

Oral Defense Announcement

University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the co-authored dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Education with an emphasis in Educational Practice

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M.Ed. in Counseling, December 2017, University of Missouri-St. Louis
B.S. in Human Environmental Studies, December 2012, Southeast Missouri State University

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Ed. S., Educational, School, & Counseling Psychology, University of Missouri- Columbia, 2019
M.A. Counseling, Lindenwood University, 2016
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Counseling and Mental Health Awareness in Higher Education Institutions: A Phenomenological Exploration of Mental Health and How It Affects Degree Completion among Black Undergraduate College Women

Date: Wednesday, January 24, 2024
Time: 3:30pm
Place: Remote

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore Black undergraduate women's lived experiences with mental health management and pursuance of degree completion. This co-authored dissertation and study used a phenomenological approach, guided by the following research questions: 1) What barriers are Black undergraduate college women facing regarding their accessibility to counseling services on their campus? and 2) How do Black undergraduate college women with mental health issues effectively manage stressful situations while pursuing and completing a college degree? The current literature that examined Black women's utilization of counseling is limited, especially among Black women enrolled in college. This study aimed to fill this gap in research and add to the current body of literature. The analysis of this data was used to explore, interpret, and describe the lived experiences of 10 Black women who were in pursuit of their undergraduate degree and their mental health quest. Further, the results of the analysis commentated six major themes regarding the participants' experiences: 1) unfamiliar territory, 2) self-discovery, 3) the miseducation of therapy, 4) mental health maintenance, 5) God and therapy, and 6) more Black women therapists. There were also three sub themes that materialized: 1) time and life balance, 2) coping strategies, and 3) awareness and utilization of counseling support services. Thus, the results of this study were disseminated to other practitioners in the field of counseling and Kindergarten through 12th grade education and included recommendations for the future.

Defense of Dissertation Committee

Kenton Mershon, Ph.D. - Chairperson
Shawn Woodhouse, Ph.D.
Rebecca Jones, Ph.D.