—by which I mean the full acceptance of our collective biography and its consequences—is the price [America] must pay to see [Black people] squarely… I am talking about more than recompense for past injustices—more than a handout, a payoff, hush money, or a reluctant bribe. What I am talking about is a national reckoning that would lead to spiritual renewal. Reparations would mean the end of scarfing hot dogs on the Fourth of July while denying the facts of our heritage. Reparations would mean the end of yelling "patriotism" while waving a Confederate flag. Instead, reparations would mean a revolution of the American consciousness, reconciling our self-image as the great democratizer with the facts of our history. (Coates, *When we think of white supremacy, we picture Colored Only signs, but we should picture pirate flags,* 2014, para. 8-9)

The study revealed an understanding, impact, and action for reparations to occur individually for

the collective. For instance, five of the eight research participants mentioned reparations and

their having developed a new understanding of reparations. Waiting for reparation to occur on a

widespread, national level is a goal that starts individually as a part of the collective. The white

participants realized they could participate in reparations by creating new ways to participate at

their point of ability and sacrifice. This understanding was exemplified in quotes such as;

> (I am) starting to think about partial personal reparations. It had never crossed my mind until facing racism—an entirely new concept for me and a significant one in terms of not having hundreds of thousands of dollars to give. So, we started doing things like putting money away for our own two kids for their future education. We also started putting the same amount away for the United Negro College Fund and American Indian College Fund. If we are going to save for our babies to get the education, we at least say let us save for somebody else's babies. (Jewelz)

> We need to have a fund for reparations in our college for our Black students and Black faculty. I have always understood reparations intellectually. However, what happened to me and Facing Racism is that reparations trickled down from being a cerebrally understood intellectually agreed to the idea of operationalizing reparations locally. The kind of emotional price tag there, reparations is a spiritual imperative for every white person. That is why reparations and the invitation to reparations are courageous [and] essential. (Windom)

For most research participants, there was an "ah-ha" moment of enlightenment regarding reparations for Black people. Historically, Black people in America have not received collective reparations. Reparations have three objectives: acknowledgment of a heinous injustice, restoration of justice, and closure for the historically oppressed and marginalized (Darity, 2008). FR offered a tiered-down lens for reparations so that they did not appear so lofty. The point was made that reparations happen personally, professionally, spiritually, publicly, and privately.

Anti-Racist/Racism

One of the surprising findings in this study was the minimal naming anti-Black racism by the research participants. Six of the eight participants explicitly expounded upon racism and becoming anti-racist. However only two of the six explicitly named anti-Black racism while reflecting on actions to address this societal ill. Participants' increased understanding of anti-racism/racism was expressed in comments such as "The actions of raising anti-racist children are strong." (Charlie) Matt emphatically stated, "With racism, the problem is a white problem."

As mentioned in the literature review, Kendi (2019) suggests racism is what we do, not who we are, and relates to supporting policies that disavow one group over another. To address and obliterate the elitist thought of white privilege, power, and supremacy, one must realize our humanity and how the African principle of Ubuntu creates a connection between the oppressed and the oppressor that leads to forgiveness and communal prowess. The honorable Desmond Tutu defines Ubuntu as "My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours" (Tutu, 2000, p. 30). Participants expressed their understanding of this concept with quotes like Jewelz, "Hearing lived experience as a part of that process of facing racism was powerful, but until Facing Racism, I did not even have an inkling of understanding how my liberation was tied up in black liberation."

As the researcher charged with analyzing the data and meaning-making, this was one of the most powerful statements during the interview process. Jewelz is referring to Ubuntu: I am because you are. Windom elaborates on his new understanding of racism by suggesting:

> The connection between how you feel about racism, what you know about racism, and what we will do about racism is the part that I love because I think so many classes just are like, what do you know about racism. Real intentional education and anti-Black racism is the beginning, and it changed me. [W]hat I understood after that training was that it is everywhere. It is in everything. You know, I think as a white person, when you first understand the impact of institutionalized racism, that it is in every system, in our country, everything. Furthermore, just thinking about the PowerPoint slides I had, how many pictures I chose were white people? (Windom)

When discussing anti-Black racism and misogynoir, the findings revealed participants' hesitance with exploring these topics. However, the findings also revealed the move from head (intellect) to heart and soul to make meaning of the importance of addressing and ending anti-Black racism. The research participants reported that with family, work, or in the community, there is an opportunity to change the narrative of whiteness. It is important to note that program content and the presentation of the content caused discomfort, a finding which will be discussed in the next section. Nevertheless, the content offered a space of raised consciousness, racialized awareness, and healing, all in the efforts of reconciliation, repentance, and inextricably bound beings.

Program Nuances

Hurt/Harm

Five of eight research participants shared their experiences of hurt and harm, conscious and subconscious, that appeared in different ways when doing racial justice work. This study revealed the importance of acknowledging the hurt and harm in order to begin the healing

process. In addition, the participants discussed ways of being and resources to name racism and

their journey with their loved ones toward healing.

As discussed in the literature review, Lloyd and Prevot (2017) state anti-Blackness causes

harm to Black people and also results in harmful interpersonal and structural outcomes. The hurt

and harm of realizing a racist past manifesting in our current posture may be hurtful or harmful

to the historically marginalized and to the dominant culture of whiteness causing the harm.

According to this study, there is individual hurt that white people feel when

acknowledging their heinous past and current actions rooted in anti-Black racism. For instance,

according to this research participant, it is difficult to acknowledge such a heinous past caused by

racism by white people in America. Four of the eight research participants explicitly mentioned

hurt and harm, each shared feelings of hurt and harm in varying ways:

You have to look at this mirror of institutionalized racism, and it hurts. (Windom)

There is a hurt imposed upon those historically oppressed and marginalized through ignorance,

avoidance, judgment, and fear. Gia stated, "[C]ontinue to try and learn and fall forward and

know that some of what I say might be hurtful and might be out of ignorance." According to the

research study, white research participants who walked into the Facing Racism acknowledged a

collective hurt and harm and wanted to learn how to reconcile it through risk-taking and stepping

out of a comfort zone of dominant white thought.

> A journey of edges and courage and pain and suffering and celebration and liberation so
> for Black women to be constantly nurturing people to not only share their stories but for
> white folks and those who are learning to be nurtured to take risks to speak [and] to feel.
> (Sam)

There is hurt and harm toward Black people in particular contexts. For instance,

Cam realized the harm white people were causing to Black people in the church. Cam wanted to

do some healing and reconciliation work through FR, but realized the congregation was not

ready and may cause harm to the Black facilitators.

> Thus, I think action felt different from before because of the brownie points, and I got to wear my anti-racism pin. Furthermore, now it is like damn, what else are we doing to contribute without realizing we were causing harm. Moreover, I had wanted to have the two of you come to the church. I knew the church was not ready. I was not about to bring and invite you into a space that could be harmful. [T]his was a chance for us to lean in. (Cam)

Finally, there is hurt and harm in the family. Jewelz is doing the work of racial reconciliation while their dad is a racist. Jewelz has used the resources to journey with their dad toward dismantling dominant white thought and racism. Although this may be pretty hurtful to Jewelz, they continue to do the work of healing within their family.

> Healing the hurt caused by racism is sitting in the discomfort versus cutting off those I love due to their ignorance and racist ways. FR offers language to sit in the discomfort while other racial justice organizations encourage families to split when ideologies differ. (Jewelz)

Shame/Guilt

According to the participants, Facing Racism creates a brave space to dismantle the shame associated with white supremacy. Five of the eight research participants specifically addressed shame and guilt in statements such as:

> I think that I will use this word in a good way, shame. So often, when we use the word shame, it is like feelings of shame or unworthiness, but this is the shame of redemptive shame because it was mixed with lament. (Matt)

Redemptive shame is the grace that frees white people to courageously name the ills of racism and oppression to dismantle white supremacy/privilege. Sam shared, "To be nurtured by facilitators to breathe and seek our humanity are the tendrils of our hearts that carry shame, anger, and fear."

"Referring to the defensive moves that white people make when challenged racially, white fragility is emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and by behaviors including argumentation and silence" (DiAngelo, 2018, p. ix). Nurturing white research participants to seek humanity beyond shame and guilt created a brave space of healing and dispelling the heinous act that caused the shame and guilt, as evidenced in the following quotes:

> Even though there were uncomfortable times and I felt shame for something I had done or something I had said, this is a culture we [white people] all inherited and was given to us, and it is more about us dismantling that way of thinking and going forward. (Charlie)

> It was a gift to be in space with my BIPOC folks who were willing to share, knowing that they had no reason to trust reason that, even in their healing which was, I think the gift of the structure of facing racism is that liberation happens for all who are present. (Cam)

Stories and experiences often go untold due to shame and guilt. The dehumanization of the Black diaspora continues to cause guilt and shame for some white people. Participants in this study showed the ways in which FR involves undertaking the uncomfortable work that addresses shame and guilt. It creates a space for one to be still and feel the discomfort and begin to heal in community.

Love

What makes FR different from other racial justice organizations is the intergroup dialogue led by Black women and the love-based revolutionary approach to addressing and obliterating anti-Black racism with primarily white people. FR pedagogical didactic is rooted in love. The intentional development of the love-based revolution to address and end anti-Black racism is most impactful in community, a diverse community of the historically oppressed and the oppressor. Evidence of this view is supported by participants saying things like Matt who stated "I just have to say I do not have many experiences in life of being loved so well." Gia

stated, "I love that it is just like this rhythm. There is a rhythm coming out of you. It is just like, oh my God, like a tempo that I start to feel it."

> There is a fierceness about FR, but it is not without fierce love-based revolution like the part that it is fierce, but it is also rooted in love and three things like authenticity and accountability and love; altogether, I think it just opens you up. (Jewelz)

Opening up to a rhythm that connects FR participants in a love-based revolution of change involves brainwork that moves one from brain work to heart and gut/soul work. The mirror neurons engage FR participants in a "socio-learning context" (Hammond, 2013). The FR participants show evidence of creating new memories and new ways of being through stories and experiences that enable them to shift the narrative of anti-Black racism to racial justice and liberation for all. Hammond explains that the need to feel connected is part of our heritage as human beings:

> We are social creatures who are hardwired for connecting. That is why there is wisdom in call and response as a communal learning activity. However, there is science behind it as well. The human brain contains a special class of cells, called mirror neurons, that fire when a person sees or hears a relevant or emotionally charged action carried out by others; mirror neurons seem to be an extension of socio-cultural learning theory that says people learn most effectively in a social context. (Hammond, 2013, para. 16-17)

Participants voiced their understanding of this by saying things like Charlie, "I think that [Facing Racism] set us at this ease of why we are all here on earth, to begin with, and set this equity plate that [depicts] we are all humans loved by God." Windom went on to say "[I] love that there were black and white participants, although we were mostly white, but the way that [the facilitators] held the container [in] respect and love."

hooks (2005) states there are recipes of healing, and in these recipes, we must be linked in a collective struggle to grow together in healing and wholeness. Data from the interviews

indicate that participants experienced FR as creating a space to acknowledge and move through these feelings with a connectional approach toward healing and liberation. We, facilitators and attendees of FR, moved through this collective healing process that the co-founders and facilitators call a love-based revolution.

In summary, the emergent themes were extrapolated from the responses of the research participants that resulted in macro themes: program attributes, program content, and program nuances as well as subthemes or micro themes that emerged under the macro themes. These themes included: Black women, storytelling, white supremacy culture, reparations, hurt/pain, shame/guilt, and love.

Research Questions Answered

Each research participant was asked the same questions in the same order to invoke congruency between the interviews. The themes pulled from the research questions mentioned above were from the research questions. The following answers to the research questions note the responses that did not fall into a particular theme. For IPA, these individual comments and reflections are crucial to the process of interpretation.

What Was the Experience of the white Participants During Facing Racism?

Overall, the participants of this study experienced FR as not an easy journey but a necessary one. Additionally, the experience was holistic: it involved mind, body, and soul/gut. Instead of the linear checklist of steps and tools, the experience conveyed and promoted critical ways of being. Participants said the experience was transformational. It raised awareness and consciousness to Black experiences; the experience was complete with Black joy to promote further and share the Black joy realized in the humanistic task of seeing another and acknowledging the dynamics of their lived experience.

Sam shared their experience of facing racism in such a powerful, cathartic, truth-telling manner:

> Opening and deepening sessions were centered on healing, hard stuff, but a lot of healing and white people were constantly invited into this space to go out and do the healing work because it is not up to Black people to do the healing work for white people. The absolute destructiveness of our lineage of what our skin in this time represents, and so we center this loving partnership with Black women in creative collaboration, and that was really important to me. (Sam)

FR was not an easy journey. Matt began sharing their experience by stating "This did not feel right at first. This is so embarrassing. I am so ashamed of myself. I was ashamed, and it made me want to hide, yet I wanted to go further in." (Matt) Yet, participants agreed that FR was a much-needed experience. For instance, taking part in the program (FR) was beyond emotional for Charlie and hit on a spiritual level. At one point, Charlie stated they were not sure if they could handle FR on a given night. Jewelz said that although FR resonated with them, they also wrestled with some portions because of their white fragility and not being fully ready to be vulnerable. These points were echoed by Gia, I almost backed out because I was trying to control the situation and Matt, "FR prepared me for an ongoing discernment both personally and collectively." Despite the hesitancy to attend and complete the FR experience, all eight research participants were drawn into the discomfort only to be empowered to sit in the truth of the discomfort and accept the FR pedagogy of love and life-long racial justice work.

> The vigilance that I felt to want it and I am sure so much this was because of how you guided us in the vigilance to learn, read, know, and converse. It did not set off a "quick I gotta do something like changing something quick." That was the context you gave us to start with a change of heart, mind, and getting those synced up and in prayer and conversation of and discernment. As my thoughts and attitudes change, then will that affect my behavior and what I do? However, I just thought your pedagogy was the way that I was drawn in. (Matt)

FR was a wholistic experience: FR curriculum used mind, body, and soul/spirit/gut to meet participants where they were to journey with them to provide the ways needed to dismantle white supremacy. This was reflected in statements such as: 'Until I am looking at racism, I am not free, and I am not whole.' (Windom) Furthermore, 'FR was not just a class; it was an experience we went through.' (Cam) Throughout the FR experience, Matt reported that they had their eyes opened, not only through their personal experience but through the readings and the facilitators sharing their experiences as Black women. Although challenging, Randy stated that FR cracked their heart open and created a space to empathize and feel. This was the first time Gia could visualize sitting in the middle of the tension – the tension of actually facing racism. In the midst of the tension and challenges, Jewelz stated this dual presence of compassion and accountability. They went on to say, 'Then all of that kind of woven into a sacred space that I just fell in love with like this is where I need to be, and I have to sit with.' Cam shared, 'leaning into whatever the spirit was calling me to preach. So it was through FR, I realized white supremacy was so built-in and not disrupting waters that it impacted my pastoral identity'.

Several of the participants mentioned *FR ways of being* as a vital part of the FR experience. As previously mentioned, ways of being are not tools or a checklist to complete. Ways of being are ways one may show up in the world that acknowledges, honors, and dignifies another. Randy shared that the ways of being (presented in FR) were so powerful, and they gained a lot, such as "epistemological curiosity" (Freire, 2009), dignity, language, and to be less complicit, particularly in white systems. Randy also mentioned that FR opened their eyes to see the world differently; the opportunity to empathize, feel, and actively listen deeply. Sam stated 'white folks were learning to be nurtured and take risks - to speak and feel' and Windom reflected on how they had learned the importance of the ability to listen deeply. A way of being

for Jewelz started on a personal level by helping them to begin to dismantle their own experience of white supremacy. Part of dismantling white supremacy is imagining Black liberation in the future as a way of being. Cam stated imagining Black liberation and realizing, 'we were invited to think about what it smells like, tastes like, feels like, that our senses once again can bring us further into liberation'.

FR was a transformational experience. A few of the research participants described the FR experience as transformational. For example, Matt stated 'it was a transformative love, and this is what FR is about.' Matt went on to say it was 'just a powerful, life-changing experience.' According to Charlie's experience, the FR experience was more transformational than any other experience they have been through because of the spiritual nature and coming to a place of healing:

> The transformation happened. I knew this instant connection was inspired by something greater than all of us by G-d and the recognition of the land, the recognition of the [indigenous and Black] people, and the recognition of the people in this space helped us hear from the soul, which was transforming for me. (Charlie)

Sam stated, "FR was a transformative sacred space through the practice and ritual through the pauses, honoring, and breathing; [FR] was very deeply personal."

FR was sacred. One of Windom's spiritual experiences was through their enhanced understanding of reparations. Windom shared, "Reparations were a spiritual imperative for every white person." As Sam stated, through opening rituals, breathwork, and honoring one another, FR held the space as sacred, whether in person or virtual, due to COVID. Cam stated FR was more than brain work; it was soul ninja work. Cam shared that FR grounded them in breath because Ruach [G-d's breath] is the Holy creative power, which is what was needed in this experience.

Sam mentioned an example of a sacred moment within FR as the story of Alice. I will expound on the story behind his mentioning Alice. During FR, the facilitators take a moment to honor Alice. The family of a FR participant enslaved Alice. The FR participant was doing some research on their family. Family stories told them they never owned slaves. During the research, they came across writings and a recording by her 91-year-old grandmother. Through her grandmother's voice, they heard stories of slavery. Alice was mentioned throughout the recording as enslaved and did what was necessary to care for the family to survive. Alice stayed with the family even after Emancipation. We do not know if Alice had any known family members or children. We know her as Alice, the slave girl.

As the FR participant told their story during a private lunch meeting with the facilitators, tears were streaming down as they recalled their family as slave owners. During this emotional moment, the FR participant shared an inheritance they most recently received. They decided they should do something for the Black community in the form of reparations and in the name of Alice and the Chickasaw Nation, who were displaced. They did not want the money. They felt it was blood money from the hands of the slave [girl]. They donated the money to Soul 2 Soul Sisters and FR in the form of partial reparation, reminding themselves that this is just a start and there is so much more to do. This gesture encouraged the FR leadership to incorporate the story of Alice into one of the FR sessions.

The co-founder and facilitators created a sacred moment for all to participate during the FR sessions in honor of Alice. A table with a white cloth, candles, sage, palo santo, and water became our altar in the center of the room. The participants placed their feet on the floor, closed their eyes, and were fully present in this sacred moment. As the facilitator lit the sage and palo santo, she walked around the room naming enslaved Black people, abolitionists, civil rights leaders, scholars, revolutionaries, and family members who have paved the way for us to do the work we do. They honored the ground we were on as stolen land from First Nation Indigenous Tribes and honored their blood that still cries from the ground due to lack of justice, reparations, or an apology. They named those who were victims of state-sanctioned murders and those killed because of the color of their Black skin. Deep sighs, moans, tears, and other emotions filled the room. Some emotions were from those who practice smudging, cleansing and honoring our ancestors. Others were in awe, for this was the first time they had ever experienced something so spiritually powerful.

After the ritual ended, the facilitator checked in with folks asking, "how are you feeling?" Some were overcome with emotions, others had questions, while others were speechless. Then, we did some breathwork and broke out into smaller groups to reflect on the experience of centering the heinous acts of slavery against Black and Indigenous

people in this nation and offered an opportunity to heal at the moment in community by honoring our beloved ancestor, Alice. (T. Davis & D. Duval, personal communication, September 18, 2018)

Although Sam was the only research participant to explicitly mention Alice, as a facilitator who has witnessed the power in ritual during the storytelling of Alice, I judged that it was important to note as one of the profound experiences of the research participant. The FR participant who told her family story of Alice exemplified another example of reparations as well.

FR was Black joy. Windom shared that they learned of Black joy; it was like Black people are going over there and creating Black joy in the midst of years of racial injustice. Windom went on to say it was the Black joy in FR that irrigated their heart, body, and imagination. Windom shared that Black joy was like standing, peering over the fence, saying that Black joy is for Black people, they deserve it, and I need to keep my white self on this side and figure out how to keep the Black joy alive and well. Sam shared his experience of watching the Black women facilitators coming into this space [FR] with authentic stories of heart, rage, sadness, and joy. Cam stated, "[FR] was constantly Black joy."

In summary of the FR experience of the research participants, FR was a dynamic, sacred space for liberation for all. Randy appreciated the space to reflect. Windom loved that there were Black and white participants; it was intergenerational and created a space for respect and love. Sam stated FR was like a neighborhood or ecosystem so, there was so much more than just thinking; we had to feel our way through FR. Finally, Jewelz shared that FR is where [white people] needed to be to do this work and do it authentically.

What Impact Did Facing Racism Have on Participants' Actions Toward Ending Anti-Black

Racism?

The FR white research participants were asked about the impact and actions related to

their experience with FR. The study showed their responses fell into two categories: either

actions or outcomes. Actions are the things people did as a result of FR. Outcomes are how

things may have changed for participants because of FR, such as feelings, thoughts, reflections,

awareness, and learned behavior.

FR Outcomes. FR white participant outcomes varied; the outcomes included a change in

the participants' minds, thoughts, emotions, bodies, and souls. The study showed that these

varying individual outcomes exemplify the impact on the FR research participants. Some

examples include:

> I now have language, skill, and will to address [racial situations]. I am no longer afraid to
> speak up and out. I could comment better, mainly when talking with my children. I can
> have conversations around white supremacy and how to be anti-racist. The most
> significant impact is learning for self and teaching my children, especially since they are
> young and starting their journey in life. I was grateful to have this kind of knowledge and
> be able to influence systems. (Randy)

> The impact is the reality of showing up week after week to be guided to connect
> to self as we are learning and relearning, learning and relearning history and current
> systems and the very harshness of our times, the horror of our times in just everyday
> news as more people get their cameras out, so now people are becoming more aware.
> (Sam)

Jewelz shared that one of the most significant outcomes was holding themselves accountable in

ending anti-Black racism even though they have years of learning to unlearn. One of Cam's

outcomes was realizing that privilege is such a shitty word – they prefer to use oppressive power

that is probably more accurate. Cam also added that the development stages handout was

powerfully impactful and a take-a-way used to inform their further actions. Gia stated they can

now hear the structures (of racism), which helped them deeply understand the outcome of their

road trip and the false adage of white saviorism. The concept of Ubuntu, I am because you are,

deeply impacted Gia. Gia stated it is the simplicity where the connection is. An outcome for

Windom was the humbling experience of FR. Windom went on to say everything changed,

including their eyes and heart. FR reminded Windom of the beautiful opportunity to put

language to liberation and feel confident in doing so. For Matt, their outcome was that they

thought they knew about racial justice and anti-racism until they realized they had a lot to learn

through FR. *Outcomes* are the "ah-ha" moments that transform thoughts and feelings, inciting

courageous actions for the greater good of addressing and dismantling anti-Black racism and

white power/privilege.

    FR Participant Actions. FR white participant actions were built into the curriculum by

encouraging the FR participants to complete an individual and communal plan of action once

they completed FR. From supporting Black business to having conversations with a racist parent,

actions varied between the participants. During the interview, Charlie stated they are still a work

in progress. Charlie also shared that if it were not for FR, they could have lived in their white

privilege, put this [racial justice] work aside and convince themselves that this does not impact

their life. Charlie is now focused on ensuring the fight against anti-Black racism is in their choral

sphere of influence, and their actions of raising anti-racist children are strong. Sam's actions

were rooted in nature walks and organically recruiting more people to take action to end anti-

Black racism. The research participants shared actions from the simple to more complex. The

following quotes are examples of what could be perceived as a simple action, followed by a

more complex example of how participants were taking action to end anti-Black racism:

        My actions included supporting Black-owned businesses speaking up and out against
        capitalist and racist systems. As a white person, this is incumbent on us to get our shit

together. The alumni group was helpful with implementing actions and are an essential piece because I am not alone. Because of these actions, my children are able to see their privilege and the inequity in systems. (Randy)

With a heart, love, space, rage, and courage, this is unquestionable ending anti-Blackness work. I accepted the invitation to be a white person to go out and do this work because it is not up to Black people to do this for white people. Centering Black people and Black experiences is the call to end anti-Black racism. There must be the absolute destructiveness of [white] lineage of what this skin represents. (Sam)

Facing Racism also changed my journey as a mom. It transformed how I talk with my daughters about race, racism, and their role [as white girls] in being actively anti-racist. I am modeling it for them to dismantle white supremacy culture actively. (Jewelz)

Cam stated this is life-long movement work versus the issue-based, isolated responses; therefore, those in their sphere of influence who participated in FR are meeting monthly to figure out what to do internally and what systems can do this disruptive shift. Cam shared that after George Floyd was murdered, the FR alumni walk began to build community, ensue healing, and create ways to address and end anti-Black racism. The alumni would gather at a park and take walks while doing breathwork, conversing about racial justice experiences, and building community through conversation and feedback about life-long anti-racism work. Cam further stated, after FR [racial justice] action feels different – the cohort is no longer extrinsic, operating in racial silos.

Additionally, Cam stated, intrinsic actions, [that is actions that build community from within a person], are an essential and inherent part of revolutionary work. The revolutionary efforts to dismantle white privilege and supremacy transform the "power hoarders" (Okun, 1999, p.5) as designated leaders and the oppressed as doers (Freire, 1970/2009.) Intrinsic actions must be opposed to the dominant culture and immersed in the historically oppressed culture of belonging, community, transformation, and liberation (Freire, 2009.) In other words, this is a change that begins intrinsically and not extrinsically. These actions must be communal and not

individual for the sake of individualism. The actions should be a part of the collective and a community of belonging.

Gia stated FR was in tandem with their visits to the Legacy Museum, Lynching Memorial, Montgomery for Civil Rights History honoring her father and his civil rights work, and their visit with a Black farmer in Alabama – going virtual was timely. Gia aligned their experience with learnings from FR that resulted in seeing and doing more to address anti-Black racism. Jewelz has spent the last year getting white colleagues to attend FR with success and began working with Soul 2 Soul sisters on the education initiative. Essentially, Windom was moved by the courage it took for Soul 2 Soul Sisters to request reparations at the end of the FR session, and it encouraged her to do the same at her institution. Not only did Windom apologize for the additional Black labor of one Black professor for thousands of Black students that have gone unrecognized, but they began their reparations initiative for Black students.

In contrast to the previous participants, Charlie wanted to do more, but they wanted the action plan to give them the next steps, or tell her what to do. This could be described as an example of mammying defined in Chapter II. Intrinsically, Charlie realized there is creative, transformative work they need to do without two Black women leading every step of the way. Charlie realized they was no longer on the outside waiting for others to do the work, but they needed to do the work in community with others.

How Has the Participant Made Sense/Meaning of Their Experience of Facing Racism?

Sense/meaning-making is "the experiential claims being made by the research participant" (Smith, et al., 2009.) The research participants used sense-making and meaning-making interchangeably. As the researcher who interprets the meaning for a research participant in a particular context, I will use meaning-making when possible. Sense-making can be cerebral

or intellectual, while meaning is feeling work that FR tends to focus. For example, racism does not make sense, but meaning creates a space for a deeper dive into the experience and possibly answers the "why" of a phenomenon. For example:

> I had to challenge myself as a white educator in front of 60% of students of color regularly. I did not take this for granted, especially after taking an undoing racism course 14 years ago. Something more was needed—a meaning to this work that should be transforming and liberating. I learned to hold space as the white representative in the room. I listened, reminding self it is not solely about self. (Windom)

For years Windom worked as an educator and it took the leadership and hearing the experiences of Black women for Windom to become aware of experiences outside of whiteness that led to steps toward transformation and liberation from the status quo.

Sam found their non-linear prowess to find meaning-making in the constant threading of the practices, breathing and honoring the constant nurturing [of another.] Sam is not a step-by-step sequential person. They embody community through the seeing another and encouraging community with another, as shown in the following quote:

> This is a relational field and not the top-down construct but a fullness of leadership with facilitators and participants invited to tremble into this space. So the sense-making was not strategically from a controlling place but strategically from a kind of space of how one can be more organically and generatively available to the kind of learning that needs to happen to the kind of evolving that needs to happen in the Facing Racism [experience]. It cannot be transactional or another form of empire. [Meaning and sense-making is] a lived reality beyond dehumanization, manipulation, extraction of people and planet, hence the Facing Racism constructs of centering Black women and their stories of the Black experience of lived life. (Sam)

Gia's meaning-making was realized when they experienced feelings after completing their road trip; they had to feel what that was and engage in community more deeply. Gia is still trying to unpack the intellect and focus on the behavior, feelings, and verbal expressions of the meaning-making of action. Cam shared her meaning-making through Sankofa and the

opportunity to reflect and pause using Sankofa as a method, realizing that if one does not know where one has been, one cannot know where one is going. Cam used this approach to meaning-making in becoming an anti-racist and doing racial justice work as a white person. Cam stated that white people's heinous acts must be acknowledged so we may establish meaning-making to do the work necessary to dismantle white supremacy and power. The meaning-making for Cam is ensuring that we do not return to dust before we have lived out that divine breath of life for all. Cam continued by stating that the divine is honored, and that is why this work matters.

From a Christian perspective, Matt believed the meaning-making of this work is the power to love others period; to do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with G-d (The Holy Bible New Revised Standard Version, 1989, Micah 6:8) and love G-d with all one's heart and one's neighbors as oneself (The Holy Bible New Revised Standard Version, 1989, Luke 10:27). Matt also believes and lives as if every human being is made in the image of the Creator and alone warrants dignity and respect. Therefore, Matt's meaning-making was Christocentric and centered in love.

Charlie stated that this was a hard question for them. They talked through the question, and Charlie shared that spirituality gave them meaning: meaning-making is immense, and FR changed their outlook on everything. Charlie intentionally created diverse spaces for them and their family but realized these actions lacked meaning without the language and the "why?" Charlie is working through their actions as anti-racist in every facet of their life, including work and family.

For Randy, meaning-making was realized through engagement. Randy said not a day goes by where they are not thinking about FR; I carry it with me when I go (to do the work) and make sense (meaning) of FR. FR gave Randy a deeper understanding and meaning of why they

do not get to be complicit or conflict averse. Randy explained that for them, "FR is a life-long experience where one does not receive a certificate or graduate, but you add meaning to life, community, and humanity."

Jewelz is still making sense and meaning right now. They are making meaning of this every day. Jewelz went on to say that a large part of meaning-making is a willingness to be vulnerable and not performative. They also stated, "FR also changed my journey as a mom, and it transformed how I talk with my daughters about race, racism, and their role [as white girls] in being actively anti-racist. I am actively working to dismantle attributes of white supremacy in me, and I am modeling it for [my family.]" In attending FR and supporting Soul 2 Soul Sisters/FR, Jewelz said that having a lived experience of FR, they realized this work is real and urgent. They also understand that it is not an option to wait for the "other people" to do the work.

As Jewelz alluded, one may view a multi-generational impact as an influence on future generations. However, multi-generational impact may be an opportunity to reflect on past generations and how the past influences current beliefs and practices. Sankofa, defined in Chapter II, is to go back and fetch that which is life-giving for the present. Even during the most heinous of times, we have an opportunity to learn and make right the wrongs from the past right now.

In summary, each of the participants shared where they are on the journey of meaning-making. Each experiential claim of meaning-making varied in scope, impact, sphere of influence, and level of discomfort. The discomfort of meaning-making was necessary in order to move one out of their comfort zone of whiteness into a dignified, humanistic task of meaning-making of self and the humanity of another.

Chapter IV Conclusion

As a Black woman researcher, I engaged in the lived experiences of white research participants to expound upon the difficulties of race, racism, and anti-Black racism in tandem with my experience. As difficult as it was to hear stories of the invisible Black woman leader/teacher/facilitator or a possible panic entering the space that calls forth white people to do the work of dismantling white privilege/power/supremacy or times when Black people were not seen as human beings, using Ubuntu and a love-based revolution kept me focused on the bigger picture of transformation toward liberation. I often questioned myself by asking if I do not do this work, when will the systemic ills of denying Black people an inalienable right to live end? Listening to the stories told with nervousness, trembling, confidence, joy, revelation, shame, anger, frustration, and hope was not an easy task. However, to save the lives of Black people, it was imperative to name the ills of whiteness, charge white people with the work while Black people heal from layers of trauma in order for Black and white people to do the work necessary for liberation for all.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

FR is a Womanist program to end anti-Black racism through intergroup dialogue (IGD) with mostly white participants and Black women leaders. This dissertation explored how white participants experienced that program or filled a gap in current literature about how white participants experienced such an intervention led by Black women. I used Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the methodology to enable a deep dive into the experience of white people before, during, and after FR. Using IPA, I had a chance to experience what FR was like from the white participants' point of view and journey with them as they shared their stories of experience, action, and meaning-making. This research model seemed to allow the white FR participants to reflect on the FR experience and engage more deeply in doing the work of dismantling dominant white thought that continues to oppress non-white BIPOC. Cam, Sam, and Jewelz explicitly stated they were grateful for the opportunity to reflect on the experience.

In the midst of listening to the stories the participants were telling me about their epiphanies and reflections while facing their own racism, the video of George Floyd's murder by a police officer in Minneapolis seemed to be on repeat, circulating and playing in the background in mainstream and social media which created a grief and sadness within me. Yet, I needed to stay with the participants' experience and not go floating off into my own emotions. My feelings are there because I did not want to bracket and compartmentalize them, but I have mentioned them as part of my exploratory comments and have integrated and woven them into my reflection here in Chapter V.

Listening to eight white participants of FR gave me hope while at the same time, I was triggered about heinous moments like the murders of George Floyd and may I add Breonna Taylor, who was killed in her sleep due to a no-knock warrant, as well as by the granular effects

of a pandemic that gravely hit the Black and impoverished community. I longed to hear from

previous Black participants to make sure they were healing and not further wounded by the

actions of white people in FR. For the purpose of this study, in light of our Womanist approach,

it was essential as a co-curator of FR to hear from white people about their experience by

establishing three questions to provoke reflection and answers about their experience of FR:

1) What was the experience of the white participants during FR?

   a) How has the participant made sense/meaning of their experience of FR?

   b) What impact did FR have on participants' actions toward ending anti-Black racism?

Key Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of participants in FR. In

particular, I was interested in understanding the impact of the Womanist approach which

underpins the program, and its use of inter-group dialogue (IGD). Both are antithetical to

oppressive dominant white thought. As stated in Chapter I, Alimo (2012) states that learning

about racism is necessary to influence behavioral choices for racial justice to occur. This study

showed the possibility of participants experiencing an epistemological relationship of dialogue

(Freire, 2009) between Black and white people, with Black women leading in the dialogue.

This study addresses the gaps of the Black women's Womanist voice in academia,

politics, education, and community and as Womanist as racial justice activists. The research

study results in Chapter IV showed themes that emerged from the data and coalesced responses

to the research questions. The themes that emerged from the research study were:

preconceptions, program attributes, program content, and nuances.

Preconceptions were beliefs, feelings, and thoughts the white participants had before

attending FR. For instance, Gia did not know there was a white culture because white people are

individualistic. Charlie did not talk about race outside of diversity and inclusion, nor did they

experience Black women's leadership in any capacity. Jewelz did not realize that her liberation

was bound to Black liberation. For this study, preconceived notions are implicit biases. Dr. Allen

(2015) states,

> Implicit bias is an unconscious bias that everyone has. Unconscious bias shapes our perceptions, interactions, and behaviors towards other people in ways we do not know. 'Implicit bias influences our teachers, judges, police officers, [pastors and community leaders], how we teach and learn, how we police, and how we sentence. Aware is halfway there to open the door for us to do something about it…Although it is our conscious, it can be changed. (Allen, 2015, 0:40-1:24)

Since this study focused on white FR participants' experiences and implicit bias or preconceived

notions, feeling, thoughts, and beliefs emerged as a theme, I had an "ah ha" moment about the

opportunity to inquire about implicit bias in future research. I intentionally named these implicit

biases as preconceived notions to focus on the experience and not the term often used in racial

justice conversations. Implicit bias or preconceived notions negatively impact Black people due

to the assumptions made or taught about Black people.

Program attributes were crucial features in the FR curriculum that arose during the

research participant interviews, such as Black women curators and facilitators and storytelling.

Surprisingly, seven of the eight white research participants had never experienced Black women

in any leadership capacity.

The other program attribute that emerged was the impact of the program's use of

storytelling. In the Black diaspora, oral traditions of storytelling were sacred and revered.

Storytelling passed down through the generations was a way to tell our own stories. For FR,

storytelling found its way to humanize the Black experience by highlighting counter-stories to

the dominant white narrative. The Womanist facilitators told stories of racism, dehumanization,

love, family, and community.

During the interviews, each participant added a story in their response to the research questions. These were often revelatory and enlightening. For instance, Cam told a story of our breath being the life force for all, especially those oppressed. They suggested that if we take that breath away, we all succumb to societal ills. Gia realized that they objectified a Black man they met on a road trip and made a conscious effort to see him as an amazing human being who reminded them of life as a harmonious moment. According to the study, storytelling was impactful during the FR experience. The impact was exemplified during the interviews as each research participant told a story to identify the impact had regarding their personal story related to racism. Jewelz further stated, they would use storytelling in conversations with their da

According to the study findings, seven of eight participants explicitly articulated they could not believe the love shown by Black women during the FR experience. The study showed an appreciation for a love-based revolutionary approach to anti-racism work. It inculcated white participants to lead this work with an understanding that this is white people's work. Results of the study showed that love, humanity, life-long work were some of the take-aways from FR. While reading the interviews, one of the most poignant findings of the study was the transparency of the white FR participants. The transparency was particularly true for those who believed they must do this work because FR has taught them the importance of communal healing, breath, liberation that is inextricably bound to one another. As stated in the literature review, hooks states "The moment we choose to love we begin to move against domination, against oppression. The moment we choose to love we begin to move towards freedom, to act in ways that liberate ourselves and others" (hooks, 1994/2008, p. 224).

Program content was the curriculum used during FR and was mentioned by research participants as a salient part of their experience. Three themes emerged under program content:

the White Supremacy Culture article (Okun, 1999) as well as white supremacy, reparations, and anti-racism. Seven of the eight participants mentioned the White Supremacy Culture article and white supremacy.

The white participants agreed that whiteness is not a culture, so they found the white supremacy article interesting. As mentioned earlier, Gia asked, "What is white culture? It is not collective." Gia also stated that in her experience, people tend to negate the American in white culture, and the attributes of white supremacy culture are collective but marginalize and oppress non-white cultures. Gia now had a framework to work to dismantle white supremacy with anecdotal responses to this societal ill. According to the study, Jewelz realized they could not invite Black people into a system not designed for them from its inception. They realized the system needed dismantling, and a new equity system must be for the liberation of all.

Equity and liberation are tied together with reparations. Reparations were another theme that emerged from the interviews of the research participants. As stated earlier, five of the eight research participants mentioned reparations and developed a new understanding of reparations. Waiting for reparations to occur on a widespread, national level is a goal, and it may start individually as a part of the collective. The white participants realized they could participate in reparations by creating new ways to participate at their point of ability and sacrifice. Jewelz chose to sacrifice in her sphere of influence by contributing to the college funds for Black and Indigenous First Nation people. Jewelz gives just as they put money away for their children's education fund. Windom shared that we need to have a fund for reparations in our college for our Black students and faculty because there was a time when Black people were not allowed an education. As Coates (2014) says in the article *The Case for Reparations,* "Until we reckon with our compounding moral debts, America will never be whole" (Coates, 2014, p.1).

Another salient program content theme that arose from the interviews was being anti-racist. Matt summed it up best. Matt said, "With racism, the problem is a white problem that white people must fix." Six of the eight participants mentioned the essential nature of being anti-racist, specifically to end anti-Black racism. Ending anti-Blackness is arguably much more substantial than diversity, inclusion, and equity (Lloyd & Prevot, 2017.)

Finally, program nuances were vital in the findings. The nuances were particularly pivotal in findings of the participants' experience in FR. Some of the research participants stated that whiteness is individual and intellectual. Moving from head to heart/gut/soul rarely happens in a collective or systemic setting. Three themes emerged under the program nuances: hurt and harm, guilt and shame, and love. Participants responded with feelings of hurt and harm caused by white people against Black people and were open to exploring ways to heal the hurt and harm. Six of the eight participants mentioned this feeling as a part of their experience of FR. FR's love-based approach to this work created a space for healing to happen, said Jewelz.

Guilt and shame were other emergent themes in the study. Matt could not believe that two Black women would love them through the guilt and shame he felt individually and collectively as a white person. On the other hand, Sam shared how Black women loved them through the guilt and shame and nurtured them through to the tendrils of their hearts. Thus, while eight of the eight participants shared their feelings about love and the love-based revolution, each shared a loving experience during a challenging topic of FR. Walker (2004) states, and I paraphrase, that Womanism centers love, loves others with unconditional positive regard and loves humankind while centering Black women for the liberation of all.

Contributions

Contribution to Current Literature

The Womanist ethos includes various applications of Womanism. Highlighting the names of those Womanist noted in the literature review, Alice Walker (2004) is the curator of Womanism who calls for the centering of Black people and experiences in all actions that lead to liberation. The late Rev. Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon (2011) was a Womanist theologian, centering omitted Black people in the sacred Christian text. Finally, Emilie Townes (2006) is a Womanist Ethicist who challenges the oppression's status quo through morals, values, and humanitarianism while centering the Black lived experiences.

During my literature search, I also discovered articles and books that focused on Africana Womanism and Womanism from a global perspective. This study focused on Womanism and anti-Black racism in the United States. The Womanist way of being may look different depending on the area of focus across the globe. However, the commonality is centering Black lives and Black experiences in the Black diaspora.

My colleague and I founded FR using American Womanist principles while inserting spiritual aspects to ground the facilitators and participants in a way that brings us together at some semblance of a starting point. Alice Walker as a layperson and prolific writer is where the creators and facilitators use Womanism and the original definition of Womanism as an integral approach to ending anti-Black racism. Using Womanism in FR seems to be a unique approach and adds uniqueness to the greater body of Womanist literature. Implementing Womanist Epistemology to do racial justice work is unique because many of the books, articles, and other scholarly mediums often focus on a particular type of Womanism such as Womanist Ethics, Theology, Ecowomanism, and Africana Womanism.

Because Womanism is not prescriptive, linear, or a step-by-step process, the impact of Womanism shows up differently in each participant. Using Womanism as an approach to end anti-Black racism is a new thought as well. Therefore, the participants shared their learnings, enlightenment, and awareness of anti-Black racism and Womanism. As a result, thoughts and experiences changed. For instance, Gia stated, "Being more sensitive to where [a Black person] might be and where can I impact where they are versus here is my agenda." Randy shared that they were able to do a little better in talking with white colleagues and said, "I know now I am better able to understand all of how I am privileged and how that impacts my actions." As mentioned in the findings, Matt stated they felt many things like overwhelming gratitude, realizing how much love it takes "For two beautiful black women to come into a group of people who are, the sometimes-unwitting oppressors…hundreds of years of [an oppressive] legacy and [still] choosing to love us."

The development of FR has created a model of racial justice work using a Womanist epistemology. During the second session of FR, the facilitators host a session called meet the matriarch where we do a deep dive about the inception of Womanism and how our love-based revolution is rooted in Womanism because it centers Black women and Black experience for the liberation of all. Windom stated, although they have been led by Black women, they wanted to hear more from Womanist to gain the language to address patriarchal white supremacist delusional inheritance that we live in.

Contribution to Practice

The contribution to practice can be complex. The practice of centering Black women and Black experiences is not linear or a step-by-step process. However, they are key attributes that should be present in order to enact change by dismantling dominant white thought. It is essential to uncover the gaps in practicing dismantling white supremacy and privilege. Additionally, it is

equally important to address the literature in meaning-making associated with racial awareness and conduct the necessary research to fill in those gaps for a transformative and liberating impact.

Moving from the intellectual sense-making to the heart and gut-centered meaning-making was not an easy task. It takes a willingness to sit in the discomfort and develop the courage to speak up and out against the injustice caused by racism. Randy stated, their bosses are privileged. They have struggled with pushing down on him as much as they should, and as much as they know, they need to. Randy further stated, Facing Racism prepared me to take those actions but my whiteness just stops me from doing it; my discomfort stops me from doing it. As stated in the findings Charlie noted, "Even though there were uncomfortable times and I felt shame for something I had done or something I had said, this is a culture we [white people] all inherited and was given to us, and it is more about us dismantling that way of thinking and going forward." Jewelz described the uneasiness of this work by sharing, '"learning] how to lean in and to do racial justice work, feeling like I was floundering with what I wanted to do, or what I needed to do or where to connect." Jewelz further stated they tried to tap into a few different things locally to no avail until FR.

The meaning-making began to take form with the participants' sharing of program nuances such as Matt's sharing about redemptive shame. Matt said, "[my experience] was [about] the shame, a redemptive shame because it was mixed with lament." Matt was referring to the lament of hurt and pain of the facilitators regarding the dehumanization of racism and the lament of white people regarding their power, privilege, and supremacy. Cam enrolled in Facing Racism because they realized there is so much more depth to racial justice work that was not happening in the congregation they serve. In the findings, Cam stated that inextricably bounded

breath of white and Black people was used to describe racial justice and the importance of dismantling white supremacy and envision liberation for all.

To practice FR or end anti-Black racism for racial justice, one must identify meaning-making as a "basic human characteristic" (Sullivan & Cross eds., 2016, p.14). "(A) person's meaning-making [must be assessed] so that the person not only strives for personal improvement and self-enhancement, but also deeper involvement in the affairs, culture, and problems faced by one's social group" (Sullivan & Cross eds., 2016, p.3).

Womanism. Implementing Womanism in ending anti-Black racism work is Black-centered. As stated in Chapter II, Townes (2006) stated that a Womanist mind creates a space for profound experiences to challenge the status quo. Such experiences were evident in the participants' narratives. For example, Sam attended several iterations of Facing Racism. Sam is far from linear and concrete. They show up in the world as a free spirit, willing to learn and share what has been learned to dispel the status quo of white supremacy. As stated earlier, the hair braiding analogy was an example of the deep reflection this study called for. Sam described hair braiding as:

Visualizing the threading of a tapestry and a blanket of the tapestry. I think about lines of people in braiding hair. I think about these rhythmic repetitions of being in a constant tapestry of moving from the mind of the heart to the body with the facing racism stories. The way spaces held the Black orient like a Black centered story - lived experiences [of] systemic patterns [of] history, current, [and] past.

Unfortunately, the status quo is rooted in American dominant white culture that oppresses and dehumanizes non-white people particularly, Black Americans. As stated earlier, Womanism does not replace one elitist thought with another, but seeks to liberate the oppressed and the

oppressor, with Black women leading the way and white people dismantling the work they created. An example of this can be found in Charlie's statement: "[white supremacy/privilege] is a culture we [white people] all inherited and it is more about us dismantling that that way of thinking and going forward." Sam shared; "Facing Racism made the connection for me of dismantling white supremacy."

Womanism comes with the freedom to create transformative and liberating spaces while centering Black people. Therefore, contributions to practice are lucid, creative, fluid, and loving. Alice Walker's definition of Womanism was outlined in Chapter II. To summarize, it starts and ends with the acknowledgment and liberation of Black people; it means loving all people with unconditional positive regard; it includes loving all things from food to the moon to the struggle; and takes its place as a resource for Black feminism that is created for Black people and by Black people. FR was created out of the fundamental definition of Womanism. The contributions to practice may look different in praxis but should be built on the same foundation of Walker's definition.

An example of this can be found in Jewelz's earlier statement: "I was doing the wrong work. My work has essentially made sure Black folk had access to white supremacy culture and equity. I was wrong." Jewelz wanted Black people to conform to the status quo of whiteness but, in actuality, should have centered Black people focusing on their humanity. *In Search of our Mothers' Gardens: Prose*, Alice Walker (2004) mentions the ideology of W.E.B. Du Bois (1994) several times critiquing the missing Black woman's voice and affirming Du Bois love of Blackness while living in white America. For Du Bois (1994)

> Black people or the historically oppressed will find liberation for themselves and the
> oppressor because Black people live in a double consciousness. This double

consciousness affords us an awareness of two worlds, a world dominated by whiteness

and a world we live in where we define Black people for Black people in this white

world. (p. 2)

For Walker (2004), this ideology extends to include the silenced voice of the Black woman and

centering Black people and experiences that are counter-cultural to the oppressive dominant

white voice.

For the practice of FR, Black women must lead. Cheryl Townsend Gilkes stated in

Cannon, et.al. (2011) "the [W]omanist potential is embedded in all Black women's

experiences" (p. 87). For FR and this study, Black women must tell their stories of historical

oppression, marginalization, dehumanization, and injustice. This was apparent as participants

recounted their experiences. Randy stated, "It is the stories of Black women and the work of

Black women, and listening to Black women. It just puts [one] in a place where [one does not]

get to [be complicit anymore]." Charlie shared, :At the same time, white people are students

of the journey of liberation through awareness, increased consciousness, language, and

knowledge. Then the work of white people can begin as they work to dismantle white

supremacy/privilege/thought."

Intergroup Dialogue. Although IGD began as a tool in higher education, this study shows

IGD can be impactful with adults. According to the literature review of this study, IGD was a

model of engaging difference for social change (Bell et al., 1990). IGD is rooted in racial justice,

communal practices in fighting injustices, and educational justice. IGD is widely known to occur

in college settings. As Pinnock stated, "intergroup dialogue finds its origin in social psychology

and is based on the contact theory, which asserts the potential for face-to-face interactions to ease

tension between identity groups" (Pinnock, 2008, p.22).

For FR, face-to-face gatherings were important as IGD suggests. Face-to-face gatherings created a space for FR to gather over an Ethiopian meal and discuss prompted questions or homework discussions. Most poignantly, IGD with Black Womanist leading mostly white people was the crux of the experience. As a co-facilitator, I had the opportunity to witness the experience of sharing a meal with conversations at each table regarding reflections of the homework or talking prompts. Jewelz mentioned that they really enjoyed the messiness of the Ethiopian food that represented the messiness of dismantling racism.

As mentioned in the literature review, skilled facilitators and leaders must lead IGD (Schoem, 2003) because IGD can be risky through catharsis, revelation, pain, healing, and love. For FR, love is central to storytelling and creating a container to hold all of the feelings during each session. FR facilitators call this love a love-based revolution, an unconditional love beyond measure. Facilitators must be skilled in holding space for these emotions, particularly when the emotions, comments, or stories may call forth adverse comments or how difficult IGD may be. In the study, Windom stated, "[I] love that there were black and white participants, although we were mostly white, but the way that [the facilitators] held the container [in] respect and love." FR takes IGD to another level by interacting with adults from varying backgrounds, honoring the face-to-face space, and leading with Black women and Black experiences and a love-based revolution.

In addition to skilled facilitators holding space for emotions that may arise during IGD, Sue (2012) mentions the misnomer about IGD and race talk being purely intellectual which minimizes the emotions involved and this can impede on the anti-racism work expected of the participants. Sue agrees with moving from the intellect to the heart and gut/soul to do the necessary transformative justice work.

On the contrary, Buckley and Quaye (2016) believes seeking to know others' experiences does not address systemic issues of power and privilege and does not engage all social justice components inherent in the tension of racial justice work. As previously stated, FR addresses the social injustices of anti-Black racism to address the misnomers of ineffectively feeling one's way through justice work and addressing areas of tension through IGD.

Introduction to Implications

Implications for practice will look differently in every single participant. We have overarching goals and objectives, but a checklist or a linear way of doing things does not exist in Womanism. Furthermore, Womanism is an on-going, life-long epistemological work that may not be immediately evident. According to the data, participants, like Jewelz will talk to their families because their family members are racist. Others like Randy will talk to their board members or colleagues because they know their racist tendencies. I won't know the true societal impact of FR until the participants go out and do the work. Noted were some actions and outcomes in the findings in Chapter IV.

While the implications may or may not be transformative, good, or even liberating, there are still implications in forming an identity for the individual part of the collective group. As I experienced the research participants during their storytelling, upon reflection, I noted that in order for a white research participant to reach a point of meaning-making, it seemed to be important to acknowledge the ills of the past and present and begin a quest of conciliation or reconciliation that will create a space of transformation and liberation for both the historically oppressed and the oppressor. Freire (2009) states, "it is only when the oppressed find the oppressor out and become involved in the organized struggle for their liberation that they being to believe in themselves" (p. 65).

Although the question "why did you sign up for FR?" was not directly asked, as a result of the findings, it was implied that the white research participants wanted to know what they could do to become anti-racist and join in the fight for liberation. The experience, likened to Freire (2009), was like a "conversion to the people [that] require[d] a profound rebirth. Those who undergo it must take on a new form of existence; they can no longer remain as they were" (p. 61). Windom stated that real intentional education about anti-Black racism is a necessary foundation toward change, and it changed him. The implication, then, is an ideological shift to move from individual dominant white thought to a deeper understanding of others to make the shift necessary to be liberated from oppressive ways of being (Freire, 2009). According to Matt, redemptive shame is the grace that frees white people to courageously name the ills of racism and oppression to dismantle white supremacy/privilege.

I may not know the answer to the question, "why would a white person sign up for FR?" However, I do know that as a facilitator and researcher, at times, there were emotions and feelings of pain, hurt, and fear. The shared moments in FR and listening to the experience of the research participants was challenging and took much energy to listen actively. Some were panicked (Matt), another was going to skip a session but decided not to (Gia), and another questioned their being in the cohort (Charlie). They all remained. I, working from a Womanist perspective, listened to their stories during the sessions and the interview process. Both involved the love-based revolution that does not wait for our liberation from oppressive forces. The struggle and storytelling involve both the oppressed and the oppressor. The Freirean (2009) model provides a way of thinking about the importance of fighting for my liberation and the liberation of the oppressor. Because FR does not impose particular cultural values and norms on dominant white culture, FR is introducing a different way of being where we can all be free. Of

course, meaning-making implications for Black women may be different for a white person; nonetheless, it takes the oppressed to lead the way for a renewed ideology, epistemological curiosity (Freire, 2009), and ensue of love-based revolution as an act of liberation for all.

Implications for Practice

Suppose white people or other Black people want to host a FR cohort. In that case, it is important to have Black Womanist lead in facilitating dialogue, sharing stories of oppression, and the importance of why Black women sacrifice to do this work. The sacrifice for the Black woman facilitator involves telling intimate stories of Black women and Black experiences and the fear that comes with being Black in America, and then the study showed this to be one of the most impactful aspects of the program. Truth-telling and facing the hard truths about racism must be told from the lens of the Black experience. Although truth-telling may be hurtful, revealing, shocking, and sad, it is the love-based approach that will keep all engaged during this learning exercise. Again, Matt said it this way, 'I just have to say I don't have many experiences in life of being loved so well.'

To do this work requires patience and love that surpasses the hard truth of racism and anti-Black racism. FR work requires skills that include soul work, ritual, compassion, and engagement to begin the process of healing. FR is about healing the hurt with a spiritual acumen that draws in cohort attendees to do the communal healing needed to do this work.

How to do the work

Since Womanist work is not static and linear, the following attributes are key in conducting FR and may look differently depending on the participants and the Womanist facilitators.

Black Women Leading

As stated previously, Black women/Black Womanists must lead this work. This was important research finding- the power of having Black women lead – for a couple of reasons 1) participants had not experienced Black women leaders before 2) the experience of Black women's love, despite the trauma they had undergone, was transformative. Womanists must be compensated for their sacrifice, and rest must be incorporated into the planning and structuring of the sessions. Womanists will build the curriculum in a Womanist way that is truth-telling, loving, and healing. If a white person wants to convene a group, one must incorporate Womanist to lead the sessions, while white people prepare to do the life-long work necessary to end anti-Black racism and dismantle white supremacy/privilege/thought.

Ritual

FR opens with African Traditional Rituals using sage and palo santo to invoke divine communication. The FR facilitators honor each attendee by inviting them to this spiritual or loving space that is universal and not contingent on a particular religion. An altar with various items inspires peace, love, compassion, empathy, and reflection. Next, the FR facilitators remember our ancestors and call out the names of Black women who have led us so that the Womanist leaders may do the required liberating work. Next, the FR community does breathwork by doing breathing exercises together to center everyone in the moment of healing, justice, transformation, and liberation. Once the ritual is complete, everyone takes a deep breath, and the participants are asked to share their feelings about what they have just experienced. We hold space at that moment since some people have never experienced Africentric rituals before. The participants are encouraged to look at their own cultures and incorporate rituals in their personal lives without co-opting indigenous rituals. Randy stated they loved the ritual around

[Facing Racism]. 'It was like walk into this space and let us focus [on the work at hand]'. Sam added, 'Through the practice and ritual through, through the pausing, honoring, breathing and breaks through the stories, the sharing from the facilitators created a space of centering and sacred space.'

IGD

In FR, IGD creates a space for a liberating ideology and is more than linguistic. "Founding itself upon love, humility, and faith, dialogue becomes a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialogues is the logical consequence" (Freire, 1970/2000, p. 91). During IGD, one may hear stories and experiences that are triggering and take one to a place of hurt. Furthermore, participants reported that by rooting the dialogue in love, healing and continued dialogue were possible to transform both the oppressed and the oppressor.

According to literature on IGD, for the FR participant, IGD requires deep listening from the Womanist leaders to avoid a defensive conversation. Deep listening is hearing what the storytelling is saying without preempting to respond defensively. IGD requires humility and grace as one listens to Womanist share harrowing stories of being Black in America. IGD invites the listener to respond at an opportune time in a compassionate, empathetic, lamenting manner. Dialogue is encouraged throughout the session, and small breakout groups help navigate the dialogue, so everyone can be heard. In the breakout groups, there is usually a facilitator present. If a facilitator is not present, the larger group and the facilitators get to hear of the experience during the report out in the larger group.

The dialogue aims to introduce stories, terms, music, think pieces, scholarly articles, and books that will raise the consciousness of the Black struggle and Black joy. As stated in the literature review, IGD acts as a key method for enabling transformative language for liberation for all amid oppression. IGD addresses white privilege/supremacy/thought in personal,

professional, political, and communal spaces. As a co-facilitator, the dialogue is guided by a loving, energetic space that may lead to tears, laughter, shame, guilt, hope, and courage. IGD is a revolutionary praxis through Womanist leadership and a dialogical model of transformation and liberation.

Storytelling

As stated in program attributes, storytelling or story-linking is a group process and refers to the strategies or plan of action leaders take to ensure an emancipatory environment (Wimberly, 1994/2005). For FR, storytelling is inviting the listener to journey with the storytelling through one's sharing. Storytelling is sharing our existence. This is imperative because storytelling is sacred in Black history and culture and because it humanizes the storyteller. As stated in the literature review, Black-centered stories are counter-cultural to dominant white thought. For FR, stories that are counter-cultural to the dominant white narrative in America, are told with the hope that the listener, when making moral choices and decisions, does so by centering the stories of the oppressed for liberation. In this study's findings for instance, Charlie stated that the experiences of Black people became real for them when they heard the personal stories of the Womanist facilitators. IGD is a revolutionary practice. A Womanist ethic of justice responds from its well of history and sociopolitical methodology: we cannot bring together that which we do not know" (Cannon, 2001, p. 39).

Love/Love-Based Revolution

The revolutionary's role is to liberate, and be liberated, with the people – not to win them over" (Freire, 1970/2009, p. 95). FR does this through love and a love-based revolution. For FR, love is defined as unconditional positive regard. Womanist facilitators could not do this work otherwise. When participants walk into the FR space or show up in the virtual gathering, they are

loved. When a participant wants to journey toward ending anti-Black racism, they are loved. The

importance of this was evident in quotes such as Jewelz statement in Chapter IV: 'There is a

fierceness about FR, but it is not without fierce love-based revolution. It is also rooted in love

and three things like authenticity and accountability and love; altogether, I think it just opens you

up.'

The love-based revolution happens when the action begins to dismantle oppressive forces

such as ending anti-Black racism to build a new system of transformation and liberation. The

love-based revolution is key in FR to ensure oppressive systems are torn down, healing happens,

and the revolutionary work to rebuild begins. To do FR, one must have the capacity to love

beyond measure and be willing to do the hard work necessary to end anti-Black racism.

Limitations of this Study

As stated in Chapter III, questions have been raised on whether IPA can accurately

capture the experiences and meanings of the experience rather than the opinions of it (Tuffour,

2017.) IPA is structured for a small sample size due to the iterative constructivist approach to the

interview process. IPA is a qualitative approach examining people making sense of their

experience in a particular phenomenon (Smith, et al., 2009). The small sample size is a limitation

of this study and a homogenous group in favor of the FR experience. All of those that

volunteered to be a research participant not only completed all the sessions but had favorable

responses to their experience. This was a limitation due to the lack of diversity of the research

participants. I did not have the opportunity to interview anyone who did not complete the

sessions due to dissatisfaction nor from anyone who had had a bad experience. The one person I

contacted who had an adverse experience did not want to be recorded, and when alternative

options were offered, they declined. Another limitation is lack of a uniformed structure in IPA.

Delimitations

Delimitations are the factors that prevent the researcher from claiming that the finding is factual for all people in all times and places. Due to the small sample size and the nascent nature of FR and its Womanist approach, findings may not apply to all FR research groups. The experience may differ between the nomenclature of each cohort, environment, and composition of the FR cohort.

Recommendations for Further Study

There are several opportunities for further study. First, instead of a random sample, the researcher might use a non-random sample, explicitly choosing a diverse group of participants with different views of FR. Second, the researcher might choose from one cohort to hear the experiences of those who attended the same FR cohort. Finally, the researcher might choose not to include white people in the sample but choose the facilitators or BIPOC who attended FR. Further study could include a comparative study with other racial justice, anti-racism, or groups that focus on ending anti-Black racism. Furthermore, FR and this Womanist model are not exclusive to white participants. With the Womanist model, BIPOC participants may heal from layers of racialized trauma. A further study may be used to explore the healing experience using the Womanist way.

Personal Reflection

For seven years, I have led anti-racist work focusing on ending anti-Black racism and centering Black women and Black experiences in the United States. The harrowing statistical analysis shows Black people are killed by police twice as many times/or as often as white people. For example, in the United States, 37 Black people are killed by police; whereas, 15 in

every million white people are killed by police (Fatal Force, 2021). I have two Black adult children that I pray for every day because Black people have been killed by law enforcement for jogging, sleeping, playing, walking, driving, and mental illness, to name a few. I grew up in Harlem, where I had teachers of different races but primarily Black and Latinx. hooks (1994) states that Black teachers were committed to nurturing intellect and resisting strategies of white racist colonization. However, being mainly taught by white teachers reinforced racist stereotypes, which left Black students missing out on education about the practice of freedom (hooks, 1994). As a Black woman living with metastatic breast cancer, Black women have a 40% higher death rate for breast cancer than any other racial group in America (DeBard, 2020). I do this work so that Black people shall live and not die at the hands of systemic racism.

As one of the co-curators and one of the Black women facilitators, I had the opportunity to witness the pedagogical approach to FR and the truth-telling dynamics through love. Unfortunately, the study did not reveal the moments when one participant walked out, never to return, or when an emotional white person had to take a break because we were not about to center white tears and "white fragility" (DiAngelo, 2018). Nonetheless, the white person who was overcome with emotion came back and completed all of the FR sessions.

In one particular session, the FR facilitators discussed equity and safety; equity as a right to life, liberty, and happiness or the inalienable right to live and safety as a humanitarian right to be safe driving, walking, sleeping, playing, shopping, while Black in America. During the research interview with Matt, they mentioned they ceased to panic (as they began the FR experience). I wondered, was this panic due to Black leadership? Or was Matt's panic due to hearing the truth about racism and anti-Black racism? Alternatively, quite possibly, their panic might have been due to the color of my skin and the negative attributes assigned to darker skin.

Safety was vital during the FR sessions. The facilitators would leave together, ensure everyone made it to their cars, and we would drive off together. We were keenly aware that our work is disrupting and dismantling someone's false sense of power and this country's capitalist views and acts. Even when we decided to re-create FR on a virtual platform, we had to be mindful of people who did not have the liberative views at heart.

I believe this is groundbreaking work for Black American Womanists to lead in racial justice work. Womanist leaders create a space for a new way of being for white people in order for white people to go out and do the work necessary to dismantle white supremacy/privilege/thought. Black and white people must do this work together to build a just humanitarian society for the liberation of the oppressed and the oppressor.

> Freire (2009) stated that the oppressed are not outside of society nor should they be invited into an oppressive society by the oppressor; so, the solution is not to integrate Black people into a structure of oppression, but to dismantle the structure, so the oppressed are no longer oppressed and are liberated human beings. (p. 74)

Freire's sentiments are expressed in the poem below. The humanization of the Blackwoman and the hope for liberation is shared by the creators of FR and the authors of this poem. Our hope was to insert our voices into a narrative that often silences Black people to dismantle an oppressive structure for the freedom of both the oppressed and the oppressor. Once the Blackwoman and Black people of the American Black diaspora are free of oppression, we will all be free.

A Blackwoman Holla

By Rev. Tawana Davis & Rev. Dr. Dawn Riley Duval

As a Blackwoman
Mother   Grandmother   Daughter
Blackwoman
Sister   Friend   Minister
Blackwoman
Student   Activist   Imago Dei
As a Blackwoman
In this history-in-the-making
Black Lives Matter moment
Religion   Faith   Knowing
Is saving me

                                        Saving us

In the midst of injustice
In the midst of inequity
Is keeping me
Keeping us
In joy and triumph
In love and life
Our Religion   Faith   Knowing
Is holding us
In the midst
Of
Our
Holla.

Yes
I want to holla   want to scream and holla
With love and joy
When I see my son and daughter
who are 10 and 8
See them laugh and run with their hands in the air
Just beautiful, big, black, shiny
And free.

I want to holla …
Throw up both my hands
In honor of Michael Brown
In praise for my 21-year-old son for still being alive
Living a life Michael Brown and others were not afforded
In praise for G-d's protection of my 29-year-old daughter
Same age as the late Sandra Bland
And in intercessory prayer for my 6-year-old grandson

Praying for protection from the racist ills of this world

And I want to holla
Just ecstatic   full
When I complete a task
With flash and flair
After folk told me to just
Stop
Try something else
Or recommended that I
Seek assistance from
Brother so-in-so

I want to holla …
Love me!
As I love you
See me!
As I see you
Dignity works both ways and I am somebody

And there are some times and some things
Some places and some spaces
some people and some powers
that just make
me wanna holla
and throw up both my hands

When people assume that
Because of my Black skin
I am expecting a handout.
When people assume that
Because I am a Black woman
I need their pity or platitudes

What we need is opportunity
Opportunity to live
Live life more abundantly

Live with human rights and human dignity

Live unafraid for our Black lives

Live unafraid for our Black children and grandchildren

What we need is to

Live and flourish and prosper
After all that's what we're promised
In the Declaration of Independence
Which says

      "We hold these truths to be sacred

      And undeniable:

      That all men
And women

      Are created equal and independent;

      That from the equal creation

      They derive rights

      Inherent and inalienable

      Among which are the preservation of life

      And liberty

      And the pursuit of happiness"
So today
And everyday
Until our lives and liberties
are protected

for our children
our future
our faith
for G-d

we must holla. (Davis, 2019, pp. 277-278).

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Appendix A

Appendix A: Feminist to Womanist

	FEMINIST	FEMINIST	FEMINIST*	BLACK FEMINIST	WOMANIST
WAVES	Early 19th Century First Wave	Early-Mid 20th Century Second Wave	Generation X Mid-Late 20th Century Third Wave	Mid - Late 20th Century Response to second and third wave feminism	Mid 20th Century Inserts theory pre-feminism "Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender"
Who is included/excluded?	Equality of sexes	Broadened scope to include reproductive justice, domestic violence to name a few		Inserts a Black narrative into equality of sexes	Traditionally universalist—independent of feminist theory
Who is centered?	Centers white women	Black women perceived as a liability to the movement	Individualism	Response to racism in feminism	Centers Black women for the liberation of all
Evolution toward inclusion	Evolved to try to include Black women	Still excluded Black women until 1964 civil rights act	Began to evolve after Clarence Thomas sexually harassed Anita Hill	Confronts our own views on sexism and Black women's oppression	Always evolving—rejecting all forms of oppression and committed to social justice
Areas of focus	There focus areas: social, economic, and political	Areas of focus expanded—more than just enfranchisement	Expanded to a movement	Focuses on race, class, gender, and sexuality—intersectionality	Confronts our challenges that include all forms of oppression
Phases of the women's movement	Marginalized Black women	Tried to include Black women, but Black women were still marginalized	Movements were born to include Black women, ecofeminism, etc.	A response to the absence of Black women in the Feminist movement	Challenges with an ever-evolving movement: visionary
Black populace				Known to be for privileged Black women	Black women may identify as womanist
Inclusion of Black diaspora				Homogeneity of Black women and men	Not a moral superiority over white people (in America)

Appendix B

Appendix B: Excerpt of Data Analysis

Emergent Themes Sub Themes	Transcript of Participant's Response	Researcher's Exploratory Comments: Descriptive (Normal Text) Linguistic (Italic) Conceptual (Underlined)

Shame
 	
    Guilt
    Stuck/discomfort
    Fear
	Randy: My bosses are privileged. I have struggled with pushing down on him as much as I should, and as much as I know, I need to…In any sort of way that facing racism prepared me to do those actions - my whiteness just stops me from doing it; my comfortability stops me from doing it.	Sitting in the discomfort of whiteness not being the norm for humanity (DiAngelo, 2018)
		Whiteness is comfortable.
		Facing Racism invites white people in a sacred space to have the complicated conversation about race by centering Black women and Black experiences in order to deal with the discomfort of guilt and shame and offer tools to work through it.

	Charlie: Even though there were uncomfortable times and I felt shame for something I had done or something I had said…this is a culture we (white people) all inherited and was given to us, and it is more about us and that way of thinking.	Stories and experiences often go untold due to shame and guilt. *The shame of whiteness.* The Black diaspora continues to be dehumanized, historically oppressed, and erased from history due to the heinous acts against the Black diaspora. Facing Racism creates a sacred space to dismantle the shame.
	Sam: To be nurtured by facilitators to breathe and to seek our humanity and to seek are the tendrils of our hearts that carry shame and anger and fear.	White thought is intellectual. *Inviting the heart and gut/soul to carry the shame connects to humanity and invokes community spirit.* Acknowledging the shame that comes along with white privilege/supremacy/thought.

Appendix C

Appendix C: IRB

1. Name and mailing address of Principal Investigator(s):
Tawana Davis

For faculty applications, Co-Principal Investigator(s) name(s):

2. Academic Department: Graduate School in Leadership and Change

3. Departmental Status: Student

4. Phone Number:

5. Name & email address of research advisor:

a) Name of research advisor
Dr. Donna Ladkin
b) E-mail address of research advisor

6. Name & email address(es) of other researcher(s) involved in this project:
a) Name of Researcher(s)
n/a
b) E-mail address(es)
n/a

7.Project Title: Womanist leading in Eradicating Anti-Black Racism to Liberate the Oppressed and the Oppressor: An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

8.Is this project federally funded: No
Source of funding for this project (if applicable): n/a

9. Expected starting date for data collection: 04/05/2021

10. Expected completion date for data collection: 04/30/2021

11. Project Purpose(s): (Up to 500 words)
Facing Racism is a program offered by Soul 2 Soul Sisters to eradicate anti-Black racism. Each cohort is for seven sessions with up to 60 people per cohort. Most of the attendees are white. Facing Racism began in 2015 in response to the rising disparate injustices against Black people in the United States. Although, Facing Racism leadership has conducted evaluative pre and post surveys, the research conducted in this study will do a deeper dive in the experience, impact, and outcome of the participants who have completed Facing Racism. The proposed study will benefit not only the former white participants, but family, community, congregation, and political members by benefitting those who aspire to cultivate structures and systems that provide compassion, justice, abundance and healing for all people, individual and collective healing is

foundational to Facing Racism programming. Benefits may include self-awareness and raise consciousness about anti-Black racism; conversations with family members; civic engagement as ally, accomplices, and comrades to end anti-Black racism; police reform, equitable representation in the political sphere, as well as equitable education in impoverished communities.

12. Describe the proposed participants- age, number, sex, race, or other special characteristics. Describe criteria for inclusion and exclusion of participants. Please provide brief justification for these criteria. (Up to 500 words)
The proposed seven participants will be former attendees of a recent Facing Racism cohort. The proposed participants will be white and 18 and over. Focusing on white participants is pivotal in anti-Black racism work as the cohort begins to dismantle white supremacy, white privilege, and dominate white thought that has marginalized and oppressed non-white groups. The former white participants of Facing Racism have attended a 7-session experience that centers others, specifically Black women, dialogical, engaging, cathartic, emotive, revelatory, and joyous. This study will take the participants beyond the cohort and explore the impact, outcomes, and meaning/sensemaking of ending anti-Black racism.

13. Describe how the participants are to be selected and recruited. (Up to 500 words)
The participants will be chosen through our database of recent Facing Racism participants who are white. The participation is voluntary. With the intent of getting broad range of participants with different viewpoints range of participants, staff will recommend former white participants for this study. The staff will recommend possible participants based on full attendance during the Facing Racism cohort, participation during the full sessions and the breakout sessions, and engagement with homework assignments. The selection will also include those who may have had an adverse experience with Facing Racism. We have access to attendance and surveys through action network. I intend to have a full view of different experiences. Once I reach seven white former participants with the desired balance, I will end recruitment. The IRB and Informed Consent will be used to ensure proper protocols are followed.

14. Do you have a prior or current relationship, either personal, professional, and/or financial, with any person, organization, business, or entity who will be involved in your research?
Yes

14a. If yes, describe the situation that presents a potential personal, professional, and/or financial conflict of interest in the proposed research study, (e.g., if you are or have been employed at the research site, have received compensation from a participating organization, have a personal or professional relationship with any participants).

As a Co-Founder of Soul 2 Soul Sisters, I have the opportunity to facilitate one of the seven Facing Racism sessions. This interaction is limited, and may involve participants who have done Facing Racism with me as a facilitator. In the past three years, I have worked with recent participants as a facilitator of one Facing Racism session instead of the entire seven sessions.

Depending on the selection of participants, some may have attended the one session I facilitated. Any relationship with the participants does not involve any financial, personal, or professional conflict.

14b. Describe how you will mitigate the bias caused by any conflicts of interest in your study and how you will protect the participants against real or potential bias (e.g., you will not recruit anyone who works directly for you or in your direct team, results will be reported in the aggregate so that participants will remain anonymous, any compensation received is independent of the study and its results).

I will mitigate the bias caused by any conflicts of interest by not recruiting anyone who works directly for me or anyone on my direct team. I will reiterate the delicate work of reflecting and talking through their experience through the 90-minute interview session. I will remind the participant of the importance of truth-telling of their experience to accurately document the impact, outcome and sense/meaning making as a result of attending Facing Racism. I will remind the participant of the use of pseudonyms to protect anonymity. Permission to use an excerpt of the interview will be outlined in the informed consent.

15. Describe the process you will follow to attain informed consent.
I have created an informed consent form (Appendix B) which all participants will be asked to sign, date, and return electronically prior to the start of the first interview. The consent form will be shared with participants once they have been screened, invited to participate, and have stated their intent to participate. Please note, the screening process involves ensuring the potential participant has completed Facing Racism. All interviews will be conducted via Zoom.

16. Describe the proposed procedures, (e.g., interview surveys, questionnaires, experiments, etc). in the project. Any proposed experimental activities that are included in evaluation, research, development, demonstration, instruction, study, treatments, debriefing, questionnaires, and similar projects must be described. USE SIMPLE LANGUAGE, AVOID JARGON, AND IDENTIFY ACRONYMS. Please do not insert a copy of your methodology section from your proposal. State briefly and concisely the procedures for the project. (500 words)

Once the participants are selected and consent forms completed, I will schedule a 90-minute interview with each participant. The participants will receive three open-ended question for a semi-structured interview to explore the impact, outcome, and meaning/sense making during and after experiencing Facing Racism.

The Zoom recordings of the interviews will be sent to and outside resource for professional transcription.

17. Participants in research may be exposed to the possibility of harm - physiological, psychological, and/or social - please provide the following information: (Up to 500 words)

a. Identify and describe potential risks of harm to participants (including physical, emotional,

financial, or social harm).
I expect no more than minimal emotional risk with minimal harm to participants. As the participants' share their stories of Facing Racism there may be some cathartic and triggering moments. I do not anticipate any physical or financial harm. As a pastoral care provider, I will be cognizant of potential risks of emotional harm. The following resources will be available upon request:
Colorado Crisis Center ~ 844-493-TALK
Element of Discovery Therapist of Color Collaborative ~ 303-881-1101
Talkspace.com ~ national online therapy access that accepts all forms of insurance

b. Identify and describe the anticipated benefits of this research (including direct benefits to participants and to society-at-large or others)
The benefits of this research are to add Black Women's leadership while offering language to white people to dismantle white supremacy, white privilege, and dominant white oppressive thought. This will be a benefit to society by addressing the systemic ills of racism that has cause heinous deaths and attacks on non-white people. This research will provide past participants to reflect on and further make sense of their experiences of Facing Racism.

There will be no monetary incentives or financial benefit to the participants.

c. Explain why you believe the risks are so outweighed by the benefits described above as to warrant asking participants to accept these risks. Include a discussion of why the research method you propose is superior to alternative methods that may entail less risk.

I believe the risks are so outweighed by the benefits described above as to warrant asking participants to accept these risks due to the systemic ills that adversely impact non-white and white people with a disproportionate impact on Black people of the diaspora. Since the inception of the United States Black and First Nation Indigenous people have been enslaved, murdered, separated from family, deculturalized, raped, mutilated, and treated less than human beings by white people.

The intent of this study is to take a deep dive into the experience of white people during and after taking part in the Facing Racism course. Fighting to end anti-Black racism and telling stories related to ending anti-Black racism may come with difficult emotions, loss of relationships, adversity, frustration, empathy, among other feelings and actions. Joy, freedom, transformation, reparations, and liberation may be included in these other feelings and actions as well.

Dismantling white supremacy, racism, oppression, and marginalization will save lives. Listening to the stories of the phenomenon offers a deep dive into the lived experience of the participants The participants will not be limited to the prompted questions, but open to tell their story freely as it relates to Facing Racism, its impact, outcomes, and meaning/sensemaking.

d. Explain fully how the rights and welfare of participants at risk will be protected (e.g., screening out particularly vulnerable participants, follow-up contact with participants, list of referrals, etc.) and what provisions will be made for the case of an adverse incident occurring during the study.

Participants will be given confidentiality statements to protect their experience during the interview. Participants will be reminded their right to take a break, resume at a later date, or withdraw at any time. In the case of an adverse incident, the interview will cease and the participant will be encouraged to seek support outside of my pastoral care purview. If an Unanticipated Problem occurs, the researcher will report the event using the Unanticipated Problem Report Form provided by the IRB (IRB Handbook, p. 47).

18. Explain how participants' privacy is addressed by your proposed research. Specify any steps taken to safeguard the anonymity of participants and/or confidentiality of their responses. Indicate what personal identifying information will be kept, and procedures for storage and ultimate disposal of personal information. Describe how you will de-identify the data or attach the signed confidentiality agreement on the attachments tab (scan, if necessary). (Up to 500 words)

Privacy and confidentiality will be preserved through the use of anonymizing interview transcripts and using pseudonyms in reporting of the findings. All information will be de-identified. Official names will be replaced with pseudonyms in the write-up of this study. The researcher and transcription service will have access to the list connecting official name to the pseudonyms. All recording will be secured and password protected.

19. Will audio-visual devices be used for recording participants? Will electrical, mechanical (e.g., biofeedback, electroencephalogram, etc.) devices be used? (Click one) **Yes**

If YES, describe the devices and how they will be used:
I will be utilizing a secure password protected Zoom account for the interviews. The video files of the recordings will be kept and stored in a secure password protected file on my personal computer.

20. Type of Review: Expedited

Please provide your reasons/justification for the level of review you are requesting.

Review of proposed research by the IRB chair or a designated voting member or group of voting members rather than by the entire IRB. Federal rules permit expedited review for certain kinds of research involving no more than minimal risk and for minor changes in approved research [45 CFR 46.110]. (IRB Handbook, p. 57).

The risk to participants in this study is minimal which falls under the criteria for expedited reviews. The method used in this research are asking participants to reflect on their own experiences with Facing Racism.

This research will engage with only adults through semi-structured interviews via Zoom. The interviews will be used to research the phenomenon of Facing Racism through the lived experiences of the participants.

21. Informed consent and/or assent statements, if any are used, are to be included with this application. If information other than that provided on the informed consent form is provided (e.g. a cover letter), attach a copy of such information. If a consent form is not used, or if consent is to be presented orally, state your reason for this modification below. *Oral consent is not allowed when participants are under age 18.

Recruitment Email (Appendix A)

Informed Consent Form (Appendix B)

22. If questionnaires, tests, or related research instruments are to be used, then you must attach a copy of the instrument at the bottom of this form (unless the instrument is copyrighted material), or submit a detailed description (with examples of items) of the research instruments, questionnaires, or tests that are to be used in the project. Copies will be retained in the permanent IRB files. If you intend to use a copyrighted instrument, please consult with your research advisor and your IRB chair. Please clearly name and identify all attached documents when you add them on the attachments tab.
NA

Appendix D

Appendix D: CITI Module Certificate

Completion Date   01-Apr-2021
Expiration Date   31-Mar-2024
Record ID   23943870

This is to certify that:

Tawana Davis

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

Human Participants in Research
(Curriculum Group)
AU Midwest - Human Participants in Research
(Course Learner Group)
2 - Refresher Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Antioch University

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w93e29aea-2b36-4545-899c-072e92a82e5b-23943870

Appendix E

Appendix E: Recruitment Email

Greetings (name of participant),

I am Reverend Tawana Davis, Co-Founder of Soul 2 Soul Sisters and Co-Creator of Facing Racism. I am a doctoral student at Antioch University's Graduate School for Leadership and Change. I am reaching out to request your participation for my dissertation research.

I am conducting an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis with former white Facing Racism participants. I will be conducting a 90-minute interview with former white Facing Racism participants for an experiential dive in the impact, outcome, and sense/meaning making of the Facing Racism cohort. Depending on the interviews, we may need to schedule a 45-minute subsequent interview to address any further questions.

The interviews are semi-structured. Three questions will be asked for a thematic framework, congruency and guidance but will not be limited to these questions. Semi-structured interviews include open-ended questions that create space for the participant to express oneself freely and authentically.

In order to participate in this study, the participant must meet the following requirements:
- You identify as white
- You recently attended of Facing Racism
- You are over 18

If you fit the requirements and are interested in participating in this research study, please respond to this email. Once you confirm, other information including an informed consent will be sent to you to ensure permissions and confidentiality.

Please correspond using the following email: tdavis7@antioch.edu

Thank you for your consideration,

Tawana Davis
Ph.D. Candidate
Antioch University
Graduate School for Leadership and Change

Appendix F

Appendix F: IRB Informed Consent Form

This informed consent form is for a recent participant of Soul 2 Soul Sisters' Facing Racism Cohort for an invitation to participate in an interview about your experience of taking part in Facing Racism.

Name of Principle Investigator: Tawana Davis
Name of Organization: Antioch University's Graduate School of Leadership and Change
Name of Project: Womanist Leading to Eradicate Anti-Black Racism for Liberation of the Oppressed and the Oppressor: An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

You will be given a copy of the full Informed Consent Form

Introduction
I am Tawana Davis, a Ph.D. candidate at Antioch University Graduate School for Leadership and Change. As a part of this degree requirement, I am conducting research on the experience of former white Facing Racism participants and the learning, reflection, and sense/meaning making of the impact it had on them. I will be conducting an interview with one participant via Zoom with the possibility of 1-2 subsequent interviews.

I am inviting you to participate in this research. You may ask questions at any time. You may drop out of the project at any time.

You will receive additional information about this project.

Purpose of the research
Facing Racism is a program offered by Soul 2 Soul Sisters to eradicate anti-Black racism. Each cohort is for seven sessions with up to 60 people per cohort. Most of the attendees are white. Facing Racism began in 2015 in response to the rising disparate injustices against Black people in the United States. Although, Facing Racism leadership has conducted evaluative pre and post surveys, the research conducted in this study will do a deeper dive in the experience to explore the impact, the program has had on you, as well as learning and reflection you have taken as a result of doing the program, and how you have made sense of your experience of Facing Racism. The pre and post surveys are helpful, but this study will explore the phenomenon beyond the last day of the Facing Racism cohort to investigate the learning, reflection, and meaning of fighting to end anti-Black racism. The Facing Racism leaders review the curriculum at the end of each calendar year to discuss areas of improvement and review what is working to keep doing this life-long work.

Research Activities
This research will involve a one-on-one interview via Zoom. Interviews will be recorded solely for research purposes and possible publication.

Participant Selection

You are being invited to take part in this research because you are a recent participant in Facing Racism and completed the cohort.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate. You may withdraw from this research at any time. You will not be penalized for your decision not to participate.

Risks

I do not anticipate that you will be harmed as a result of participating in this research. There may be some discomfort in describing difficult experiences. You may stop participating in the research at any time if you become uncomfortable or take breaks as needed.

Benefits

Your participation may help me to learn more about your experience after participating and completing the Facing Racism cohort, help you in your sensemaking, and provide a sacred space for reflecting on your experience.

Reimbursements

You will not be provided any monetary incentive to take part in this research.

Confidentiality

All information will be de-identified, so that it cannot be connected back to you. Your real name will be replaced with a pseudonym in the write-up of the research. I and the transcriber will be the only persons with access to your name associated with the pseudonym. All Zoom recordings will be kept in a secure place.

Limits of Privacy Confidentiality

Generally speaking, I can assure you that I will keep private everything you tell me or do for the study. Yet there are times where I cannot keep things private (confidential). Therefore, to ensure confidentiality, you will sign a confidentiality agreement. In addition, I will remind you that the information discussed needs to remain confidential.

The researcher cannot keep things private (confidential) when:
- The researcher finds out that a child or vulnerable adult has been abused
- The researcher finds out that that a person plans to hurt him or herself, such as commit suicide,
- The researcher finds out that a person plans to hurt someone else,

There are laws that require many professionals to take action if they think a person is at risk for self-harm or are self-harming, harming another or if a child or adult is being abused. In addition, there are guidelines that researchers must follow to make sure all people are treated with respect and kept safe. In most states, there is a government agency that must be told if someone is being abused or plans to self-harm or harm another person. Please ask any questions you may have about this issue before agreeing to be in the study. It is important that you do not feel betrayed if it turns out that the

researcher cannot keep some things private.

Future Publication
I reserve the right to include any results of this study in future scholarly publications and presentations. All information will be de-identified prior to publication.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw
You do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to do so and you may withdraw from the study at any time without your job being affected.

Who to Contact?
If you have any questions, you may ask them now or later. For any questions, you may contact Tawana Davis.

DO YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH?

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to participate in this research.

Print Name of Participant_____

Signature of Participant _____

Date_____ **Day/month/year**

DO YOU WISH TO BE VIDEOTAPED AND/OR AUDIOTAPED AS PART OF THIS RESEARCH?
I voluntarily agree to let the researcher video/audiotape me for this research. I agree to allow the use of my recordings as described in this form.

Print Name of Participant_____

Signature of Participant _____

Date_____ **Day/month/year**

To be filled out by the researcher or the person taking consent:

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the research and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been provided to the participant.

Print Name of Researcher/person taking the consent_____

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent_____

Date_____ **Day/month/year**