Help-seeking attitudes of Black college students: the effects of racism, cultural mistrust, and campus racial climate

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HELP-SEEKING ATTITUDES OF BLACK COLLEGE STUDENTS: THE EFFECTS OF
RACISM, CULTURAL MISTRUST, AND CAMPUS RACIAL CLIMATE

by

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Abstract

Black college students utilize mental health services less often than other racial groups, despite experiencing psychological distress (Kearney, Draper, & Baron, 2005; Sontag-Padilla et al., 2016). Black students face a number of unique barriers including experiences with racism, poorer adjustment, and cultural mistrust, which have been linked to poor retention outcomes (Iacovino & James, 2016), particularly at predominantly White institutions (PWIs). While there is a need for mental health service utilization among this population, a number of factors impact students’ willingness to seek services. The current study examined the role of race-related stress, cultural mistrust, and campus racial climate in predicting help-seeking attitudes of Black college students at a PWI. More specifically, cultural mistrust was hypothesized to mediate the existing relationship between race-related stress and help-seeking attitudes. Campus racial climate was conceptualized as a potential moderator of the relationship between cultural mistrust and help-seeking attitudes.

Black undergraduates (N = 318) at a public Northeastern PWI were surveyed using self-report measures. Conditional process analysis was used to test the moderation of the indirect effect of race-related stress on help-seeking attitudes through cultural mistrust. Findings did not reflect the hypothesized moderated mediation between the primary study variables, however significant relationships were noted among control and demographic variables, providing relevant information and potential directions for future research.
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Chapter I: Introduction

There has been an historical underutilization of mental health services by people of color (Constantine, Chen, & Ceesay, 1997; Snowden, 2001) and existing research has documented that Black Americans tend to rely on informal sources of support rather than seeking professional mental health assistance (Woodward et al., 2008). Several studies support this finding, as well as the finding that many people of color only seek treatment when their problems become severe (e.g., Flasketud & Hu, 1994; Zane, Enomoto, & Chun, 1994). Black Americans often experience a mistrust of medical institutions (Breland-Noble, Bell, & Nicolas, 2006), and hold negative perceptions of White therapists (Whaley, 2001c). People of color are also more likely to attend fewer counseling sessions and prematurely end therapy compared to White individuals (Sue & Sue, 2016). College students of color, and more specifically, Black college students are no different in this regard.

Despite experiencing significant distress (Kearney et al., 2005), Black college students underutilize mental health services on college campuses (Davidson, Yakushka, & Sanford-Martens, 2004). In a study of 33,943 undergraduates at 39 California colleges and universities, Sontag-Padilla et al. (2016) found that African American students were less likely to utilize mental health services than White students. Brownson, Swanbrow Becker, Shadick, Jaggars, and Nitkin-Kaner (2014) found that Black students experienced suicide rates similar to other racial groups though were far less likely to seek formal help. However, there has been a limited amount of research on the help-seeking attitudes of Black students.

The above experiences faced by Black students and students of color in general exist within a larger context of increasing severity and prevalence of psychological distress and diagnoses on college campuses. In a recent survey, college counseling center directors noted that
the frequency and severity of psychological problems are increasing at alarming rates (APA, 2013). Depression is widespread in this population, with over 30% of college students reporting severe depression that prevents them from daily functioning (American College Health Association, 2008). Additionally, suicide remains the second leading cause of death for college students (Suicide Prevention Resource Center, 2004).

Black college students face a unique set of stressors compared to students from other racial groups, namely race-related stress, cultural mistrust, and campus racial climate. The U.S. Department of Education (2014) found that African American students had the lowest 4-year college graduate rate of any racial group (20.8%). This may be due to the negative social experiences, racist experiences, and negative faculty interactions that Black students face, which leads to poorer adjustment and retention outcomes (Iacovino & James, 2016). Another study found that a majority of Black college students reported an experience with racism in the past two weeks and these experiences with discrimination were linked to psychological distress (e.g., suicidal ideation, poor adjustment) (Swim, Hyers, Cohen, Fitzgerald, & Bylsma, 2003).

Additionally, it has been found that many Black college students reported cultural mistrust, which were associated less favorable attitudes toward counseling (Harewood, 2009; Whaley, 2001b). These unique stressors likely increase Black college students need for mental health services, and likely also negatively impact Black college students’ willingness to seek mental health.

The current study examined the role of race-related stress, cultural mistrust, and campus racial climate in predicting help-seeking attitudes of Black college students at predominantly White institutions (PWIs). Race-related stress is the stress associated with everyday encounters of racism and discrimination for African Americans (Utsey & Ponterotto, 1996). Cultural
mistrust is defined as the level of mistrust that Black Americans hold toward White Americans (Terrell & Terrell, 1981). Campus racial climate is conceptualized as the cultural attitudes and perceptions associated with individuals’ diversity-related concerns in a university setting (Sedlacek, Helm, & Prieto, 1998). Lastly, help-seeking attitudes are defined as one’s choice to approach or avoid seeking psychological treatment when in distress (Fischer & Turner, 1970).

In the present study, the term ‘Black’ is used to refer to individuals of African or Afro-Caribbean descent. Individuals who are bi-racial were able to participate in this study if they self-identified with being Black more than any other race. Predominantly white institutions (PWIs) are defined as institutions that historically began as White institutions and have more than one-half of the student body being White. Students of color at PWIs encounter a number of barriers, including tokenism, stereotyping, cultural insensitivity, and social isolation which impact both social and academic functioning (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002; Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010). Thus, Black students at PWIs are at higher risk for a number of unique stressors, which warrants attention.

It is known that experiences with racism negatively predict help-seeking attitudes for Black adults (Keating & Robertson, 2004); however, this relationship has not been empirically tested in a Black college student sample. Racism has been linked to higher levels of cultural mistrust (Combs et al., 2006) and cultural mistrust has been shown to be related to less favorable attitudes toward help-seeking (Nickerson, Helms, & Terrell, 1994). It therefore stands to reason that cultural mistrust may help to explain the relationship between race-related stress and help-seeking attitudes, thus functioning as a mediator in this relationship. Although research has demonstrated the association between race-related stress and cultural mistrust, and that between cultural mistrust and help-seeking attitudes, all three variables have not been empirically tested
in a mediational model. The first goal of the present study was to address this gap in the literature by testing cultural mistrust as a mediator in the relationship between race-related stress and help-seeking attitudes.

By examining the explanatory mechanism (i.e., cultural mistrust) underlying this important relationship, this study sought to provide valuable information to college administrators, faculty, and mental health professionals regarding the help-seeking attitudes of Black college students. If cultural mistrust were found to mediate this relationship, efforts could be aimed at finding ways to reduce students’ cultural mistrust, such as hiring more counselors of color at the counseling center and implementing outreach programming to familiarize students with services and staff.

Although the relationship between cultural mistrust and help-seeking attitudes has been studied in the Black population, limited research has been conducted on factors (e.g., campus racial climate) that could influence, and more specifically, lessen its negative impact. Therefore, the second goal of this study is to test the moderating, or buffering, effect of campus racial climate on the relationship between cultural mistrust and help-seeking attitudes. Positive campus racial climate has been linked to more positive experiences for college students of color (Gloria, Hird, & Navarro, 2001). Gloria and Robinson Kurpius (1996) found that students who have positive experiences in a campus environment look more favorably on campus organizations/activities and will therefore be more likely to engage with campus services. A qualitative study of the student of color experience at a PWI showed that a campus environment that is reflective of one’s culture and values led to increased engagement in campus activities (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002).
Several authors have noted that the barriers faced by students of color at PWIs can be reduced via campus involvement and faculty interaction (e.g., Montelongo & Ortiz, 2001; Palmer, Maramba, & Holmes, 2011). Black students at PWIs often perceive the campus environment as oriented toward Whites, lacking culturally inclusive activities (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002). The lack of culturally inclusive activities highlights the importance of examining the campus environment in an effort to increase inclusiveness and enhance the functioning of students of color at PWIs, especially given the cultural mismatch between students’ home environment and the campus environment at PWIs (Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010). The above research highlights the particular importance of the campus racial climate for this population, and its impact on student engagement with campus services and organizations.

As discussed, Black students at PWIs often encounter racism and greater levels of cultural mistrust, both of which could lead to negative help-seeking attitudes (Chao, Mallinckrodt, & Wei, 2012; Keating & Robertson, 2004; Nickerson et al, 1994). Students who find themselves in a more supportive, inclusive, and multicultural environment might be less susceptible to the negative effects of racism and cultural mistrust, thus highlighting the importance of a positive campus racial climate. Given the important role played by campus racial climate in the experience of Black students, it stands to reason that campus racial climate might serve to reduce the negative impact of racism and cultural mistrust experienced by students. However, the moderating effect of campus racial climate has not been empirically tested. Therefore, the current study sought to fill a gap in the literature by introducing campus racial climate as a moderator in the relationship between cultural mistrust and help-seeking attitudes. If found to be significant, campus racial climate could be targeted as an important mechanism for reducing the negative effect of cultural mistrust on the help-seeking attitudes of Black students.
Theoretical Framework

An individual’s attitudes toward help-seeking can be conceptualized using Lewin’s (1951) field theory, which postulates that positives attract and negatives repel, such that an individual is led to either approach or avoid a given stimuli. Elliot and Covington (2001) stated that individuals’ approach motivation is influenced by a positive event or idea whereas avoidance motivation is influenced by a negative event or idea. Kushner and Sher (1989) applied field theory to individuals’ attitudes toward counseling, stating that the reluctance to seek professional psychological help can stem from a fear of services. Kushner and Sher (1989) define treatment fears as “a subjective state of apprehension arising from aversive expectations surrounding the seeking…of mental health services” (p. 251). The current study conceptualized race-related stress and level of cultural mistrust as avoidance factors that influence Black students’ attitudes toward counseling. More specifically, race-related stress and cultural mistrust can be thought of as factors leading to treatment fears for individuals (Vogel, Wester, & Larson, 2007). Vogel et al. (2007) noted the importance of further examination of avoidance factors and their influence.

It has been found that factors such as experiences with racism and cultural mistrust influence Blacks’ attitudes toward counseling (e.g., Keating & Robertson, 2004; Nickerson et al., 1994). A number of studies have found that people often view the mental health context as representative of experiences in broader society, thus individuals’ fear of treatment may stem from outside influences, such as racism and cultural mistrust. Individuals may believe that they will encounter racism in psychotherapy or be reluctant to share sensitive information as a result of cultural mistrust (Keating & Robertson, 2004). Therefore, individuals would choose to avoid rather than approach the act of seeking help at a counseling center. Kushner & Sher (1989)
suggested that disconfirmation of treatment fears could be an effective way to engage individuals in treatment and increase motivation. If cultural mistrust is found to mediate the relationship between race-related stress and help-seeking attitudes in the present study, it would then make sense for college professionals to focus their energy on reducing students’ cultural mistrust in an effort to reduce students’ avoidance of mental health services.

Deane and Todd (1996) suggested that finding a way to modify avoidance factors is an important goal for future research. A safe and inclusive campus racial climate may serve to mitigate the deleterious impact that race-related stress and cultural mistrust have on Black college students. In addition to the avoidance factors of race-related stress and cultural mistrust, this study also explored campus racial climate as a moderator in buffering the negative effects of these avoidance factors.

The hypotheses put forth in the current study are consistent with Clark, Anderson, Clark, and Williams’ (1999) biopsychosocial model of perceived racism in which one’s experience of racism or discrimination prompts physiological, psychological, and social responses for Black Americans. These responses can lead to significant physical and mental health issues if one is not able to cope with these effects. Adaptive coping responses, such as seeking counseling, can mitigate the negative health outcomes of racism. In this study, race-related stress and cultural mistrust are stressors that could lead to negative mental health outcomes, and help-seeking is an adaptive coping response. Clark et al. (1999) call for the identification of interventions that will lessen the deleterious impact of racism and it is hypothesized that a positive campus racial climate will buffer these negative effects and serve as a possible target for campus-wide intervention.

**Help-Seeking Attitudes**
Help-seeking attitudes refer to whether an individual chooses to approach or avoid seeking psychological treatment when experiencing distress (Fischer & Turner, 1970). According to the theory of reasoned action (TRA; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), an individual’s intention to engage in a behavior is strongly influenced by one’s attitude toward the behavior, thus demonstrating the importance of examining help-seeking attitudes. Specifically with Black college students, Mosley (2014) found positive help-seeking attitudes to be predictive of help-seeking intention at a predominantly White institution.

Black college students hold negative attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help (Ponterotto, Anderson, & Grieger, 1986; Walden, 1994; Williams & Justice, 2010). In an early review of the literature, Leong, Wagner, and Tata (1995) concluded that Black Americans as a group often hold negative views toward seeking formal help for mental health issues. Specifically in college student samples, researchers have found that Black students attended significantly fewer counseling sessions at a university counseling center than White students (Ayalon & Young, 2005), despite experiencing higher levels of distress at intake (Kearney et al., 2005). Brownson et al. (2014) found that Black students seriously considered suicide at similar rates to peers of other racial groups and were just as likely to seek help, however only 7% of those seeking help sought it from a mental health professional.

In an archival study of 242 college students utilizing counseling services at a major university over a period of five years, Davidson et al. (2004) found that only 2.4% of students of color at the university utilized counseling services and that these students attended counseling for briefer periods of time than White students. In their large-scale study of universities in California, Sontag-Padilla et al. (2016) found that African American students utilized services at a lower rate than White students. In a study of 66 universities, Hayes et al. (2011) found that
students of color were more likely to utilize the counseling center if there were more racial minority staff members, were experiencing higher levels of distress, had less family support, and had a history of psychiatric issues. Barriers to seeking treatment for college students may include cultural mistrust, social norms, and the belief that culturally sensitive services are not available (Hayes et al., 2011).

Williams and Justice (2010) examined the difference between help-seeking attitudes at both predominantly White institutions (PWIs) and historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and found that Black male college students held negative attitudes towards counseling at both types of schools. Furthermore, more salient masculinity norms were associated with increased barriers to mental health help-seeking among Black men (Powell, Adams, Cole-Lewis, Agyemang, & Upton, 2016). Black college students at an HBCU who were confident in the mental health profession and recognized a personal need for counseling were more likely to hold positive help-seeking attitudes (So, Gilbert, & Romero, 2005). Additionally, students who were further along in school (e.g., senior vs. freshman) were more likely to have positive help-seeking attitudes. The authors explained the latter finding by noting that students have increased familiarity with and knowledge of campus mental health services as they advance in their academic career. The authors noted however, that overall, Black students remained apprehensive toward seeking mental health treatment (So et al., 2005). The current study examined year in school as a control variable, given the finding that older students tended to have more positive help-seeking attitudes.

Researchers have also examined the types of concerns faced by students from different racial groups. Sheu and Sedlacek (2004) found that Black students were more likely than White or Asian students to seek help for impersonal concerns (e.g., career issues, study skills, time
management) rather than personal or emotional issues. They speculated that this finding might be related to Blacks’ cultural mistrust of mental health services, as seeking help for less personal issues might feel like a safer option than opening up to a counselor on a deeper level.

Overall, Black Americans have been found to hold negative attitudes towards counseling (Buser, 2009) and cultural mistrust has been identified as a key component of this reluctance to seek formal mental health services for people of color (Leong et al., 1995), and especially for Black Americans (Whaley, 2001a). Nickerson et al. (1994) found that cultural mistrust negatively predicts help-seeking attitudes (Beta = -.23). Therefore, cultural mistrust was included as both a predictor and mediating variable that is expected to negatively predict Black students’ help-seeking attitudes. Furthermore, those with higher levels of cultural mistrust had more negative attitudes towards seeking help at an agency staffed by White counselors and a belief that services from White counselors would not be adequate. In a community and college sample, Obasi and Leong (2009) found that higher levels of psychological distress negatively predicted help-seeking attitudes. Those in more psychological distress had negative views toward help-seeking, which differs from previous research including White participants. These authors posited that psychological distress might trigger other help-seeking barriers, such as cultural mistrust, which would help to explain the negative view of help-seeking.

In a study of Black students at a PWI, psychological distress was found to positively predict willingness to seek counseling (Constantine, Wilton, & Caldwell, 2003). Additionally, greater satisfaction with one’s sources of social support led to decreased willingness to seek counseling. In other words, students who gained support from family and peers were less willing to seek professional support. This finding reflects earlier research indicating that Blacks and other racial minority groups were more likely to seek help from informal sources such as family,
community members, and religious leaders rather than from mental health professionals (e.g., Constantine et al., 1997; McMiller & Weisz, 1996). In a community college sample, Ayalon and Young (2005) also found that compared to Whites, Black students were more likely to rely on religious rather than professional forms of help. Barksdale and Molock (2009) noted the importance of peer and family norms and their influence on the help-seeking intentions of Black college students.

A review of the literature on help-seeking shows the importance of studying the experience of Black college students and factors that influence their willingness to seek formal help from a mental health professional. Findings in the literature have informed the selection of control variables for the study (e.g., year in school, previous experience in counseling) and the mediating variable of cultural mistrust, as these variables have a profound impact on help-seeking attitudes for Blacks (Masuda, Anderson, & Edmonds, 2012; Whaley, 2001a).

**Racism**

Racism is defined as “the beliefs, attitudes, institutional arrangements, and acts that tend to denigrate individuals or groups because of phenotypic characteristics or ethnic group affiliation” (Clark et al., 1999, p. 805). Jones’ (1972) tripartite model of racism for Blacks describes racism as taking three forms: individual (superiority of one’s own racial group), institutional (policies and actions of institutions that grant privilege to some and restrict the rights of others), and cultural (the idea that one culture is superior and can be demonstrated on both an individual and institutional level). In the present study, participants’ race-related stress, or stress related to everyday experiences with racism as defined according to Jones’ (1972) model, is included as a predictor of help-seeking attitudes.
Black Americans encounter racism in society, and the experience of Black college students on campus is no different in this regard (Pieterse, Carter, Evans, & Walter, 2010; Swim et al., 2003). Ninety-one percent of a Black community sample encountered racial discrimination at some point over the past 10 years, with most reporting recurrent experiences (Carter & Forsyth, 2010). These participants reported that the most significant encounters with discrimination took place at work or school. This finding underscores the importance of examining the student experience with racism, as campuses provide an environment where this behavior is likely to occur.

Black college students experience racism on an individual, cultural, and institutional level (Deering, 2004; Swim et al., 2003). In a study on the experience of racism for Black college students at a PWI, found that a majority of students reported experiencing racism within the past two weeks (Swim et al., 2003). Using a diary format, the majority of students reported 1-2 experiences with racism in a two-week period, with 10% of students reporting 3-7 incidents. Students encountered racism in the form of suspicious staring (36%), verbal insults (24%), poor service at businesses (18%), and what was classified as miscellaneous (e.g., rude interactions; 15%). The experiences led to increased feelings of discomfort and threat, with the most common emotional response being anger (58%). Many of the interactions took place in familiar settings (e.g., school or social settings), which could be damaging to students’ interpersonal relationships. The authors concluded that approximately two-thirds of Black college students at PWIs would encounter racism at some point in a given two-week period. Swim et al. (2003) also noted that while subtle or covert racism is often thought of as most common in today’s society, more direct or overt forms of racism are still a reality for Black students. Deering (2004) found that cultural racism, or the belief in the superiority of one group over another, was most common and most
impactful in a sample of Black undergraduates at a PWI. Compared to both White and Asian students, Black students reported the highest levels of discrimination (Pieterse et al., 2010).

**Impact of racism.** Ample evidence demonstrates the negative effects of racism on an individual’s mental and physical health, such as depression and high blood pressure (Brondolo, ver Halen, Pencille, Beatty, & Contrada, 2009). In a meta-analysis including 66 studies of Black Americans published between 1996 and 2011, Pieterse, Todd, Neville, and Carter (2012) found a positive relation between perceived racism and psychological distress (e.g., PTSD, depression). Black Americans in particular have described more encounters with racism than other racial minorities, which can be linked to inequality in health outcomes.

In another meta-analysis, Pascoe and Smart Richman (2010) found that perceived discrimination significantly and negatively affects one’s physical and mental health. Stress responses to discrimination included anger, psychological stress, lowered self-esteem, diminished psychological well-being, decreased life satisfaction, depression, and anxiety. Discrimination was also associated with more engagement in unhealthy behaviors (e.g., risky sexual behavior, drug/alcohol use) and less engagement in healthy behaviors (e.g., medical compliance, doctor visits).

Additionally, in a study of racial and ethnic minorities, Carter and Forsyth (2010) found that experiences with racism led to increased levels of anxiety, shame, guilt, and hypervigilance. The authors found that participants with direct rather than vicarious experiences with racism reported more symptoms and negative reactions, with 78% of the sample reporting stress following the racist experience. Forty-four percent of Black Americans in this sample reported continued stress after two months up to one year. The most frequent emotions felt by Black
participants were disrespected, insulted, disappointed, and outraged, among others (Carter & Forsyth, 2010).

The amount of research demonstrating the detrimental effects of racism on Black individuals highlights the importance of this construct in society. Experiences with racism are a common occurrence for Black individuals and it is important to further examine the ways in which racism can impact individuals. Specifically, past research has shown the negative impact that racism can have on Black college students studying at PWIs (Ashburn-Nardo & Smith, 2008; Chao et al., 2012; Deering, 2004).

In an examination of archival data of 1,555 Black undergraduates from seven Midwestern PWIs by Chao et al. (2012), perceived racism was found to be associated with a variety of presenting concerns, with the most common being depression, anxiety, uncertainty about the future, and adjustment. Students who reported racial discrimination were 3 to 18 times more likely to experience causes of distress that tend to be rare for the Black undergraduate population, such as suicidal ideation, homesickness, spiritual concerns, and family differentiation issues. The specific impacts for males and females were found to be irritability/anger and procrastination, respectively. Chao et al. (2012) also found that perceived racial discrimination was associated with perfectionism, decreased self-esteem, and body image/eating issues, which indicated a desire to fit into an unfamiliar or harmful environment.

In another sample of Black undergraduates at a PWI, experiences with institutional racism, defined as one’s experience of racism from the institution’s policies, led to lower levels of social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, attachment to the institution, and overall adjustment to college (Deering, 2004). Other researchers have also noted the importance of environment in making Black students more vulnerable to racial stress (Lepore & Evans, 1996;
Madrazo-Peterson & Rodriguez, 1978). Relatedly, Pieterse et al. (2010) suggest that perceptions of one’s environment as hostile or discriminatory can lead to psychological distress, regardless of direct experience of discrimination. The aforementioned findings about the association between experiences with racism/discrimination and psychological distress lends support for this study’s conceptualization of racism as including both experiences with racist behavior and its stress response (i.e., race-related stress).

**Racism and help-seeking.** Given the numerous studies demonstrating the negative effects of racism, it is critical to examine how individuals cope with the resulting distress. Black college students at PWIs seem particularly vulnerable, as these students tend to experience a number of presenting concerns (e.g., suicidal ideation, lowered self-esteem, poor college adjustment), which are often amplified by experiences with racism (Chao et al., 2012). Further examination of the ways in which Black college students at PWIs handle or cope with these issues is vital. Therefore, this study examined racism as a predictor of help-seeking attitudes in this population.

It has been shown in the literature on help-seeking that people of color are more likely to seek help from informal (e.g., family/friends) rather than formal (e.g., counselors) sources (e.g., Ayalon & Young, 2005; Carter & Forsyth, 2010). For example, over 50% of students in a sample of Black college students experiencing racism sought support from friends or family following the encounters (Swim et al., 2003). Deering (2004) found that Black male college students with increased race-related stress were more likely to engage in problem-focused coping (e.g., seeking social support). Using qualitative methods, Lewis, Mendenhall, Harwood, and Browne Huntt (2013) examined the ways in which Black women coped with racial microaggressions. These authors found that coping strategies included speaking up against the perpetrator, making shifts
in one’s thinking, and relying on one’s social support network. Seeking counseling or mental health services did not emerge as a form of coping.

Studies have also found that experiences with racism impact individual of colors’ help-seeking attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Carter & Forsyth, 2010; Keating & Robertson, 2004). In a qualitative study of Black adults in the U.K., Keating and Robertson (2004) found that experiences with racism played an important role in participants’ attitudes toward seeking help. Specifically, people tended to avoid the use of professional services until problems became very serious. Carter and Forsyth (2010) found that 57% of participants in a community sample of racial and ethnic minorities sought help following an experience with racism, however only 12% of those individuals sought help from a mental health professional (e.g., counselor or psychologist). Blacks were found to be the least likely group to seek professional help following a racist encounter, and were more likely to instead seek help from friends, family, spouse, colleagues, or mentors.

Race-related stress is an important variable to study given its negative impact on Black individuals’ psychological well-being and overall mental health. Further examination of how individuals choose to cope with heightened distress, or their help-seeking attitudes, presents another important area of inquiry. It is clear that one’s experience of race-related stress influences whether an individual will seek help and what form this help will take (i.e., formal or informal). Therefore, race-related stress was examined as a predictor variable of help-seeking attitudes in the current study. Additionally, researchers have noted the important role of cultural mistrust in the relationship between racism and help-seeking (Carter & Forsyth, 2010; Keating & Robertson, 2004), and Combs et al. (2006) found that perceived racism positively predicted
cultural mistrust and nonclinical paranoia. Therefore, cultural mistrust was examined as a potential mediating variable between racism and help-seeking attitudes in this study.

**Cultural Mistrust**

Cultural mistrust is significant in the lives of Black Americans (Whaley, 2001a). Cultural mistrust, or the mistrust of Whites by Blacks, stems from Ridley’s (1984) concept of cultural paranoia. Cultural paranoia, now referred to as cultural mistrust, comes from Black Americans interactions with Whites and Blacks’ current and historical experiences with discrimination (Ridley, 1984; Whaley, 2001a) and is a result of commonplace experiences (e.g., racism) that are perceived as threatening (Combs et al., 2006). In a focus group study of 60 Black Americans, Freimuth et al. (1997) found that most participants had knowledge of the Tuskegee syphilis study and reported that it influenced their view of medical research. Participants in this study indicated general mistrust of mental health providers and linked this mistrust to racism. Most recently, Dean, Long, Matthews, and Buckner (2017) found a positive association between perceived racism and cultural mistrust in a sample of Black undergraduates.

Whaley (2001a) posited that cultural mistrust is influenced by a person and his or her environment. Therefore, further investigation of the environment in which Blacks exist is warranted. Terrell and Terrell (1981) noted that cultural mistrust tends to occur in four areas: educational/training, political/legal, work/business, interpersonal/social. Whaley (2001b) suggested that Blacks likely view the counseling environment as a “microcosm of larger White society” (p. 513). The counseling setting could prompt higher levels of cultural mistrust for Blacks, given the sensitive and vulnerable nature of counseling. Overall, it has been argued that cultural mistrust is an important factor to consider in the mental health treatment of Black
Americans, influencing Black individuals’ attitudes and behaviors regarding their use of such services (Whaley, 2001a).

In Whaley’s (2001b) meta-analysis of 22 studies examining cultural mistrust in college and community samples (N = 3,300 Black individuals), it was found that cultural mistrust significantly impacted the psychosocial functioning of Black Americans in a variety of domains, with a medium effect size ($r = .30$). Results indicated that Blacks’ experience of cultural mistrust was not limited to mental health settings. The author argued that the meta-analysis findings lend support for the argument that “interracial mental health encounters are influenced by the broad cultural context” (Whaley, 2001b, p. 524). Furthermore, it was found that younger individuals experienced greater cultural mistrust. This finding underscores the importance of examining cultural mistrust in younger populations, such as college students. In fact, the majority of recent research on the relationship between cultural mistrust and help-seeking attitudes has been conducted on Black college students, demonstrating the importance of cultural mistrust for this population. However, cultural mistrust has not been conceptualized as a mediator in the relationship between racism and help-seeking attitudes and such conceptualization could provide important information to better understand the way in which help-seeking attitudes are impacted by these variables.

Several studies have examined the relationship between cultural mistrust and Blacks’ attitudes toward counseling (Whaley, 2001a). In a sample of 128 Black college students from both PWIs and HBCUs, Combs et al. (2006) found that perceived racism was significantly and positively correlated with cultural mistrust. The authors suggested that cultural mistrust was influenced by cultural and social rather than intrapersonal (i.e., psychiatric) factors. This
implication demonstrates the importance of examining not just the individual, but also the environment in which they live (e.g., college campus).

In a study of 113 Black college students, Harewood (2009) found that higher levels of cultural mistrust negatively predicted help-seeking attitudes (beta = -.22), and help-seeking attitudes functioned as a mediator that negatively predicted help-seeking intentions. In a qualitative study of Black adults involved in the mental health system in the United Kingdom, Keating and Robertson (2004) found that individuals’ experiences in mental health treatment were reflective of discriminatory experiences in broader society, on both personal and institutional levels. The authors noted that individuals became reluctant to seek help as a result of these discriminatory experiences and did not seek mental health treatment until problems became very severe, which led to a more significant impact on society (e.g., police involvement).

In a sample of Black college students at a PWI, Nickerson et al. (1994) found that higher levels of cultural mistrust predicted negative help-seeking attitudes and that it was the strongest predictor of help-seeking attitudes compared to their opinions about mental illness and overall satisfaction with social service. Authors also found that more mistrust led to negative attitudes toward seeking help at counseling centers staffed by White counselors and the belief that these services would be less effective (Nickerson et al., 1994). This finding highlights the relationship between racial make-up of mental health professionals and its influence on level of cultural mistrust.

Several studies have examined other factors that influence the relationship between cultural mistrust and help-seeking attitudes. Black undergraduate and graduate students at both PWIs and HBCUs who are older, from lower SES, and hold lower levels of cultural mistrust hold more favorable attitudes towards counseling (Duncan, 2003). In a subsequent study of Black
college students, Duncan and Johnson (2007) found that female students with lower levels of cultural mistrust held more positive attitudes toward help-seeking. Additionally, students who were higher in African self-consciousness and cultural mistrust expressed preference for a Black counselor. Lastly, in a sample of Black community residents and college students, Townes, Chavez-Korell, and Cunningham (2009) found that higher levels of cultural mistrust, lower assimilation attitudes, and strong Afrocentric identity significantly predicted individuals’ preference for a Black therapist. In the current study, year in school and gender were used as control variables to account for potential confounds.

Overall, the above findings highlight the significant negative relationship between cultural mistrust and help-seeking attitudes, which comprise an important element of the present study. It is known that cultural mistrust stems from Blacks’ interactions with Whites as well as experiences with discrimination (Ridley, 1984; Whaley, 2001a). There is an empirically supported link between experiences with racism and cultural mistrust, such that experiences with racism lead to greater cultural mistrust (e.g., Combs et al., 2006; Freimuth et al., 1997). In the preceding paragraphs, a number of studies were reviewed which demonstrate the significant negative relationship between cultural mistrust and help-seeking attitudes. Given what is known in the literature, it is hypothesized in the current study that cultural mistrust could explain, or mediate, the relation between race-related stress and help-seeking attitudes. In other words, race-related stress would be associated with greater levels of cultural mistrust, which in turn would be associated with negative help-seeking attitudes.

**Campus Racial Climate**

Campus racial climate, also studied in the literature as campus cultural congruity or university environment, impacts the help-seeking attitudes of students of color (Gloria et al.,
Campus racial climate is defined as students’ perceptions of the racial and ethnic environment at their institution. Gloria et al. (2001) noted that students may view the larger campus climate as reflective of the types of services to be received at university agencies. That is, students who experience the climate as negative are likely to have negative views of university agencies. It therefore could be reasoned that campus climate can temper, or moderate, the relationship between students’ experiences on campus (e.g., mistrust of White faculty/staff) and their perceptions of a university agency (e.g., counseling center). In this study, help-seeking attitudes were assessed in an effort to gauge students’ attitudes toward using counseling services at their university.

Keating and Robertson (2004) found that Black adults perceived their experience with mental health services as mimicking experiences in broader society, highlighting the overall importance of one’s environment in shaping opinions of mental health services. Gloria and Pope-Davis (1997) argued that the university environment of PWIs is typically White, male, middle-class, where individualism and competition are highly valued. It therefore makes sense why students who do not hold these identities would have a different experience of the campus climate, which has been demonstrated in several studies (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000; Pieterse et al., 2010).

In a sample of 389 undergraduates, Pieterse et al. (2010) found that Black students had more negative views of campus racial climate compared to Asian and White students. In another study of racially diverse undergraduates, Ancis et al. (2000) found that Black students reported more unequal treatment by faculty and staff, more racial conflict/tension on campus, and more stereotype pressure than other students of color and White students. It has been noted that a tense or unsafe environment could lead to issues often brought to counseling centers, including poor
academic performance and psychological stress (Ancis et al., 2000). In a qualitative study of Black college students, Schweitzer, Griffin, Ancis, and Thomas (1999) found that the adjustment of students was impacted by experiences with racism, difficulty communicating with faculty members, feeling isolated, and feeling more comfortable with racially similar faculty members. Iacovino and James (2016) highlight similar findings, citing campus climate as an important factor in predicting the adjustment and persistence of African American undergraduates. The authors also state that universities often overlook the unique barriers faced by students of color. Students of color, and more specifically, Black students, have a different perception of campus racial climate than White students (e.g., feeling isolated, experiencing racism, difficulty interacting with faculty).

There has been limited research on the degree to which university administrators have taken steps to foster a more supportive campus racial climate despite the fact that students of color report stress due to the university environment (Ponterotto, 1990; Watson et al., 2002). Campus racial climate therefore warrants further study, as its impact can be felt in a variety of areas. Experiencing a discriminatory campus climate impacts the cognitive development, academic persistence, and overall wellness of students of color. Cokley, McClain, Enciso, and Martinez (2013) noted that stereotypes, discrimination and campus cultural incongruity could lead to increased risk of psychological distress. A university environment that is hostile toward students of color impacts students’ ability to thrive on campus and grow academically (Gloria et al., 2001). In a stratified sample of undergraduates at a major mid-Atlantic university, students’ perception of campus racial climate was related to overall satisfaction with college (Sedlacek et al., 1998)
In a sample of 98 Mexican American female undergraduates, authors found that cultural congruity was a significant predictor of psychological well-being (Gloria, Castellanos, & Orozco, 2005). Cultural congruity is conceptualized as the degree to which one’s personal values fit with the larger university environment and is considered a barrier for students of color that is related to, but not the same as, campus racial climate. Students who viewed the university environment as a good cultural fit experienced less barriers in school and were more likely to take active and planned action when coping with difficulties. These students were also more likely to take active or planned approaches to coping, which came in the form of seeking both social/family support and professional advice (Gloria et al., 2005). Therefore, students of color who experience a more positive campus racial climate might be more likely to have positive attitudes towards counseling. It stands to reason that campus racial climate can moderate, or weaken, the relationship between students’ cultural experiences (e.g., cultural mistrust) and help-seeking attitudes, such that a more positive campus racial climate could diminish the negative relationship between cultural mistrust and help-seeking attitudes.

A number of studies have in fact specifically studied the relationship between campus racial climate and help-seeking attitudes. In a study of 716 undergraduates, Gloria et al. (2001) found that university environment and cultural congruity predicted help-seeking attitudes for students of color, with Beta values of .12 and .19, respectively. Overall, females had more positive help-seeking attitudes than males, and females’ perceptions of campus climate were more predictive of help-seeking attitudes than males’ perceptions, which supports the use of gender as a control variable in the current study. These authors suggested that students might be cautious about the help received from university’s agencies and believe that the help will not be a good fit. Students’ of color tendency to proceed with caution when seeking help from university
agencies would suggest a lack of trust in these services. Miville and Constantine (2007) also found that Mexican American college students who sensed a better cultural fit with the university were more likely to have positive help-seeking attitudes. Therefore, students who fit in with the campus culture would be more likely to utilize assistance from the university (e.g., at the counseling center). Lastly, in their study of 198 Black undergraduates at a PWI, Jones (2014) found that cultural congruity was positively related to help-seeking attitudes.

The above findings indicate a relationship between university environment and cultural congruity (i.e., campus racial climate) and help-seeking attitudes. The current study utilized the Cultural Attitudes and Climate Questionnaire (CACQ), a measure of campus racial climate created by Helm et al. (1998) instead of the aforementioned combined assessment of university environment and cultural congruity, as the CACQ is a single instrument that seems to better capture a comprehensive picture of campus racial climate. The importance of environment has also been highlighted in the existing literature on cultural mistrust.

Whaley (2001a) posited that cultural mistrust is influenced by a person and their environment. Several researchers have noted that cultural mistrust exists in mental health settings as it does in broader society, which influences individuals’ attitudes toward help-seeking (e.g., Keating & Robertson, 2004). Previous research has cited the importance of examining factors that influence one’s level of cultural mistrust, such as the environment. A number of studies have also demonstrated the specific importance of the campus environment and climate for students of color at PWIs and the impact on students’ overall functioning and engagement on campus. Given the impact of the environment on cultural mistrust found in the literature and the overall importance of the campus environment for students of color at PWIs, it would be logical to test the moderating role of campus racial climate in this relationship.
Research Hypotheses

The present study tested two main hypotheses regarding the relationships between Race-Related Stress (RRS), Cultural Mistrust (CM), Campus Racial Climate (CRC), and Help-Seeking Attitudes (HSA). Based on the existing literature, it was hypothesized that CM would partially mediate the relationship between RRS and HSA, when controlling for CRC (see Figure 1). Partial mediation was hypothesized due to the lack of empirical testing of this relationship in the literature. The second hypothesis posited that CRC would moderate the relationship between CM and HSA (see Figure 1). The specific research hypotheses are as follows:

1. When controlling for CRC, age, gender, and previous experience in counseling, the indirect effect of RRS on HSA through the mediator (CM) will be negative and significantly different from zero. The statistical hypotheses for the indirect effect of RRS on HSA through CM are as follows: $H_0: ab \geq 0$ and $H_a: ab < 0$. The statistical hypotheses for the direct effect of RRS on HSA are as follows: $H_0: c' = 0$ (There is no evidence of association between RSS and HSA when the mechanism through CM is accounted for) and $H_a: c' \neq 0$ (RRS is related to HSA independent of the mechanism represented by CM).

2. When controlling for RRS, age, gender, and previous experience in counseling, CRC will moderate the relation between CM and HSA. Specifically, it is hypothesized that positive perceptions of CRC will mitigate the negative relationship between CM and HSA.

Chapter II: Methods

Participants

An a priori power analysis was conducted to determine the number of participants required to achieve a power level of .80, with a studywise Type I error rate of .05.
Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007) provide a rough estimate of sample size for moderated mediation using bootstrapping methods. Suggested sample sizes ranged from 200-500, depending on the size of the effect anticipated (i.e. small vs. medium). However, these estimations are somewhat broad and are based on the assumption that all paths have the same anticipated effect size. Chu (2012) provided more specific sample estimates to achieve .80 power in moderated mediation models. A medium effect (Cohen, 1992) of $r = .39$, or 13% of the variance, was used for the path between race-related stress and cultural mistrust, based on extant literature as outlined above. Given the lack the relationships between both cultural mistrust and campus climate, and cultural mistrust and help-seeking attitudes, a small effect size was anticipated. Based on the guidelines outlined by Chu (2012), the current study would require a sample of 230 participants to achieve .80 power.

The current sample consisted of 318 Black/African American undergraduate students at a PWI. In order to participate in the study, participants were required to be: (a) 18-25 years of age (b) enrolled as an undergraduate at a predominantly White institution (PWI) (c) self-identified as Black American. Predominantly White institutions (PWIs) were defined in this study as institutions where White students comprise at least 50% of the student body, in accordance with the commonly accepted definition of a PWI (Brown & Dancy, 2010). Additionally, participants were asked to identify the name of their college/university to ensure that students were enrolled at a PWI. Individuals who did not meet the aforementioned inclusion criteria were exited from the survey and thanked for their time.

Of the total sample, 85.2% identified as Black/African American, 12.3% as bi or multi-racial including Black/African American, 2.2% identified as Caribbean and .3% as Caribbean plus other. The majority of the final sample was female (73.9%), with 25.2% male.
participants, .3% identifying as transgender, and .6% identifying as other. Eighty-five percent of the sample was heterosexual, 4% gay/lesbian, and 7% bisexual, with 4% identifying as asexual, pansexual, or other. Participants were evenly spread out in regards to class standing, with the sample consisting of 26.4% freshmen, 25.2% sophomores, 24.2% juniors, 23.9% seniors, and .3% listing other. Students were asked to rate their current level of distress on a scale of 1-10, with students’ overall distress level appearing evenly distributed (0 = .3%; 1 = 11.6%; 2 = 9.4%; 3 = 13.5%; 4 = 13.5%; 5 = 11.6%; 6 = 12.6%; 7 = 13.5%; 8 = 8.2%; 9 = 2.2%; 10 = 1.9%).

Design

The current study implemented an ex post facto cross-sectional design with one predictor variable (RRS; Race-Related Stress), one mediating variable (CM; Cultural Mistrust), one moderating variable (CRC; Campus Racial Climate), and one dependent variable (HSA; Help-Seeking Attitudes). These variables were assessed using instruments described in the next section.

Measures

Index of Race-Related Stress—Brief Version (IRRS-B). The IRRS-B (Utsey, 1999; see Appendix A) measures Black Americans’ experience with racism and the stress experienced as a result. The 22-item measure asks participants to indicate whether they or someone close to them has experienced racist situations and the resulting impact on the individual. Responses are on a 6-point Likert type scale ranging from 0 (this never happened to me) to 5 (event happened and I was extremely upset). Using confirmatory factor analysis, Utsey (1999) found a three-factor solution for the scale: cultural racism (10 items; i.e., the disparagement of one’s culture), institutional racism (6 items; i.e., racism experienced in formal policies and practices), and
individual racism (6 items; i.e., experienced in individual interactions). The three-factor solution is in accordance with Jones’ (1972) tripartite model of racism.

The IRRS-B was initially validated in a sample of community members and college students (Utsey, 1999). In this initial study, Utsey (1999) found alpha coefficients of .78, .69, and .78 for the cultural, institutional, and individual racism subscales, respectively. In another study with only college students, Utsey, Giesbrecht, and Hook (2008) achieved alpha coefficients of .81 for cultural racism and .79 for individual racism on the IRRS-B. Convergent validity was demonstrated through a significant positive correlation ($r = .50, p < .01$) between the total scores of the IRRS-B and the RaLES-Revised (Harrell, 1997), another measure of experiences with racism. Criterion-related validity was demonstrated by the finding that Blacks scored significantly higher than Whites on subscales and global racism score, indicating that the IRRS-B uniquely captures the experience of Black Americans (Utsey, 1999). The total score for overall race-related stress was used in the proposed study. The current sample produced a Cronbach’s alpha of .92.

**Cultural Mistrust Inventory.** The Cultural Mistrust Inventory (CMI; Terrell & Terrell, 1981; see Appendix B) is a widely used, 48-item instrument that measures the level of mistrust that Black Americans hold toward White Americans, in accordance with Grier and Cobb’s (1986) theory of cultural paranoia. Items are rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Scores range from 48 to 336, with higher scores reflecting higher levels of cultural mistrust. Although the scale is further broken down into subscales, Whaley (2002) recommends use of the total score rather than subscale scores. Therefore, the total score was used in the current study.
Although originally normed using a male college sample, Whaley’s (2001b) meta-analytic review found that effect sizes in male-only college samples were not statistically different than other samples. Reliability coefficients of .89 and .90 have been found for Black college students (Nickerson et al., 1994; Townes et al., 2009) and .89 for Black adults (Combs et al., 2006). Terrell and Terrell (1981) found two-week test-retest reliability of .86 as well as evidence of concurrent validity with the Racial Discriminatory Inventory (RDI; Terrell & Miller, 1980). Whaley (2002) demonstrated convergent validity evidence through positive correlation with a measure of nonclinical paranoia. Convergent validity was also demonstrated through lower ratings of counselor credibility and expectations for White counselors (Watkins & Terrell, 1988; Watkins, Terrell, Miller, & Terrell, 1989) as well as a correlation with negative attitudes towards help-seeking (Nickerson et al., 1984). Cronbach’s alpha is .92 in the current study.

**Cultural Awareness and Climate Questionnaire (CACQ).** The original CACQ is a 100-item measure developed by Helm et al. (1998) using principal axis factoring analysis with varimax rotation, which measures cultural attitudes and perceptions associated with individuals’ diversity concerns in a university setting. Eleven factors were identified, accounting for 48% of the total variance. Helm et al. (1998) also developed a 45-item version that excludes the demographic items used in the pilot study (see Appendix C). The 45 items are broken into 11 separate subscales, assessing different aspects of campus cultural climate. Authors of the CACQ were consulted to gain information on the validity and utility of the measure. For the current study, the following subscales were used: Racial Tension (6 items, $\alpha = .73$), Cross Cultural Comfort (6 items, $\alpha = .73$), Racial Pressures (4 items, $\alpha = .60$), Residence Hall Tension (5 items, $\alpha = .69$), Faculty Racism (2 items, $\alpha = .77$), and Respect for Other Cultures (3 items, $\alpha = .62$). These subscales were chosen based on the content validity of the scale items and the
degree to which these subscales best reflected a comprehensive picture of campus racial climate (i.e., diversity concerns at their university).

Items were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating a more positive campus racial climate. Items that are negatively worded were reverse scored. Convergent validity for African American students has been demonstrated by negative correlations between overall satisfaction with the university and the following subscales used in this study, Racial Tension \( (r = -0.20) \), Racial Pressures \( (r = -0.27) \), and Faculty Racism \( (r = -0.19) \). Cross-Cultural Comfort \( (r = 0.29) \), Respect for Other Cultures \( (r = 0.21) \), and Residence Hall Tension \( (r = 0.06) \) were positively correlated with overall university satisfaction for African American students (Helm et al., 1998). The total score of these six subscales was used to measure campus racial climate in the current study. The current sample produced a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.82.

**Attitudes Towards Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale—Short Form (ATSPPHS-S).** The ATSPPHS-S (Fischer & Farina, 1995; see Appendix D) was used to measure participants’ help-seeking attitudes. The ATSPPHS-S is one of the most widely utilized measures of help-seeking attitudes for people of color (Delphin & Rollock, 1995; Yeh, 2002). The ATSPPHS-S is a 10-item inventory that measures attitudes towards seeking help for psychological issues using a Likert-type response format \( (0 = \text{disagree}, 1 = \text{partly disagree}, 2 = \text{partly agree}, 3 = \text{agree}) \). The ATSPPHS-S is the shortened version of the original 29-item ATSPPHS and the short form was created using a college student sample (Fischer & Farina, 1995). The ATSPPHS-S was shown to have a correlation of 0.89 with the original long form (Fischer & Farina, 1995). Five of the ten items were reverse scored and all items were summed
for a single score (maximum 30), with higher scores reflecting more positive attitudes towards help-seeking.

Reliability coefficients of .86 and .73 were found in samples of undergraduate students of color and Black American adults, respectively (Gloria et al., 2001; Townes et al., 2009). Criterion validity was demonstrated through the correlation found between the ATSPPH-S score and help seeking behavior. Additionally, Fischer and Farina (1995) demonstrated test-retest reliability of .80 after four weeks in the normative college student sample. Cronbach’s alpha was .71 in the current sample.

Demographic questionnaire. Demographic information was collected to describe the sample and examine any potential confounding variables (see Appendix E). The demographic questionnaire included questions on participants’ gender, year in school, racial group membership, previous experience in counseling, and name of college/university. Past research has demonstrated the impact of year in school, gender, and previous experience in counseling on help-seeking attitudes (Masuda et al., 2012; Nam et al., 2010; So et al., 2005). Therefore, these three demographic variables were analyzed as control variables. Students were asked to indicate the name of their college/university in an open-response format to ensure that their institution qualified as a PWI.

Procedure

Convenience and snowball sampling methods were used to recruit Black undergraduate students for the study. Students were primarily recruited from students at a public university in the Northeast via flyers and in-class recruitment. The primary researcher posted flyers with the link to the survey in various locations around campus (e.g., bulletin boards, bathroom stalls, lecture halls). Emails with the survey link were sent to course instructors in various departments
and distributed to students. The primary researcher also went into classrooms and recruited students in person.

Recruited participants were asked to complete an online survey on PsychData.com. Upon clicking the link, participants were provided with an informed consent form, which outlined the nature of the study, anticipated risks/benefits, confidentiality, right to withdraw at any point, and contact information for the researchers and Office of Research Compliance. Participants were informed that the study is about the relationship between race and mental health on college campuses and that by clicking “Continue” on the initial screen, they would be providing their consent to participate in the study. Participants then proceeded to the survey, on which the measures were counterbalanced using two different orders of the predictors variables (RRS, CM, CRC, HSA), in an effort to prevent order effects. Upon completion of the survey, participants were thanked for their time and asked to forward the survey link to five individuals who also meet criteria for participation in the study. Participants were provided with an opportunity to enter their email address for a chance to win one of several $10 Amazon gift cards or one $75 Amazon gift card.

Data Analysis

Conditional process analysis was used to test the moderation of the indirect effect of RRS on HSA through CM, the statistical models for which are as follows (Hayes, 2013):

(a) \( M_{CM} = i_1 + aX_{RRS} + e_M \)

(b) \( Y_{HSA} = i_2 + c'X_{RRS} + b_1M_{CM} + b_2V_{CRC} + b_3M_{CM} * V_{CRC} + e_Y. \)

The regression coefficients for the moderated-mediation model were estimated using two OLS regressions in SPSS. In order to determine whether the conditional effect was different from zero, the PROCESS tool (Hayes, 2012) was used. The PROCESS tool requires the
specification of all variables in the model, the model number being used (Model 14; Hayes, 2013, p. 450), and the role of each variable based on the conceptual diagram (see Figure 1). Bootstrapping confidence intervals were used to make statistical inferences about the indirect effect of RRS on HSA through CM conditioned on CRC (Hayes, 2013).

Chapter III: Results

Preliminary Analyses

Prior to analyzing the data, several steps were taken to prepare the data set for formal data analyses. Demographic responses were reviewed to ensure that participants met inclusion criteria (i.e., 18+ years, self-identified as Black American, undergraduate at PWI). Of the 584 participants who initially took the survey, 152 participants were removed from the data because they had missing data exceeding 10% (i.e., left more than 11 responses blank) of the total number of instrument items. An additional 114 participants were removed from the data set, as they did not meet inclusion criteria (i.e., did not identify as an 18 to 25-year-old Black undergraduate), resulting in a final sample of 318 participants. Missing data were imputed using the expectation-maximization algorithm in SPSS for 371 values (0.01%) out of 34,238 values in the data set.

Assumptions of regression analysis were tested using the following methods (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). First, scatterplots of bivariate correlations for the relationship between each of the predictors and the dependent variable were visually inspected, demonstrating linearity. There were no statistically significant outliers in the data, which was determined by calculating the Mahalanobis distance ($d^2$) for each case and testing the significance via chi-squared test using a conservative .001 cutoff level, as recommended by Kline (2016). Examination of the skewness and kurtosis for all four variables demonstrated
normality, as values fell within the accepted cutoff range of -2 to +2 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). The assumption of homoscedasticity was tested by plotting the residuals against the predicted values for the dependent variable to ensure that the variance is roughly equal. Independence is assumed as there was no paired data. The lack of multicollinearity is supported by the < 10 variance inflation factor (VIF) values for each predictor (RRS = 1.37, CM = 1.53, CRC = 1.34). A summary of the correlation matrix, mean item scores, standard deviations, response scale, and Cronbach’s alphas for the main study variables is presented in Table 1.

**Formal Analyses**

The first major hypothesis posited that the indirect effect of RRS on HSA through the mediator (CM) would be negative and significantly different from zero when controlling for year in school, gender, and previous experience in counseling. This hypothesis was rejected, as there was no significant indirect effect of CM on the relationship between RRS and HSA (indirect effect = -.02, 95% CI = -.06, .02, p > .05). The second hypothesis presumed that CRC would moderate the relationship between CM and HSA, thereby weakening the relationship between these variables, when controlling for age, gender, and previous experience in counseling. The second hypothesis was also rejected, as the interaction effect of campus racial climate and cultural mistrust on help-seeking attitudes was nonsignificant (b = .08, 95% CI = -.07 to .23, p > .05). Both hypotheses were tested simultaneously using Hayes’ (2012) PROCESS tool, which additionally provides an index of moderated mediation indicating that none of the conditional indirect effects at each value of Campus Racial Climate were statistically different (index = .03, 95% CI = -.04, .09), thus providing no support for the study’s moderated mediation hypothesis. The results of the moderated mediation data analysis are presented in Table 2.
Examinations of specific relationships within the statistical model (Figure 2) are outlined below. Race-related stress was not significantly associated with help-seeking attitudes ($c’ = .00$, 95% CI = -.07 to .07, $p > .05$). Race-related stress was positively and significantly associated with cultural mistrust ($a_1 = .41$, 95% CI = .33 to .49, $p < .001$). Cultural mistrust was not significantly associated with help-seeking attitudes ($b_1 = -.33$, 95% CI = -.90 to .23, $p > .05$). Campus racial climate was not significantly associated with help-seeking attitudes ($b_2 = -.23$, 95% CI = -.83 to .36, $p > .05$).

Chapter IV: Discussion

Major Findings

The current study examined the roles of race-related stress, cultural mistrust, and campus racial climate in predicting help-seeking attitudes of Black college students at a predominantly White public university in the Northeastern U.S. Specifically, this study tested whether cultural mistrust would mediate the previously established negative relationship between race-related stress and help-seeking attitudes. Furthermore, campus racial climate was conceptualized as a potential moderator of this mediated relationship. Inconsistent with prior research and theory for both persons and students of color, the overall model testing these relationships was not found to be significant. However, there were a few noteworthy findings that may help to better understand the experience of Black students at such institutions.

In this sample, race-related stress was positively associated with cultural mistrust, a finding that has been well-established among Black Americans in general, however has been less frequently studied within the Black college student population. This particular finding builds upon limited existing research (e.g., Combs et al., 2006) with this specific subgroup, highlighting the presence of cultural mistrust, a significant and deleterious effect of racism. Cultural mistrust
negatively impacts the psychosocial functioning of Black individuals, often directly impacting attitudes toward health services (Whaley, 2001a). Younger individuals tend to experience cultural mistrust more often (Whaley, 2001b), making it an important construct to be studied among the college-age population.

The current study’s finding draws attention to the presence of cultural mistrust for Black college students and its connection to race-related stress. Historically, mental health providers have found Black individuals to be more paranoid, which has often led to misdiagnosis. Originally coined cultural paranoia, cultural mistrust can be viewed as a form of nonclinical paranoia that is a normative response to an adverse event (Whaley, 2001a). It is important for providers to recognize that after one experiences race-related stress, symptoms of nonclinical paranoia may present, and should not be conceptualized as pathology. For this college student sample, experiencing race-related stress is associated with increased cultural mistrust, which provides important information for mental health and student affairs professionals regarding one’s reaction to a racist event or experience.

Particularly at campuses where racist events have occurred, administrators and faculty/staff should pay special attention to whether students have increased cultural mistrust, and take preemptive action to reduce this mistrust, such as hiring more staff of color as service providers or bolstering inclusive and culturally-informed outreach efforts during this time. Although the current study does not provide evidence for the mediating role of cultural mistrust within the tested model, the above finding demonstrates that race-related stress is associated with higher levels of cultural mistrust, which warrants further attention.

The current study tested three control variables (year in school, gender, and previous experience in counseling) based on previous literatures noting the impact of these variables on
help-seeking for Black students (e.g., Cheng, McDermott, & Lopez, 2015; Masuda et al., 2013; Sontag-Padilla et al., 2016). Consistent with previous research illuminating the important role of gender in predicting help-seeking attitudes, the current study found a significant relationship between gender and help-seeking attitudes. Specifically, females held more positive attitudes toward help-seeking than males. Previous research conducted by Duncan and Johnson (2007) found that females who held lower levels of cultural mistrust were more likely to hold positive attitudes toward help-seeking. Given this finding, the outreach efforts outlined above may be specifically geared toward male students, in order to promote trust in mental health services among this population.

Additionally, previous experiences in counseling were associated with more positive help-seeking attitudes in this sample. Prior research has uncovered the importance of previous counseling experiences in predicting both positive help-seeking attitudes (Masuda et al., 2012) and intentions (Cheng, McDermott, & Lopez, 2015). Previous counseling positively relates to help-seeking attitudes, which means that these students may be more likely to seek treatment when needed. Thus, efforts should be focused on creating an optimal environment for an initial encounter with counseling. Once students get their foot in the door with mental health services, it stands to argue that they would be more likely to return in the future if needed.

The current study showed that cultural mistrust did not mediate the relationship between race-related stress and help-seeking attitudes. Additionally, there is no evidence that campus racial climate moderated the relationship between cultural mistrust and help-seeking attitudes. While this sample’s levels of race-related stress, cultural mistrust, and help-seeking attitudes do not appear to vastly differ from previous research with community and college samples of African Americans (e.g., Townes et al., 2009; Utsey et al., 2002), other unique factors may be
present that are preventing barriers (i.e., race-related stress and cultural mistrust) from impacting help-seeking attitudes at this university. For example, specific efforts have been undertaken by this university’s counseling center to promote access for populations who may underutilize services, such as students of color. Licensed psychologists hold clinical consultation hours in various departments on campus to meet with students in a confidential and informal manner, as a first point of contact prior to formal counseling.

Additionally, the counseling center at this university employs several counselors of color, which has been shown to positively predict utilization rates for students of color (Hayes et al., 2011). The counseling center’s website features photos and bios for each counselor, making the identity of staff known to students, as well as offering students an option to choose their counselor. The counseling center also makes its presence known on campus via programming efforts, orientation programming, and themed events. Therefore, the negative relationship between cultural mistrust and help-seeking may not exist with this population as it has in previous studies. These programs provide examples of how this university may be successfully reducing the impact of barriers, which points to other potential moderating variables that mitigate the effects of race-related stress and cultural mistrust.

While the specific relationships within the hypothesized model have been empirically tested separately (e.g., Combs et al., 2006; Duncan & Johnson, 2007; Jones, 2014) or with different populations (i.e., Black American adults), the entire model had not been examined with Black students specifically. For example, one of the study’s foundational relationships, that between race-related stress and help-seeking attitudes, had never been tested in a Black college student sample. The current study presents a unique opportunity to test the relations among hypothesized variables despite the non-significant findings regarding mediation and moderation
with this population. Additionally, while some demographic control variables (i.e., year in school, previous counseling experience, gender) were controlled in the current study, it is possible that other demographic variables, such as socioeconomic status (Duncan & Johnson, 2007) and enrollment status (i.e., full-time vs. part-time; Sontag-Padilla et al., 2016), could also impact the help-seeking attitudes of Black college students.

An alternative explanation of the study’s nonsignificant findings relates to the study’s primary dependent variable, help-seeking attitudes. Although some significant findings were evident in the current study, no significant associations were found between help-seeking attitudes and either of the study’s primary predictors (i.e., race-related stress, cultural mistrust), despite a plethora of existing research demonstrating the negative impact that these variables have on help-seeking attitudes. The Cronbach’s alpha of .71 in the current study was lower than .82 found among Black undergraduates at a PWI (Jones, 2014) and .86 for students of color (Gloria et al., 2001). Despite strong empirical evidence for these negative relationships, many of these prior studies used different instruments to measure help-seeking, such as the long form of ATSPPHS (Fischer & Turner, 1970) or the Help-Seeking Attitudes Scale (Plotkin, 1983). It is possible that the short form of the ATSPPHS does not adequately capture help-seeking for this population.

It is worth mentioning that the university examined in this study holds unique characteristics that may differentiate it from other PWI institutions on which previous research is based. Although the university in question is technically considered a PWI, with more than 50% White students, recent university census data demonstrated that White students make up only 51% of the student body (Forbes, 2017). Therefore, while defined as a PWI, the demographics of this university have shifted over time and the campus may reflect a more culturally diverse
community. Traditionally, students of color at PWIs face a number of stressors, including social isolation, tokenism, and cultural insensitivity, which impact students’ overall functioning (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002; Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010). While these stressors may still exist at the studied university, it is possible that these variables do not play as significant of a role as they might at an institution with a higher percentage of the White population.

Although studies have shown a link between positive perceptions of campus racial climate and engagement with campus services (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002; Gloria & Robinson Kurpius, 1996), campus racial climate has not been extensively studied within the help-seeking literature. Other constructs, such as cultural congruity, or level of fit between one’s own culture and the college environment, and university environment have been more frequently studied in relation to help-seeking attitudes (e.g., Gloria et al., 2005; Gloria et al., 2001). Jones (2014) found that cultural congruity was a significant predictor of positive help-seeking attitudes among Black undergraduates at a PWI. In a large study of 716 undergraduates of color by Gloria et al. (2001), university environment and cultural congruity were found to jointly predict help-seeking attitudes. The current study was based on this empirical research demonstrating that campus racial climate (i.e., university environment and cultural congruity measured simultaneously) was related to help-seeking attitudes. Previous research had referred to the combined measurement of university environment and cultural congruity as ‘campus racial climate’ which led to the equivocation of these constructs with other tools measuring campus racial climate. However, it is possible that this difference in operationalization of campus racial climate might have led to nonsignificant findings regarding the moderating role of campus racial climate in the current study.

Limitations
There are a number of methodological limitations to the study that warrant further examination. First, the study’s ex post facto design prevents any causal inferences regarding the relationships between variables. For example, race-related stress and cultural mistrust are positively related, however it is unclear which construct might cause the other.

Selection bias is present in this study, as participants were not randomly selected from the general population, but rather self-selected based on factors such as level of interest, availability, etc. It is possible that those who completed the questionnaire were more interested in the topic area and participation could also be limited to those individuals who spent time on campus, attended class, and had access to computer/internet. The current sample is limited in its generalizability as it is predominantly female and heterosexual. Active recruitment methods (i.e., in-class or email) were carried out primarily within social science courses, based on convenience sampling, which might limit the external validity of the findings. While efforts were made to promote the study among Black and African American faculty and student leaders on campus throughout the recruitment process, some students may still have been hesitant to complete a survey given by a White European-American researcher. It is important to note that cultural mistrust is not limited to mental health settings and can impact attitudes and behavior in a variety of domains (Whaley, 2001b), such as research participation.

The present study is also subject to mono-method bias, as each variable was measured via a single self-report instrument, thus limiting the inferences that can be made from the study’s results. Future research might incorporate additional forms of data (e.g., frequency data for racial incidents on campus to assess campus racial climate). The Cultural Attitudes and Climate Questionnaire (CACQ; Helm et al., 1998) has not been widely used in peer-reviewed empirical research, and therefore holds limited psychometric evidence. The CACQ was chosen for the
current study, as it appeared to have the best content validity of available measures, with specific subscales selected based on the Cronbach’s alpha value, in an effort to reduce the amount of time spent completing the full questionnaire. Future research might consider utilizing all 11 of the CACQ’s subscales or utilizing other available measures examining university environment and climate.

While the Attitudes Towards Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale-Short Form (ATSPPHS-S; Fischer & Farina, 1995) has been widely used in the help-seeking literature with ample psychometric evidence, the Cronbach’s alpha (.71) found in the current study is lower compared to that found in previous research with similar populations (e.g., Gloria et al., 2001; Jones, 2014; Townes et al., 2009). The literature will benefit from additional examination of psychometric properties of the ATSPPHS-S and/or the use of alternate self-report measures of help-seeking attitudes with the Black college student population.

**Directions for Future Research**

There are several ways in which future research might build upon the findings from the present study. First, future studies should attempt to address and ameliorate the outlined limitations in an effort to better test the study’s hypothesized model. For example, future studies might consider utilizing the long form of the ATSPPHS (Fischer & Turner, 1970), as there is stronger evidence for the reliability of this measure. Masuda et al. (2012) attained a reliability coefficient of .85 in a sample of African American college students, using this version, providing evidence for both strong reliability with this specific population.

Pieterse, Todd, Neville, and Carter (2012) delineate the myriad of ways that perceived racism has been assessed via self-report among Black Americans, including the Everyday Discrimination Scale (Krieger, 1990), Perceived Racism Scale (McNeilly et al., 1996), Schedule
of Racist Events (Landrine & Klonoff, 1996), and Racism and Life Experiences Scale (Harrell, 1997). In the current study, the Index of Race-Related Stress-Brief Version (Utsey, 1999) was chosen because of its multidimensionality in assessing for both experiences with racism in addition to the resulting psychological distress. Future research might explore the utility of additional measures of experiences with racism, in an effort to tap into alternative operationalization of the construct. Given the lack of causal inferences that can be made given the design of the current study, future research might include experimental manipulation, such as exposing students to racially charged stimuli, asking students to recall a specific racial incident or providing students with scenarios reflecting a supportive or unsupportive campus racial climate.

As mentioned previously, campus racial climate might be better operationalized in future research with a combination of university environment and cultural congruity, as the empirical relationship has been previously established and may capture a broader view of the construct. The current study utilized six of the eleven subscales of the CACQ, and future research might consider utilizing the full measure. Also, in an effort to reduce mono-method bias, objective data that would be seen as reflective of the campus racial climate (e.g., racial incident reports/complaints) should also be gathered to measure this construct from an alternate vantage point.

Black students have been found to experience psychological distress in college at high rates, often compounded by additional negative factors (e.g., experiences with racism, stereotyping) and it is important to take note of strategies that have been traditionally utilized to cope with this stress. The current study emphasizes the importance of students’ attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help when experiencing distress. However, people of color
have often relied on other sources of support, including family, community members, and religious leaders (Carter & Forsyth, 2010; Constantine et al., 1997; McMiller & Weisz, 1996). Lewis et al. (2013) described utilization of a social support network as a primary coping tool following experiences with racial microaggressions in a sample of Black women. This type of finding has also held true for Black students in college settings, as students tended to rely on religious rather than professional forms of support (Ayalon & Young, 2005). Specifically, when students have encountered racism, Black students sought support from friends or family more than 50% of the time, directly after the incident (Swim et al., 2003). Future research might incorporate these other adaptive forms of coping as dependent variables in an effort to better capture the myriad of ways that students might seek help during times of distress, rather than relying solely on professional help-seeking.

Researchers might also consider students’ rates of utilization for other campus services, including career, academic, and financial advisement. Sheu and Sedlacek (2004) noted that Black students may be more likely to seek help for concerns that are not mental health-related, including career and academic support, which may be related to cultural mistrust. Research has also shown that positive experiences on campus lead to more engagement of campus services overall (Gloria & Robinson Kurpius, 1996), which may include seeking mental health treatment on campus. It therefore stands to reason that it may be useful for future research to examine utilization of other types of campus services, as positive experiences with these services may lead to more positive help-seeking attitudes.

In an effort to extend the current study, future endeavors might incorporate factors that have been shown to influence help-seeking attitudes for students overall, rather than those factors specific to students of color. For example, stigma, anticipated benefits/risks, and self-disclosure
have been shown to influence help-seeking attitudes and intentions in the broader undergraduate population (Cheng, McDermott, & Lopez, 2015; Nam et al., 2013). Additional factors impacting the help-seeking attitudes of Black students specifically could also be incorporated into the existing hypothesized model in future research, including level of family support, history of psychiatric issues, and masculinity norms (Hayes et al., 2011; Powell et al., 2016).

In the current study, participants’ racial demographic information was gathered via open-ended self-report. Future work might additionally assess students’ racial identity using a formal measure (e.g., Racial Identity Attitude Scale; Parham & Helms, 1981) to not only provide richer information about students’ identity, but also as a potential predictor variable. Several studies have highlighted the important connection between racial identity and help-seeking attitudes. More specifically, a stronger Black or Africentric racial identity has been found to predict preference for a Black therapist (Ferguson, Leach, Levy, Nicholson, & Johnson, 2008; Townes et al., 2009), which in turn has been shown to promote help-seeking among Black students (Hayes et al., 2011). Future research might incorporate measurement of racial identity, as it is often been studied as a key variable related to help-seeking among this population.

Lastly, given the specific limitations regarding the study’s recruitment methods, researchers might go beyond extent recruitment efforts by recruiting via classes and instructors from a variety of majors and departments. Additionally, efforts might focus on recruiting more male participants by posting recruitment materials in areas typically frequented by males. Offering an alternate medium for completing survey (i.e., paper and pencil) would also serve to reduce selection bias.

Implications
It has been shown that Black college students tend to underutilize mental health services more than other racial groups, despite experiencing significant distress that aligns with current trends toward increasing severity and prevalence of mental health concerns among the broader student population (Sontag-Padilla et al., 2016). Additionally, Black students have the lowest graduation rate of all racial groups, which is related to experiences with racism and negative interactions on campus (Iacovino & James, 2016).

The present study’s findings highlight the importance of recognizing the association between race-related stress and cultural mistrust in the Black college student population. Mental health providers ought to be aware of this relationship, as cultural mistrust often presents in the form of nonclinical paranoia and should be conceptualized as such. University personnel might use this information to better understand student’s reactions to racist experiences, both on the individual and institutional level, and work to contextualize these reactions as well as take action to mitigate negative effects. Taking a cue from the current study’s institution, promoting efforts to reach students that experience these barriers such as campus outreach programming and informal consultation services may promote positive help-seeking and increase the well-being of this population. Additionally, hiring staff of color at counseling centers and ensuring that students are aware of a culturally diverse counseling staff may help with the mistrust students experience as a result of race-related stress.

The present study’s findings also reflect the importance of gender and previous experiences in counseling for Black students’ help-seeking attitudes. Special attention should be given by universities in the form of outreach and programming to Black male students in an effort to reduce cultural mistrust. Students who have been to counseling previously are more
likely to return, which highlights the importance of fostering initial positive contact with mental health services and staff.
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Tables and Figures

Table 1

*Bivariate Correlations and Descriptives of Main Study Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable (range)</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Race-related Stress (0-4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.49**</td>
<td>-.37**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.14*</td>
<td>-.20**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cultural Mistrust (1-7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.48**</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Campus Racial Climate (1-5)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.21**</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Help-seeking Attitudes (0-3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>.14*</td>
<td>-.29**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.18**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Year in School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.17**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Previous experience in counseling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*M*  
2.16 3.83 3.60 1.64

*SD*  
.88 .73 .50 .52

*α*  
.92 .92 .82 .71

*Note. N=318. *p < .05, **p < .01*
### Table 2

*Model Characteristics for the Conditional Process Analysis of the Indirect Effect of Race-Related Stress to Help-Seeking Attitudes through Cultural Mistrust for Campus Racial Climate.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Help-Seeking Attitudes (Y)</th>
<th>Cultural Mistrust (M)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coeff.(SE)</td>
<td>95% CI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race Related Stress (X)</td>
<td>c’</td>
<td>.00 (.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Mistrust (M)</td>
<td>b&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>-.33 (.29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Racial Climate (V)</td>
<td>b&lt;sub&gt;2&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>-.23 (.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M x V</td>
<td>a&lt;sub&gt;3&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>.01 (.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Standing</td>
<td>.05 (.03)</td>
<td>-.01, .10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Counseling</td>
<td>-.30* (.06)</td>
<td>-.42, -.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.14* (.06)</td>
<td>.02, .25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ R^2 = 0.12 \]
\[ F(7, 307) = 5.95 \]
\[ p < .05 \]

\[ R^2 = 0.25 \]
\[ F(4, 310) = 25.95 \]
\[ p < .05 \]

*Note.* Unstandardized regression coefficients with CI (SE in parentheses). Class standing, previous experience in counseling, and gender tested as control variables.  
*<sup>p</sup> < .05
Figure 1. Hypothesized moderated mediation model.
Figure 2. Statistical moderated mediation model
Scatterplots of bivariate correlations of predictors vs. dependent variable.
Scatterplot of residuals against the predicted values for the dependent variable.
Appendix A: Index of Race-Related Stress-Brief Version

This survey questionnaire is intended to sample some of the experiences that Black people have in this country because of their “blackness.” There are many experiences that a Black person can have in this country because of his/her race. Some events happen just once, some more often, while others may happen frequently. Below you will find listed some of these experiences, for which you are to indicate those that have happened to you or someone very close to you (i.e., a family member or loved one). It is important to note that a person can be affected by those events that happen to people close to them; this is why you are asked to consider such events as applying to your experiences when you complete this questionnaire. Please circle the number on the scale (0 to 4) that indicates the reaction you had to the event at the time it happened. Do not leave any items blank. If an event has happened more than once, refer to the first time it happened. If an event did not happen circle 0 and go on to the next item.

The rating scale is as follows:
0 = This never happened to me.
1 = This event happened, but did not bother me.
2 = This event happened and I was slightly upset.
3 = This event happened and I was upset.
4 = This event happened and I was extremely upset.

1. You notice that crimes committed by White people tend to be romanticized, whereas the same crime committed by a Black person is portrayed as savagery, and the Black person who committed it, as an animal.

2. Sales people/clerks did not say thank you or show other forms of courtesy and respect (e.g., put your things in a bag) when you shopped at some White/non-Black owned businesses.

3. You notice that when Black people are killed by the police, the media informs the public of the victims criminal record or negative information in their background, suggesting they got what they deserved.

4. You have been threatened with physical violence by an individual or group of White/non-Blacks.

5. You have observed that White kids who commit violent crimes are portrayed as “boys being boys,” while Black kids who commit similar crimes are wild animals.

6. You seldom hear or read anything positive about Black people on radio, TV, in newspapers, or history books.

7. While shopping at a store the sales clerk assumed that you couldn’t afford certain items (e.g., you were directed toward the items on sale).

8. You were the victim of a crime and the police treated you as if you should just accept it as part of being Black.

9. You were treated with less respect and courtesy than Whites and other non-Blacks while in a store, restaurant, or other business establishment.
10. You were passed over for an important project although you were more qualified and competent than the White/non-Black person given the task.

11. Whites/non-Blacks have stared at you as if you didn’t belong in the same place with them; whether it was a restaurant, theater, or other place of business.

12. You have observed the police treat White/non-Blacks with more respect and dignity than they do Blacks.

13. You have been subjected to racist jokes by Whites/non-Blacks in positions of authority and you did not protest for fear they might have held it against you.

14. While shopping at a store, or when attempting to make a purchase, you were ignored as if you were not a serious customer or didn’t have any money.

15. You have observed situations where other Blacks were treated harshly or unfairly by Whites/non-Blacks due to their race.

16. You have heard reports of White people/non-Blacks who have committed crimes, and in an effort to cover up their deeds falsely reported that a Black man was responsible for the crime.

17. You notice that the media plays up those stories that cast Blacks in negative ways (child abusers, rapists, muggers, etc.), usually accompanied by a large picture of a Black person looking angry or disturbed.

18. You have heard racist remarks or comments about Black people spoken with impunity by White public officials or other influential White people.

19. You have been given more work, or the most undesirable jobs at your place of employment while the White/non-Black of equal or less seniority and credentials is given less work, and more desirable tasks.

20. You have heard or seen other Black people express a desire to be White or to have White physical characteristics because they disliked being Black or thought it was ugly.

21. White people or other non-Blacks have treated you as if you were unintelligent and needed things explained to you slowly or numerous times.

22. You were refused an apartment or other housing you suspect it was because you’re Black.
Appendix B: Cultural Mistrust Inventory

Enclosed are some statements concerning beliefs, opinions, and attitudes about Blacks. Read each statement carefully and give your honest feelings about the beliefs and attitudes expressed. Indicate the extent to which you agree by using the following scale:

<table>
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<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Slightly disagree</td>
<td>Neither disagree or agree</td>
<td>Slightly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The higher the number you choose for the statement, the more you agree with that statement. For example, if you “moderately agree” with a statement, you would choose the numbers 4 and 5 which appear above the label “Moderately agree.” If you chose number 5, this means you agree more with the statement than if you had chosen the number 4. The same principle applies for the other labels. The higher the number you chose, the more you agree with the statement. Finally, there are no right or wrong answers, only what is right for you. If in doubt, blacken the space which seems most nearly to express your present feeling about the statement. Please answer all items.

1. White are usually fair to all people regardless of race.  
2. White teachers teach subjects so that they favor Whites.  
3. White teachers are more likely to slant subject matter to make Blacks look inferior.  
4. White teachers deliberately ask Black students questions which are difficult so they will fail.  
5. There is no need for a Black person to work hard to get ahead financially because Whites will take what you earn anyway.  
6. Black citizens can rely on White lawyers to defend them to the best of their ability.  
7. Black parents should teach their children not to trust White teachers.  
8. White politicians will slant a story to make Blacks appear guilty.  
9. White policemen will slant a story to make Blacks appear guilty.  
10. White politicians usually can be relied on to keep the promises they make to Blacks.  
11. Black should be suspicious of a White person who tries to be friendly.  
12. Whether you should trust a person or not is based on race.  
13. Probably the biggest reason Whites want to be friendly with Blacks is so they can take advantage of them.  
14. A Black person can usually trust his or her White co-workers.  
15. If a White person is honest in dealing with Blacks, it is because of fear of being caught.
16. A Black person cannot trust a White judge to evaluate him or her fairly.

17. A Black person can feel comfortable making a deal with a White person simply by a handshake.

18. Whites deliberately pass laws designed to block the progress of Blacks.

19. There are some Whites who are trustworthy enough to have as close friends.

20. Blacks should not have anything to do with White since they cannot be trusted.

21. It is best for Blacks to be on their guard when among Whites.

22. Of all ethnic groups, Whites are really the Indian-givers.

23. White friends are least likely to break their promise.

24. Blacks should be cautious about what they say in the presence of Whites since Whites will try to use it against them.

25. Whites can rarely be counted on to do what they say.

26. Whites are usually honest with Blacks.

27. Whites are as trustworthy as members of any other ethnic group.

28. Whites will say one thing and do another.

29. White politicians will take advantage of Blacks every chance they get.

30. When a White teacher asks a Black student a question, it is usually to get information which can be used against him or her.

31. White policemen can be relied on to exert an effort to apprehend those who commit crimes against Blacks.

32. Black students can talk to a White teacher in confidence without fear that the teacher will use it against him or her later.

33. Whites will usually keep their word.

34. White policemen usually do not try to trick Blacks into admitting they committed a crime which they didn’t.

35. There is no need for Blacks to be more cautious with White businessmen than with anyone else.

36. There are some White businessmen who are honest in business transactions with Blacks.

37. White store owners, salesmen, and other White businessmen tend to cheat Blacks whenever they can.

38. Since Whites can’t be trusted in business, the old saying “one in the hand is worth two in the bush” is a good policy to follow.

39. Whites who establish businesses in Black communities do so only so they can take advantage of Blacks.

40. Blacks have often been deceived by White politicians.

41. White politicians are equally honest with Blacks and Whites.

42. Blacks should not confide in Whites because they will use it against you.
43. A Black person can loan money to a White person and feel confident it will be repaid. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
44. White businessmen usually will not try to cheat Blacks. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
45. White business executives will steal the ideas of their Black employees. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
46. A promise from a White is about as good as a three dollar bill. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
47. Blacks should be suspicious of advice given by White politicians. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
48. If a Black student tried, he will get the grade he deserves from a White teacher. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
**Appendix C: Cultural Attitudes and Climate Questionnaire**

Please indicate to what degree you agree with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. There is racial conflict on campus.
2. I am comfortable being with people whose racial/ethnic backgrounds are the same as my own.
3. There are interracial tensions in the classroom.
4. I am comfortable saying what I think about racial/ethnic issues.
5. I have been exposed to a racist atmosphere outside the classroom.
6. I am comfortable speaking with others about my racial/ethnic background.
7. I am comfortable going to see a faculty member of my own race/ethnicity.
8. Students are resentful of others whose race/ethnicity is different from their own.
9. I am comfortable being in a situation where I am the only person of my racial/ethnic group.
10. I have been exposed to a racist atmosphere in the classroom.
11. I feel I am expected to represent my race or ethnic group in discussions in class.
12. There is racial/ethnic separation on campus.
13. University police treat me fairly.
14. Residence hall personnel treat me fairly.
15. I have been exposed to activities and programs in residence halls about the history, culture and/or social issues of racial and ethnic groups other than Whites.
16. I feel there are expectations about my academic performance because of my race/ethnicity.
17. I feel I need to minimize various characteristics of my racial/ethnic culture (e.g., language, dress) to be able to fit in at the university.
18. I am comfortable being with people whose racial/ethnic backgrounds are different from my own.
19. There are interracial tensions in residence halls.
20. I have been exposed to other university programs or activities about the history, culture and/or social issues of racial and ethnic groups other than Whites.
21. I feel pressured to participate in ethnic activities at the university.
22. I have often been exposed to a racist atmosphere created by faculty in the classroom.
23. Faculty respect students of different racial and ethnic groups.
24. I have often been exposed to a racist atmosphere created by faculty outside the classroom.
25. Students respect other students of different racial and ethnic groups. 1 2 3 4 5
26. There is a great deal of friendship between students of different racial and ethnic groups.
Appendix D: Attitudes Towards Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale-Short Form

Read each statement carefully and indicate your degree of agreement using the scale below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Partly disagree</td>
<td>Partly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. If I believed I was having a mental breakdown, my first inclination would be to get professional attention. 0 1 2 3
2. The idea of talking about problems with a counselor strikes me as a poor way to get rid of emotional conflicts. 0 1 2 3
3. If I were experiencing a serious emotional crisis at this point in my life, I would be confident that I could find relief in psychotherapy. 0 1 2 3
4. There is something admirable in the attitude of a person who is willing to cope with his or her conflicts and fears without resorting to professional help. 0 1 2 3
5. I would want to get psychological help if I were worried or upset for a long period of time. 0 1 2 3
6. I might want to have psychological counseling in the future. 0 1 2 3
7. A person with an emotional problem is not likely to solve it along; he or she is likely to solve it with professional help. 0 1 2 3
8. Considering the time and expense involved in psychotherapy, it would have doubtful value for a person like me. 0 1 2 3
9. A person should work out his or her own problems; getting psychological counseling would be a last resort. 0 1 2 3
10. Personal and emotional troubles, like many things, tend to work out by themselves. 0 1 2 3
Appendix E: Demographic Questionnaire

Age: _____
Gender: □ Male    □ Female    □ Transgender    □ Other: __________
Sexual orientation: □ Heterosexual □ Lesbian/Gay □ Bisexual □ Questioning
□ Other: __________
Race/ethnicity: ______________________
Undergraduate status:
□ First year
□ Second year
□ Third year
□ Fourth year
□ Fifth year
□ Other: __________

Type of Institution You Attend (Check all that apply):
□ Predominantly White college/university
□ Historically Black college/university (HBCU)
□ Women’s College
□ Men’s College
□ Urban college/university
□ Public college/university
□ Private college/university
□ Other: ____________________________
Name of Institution: ____________________________________________________________

Approximately how many people attend your institution?
□ less than 5,000
□ between 5,000-10,000
□ between 10,000-15,000
□ between 15,000-20,000
□ between 20,000-25,000
□ more than 25,000

Have you ever received professional counseling or psychological services? (This includes
family/group/couples therapy, psychiatric medication referral, psychiatric hospitalization,
outpatient counseling)
□ Yes
□ No

Currently, how would you rate your level of psychological distress on a scale of 1 – 10 (1 = very
low distress, 10 = very high distress)?: ____

Currently, how much do you think you would benefit from seeking professional psychological
help on a scale of 1 – 10 (1 = not at all, 10 = a lot)?: ____