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“US, THEM OR WE?: CROSSING BOUNDARIES TO ENGAGE IN DIFFICULT DIALOGUES”

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“US, THEM OR WE?: CROSSING BOUNDARIES TO ENGAGE IN DIFFICULT DIALOGUES”

Franklyn Conroy Williams

Graduate Assistant, Department of Counseling and School Psychology
University of Nebraska at Kearney

"In addition to gaining insights into the Black male experience in America, participants will gain a better understanding of Black identity development."

This session will address the comparative thoughts and perceptions of Black males in terms of race, ethnicity and culture and what these imply for counseling and student affairs practice. The format of the session will involve the examination of two questions. The first of these is: "How do the real-life experiences of Black males parallel what is found in the literature?" The other is: "What does our knowledge about these real-life experiences imply for counseling and student affairs practice?"

The researcher will share his synthesis of works by scholars such as Joseph White, James Cones III, Thomas Parham, Courtland Lee, Devon Carbado, William Cross, Na'im Akbar, Wade Nobles, Woodrow Parker and Spike Lee. This synthesis is an integration of the works of these men into a singular body of ideas. A singular body of ideas allows for a more accessible source of understanding of the Black male experience.

This researcher will also present findings from a qualitative research study designed to:

- i) to address and test the validity of some of conclusions of the above-named scholars against the real-life experiences of Black males, and
- ii) to ascertain the implications of the findings for counselors and student affairs practitioners.

The research took the form of dialogue with different groups of Black males. The purpose of the dialogue/focus groups was to share this researcher's above-mentioned synthesis and then to give Black males the opportunity to respond to the synthesis in terms of their own real-life experiences.

Realizing that the experiences of Black males from countries other than America might be different from those of Black males born and reared in America, three separate focus groups were formed-one composed of African-American males, another composed of African-born males, and the other of males from the Bahamas.

The intention is to make session participants aware of how these results may be applicable in their own professional work as people of color at predominantly white institutions or as white professionals working with students of color.

In addition to gaining insights into the Black male experience in America, participants will gain a better understanding of Black identity development. Participants will leave the

session with valuable resources that will include a written copy of the researcher's synthesis of ideas, research study results and a written list of implications for professional practice.

Presenter:

Franklyn C. Williams is a graduate assistant at the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) where he is currently completing a Master's Degree in School Counseling. Previously, Mr. Williams served as a school counselor in Freeport, Bahamas for five (5) years with particular experience in working with at-risk/misdirected students. He already holds a Master's Degree from the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri and an undergraduate degree in Sociology and Administrative Studies from the University of Western Ontario, London. Mr. Williams is active in the Nebraska Association of Multicultural Counseling and Development as newsletter editor and is a student member of the Nebraska Counseling Association (NCA), Chi Sigma Iota and the American Counseling Association (ACA).