PERSPECTIVES OF BLACK PARENTS OF YOUNG ADULTS WITH HIGH INCIDENCE DISABILITIES ON THE POSTSECONDARY PLANNING PROCESS

by

ERIN PEARCE KILPATRICK

(Under the Direction of Jolie Daigle)

ABSTRACT

Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities provide salient, multifaceted support to their children during and after the high school years. School counselors are well-positioned as social justice advocates to collaborate with Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities during the child’s high school years. Such students are more likely to receive special education services in restrictive environments and experience exclusionary discipline practices. Moreover, Black students with high incidence disabilities are more likely to drop out of high school, graduate with an IEP diploma or certificate of attendance, leave high school without a clear plan, have lower college completion rates, and are more likely to be underemployed and underpaid in employment settings. Despite these truths, Black parents and their children with high incidence disabilities are invisible to school counselors and continue to be underserved in the area of postsecondary planning.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the perspectives of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities on the postsecondary planning process. The research question that guided the study was, “What are Black parents’ lived experiences regarding the postsecondary planning process for their young adult child with high incidence disabilities?” Fourteen Black parents from three states (Georgia, Michigan, and South Carolina) were interviewed to elicit their experiences with their young adult child with high incidence disabilities’ postsecondary planning process. Disability Critical Race Theory (Annamma et al., 2018) served as the theoretical framework. Findings of the data analysis evidenced five themes: (a) experiencing invisibility by a lack of inclusive postsecondary planning, (b) feeling marginalized due to collusive forces of ableism and racism, (c) persevering role of Black parents through postsecondary planning processes and beyond, (d) navigating inequities through social supports and other supports, and (e) enacting ongoing resistance and advocacy. Implications for practice and recommendations for future research are discussed.

INDEX WORDS: Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit), Black Parents, Postsecondary Planning, High Incidence Disabilities, Phenomenology, Advocacy, School Counseling, Counselor Education, Special Education, K-12

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation first of all, to all of the participants and to their young adult child(-dren) with high incidence disabilities. I am so grateful that you entrusted me with your accounts of your experiences of getting your child ready for life after high school. Educational institutions and educators have so much more work to do to give you and your children the postsecondary planning support, academic support, and social-emotional support that is needed in the K-12 years and beyond.

Secondly, I dedicate this dissertation to the younger generation behind me, all of my nieces, nephews, godchildren, second cousins, and friends' children. Please develop your talents, dream big, be courageous, and seek to understand the perspectives and lives of those who are different from you. Additionally, aim to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39, NIV).

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDICES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> We [educational] professionals need to develop a critical view of our role in perpetuating the oppression of the individuals with whom we work. Are we challenging victim-blaming approaches to treatment and rehabilitation and institutional practices that under-treat and over-control people of color with disabilities? We all need to be more critical of our roles in maintaining the status quo and keeping oppressed populations content with and constrained by their reality. (McDonald et al., 2007, p. 159)

This quote holds significance for social justice-oriented school counselors because they continuously monitor comprehensive school counseling programs to advocate for historically marginalized student groups, such as Black students with high incidence disabilities and their families. Mounting literature counters the ableist, White supremacist ideologies that blame Black students with high incidence disabilities and their parents for entrance into special education (Harry & Klinger, 2006; Sullivan & Bal, 2013), low high stakes test scores (Pazey et al., 2015; Tefera, 2019), and high occurrences of punitive school discipline (Mallett, 2017; Oshima et al., 2010). Even so, Black students with high incidence disabilities and their parents are underserved when it comes to postsecondary planning.

The proof for this is evident across educational literature and in U.S. government outcome data (American Institutes for Research, 2013; National Center for Educational

Statistics, 2019; Newman et al., 2011; Semega et al., 2020; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2012). During the 2014-2015 school year, 62% of Black students with a disability graduated with a regular education diploma (NCES, 2019). However, over a third of Black students with disabilities had less successful outcomes: 14% received an alternate certificate (certificate of completion or attendance), and 22% dropped out of high school (NCES, 2019). This is concerning due to the fact that

> Most jobs require a high school diploma, students with disabilities who receive certificates instead of diplomas could find their employment options significantly curtailed because many employers do not recognize alternative completion documents. (U.S. GAO, 2012, p. 16)

Additionally, neither postsecondary institutions nor the military accepts these alternate documents, unbeknownst to many students with disabilities and their families (AIR, 2013; USA.gov, 2020). Young adults with disabilities attend college and complete college at lower rates than their peers (Newman et al., 2011). Without access to competitive employment or relevant postsecondary education with knowledge of legal rights, self-advocacy skills, and appropriate academic skills, Black students with high incidence disabilities are at high risk for entering low-wage, low-skilled employment for long periods. Such hourly employment does not often lead to livable wages and benefits such as health insurance, sick leave, vacation, and a retirement account. Without access to competitive, stable employment, Black young adults with high incidence disabilities are at risk for requiring long-term government assistance and are at high risk for poverty (Newman et al., 2011). Relatedly, unemployment figures for individuals in the young adult bracket of ages 16 to 19 is 21.7%. For ages 20-24, the unemployment rate is 11.4%.

Both of those unemployment figures are about less than half that for individuals without disabilities in the U.S. (U.S. Department of Labor, 2019).

In 2019, adults with disabilities in the United States had a poverty rate of 22.5%, over double that of the average U.S. poverty rate of 10.5% (Semega et al., 2020). U.S. Census data reports do not disaggregate data by race and disability, just one or the other. Troubling data from the same report showed the poverty rate for Black individuals at 18.8%, while the poverty rate for White individuals is 7.3% in 2019. Additionally, in a national prevalence study of disability in incarcerated individuals, slightly over 40% of the incarcerated population endorsed having a disability, with high incidence disabilities being the majority of the identified disabilities for both Black and White incarcerated participants (Reingle Gonazlez et al., 2020). Incarcerated individuals with disabilities also have higher recidivism rates than their non-disabled peers. Upon their release from jail, many have difficulty fully participating in the U.S. labor market due to varying state restrictions on individuals who served time (Reingle Gonzalez et al., 2020; Warner et al., 2020).

These disappointing statistics assert a reality that no student nor family deserves, and no school counselor nor educator should accept. Such facts ought to compel school counselors to resist such debilitating realities and intentionally build strong partnerships with Black parents of students with high incidence disabilities to advance postsecondary outcomes for these students. I became interested in soliciting Black parents' perspectives of their young adult child with high incidence disabilities and the postsecondary planning process during the past few years in my work as a high school counselor at a large suburban public high school. Before my work as a high school counselor, I was a special education teacher for students with high incidence disabilities at the middle school and high school levels. Building trusting relationships with Black parents who have a child with a disability in my school is essential to me, due to my knowledge of statistics on unsatisfactory postsecondary outcomes for Black students with disabilities. Also, my knowledge of best practices to support these multiply marginalized students and parents concerning postsecondary planning also motivates me in my work with such students and families (Newman et al., 2011; Durodoye et al., 2004). There is more postsecondary planning knowledge, social capital, navigational capital, and cultural capital that Black students with high incidence disabilities and their parents require than their White peers without the disability label (Yosso, 2005). This is due to the multiple oppressions that such students face in postsecondary institutions and in employment (Glynn & Schaller, 2017; McDonald et al., 2007). Since Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities continue to be involved in their child's life after high school, it makes sense that high school counselors ought to collaborate with Black parents to provide the knowledge, various capital, and related resources to help their child be successful in his/her post-school life. As affirmed by Harris and colleagues in their work about school counselors and school psychologists collaborating to prepare Black males with disabilities for college, "the support that families provide their children is critical in their educational and career success" (2016, p. 59).

To circumvent the notorious transition cliff that many students with high incidence disabilities face from the transition from high school to life after high school, I initiated a Transition to College event for students with disabilities and their families at my school (ASCA 2016b; Milsom et al., 2004; Naugle et al., 2010). Along with two disability support office representatives from two nearby colleges (a 2-year college and a 4-year college), two colleagues from the school's special education department, and another school counselor, we all shared relevant information to about 80 parents and students on a frigid winter weeknight for recommendations on bolstering their child's chances of attending and graduating from college. Demographics for parents and students in attendance were diverse: Black, Latinx, and White.

At the end of the event, there were optional parent/guardian surveys for parents to complete. Thirteen parents submitted completed surveys. Seventy percent of those parents endorsed the view that they had none to minimal knowledge of the topic information presented before the workshop. Yet, their topic knowledge increased as a result of attending the event. What was noted and not noted in one survey from a parent of a senior with an individualized education plan (IEP) was one of the memorable takeaways from conducting that workshop. Unlike other parents, the parent did not rank what his/her perceptions were for his/her child's teachers' expectations, nor for the school counselors' expectations for his/her child after high school graduation. However, at the bottom of the survey for additional comments about the information presented in the Transition to College event, the parent wrote, "Could have used earlier in high school years." This simple statement remained with me. It stirred my curiosity about what further thoughts, emotions, and experiences do Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities harbor regarding their child's postsecondary planning process?

Statement of Problem

Black students with high incidence disabilities face worse postsecondary outcomes than their non-disabled White and Black peers (Newman et al., 2011). The

Individuals with Disabilities Act (2004) exhorts school officials to collaborate with students with disabilities and their families for their postsecondary goals through mandatory transition planning at age sixteen. While special education literature advocates for early, intentional, and specific postsecondary planning that is culturally competent for students with disabilities and their family members (Achola, 2019; Hetherington et al., 2010), related literature from the field of school counseling is dated and sparse (Milsom et al., 2004; Milsom, 2007). A nascent area of research positions parents as a pivotal influence on their child with high incidence disabilities' postsecondary plans, for example, indicating that such support positively impacts more excellent employment rates for Black young adults with ADHD (Glynn & Schaller, 2017). Bianco and colleagues (2009) posit that the pivotal role that parents of young adults with intellectual disability after high school is complex and multifaceted. Parents identified as "collaborators, decision-makers, and program evaluators, role models, trainers, mentors and instructors, and systems change agents" (Bianco et al., 2009, p. 186). Miller-Warren's research concluded that most of the surveyed parents of students with disabilities, including Black parents, did not believe that high school experiences adequately prepared their child for life after high school (2016). Miller-Warren (2016) exhorts educators, postsecondary agencies, and institutions to collaborate with and support parents of teenage students with disabilities regarding the postsecondary planning process. Otherwise, "students with disabilities will continue to be placed at a disadvantage after graduation" (p. 35). Therefore, it is necessary to foreground narratives of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities because the terrain of postsecondary outcomes for this group of young people continues to be concerning.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to discover the perspectives of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities on the postsecondary planning process. Through interviewing Black parents in a virtual format, I depicted the phenomenon of Black parents' retrospective experiences with their young adult child's postsecondary planning process. This investigation of exploring postsecondary planning through the participants' perspectives provides the researcher with the opportunity to promote recommendations for the school counseling field and educator preparation programs. I envision this study's outcomes will increase awareness of how this group of participants experiences postsecondary planning. The research question that supported this study was: "What are Black parents' lived experiences regarding the postsecondary planning process for their young adult child with high incidence disabilities?"

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to existing literature, to improve the practice of school counselors and other educators' practice, and to provide implications for policy decisions. Parents are pivotal members of their child's educational and postsecondary planning processes (ASCA 2016b; Harris et al., 2016; Holcomb-McCoy, 2010). The overall goal of this retrospective study was to provide school counselors and schools with information on how they can better value, educate, and assist Black parents of students with high incidence disabilities in preparation for the child's post-school plans (Hirano & Rowe, 2016). This study centered the experiences of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities concerning their recollections and perspectives of their child's postsecondary planning process.

Potential Additions of Study to Research Literature

This research will add to the literature in multifold ways. First, there is a paucity of school counseling and counselor education literature that uses Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) (Annamma et al., 2018) as its theoretical framework (Brodar, 2018). This work will be a phenomenological study focusing on a school counseling topic through the lens of DisCrit. Moreover, this study affirms tenet four of DisCrit: to "privilege voices of marginalized populations not traditionally acknowledged within research" (Annamma et al., 2018, p. 58). Parallel with McDonald and colleagues' (2007) stance, I acknowledge "the need to amplify perspectives in research that are not commonly heard" (p. 159). In this case, it is Black parents' perspectives of postsecondary planning processes for their young adult children with high incidence disabilities.

Second, this research will showcase the status of postsecondary planning and articulate Black parent' strengths and needs concerning their young adult child with high incidence disabilities. This research overlaps with Holcomb-McCoy's recommendation that "qualitative studies also are needed that investigate the needs of low-income parents and parents of color in relation to college readiness" (2010, p. 122). Another factor for how this study adds to the literature is to show that school counselors' postsecondary planning and career development work with students with high incidence disabilities needs to be in tandem with the school counselor working with the students' parents and other personnel. As supported by the National Career Development Association's (NCDA) policy (2011) on best practices for fundamental career development processes across a person's lifetime:

> Career development assistance is a community partnership effort involving the

> education system, the home and family structure, business, industry, and a wide variety of community agencies and organizations. It is not carried out by career development professionals [e.g. school counselors] alone (p. 1).

The third contribution of this study to the research literature is that it will advance at least two domains of counseling and advocacy interventions of the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC) (Ratts et al., 2015). The first domain is that of the researcher/social-justice competent counselor contributing to the intrapersonal level of interventions through engaging in this research to underscore the fact that there are "inequities present in the current counseling literature and practices in order to advocate for systemic changes to the profession" (p. 12). It is baffling that as other educational disciplines have an increasing amount of non-dissertation qualitative research on Black parent perspectives on a range of topics related to their child's educational processes, the field of school counseling and counselor education lags. Seminal work on such topics exists in the disciplines of educational leadership (Auerbach, 2009; Cucchiara & Horvat, 2009; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Mapp, 2003); anthropology of education (Doucet, 2011), and special education (Gillborn, 2015; Kozleski et al., 2008; Scorgie, 2015; Stanley, 2015). For school counseling and counselor education to be the social-justice advocacy-oriented fields that they claim to be, these disciplines have more growth to do in adding the perspectives of minoritized parents of K-12 students with and without disabilities to their respective body of scholarly work.

The second domain of counseling and advocacy interventions of the MSJCC that this study will advance is the area of interpersonal interventions. Interpersonal interventions are those social sources of support that "provide individuals with identity and support" (Ratts et al., 2015, p. 12). In this study, the researcher will document the lived experiences of the Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities about the postsecondary planning process. Participant accounts reaffirmed how Black parents are sources of support to their child with a high incidence disability. Such evidence ought to persuade school counseling and counselor education audiences of the importance of intentionally building partnerships with Black parents around the topic of postsecondary planning.

Implications for Improving Practice

This study will contribute to school counselors' improved practice of collaborating with Black parents of students with high incidence disabilities for more equitable postsecondary planning processes for their child (ASCA 2016b). First, this study will improve practice by the researcher modeling the ethical and social justice advocacy practice of viewing Black students with high incidence disabilities and their parents as having strengths and assets when it comes to postsecondary planning processes (ASCA 2016a; Butler-Barnes et al., 2013). Blanchett (2009) explains the need for this: "conduct(ing) research that illuminates the intersectionality of race, culture, language, poverty, and disability using a strengths-based vs. a deficit conceptual framework" (p. 405). Second, this study will inform practice for not only school counselors, but for special educators and educational leaders to grow in their consciousness on how "racism and ableism influence schooling practices related to post-secondary transitions that have long-term impacts on the pathways and opportunities available to students of color with disabilities" (DeMatthews, 2020, p. 32). Going beyond an increasing awareness of how racism and ableism constrain Black students with high incidence disabilities and their parent(s) with their post-school expectations, goals, and opportunities, this research will advance the potential changes and actions educators need to make germane to the topic.

Third, this research will contribute to school counseling practices by broadening the role of school counselors in advocating for Black student with high incidence disabilities, and for the students' parents when it comes to the child's postsecondary planning (West-Olatunji, 2015). Such advocacy might take the form of recommending parent empowerment interventions and practices to school counselors (Kim et al., 2018). In addition to school counselors employing consciousness-raising practices with marginalized parents, Kim and colleagues (2018) recommend that school counselors build various competence, advocacy, and leadership skills for marginalized parents. Finally, school counselors need to foster social connections between Black parents of students with high incidence disabilities to collectively build higher postsecondary success rates for the students (Kim et al., 2018).

Implications for Improving Policy and Decision Making

This study will offer implications for decision-makers and policymakers at local, state, and national levels for the field of school counseling and other educational disciplines in several ways. Ensuring equitable, individualized, and meaningful post-school outcomes for students with disabilities, regardless of race, ethnicity, and other social identity markers, is at the forefront of most educational disciplines. There is much overlap across educational disciplines to advance the academic and post-school outcomes for multiply marginalized students with disabilities. One suggestion is the merging of aspects of educator preparation programs of subject area teachers, special education teachers, school counselors, and educational leaders to make such training more streamlined and effective (Blanchett, 2009).

Nonetheless, this study's contribution for school counseling decision-making and policymaking pertains to the argument that all schools need to meet the ASCA recommended ratio of school counselors to students, or 1:250 (ASCA, n.d.). Providing high school students with high incidence disabilities and their parents the information, resources, and interventions needed for the child to be successful after graduation takes time, but high school counselor caseloads continue to be high (Woods & Domina, 2014). Such high caseloads are barriers for school counselors to make consistent, early, and effective outreach to students with high incidence disabilities and their parents regarding postsecondary planning. This study will support other school counseling literature, which concludes that high schools with lower school counselor to student ratios have higher graduation rates and higher rates of students attending a two- or four-year postsecondary institution after high school. Lower school counselor to student ratios helps school counselors have more time to make more contacts with students, especially multiply marginalized students (Cholewa et al., 2015; Hurwitz & Howell, 2014; Lapan et al., 2012).

Finally, this study will contribute to school district leaders' understanding of the multiple oppressive forces and barriers that prevent multiply marginalized students with disabilities from having comparable high school graduation rates and positive postsecondary outcomes than their peers with no disability label. Perhaps the findings of this study could lead to recommendations echoed from DeMatthews (2020): "engage faculty, staff, district personnel, families, and students in a school-based equity audit to further interrogate how past policies and procedures impact students of color with and without disabilities [i.e., as related to postsecondary planning processes] (p. 32). A vision for the future is that all school districts have interdisciplinary committees who measure, monitor, and improve postsecondary planning and outcome data for students with disabilities, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and other demographic information.

Brief Overview of the Study

For this qualitative study, I employed a phenomenological method to derive an understanding of the essence of the phenomenon of postsecondary planning from the first-person experiences of the Black parent participants with a young adult child with high incidence disabilities (Vagle, 2018). Purposeful sampling was utilized to seek and select participants from the Southeastern and Midwest regions of the United States. Fourteen participants from Georgia, Michigan, and South Carolina participated in the study. Data collection consisted of information provided in participants' demographic questionnaires and through semi-structured interviews for each individual participant (Roulston, 2010). The interview protocol contained open-ended questions to guide the interview(s) (Maxwell, 2013; Peoples, 2021). Various educational research influenced the development of the interview questions (Bianco et al., 2009; Gonzalez, 2018; Hetherington et al., 2010). Participants opted to engage in two interview sessions over the Zoom conferencing platform, or they chose to complete one longer interview session over the same platform. After transcribing and coding the first interview, I conducted horizontalization of the data, or noted significant participant statements relevant to the phenomenon being studied (Moustakas, 1994).

A research team comprised of two counselor education doctoral students assisted in the data analysis phase of the study. These research team members were school counselors and in their second and third years, respectively, of counselor educator programs. Both research team members possessed experience working in public school settings with diverse students with disabilities and their families. One research team member was a Black female, while the other team member was a White female. It was important that both research team members had knowledge of and experience working in public school settings. Additionally, it was of paramount importance that there was at least one research team member who had a Black racial identity. As a White female researcher, I lacked the insider knowledge and perceptual wisdom (Sue & Sue, 2008) related to the experiences of the participants due to my racial identity as a White person.

The research team collaborated together and established the agreed-upon types of coding for doing consensus coding during data analysis or similar codes across types (descriptive, in vivo, and process) (Hays & Singh, 2012; Holley & Harris, 2019). In doing so, the research team demonstrated the data's trustworthiness via the triangulation of multiple researchers (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Additionally, I created a codebook of theory-informed codes, and the research team incorporated some of those codes to describe the significant statements or horizontalization units from participants.

Theoretical Framework

Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) is a sagacious lens to view the educational and postsecondary realities for students of Color with disabilities and their families (Annamma et al., 2018). DisCrit sharply critiques the deficit narratives in educational research on historically marginalized students with a disability. Rather than focusing on what short-term fixes educators ought to implement for students of Color with disabilities, DisCrit troubles the dysfunctional educational landscape for students of Color with disabilities and their families (Annamma & Morrison, 2018).

From a DisCrit perspective, the oppressive forces of racism and ableism must be named and interrupted in educational settings to advance equitable post-school outcomes for students of Color with disabilities. The DisCrit theoretical lens propels this researcher to advance the claim that school systems are failing students of Color with disabilities and their parents/families. School systems are comprised of longstanding inequities, influenced by the entrenched forces of racism and ableism (Annamma & Morrison, 2018). From utilizing DisCrit as this study's theoretical framework, school counselors can view the sorely inadequate postsecondary outcomes for Black young adults with high incidence disabilities by viewing the issue not as a randomly occurring one, but as an urgent dilemma that is systemic, demoralizing, unjust, and adding to the educational debt and historical debt that the United States owes to Black individuals with disabilities (Thorius & Tan, 2016).

There is a paucity of literature produced by school counselors that uses DisCrit to view postsecondary planning and postsecondary inequities facing Black students with high incidence disabilities and their parents. If postsecondary statistics continue to be so abysmal for this group of students and ASCA (2019b) mandates that school counselors view themselves as social justice advocates and systemic change agents, why do the perspectives of Black students with high incidence disabilities and their parents remain hidden and invisible?

In order for school counselors, the counselor education field, and other educational disciplines to reimagine and recreate equitable postsecondary planning for Black students with high incidence disabilities, DisCrit literature contends that educational practice "must be informed by knowledge from within and outside the academy" (Annamma & Morrison, 2018, p. 12). Since Black parents are an integral part of their child with high incidence disabilities' life, it is beneficial for educators to connect with such parents' lived experiences. Therefore, the lived experiences of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities will provide a salient source of information for school counselors on the topic of postsecondary planning for Black students with high incidence disabilities and their parents. DisCrit prizes the counter accounts of historically multiply marginalized communities, so it seems congruent that this theory provides the impetus to frame the research to center the lived experiences of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities concerning the postsecondary planning process.

Research Question

This study will investigate the perspectives of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities on the postsecondary planning process. More specifically, the centering research question is, "What are Black parents' lived experiences regarding the postsecondary planning process for their young adult child with high incidence disabilities?"

Definitions

Ableism

Ableism is a term for discrimination against individuals with disabilities. It is a continuum of discrimination that ranges from a person's biases against those with disabilities to structural discrimination where businesses and other organizations resist complying with the statutes of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) and other laws. Ableism is also an erroneous belief, influenced by the medical model and the "sociocultural production of ability" (Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2012, p. 40) that individuals with disabilities are abnormal and inferior to individuals in a society who do not have a disability (Siebers, 2008). Ableism is

> A system that places value on people's bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normalcy, intelligence, and excellence. These constructed ideas of normalcy, intelligence, and excellence are deeply rooted in anti-Blackness, eugenics, and capitalism. This form of systemic oppression leads to people and society determining who is valuable and worthy based on people's appearance and/or their ability to satisfactorily produce, excel, and "behave". You do not have to be disabled to experience ableism. (Lewis, 2019).

Black

The demographic term Black in this study is an all-encompassing identifier for individuals who identify as African American (descendants of enslaved Africans forcibly brought to the United States), as immigrants from African countries (ex: Kenyan American, Nigerian American), or as immigrants who moved from Europe, the Caribbean (ex: Haitian American, Jamaican American), or other geographic areas (Locke & Bailey, 2014). As Watkins-Hayes notes, "African American is nation-specific" and "There are black people in every continent who are all over the world" (Adams, 2020). Concurrently, Love utilizes the terms dark people and dark folx (2019). Therefore, Black is not a substitute for how the participants will describe themselves. However, for consistency and clarity in presenting the results of this study, the term Black will be used to describe the participants, which aligns with U.S. Department of Education guidance on race and ethnicity markers for educational data (2009).

High Incidence Disabilities

Refers to those eligibility areas under IDEA (2004), such as emotional/behavioral disorders (EBD), specific learning disability (SLD), mild intellectual disability (MID), and other health impaired (OHI), particularly those with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and disabilities related to speech and language (Tefera, 2019). High incidence disabilities comprise the most commonly identified disabilities in special education, making up about 73% of the total number of students with disabilities in the United States (Walker & Berry, 2018).

Parent

A parent describes the biological, adoptive, stepparent, or legal guardian of a student who has consistent access to the student and the authority to make decisions with and for the student regarding postsecondary planning, academic planning, and special education processes.

Postsecondary Planning

Postsecondary planning refers to how a high school counselor intentionally provides college and career information, education, and related training to all students and their families in a school through individual meetings, small-group interventions, classroom lessons, and school-wide programming. The goal is to assist students “to choose from the wide array of options when students complete secondary education” (ASCA, 2019a, p. 18). Included in postsecondary planning are career assessments administered to students by school counselors (ASCA, 2019b) with subsequent explanation by school counselors to students and families of the interpretation of the results of career assessments and next steps (ASCA, 2016a).

School Counselor

A school counselor is a state-certified education professional with at least a master's degree in school counseling who implements a comprehensive school counseling program and collaborates with parents, community members, and other educators to meet the social-emotional, academic, and career needs for all students. (ASCA, n.d.).

Transition Planning

Transition planning refers to legally mandated, synchronized group of activities for students with disabilities initiated by special education personnel that is individualized and intended to assist such students with their movement from school to post-school goals and activities, such as employment, postsecondary education, participation in the community, and other adult living goals (IDEA, 2004).

Chapter Summary

School counselors are social justice advocates in K-12 schools. With their expertise in career development practices, postsecondary planning, culturally competent counseling, and consultation with parents, educators and community organizations, school counselors can advocate for Black students with high incidence disabilities with postsecondary planning by collaborating with Black parents (ASCA 2016a; ASCA 2016b; Durodoye et al., 2004). School counselors must build trust with Black parents of youth with high incidence disabilities. Postsecondary planning and empowerment of marginalized parents' literature describe Black parents as being ignored by school officials, and there is a "disconnect between parents who are vital to the process and K-12 schools that are mandated to engage them" (Hallett & Griffen, 2015, p. 102). High school counselors hold bright promise to be essential teammates with Black parents of children with high incidence disabilities in the postsecondary planning process (Smith, 2009). The lived experiences of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities on the postsecondary planning process are absent from school counseling literature. School counselors who view the plight, needs, and worldviews of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities and the postsecondary planning process will be better equipped as social justice advocates to understand their own biases and assumptions toward this group of students and parents so school counselors can be better advocates (Ratts et al., 2015).

To that end, the school counseling profession would benefit from growing in understanding of the meaning that Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities attribute to the postsecondary planning process. With a DisCrit lens, this phenomenological inquiry illuminated the lived experiences of the Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities that are enshrouded in interlocking oppressions of racism and ableism (Annamma & Morrison, 2018).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter aims to provide a summary of the educational literature that foregrounds the experiences of Black parents of a young adult child with high incidence disabilities in relation to their child's postsecondary planning process. There is a plethora of research citing the need for Black parent involvement with postsecondary planning ventures for their child's plans following high school. However, there is a paucity of research examining Black parents' actual experiences with postsecondary planning, especially for Black parents with a young adult child with high incidence disabilities. The lack of postsecondary outcome data for young Black adults with high incidence disabilities portends the urgent, intentional need for school counselors to advocate for this population of students.

Research indicates that special education teachers and school counselors need to specifically support Black students with high incidence disabilities by viewing parents as crucial partners in postsecondary planning processes (Harris et al., 2016). Social justice advocacy-oriented school counselors need an understanding of how school systems marginalize parents with non-mainstream identities and subsequent impacts on Black parents of a young adult child with high incidence disabilities. Therefore, the theoretical framework of Disability Critical Race Studies (DisCrit) presents a viable, conscious lens by which school counselors conceptualize equity work and collaborative work with Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities (Annamma et al., 2018).

Consequently, the primary research question driving this study is: What are Black parents' lived experiences regarding the postsecondary planning process for their young adult child with high incidence disabilities?

Postsecondary Outcomes of Students with High Incidence Disabilities

Dismal statistics in the areas of high school graduation rates, and postsecondary education and employment trends are a few of the areas that warrant focus on youth with high incidence disabilities and their families by a school counselor (Gregg, 2007; Mallett, 2017; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019; Oshima et al., 2010). Despite some gains in high school graduation rates, students with disabilities continue to have lower high school completion rates than their non-disabled peers (Newman et al., 2011). Black students with a disability continue to be pushed out of their high schools due to punitive school discipline practices maintained by educators' implicit and explicit bias (Annamma & Morrison, 2018). Annamma and Morrison debate that these marginalized students are not viewed as commodities in the ecological system of their schools, but rather, as outflows of their school community (2018). Lack of intentional intervention by educators for postsecondary planning results in higher attrition rates in higher education and poor employment trends for youth with disabilities as compared to their nondisabled student cohort (Newman et al., 2011).

High School Completion

In school year 2014-2015, students with disabilities graduated high school with a regular education diploma at a rate of 69%, while 11% of the students with disabilities earned a certificate of completion or attendance, and 18% of those students dropped out of high school (NCES, 2019). One writer cited the statistic that "only 27% of African

American male special education students graduate from high school" (Stone, 2016, p. 7) from 2011-2012 data. During the 2014-2015 school year, 62% of Black students with a disability graduated with a regular education diploma (NCES, 2019). However, over a third of Black students with disabilities had poorer outcomes: 14% received an alternate certificate (certificate of completion or attendance) and 22% dropped out of high school (NCES, 2019). High school graduation data and related data for students with high incidence disabilities showed the following trends: students with classifications of other health impairment, specific learning disability, and speech language impairment had high rates of graduation (respectively, 74%, 74%, and 81%) while students with emotional behavioral disorder and intellectual disability had lower graduation rates (respectively, 57% and 42%) (NCES, 2019). Furthermore, those latter high incidence disability classifications had highest outcomes with non-earning of a high school diploma (drop-out rate for students with emotional behavioral disorder was 34%; students with intellectual disability rate of earning an alternate diploma/certificate of attendance was also 34%) (NCES, 2019). Data disaggregated by race/ethnicity subgroups under high incidence disability classifications was not locatable in the national data set (NCES, 2019).

Educational statistics from a 2012-2013 cohort study ranks the state of Georgia as the 40th worst state for Black males in terms of graduation rates: 55% of Black males earned a high school diploma, trailing behind Latino males (57%) and White males (71%) (Jackson, 2015). Disaggregated data from graduation rates that delineates the subgroups within a group, such as Black male students with disabilities, are not readily available (Jackson, 2015). Further disaggregated data on students of Color with a specific disability (i.e. learning disability) is even more difficult to locate (deFur & Auguste, 2015). If data is unavailable/invisible to find concerning a group of students, how can a school counselor monitor interventions and outcomes to help such students? (Jackson, 2015). Graduation rate statistics for students with disabilities in high incidence disability categories and broken down by racial/ethnicity categories were unable to be located on U.S educational websites. Students with disabilities and their families deserve supports to advance their high school graduation rates to be at the same rate as their non-labeled peers.

Higher Education

Students with high incidence disabilities are more likely to attend a two-year college than a four-year college (AIR, 2013). Similarly, students with high incidence disabilities are less likely to complete a four-year degree (AIR, 2013). Thus, attrition rates of students with high incidence disabilities are an issue at the postsecondary level (Garrison-Wade, 2012; Kosine, 2007; Madaus et al., 2014). Students with high incidence disabilities who graduate from high school report that they feel unprepared with the challenges associated with attending college once they are enrolled (Hetherington et al., 2010). Students with high incidence disabilities are often not academically equipped to earn passing grades once they attend a two-year or four-year college (Newman et al., 2011). Lack of academic preparation stems from minimal proficiency with independent study strategies, poor time management skills, and low awareness that college classes require more time allocated for study outside of class (Garrison-Wade & Lehmann, 2009; Ray, 2018). Another variable that impedes student academic success is the report of students with high incidence disabilities not identifying as having a disability once in college, and subsequently not connecting with the college's office of disability support services or self-advocating for needed accommodations with each professor, across semesters (Newman et al., 2011). National Longitudinal Transitional Survey-2 (Newman et al., 2011) data indicated that for students with disabilities who ever enrolled in a postsecondary college, 63.1% of respondents with a documented disability reported they did not have a disability. Additionally, of those respondents with a documented disability who enrolled in postsecondary college, only 4.4% of those individuals stated that they reported their disability to the postsecondary college after receiving admittance (Newman et al., 2011). Students with high incidence disabilities tend to underuse disability resource centers in college and request academic help later in the semester when it is too late to make much of a difference (Newman et al., 2011; Yung-Chen et al., 2019). Clearly, there are knowledge gaps for students with disabilities who transition from high school to postsecondary college that require more attention and intervention from high school professionals, such as school counselors, special education teachers, and postsecondary professionals.

Related to the knowledge information gap, students with disabilities transitioning to postsecondary college often are unaware of the legislation mandates related to their disability (Kosine, 2007). While students are in the P-12 setting, their special education teacher/IEP case manager is required to distribute all academic/behavioral accommodations and modifications for the student as dictated by the IEP under IDEA (2004) to all teachers every semester, each school year. Parents and special education teachers are the most common advocates for students with disabilities. However, as a student with a disability makes the transition to college, IDEA (2004) is replaced by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990), and more recently, Americans with

Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA, 2008) as the legal protection for students with disabilities in postsecondary life, such as the workplace and at the postsecondary institution. Without explicit communication and reminders in high school about this legal fact from the student's special education teachers or school counselor, the student with high incidence disabilities and his/her parents/guardians are oblivious to this essential knowledge. School counselor preparation programs do not typically educate future school counselors on disability matters or disability legislation, though ASCA exhorts school counselors to assist all students with postsecondary transitions (2016a; Milsom, 2007). The onus is upon the student to register with the postsecondary institution's disability support center and to maintain communication with that office often, as well as to be able to self-disclose to different professors about his or her academic needs and accommodations.

Intersectionality

A prevailing issue that effects equity and access for Black students with high incidence disabilities involves the lack of attention to the intersectionality of the students at the postsecondary level (Gregg, 2007; McDonald et al. 2007). A student with high incidence disabilities entering a postsecondary institution also navigates anxiety about adjusting to a new setting and making new social connections, as well as the stressors associated with having multiple marginalized identities. For example, a Black student with a specific learning disability is a first-generation college student. She grapples with the negative aspects of her disability, yet she is able to "hide it" as it is cognitive, and for the most part invisible, unlike a conspicuous, orthopedic-related disability. If the postsecondary institution only supports her status as a student with a disability because she registered with disability support services, the needs of other social identities go unmet, such as her gender identity, race/ethnic identity, or first-generation college student status. As McDonald and colleagues (2007) state, “encountering both disability and racial/ethnic discrimination can make it difficult for these individuals to find an accepting group” (p. 157).

Racism

Accordingly, if a Black student with or without a disability enrolls in a predominantly White institution (PWI), he or she is likely to experience overt or covert racism and an unsupportive academic/institutional climate (Smith et al., 2007). The concept of racial battle fatigue applies to Black males, in higher education or other domains (Smith et al., 2007). Smith and colleagues describe it as “the result of constant physiological, psychological, cultural, and emotional coping with racial microaggressions in less-than-ideal and racially hostile or unsupportive environments” (2007, p. 555). Such unwelcoming environments require that Black male students spend a significant amount of time and emotional/mental labor to deal with such racist stressors and environments (Smith et al., 2007). Racial battle fatigue enacts a high emotional, physical, and cognitive toll on Black male students (Smith et al., 2007). This dynamic is also relevant for Black female college students. Relatedly, recent findings draw a parallel between experiences of observing slight occurrences of racial bias and diminished executive processing function (Ozier et al., 2019). As Smith and colleagues infer, accumulated experiences of racism and bias for African American male college students lead to dropping out of college, among other negative outcomes (2007).

Ableism

Yet another equity/access barrier for Black students with high incidence disabilities at the postsecondary institution is ableism. Colleges and universities, like many social institutions today, do not view a learning disability/disability as a variance of the way a person learns or as part of their identity, but as a biological or psychological deficit (Siebers, 2008). Rather than require instructional faculty across fields of study/majors be skilled in employing a wide range of instructional techniques, modalities, and a diversity of formative assessments, higher education settles for allowing one center on campus to be a resource for students with documented disabilities. A better solution is all of higher education taking responsibility for divergent learners (Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2012). Relatedly, disability support professionals at community colleges observe students with high incidence disabilities to have issues with time management, writing skills, math skills, and overall study skills, which could be described as another access issue that hinders equitable educational outcomes (Garrison-Wade & Lehmann, 2009).

Lack of Affordability

Finances are an obstacle to equity and access at the postsecondary level. Financial reasons are the highest reason for students with disabilities leaving a four-year postsecondary institution (Newman et al., 2011). Lack of appropriate documentation for the postsecondary institution's disability support office and the responsibility for paying for outside evaluations are also barriers to students with high incidence disabilities succeeding in college (Gregg, 2007; Holmes, 2018).

Vulnerability to Sexual Assault

The topic of abuse and sexual assault of college students with disabilities needs mentioning. Some higher education literature centers on non-disabled college students' experiences after sexual assault, which leads to institutional betrayal, psychological trauma, and even to activism for the survivor (Linder & Myers, 2017; Smith & Freyd, 2014). However, even fewer scholars attempt to chronicle the prevalence of such violent trauma on college students with a disability (Findley et al., 2015).

Employment

Additional facts about students with high incidence disabilities are that they are more likely to be unemployed, earn low wages if they are working, and less likely to live independently as compared with nondisabled peers (Gregg, 2007; Newman et al., 2011). If such individuals come from a low-income background, their postsecondary outcomes related to employment, wage growth, and independent living are more negatively impacted (Gregg, 2007; Newman et al., 2011). NLTS-2 data shows that most students with high incidence disabilities delay enrolling in college by five to eight years after high school graduation (Newman et al., 2011). This fact alone shows that such students' lifetime earning potential is reduced since completion of two-year and four-year postsecondary programs of study are correlated with higher salaries (Gregg, 2007; Newman et al., 2011). Gregg also cites lack of postsecondary options, such as school-to-work programs or workforce development programs (that do not require a college degree), as reasons for students with learning disabilities having low success rates after high school graduation (2007).

Experiences and data pertaining to American workers with a disability across the age span and racial/ethnic group membership, especially Black young adults with disabilities, or more specifically, high incidence disabilities, is an area sorely in need of intentional, rigorous study. A survey of the literature depicts longitudinal, national data of young adults with disabilities eight years after school, but data is reported in an either/or format (either broken down by disability or by race, but not showing disability categories disaggregated by race) (Newman et al., 2011).

Metaphorically, one needs to juxtapose two different demographic lenses by which to view the phenomenon of employment challenges for Black young adults with high incidence disabilities. Such an endeavor confirms the intersectionality that exists for this population. The foundational, time-consuming, and well-cited longitudinal study, NLTS-2, is extremely helpful, but questions remain about the employment-related trends for Black workers with high incidence disabilities since those disaggregated figures are not retrievable (Newman et al., 2011). Reaching out to the aforementioned principal investigator for the original data set and running one's own statistical tests on employment (and other postsecondary data) outcomes for young Black young adults with high incidence disabilities is beyond the scope and time frame of this work.

Challenges Black Students with High Incidence Disabilities Face in High School

Lack of Rigorous Academics

Black students have disproportionally higher rates of entering the special education referral process and receiving special education services as compared to other demographic groups (Blanchett, 2006). Black students in special education commonly labeled with one of the following high-incidence disabilities: emotional behavior disorder, learning disability, or intellectual disability (Blanchett, 2006). The concern about the referral and eligibility process for Black students to special education are that those high incidence disability categories "depend on clinical judgment (informed opinions of those conducting the assessment)" (Gatlin & Wilson, 2016, p. 131). Blanchett concludes that since the majority of educators are White, and they tend to "see Whiteness as the norm and consequently the academic skills, behavior, and social skills of African American and other students of color are constantly compared with those of their White peers" (2006, p. 27). Hence, White educators, informed by White privilege and racism, are more likely to refer students of color to special education because they do not fit norms of Whiteness (Blanchett, 2006).

Relatedly, placement into special education can lead Black students with a disability to being segregated from their non-disabled peers and being further away from access to general education curriculum (Connor, 2006; Holmes, 2018). Such a psychological and geographic distance from general education content is an impediment for college-bound students with high incidence disabilities. Students with high incidence disabilities need early access to rigorous classes while in high school in order to be equipped for the content, pace, and structure of college courses (Gregg, 2007). Without such access to challenging general education content by remaining in segregated special education classes, students are likely to earn a sub-diploma, a certificate attendance or drop out of high school (Blanchett, 2006). Black students have difficulty exiting special education once they earn a disability eligibility and are not likely to exit special education once identified (Banks & Hughes, 2013).

Career Development Gaps

Relevance of Career Assessments

Many Black students with high incidence disabilities are ill prepared to exit public high school successfully with a defined college and career plan (deFur & Auguste, 2015). One common way for school counselors to determine and monitor student growth with career development competencies is through the area of assessments (Tang, 2019). High school counselors incorporate career assessments for all students as a salient component of a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes college and career readiness (Tang, 2019). Career assessments typically take place in classrooms across grade level and include informal or formal measures (Tang, 2019). School counselor intentionality is paramount prior to the selection of and administration of any assessment. It is necessary that the school counselor use assessments that foster client "self-awareness and self-exploration" (Tang, 2019, p. 178) in order to facilitate interventions that promote career development for students. Tang also exhorts school counselors to consider the aspects of student's social identities, including race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and other forms of diversity "when determining appropriate career and college readiness interventions and when working on postsecondary planning with students and their families" (Tang, 2019, p. 298).

Career Assessments and Black Students with High Incidence Disabilities

The topic of a high school counselor using career assessments with Black high school students with high incidence disabilities was not locatable in the educational literature. Special education teachers also administer career assessments to students with high incidence disabilities, through the transition process. A search of numerous databases with terms disabilities, teen or adolescent, and career assessments elicited few relevant findings related to the topic (Databases selected: Education Research Complete, ERIC, Psychology and Behavioral Science Collection, SOC Index with Full Text, Sociological Collection, and Vocational and Career Collection). Of the three applicable articles found, all authors were in the field of special education, and only one referenced a school counselor (Doren et al., 2013; Rojewski, 2002; Trainor et al., 2012). Doren and colleagues utilized school counselors for their intervention. School counselors referred students as well as co-facilitated a for-credit, gender-specific career curriculum program for female high school students. The identified participants had a disability or who were at-risk for not graduating high school with participant demographics noted as White, Non-White, Hispanic, and Non-Hispanic, and receiving free and reduced lunch (Doren et al., 2013). The intervention facilitators administered a few vocational assessments to the students during a portion of the 77-module curriculum. Participants demonstrated gains in "vocational skills self-efficacy…and vocational outcome expectations", among other variables (Doren et al., 2013, p. 1089).

For students with high incidence disabilities, Rojewski clarifies "career assessment can provide information to assist adolescents, their parents, and school personnel in making informed career decisions" (2002, p. 87). High school counselor-initiated, frequently occurring college and career readiness activities, including career assessments, ought to be ongoing and recognizable to students with high incidence disabilities and their parents. ASCA standard A.13 addresses the topic of "evaluation, assessment, and interpretation" (2016a). Oftentimes, the time high school counselors spend with a group of students with high incidence disabilities on career assessments is brief and ineffective due to time constraints, high caseload numbers, and a disconnect between student needs and career assessments that have not been normed for students with various disabilities.

Need for Accessible Career Assessment Data

School counseling departments have different ways of communicating career assessment results to parents, but this activity likely varies by school and counselor. In its code of ethics, ASCA outlines that school counselors "provide interpretation of the nature, purposes, results, and potential impact of assessment/evaluation measures in language the *students and parents/guardians* can understand" (2016a, p. 5). The nature of communicating assessment results is a bit more complex since results are specific to each individual. Yet, benefits of adhering to this ethical principle include the student with high incidence disabilities and his or her parent/guardian having increased awareness of student work-related values, career aptitudes, and occupational interests. This data is invaluable to complement other data that the special education teacher gathers in the form of transition assessments (formal and informal instruments). If the school counselor, special education teacher, student with high incidence disabilities, and his or her parent/guardian were able to have a comprehensive picture of where the student was in terms of college and career readiness due to having school counseling's career assessments and special education transition assessment data, improved postsecondary transition planning would occur. Since the professional literature exhorts school counselors to collaborate with Black parents of students with high incidence disabilities (Durodoye et al., 2004), high school counselors need to be proactive in communicating outcomes of classroom guidance activities involving career assessments to parents as well as to special education teachers inside and outside of IEP meetings (Skaff et al., 2016).

Accessible Career Assessment Data as Parent Engagement Tool

Relatedly, a recommendation is for high school counselors collaborating with special education teachers to create a college and career virtual classroom containing results from school counselor-administered career and related assessments in an electronic folder accessible to students with high incidence disabilities and their parents. A related shared electronic document in the folder is an avenue for ongoing communication between the school counselor, special educator, parent, and student (Skaff et al., 2016). The document is a space for the student with high incidence disabilities and his or her parent to ask questions of the educators as well as for the school counselor to include relevant announcements or links related to the student's postsecondary goals.

This increased engagement between educational stakeholders and parents is invaluable: it promotes more parent involvement (Skaff et al., 2016). It supports research showing Black parents of a students with high incidence disabilities desire to have more interactions with educators centering on their child's individual needs and the parents' desire to be more empowered with supporting their child (Hicks, 2018; Stanley, 2015). Additionally, such an improved relationship between Black parents and educators could equip the parents with the knowledge, tools, and resources to help their young adult child with high incidence disabilities better navigate the world of work or postsecondary educational institutions.

Exclusionary School Discipline

National School Discipline Statistics for Males with a Disability

The Office of Civil Rights Data Collection (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.) on school discipline for 2015-2016 contains a myriad of datasets for the U.S. and each state for different school discipline types. School discipline types of interest are variables of in-school suspension one or more days and one or more days of out-of-school suspension (USDOE, n.d.). While such data does not provide context or break down results by classification of disability, it is still very informative. For discipline type of more than one day of in-school suspension across the U.S, Black male students with a disability accounted for 30.5% of male students, while White male students with a disability accounted for 44.2% of that type of discipline (USDOE, n.d.). For U.S. male students with no disability, 30.3% of Black male students and 40.2% of White male students fell under that category of discipline. There was not much discrepancy between male students with or without a disability in their respective racial/ethnic category. For the discipline type of more than one out-of-school suspension, national data showed that 36% of Black male students with a disability and 38% of Black male students with no disability accounted for this area. Relatedly, 38.4% White male students with a disability and 28.6% of White male students with no disability received more than one out-of-school suspension. Again, there is not too much difference between statistics among racial/ethnic groups.

National School Discipline Statistics for Females with a Disability

Data on Black female students and school discipline confirms recent literature stating that Black female students receive more severe discipline consequences than their White female peers (Townsend Walker, 2020). For the national statistics, more than one out-of-school suspension, 44% of Black female students with a disability and 31.7% of White female students with a disability received this discipline type (U.S. DOE, n.d.). Black female students without a disability received more than one day of out-of-school suspension at a rate of 48% as compared White female students without a disability at 20.7%, much less than their Black female peers. This data is highly disproportional for Black and White female students for this category of discipline data.

Lack of Effective Transition Planning

Related literature contends that transition plans need to be a tool to help an individual with a disability to successfully transition from high school to college or work (Kosine, 2007). Those professionals who facilitate and support transition plan meetings need to have high expectations for post-school planning for students with disabilities, regardless of disability label (Grigal et al., 2011). However, there is a discrepancy between what transition literature recommends for effective transition plans and what actually takes place in a school (Hetherington et al., 2010). The literature highlights unacceptable transition plans often occurring superficial, non-individualized plans that lack goals and relevant curriculum and transition assessments (Hetherington et al., 2010). For example, an unacceptable transition plan includes a general sentence for the student that states where if student will attend college, work, or enlist in the military after high school (Hetherington et al., 2010). The transition plan ideally lays out goals related to helping the student prepare for postsecondary plans as well as to begin identification of relevant community agencies and organizations, such as a state vocational rehabilitation office (Hitchings et al., 2005). Increasingly, more special education literature calls for transition planning to be more culturally competent for culturally diverse students with disabilities and their families (Achola, 2019; Suk et al., 2020).

Role of High School Counselor and Postsecondary Planning Process for Students with Disabilities

High school counselors play an integral role with assisting students with disabilities concerning the postsecondary transition process and helping such students surmount the challenges that are unique to having a disability label (ASCA, 2016b). High school counselors' knowledge of postsecondary planning options and their charge by the American School Counseling Association's (ASCA) code of ethics to prepare all students to make informed decisions about college and career options places high school counselors in a unique position to support students with disabilities (ASCA, 2016a).

Social Justice Advocate

High school counselors function as advocates, educators, and mediators for students with disabilities and their families. High school counselors also serve as connectors of students with disabilities and parents to colleges, workplaces, community organizations, and other social organizations, while collaborating with special education teachers and IEP team members (Durodoye et al., 2004; Kosine, 2007). For Black students with high incidence disabilities, proactive, competent career planning is essential for them and their family. It is a social justice imperative that high school counselors provide strategic career planning to Black students with high incidence disabilities and their families so that they are aware of the pathways to high demand careers that provide a livable income, stability, and benefits. Black young adults with high incidence disabilities need to know about the plethora of job options available, so as to avoid mediocre employment outcomes related to minimum wage jobs and part-time jobs (Rojewski et al., 2014).

Due to the nature of their training and access to postsecondary resources and information, high school counselors function as gatekeepers to career related information that students and parents need. For example, a high school counselor is aware of state organizations and businesses that offer career apprenticeships (i.e. beginning electricians) or state financial aid that funds high demand careers (i.e. HOPE Career Grant in Georgia). Tangentially, a high school counselor serves as a type of social capital (Bryan et al., 2011), even if special educators and parents are conscious of that or not (Trainor et al., 2012). The information and resources for postsecondary planning a high school counselor holds possesses promise for making a significant difference in students' lives, if it makes it into the hands of Black students with high incidence disabilities and their families.

School Counselor Interventions

While the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2019) expectation is that high school counselors implement comprehensive school counseling programs that include emphasis on student career exploration, career assessments, and any other method to promote career development, it is clear that students with disabilities need specific interventions in addition to school-wide classroom lessons on career advisement. School counselor-facilitated interventions fall broadly into one of two categories: (1) psychoeducational short-term groups for students with disabilities and (2) other supports. The other supports category consists of school counselor-led workshops (at the high school level) for college degree-seeking students with disabilities and their parents, and the school counselor orienting students with learning disabilities to networks of social capital on the college campus and outside the college campus (Durodoye et al., 2004; Garrison-Wade, 2012; Milsom & Dietz, 2009; Naugle et al., 2010). The literature takes into consideration the need for culturally competent interventions by a school counselor for students of historically oppressed, double marginalized backgrounds (example: a Black student with a learning disability) in their postsecondary transition process (Durodoye et al., 2004).

Short-term groups for students with disabilities in the high school setting consist of specialized groups related to the specific postsecondary goal that a student has. School counselors benefit from teaming with special education teachers to facilitate short-term groups for postsecondary-specific psychoeducational groups. Special education teachers and school counselors can collaborate to screen for potential group members, create and facilitate group session topics, and monitor of students during the group and after group termination (McEachern & Kenny, 2007; Milsom et al., 2004). Groups for students going directly into the workforce upon graduating from high school (McEachern & Kenny, 2007) is another option. Such transition groups may take place after school or on a Saturday and cover such topics as social skills related to the workplace, communication skills, self-awareness, self-advocacy, applying to jobs, and job interviewing skills (McEachern & Kenny, 2007).

Psychoeducational short-term groups for students with disabilities are an avenue for a high school counselor to reach a greater number of students and to provide them with the knowledge and peer support that they need to successfully transition to two-year or four-year postsecondary institution (McEachern & Kenny, 2007; Milsom et al., 2004). Some researchers recommend creating separate groups unique to the two-year college experience and to the four-year college experience, while other researchers recommend that students with the goal of going to either two-year or four-year college be included in the same group (McEachern & Kenny, 2007; Milsom et al., 2004). Ideally, the school counselor implements the college-going group during the school day, rotating across classes. Suggested session topics overlap with the transition to work group (self-awareness, self-advocacy skills), though topics unique to this group include knowledge of educational rights related to disability legislation and disability support services and other services at the postsecondary institution (Milsom et al., 2004).

School counselor-facilitated workshops for students with disabilities and their parents can be an efficient means of providing education to many families concerning meeting the challenges associated with navigating the postsecondary process. Pejorative phrases such as *documentation divide* and *transition cliff* in special education literature describe the disconnect that student with disabilities and their families face once the student leaves high school to move on to college or work (Garrison-Wade, 2012; Gregg, 2007). While some educators may have communicated to students with disabilities that there is a large difference with how the student will navigate life with their disability after high school, many students and parents are ill prepared to deal with the lack of information, structure, and accountability that they face upon graduation from high school. Therefore, school professionals, including school counselors, need to support special education teachers in this social justice issue by informing and educating students and parents in order to end the disability information gap prior to graduation from high school.

Mental Health Considerations

Mental wellness is an understated but foundational area for successful post-school outcomes. Optimal mental health functioning is necessary for interpersonal relationships, academic performance securing and maintaining employment, completion of college, independent living, and other areas (Poppen et al., 2016). School counselors and special education teachers ought to probe for individual-specific challenges related to the student mental health challenge or mental health disorder in order to create a sufficient career plan (Tang, 2019, p. 69).

Students with disabilities reportedly have a higher susceptibility of having mental health disorders (Clark et al., 2008). Students with disabilities with unmet mental health needs are more likely to receive severe school discipline, such as suspension or expulsion from school, or to drop out of school (Dembo & LaFleur, 2019). As compared to their non-disabled peers, students with the intellectual disability classification under IDEA are "more than six times likely to develop a psychiatric disorder" (Emerson & Hatton, 2007, as cited in Chang & Clark, 2018, p. 2). Youth with emotional behavioral disturbance and mental health disorders have a high involvement with the juvenile justice system (Chang & Clark, 2018). Seventy five percent of survey respondents with an emotional disorder reported involvement with the criminal justice system at least one point in their lifetime (Newman et al., 2012). Over two-thirds of youth in juvenile justice settings reportedly have a mental health disorder (Chang & Clark, 2018). The initial age to begin transition planning is 16, which overlaps with the age range (15-24) when youth are secondarily most likely to die by suicide (National Institute of Mental Health, n.d.).

Given the urgency of such statistics, IEP teams and school professionals are ethically obligated to address mental health supports in the transition plans of those students who have documented mental health needs. Poppen and colleagues note that while some mental health challenges were likely to be included on the IEP, others were not (2016). Examples of those challenges most likely to appear on the IEP were externalizing behaviors, such as "classroom disruptive-ness, attention deficit/hyperactivity, and impulsive/dangerous behaviors" (Poppen et al., 2016, p. 230). The more internalizing behaviors indicative of mental health challenges, though evident in the classroom, are omitted in the student's IEP: "experiences of trauma, impaired self-esteem, and depression" (Poppen et al., 2016, p. 230). Addressing mental health supports in a transition plan occurs through specific mental health-related goals, education to parents about local behavioral health providers (especially those that assist low-income families), community wraparound supports, and collaboration with families (Poppen et al., 2016).

School professionals advance the centrality of intentionally meeting student mental health needs through the transition planning process. School counselors are adept at working with students with mental health challenges. School counselors are often the first professional from the school who offers a parent outside local mental health resources for their child, should the need arise (Kaffenberger & O'Rorke-Trigiani, 2018). Ideally, school counselors educate parents on how to find an outside mental health provider who is culturally competent and skilled working with adolescents/young adults with high incidence disabilities, as this is not the professional scope of special education teachers.

Black Parent Perceptions on Special Education and Transition Planning

While there is a growing body of educational literature that centers the perspectives of Black students with a high incidence disability regarding their P-16 experiences in education (Banks, 2014, 2017; Connor, 2006; Holmes, 2018), it is also essential that research amplifies the perspectives of these students' parents. Black parents serve as guides, mentors, nurturers, and connectors for their child during secondary school and beyond. The pattern of educational literature regarding Black parent involvement in their child's education is one of "one-dimensional representations" (Morris, 2004). In other words, the surrounding contextual and historical factors of the cultural, social, and economic realities for Black parents are often absent in the research, though this is slowly changing. Corroborating this phenomenon, Kozleski and colleagues (2008) note:

> In U.S. research journals, the narratives of White, middle-class families have been told as universal stories rather than as stories situated in particular contexts in which the families themselves hold particular positions of privilege within a majority White and middle-class culture in the United States (p. 27).

Thus, negative assumptions by middle-class teachers and administrators about less involved parents and parents of lower socioeconomic status, regardless of race/cultural makeup of the parents permeate the attitudes, beliefs, and practices of school systems (Cucchiara & Horvat, 2009; Gorski, 2008).

Parent Perspectives on Special Education

A few authors center the perspectives of Black parents with a child with high incidence disabilities regarding involvement with and perceptions about special education through the methodology of case study, focus groups, narratives, phenomenology, and semi-structured interviewing (overarching methodologies not explicitly defined). Researchers on this topic derive mainly from special education (Blue et al., 2004; Griffin, 2016; Motley-King, 2008; Muse; 2014; Ziontz et al., 2003), school psychology (Hess et al., 2006), social work (Adjei, 2018; Stanley, 2015), and rehabilitation counseling (Hicks, 2018). Hicks highlighted Black parent perspectives about parent involvement in the transition planning process (2018).

Motley-King investigated Black parent perspectives on their child's experiences with high-stakes testing (2008). High-stakes tests and high school exit exams are barriers for some students with disabilities. Failure for students to surmount such a hurdle result in students receiving a sub-diploma, which is essentially a certificate of attendance of high school (Motley-King, 2008; Pazey et al., 2015; Tefera, 2019). Thompson studied perspectives of Black parents concerning their experiences with the IEP plan process (2014). Muse examined Black parents' experiences of their level of preparedness with the IEP decision-making process (2015). A compelling, unique study focused on the advocacy experiences of Black mothers in rural North Carolina (Stanley, 2015). Participants offered alternate, powerful accounts of what parent advocacy looks like in a community void of traditional resources and supports for parents of a child with a disability (Stanley, 2015).

Common themes across the above-mentioned literature are multifold. One theme is that Black parents desire better communication from and collaboration with school personnel (Stanley, 2015; Ziontz et al., 2003). The old adage of communication primarily resting in the perception of the recipient of the message is relevant: "level of parent satisfaction was closely related to the feeling that they were respected by the school personnel" (Ziontz et al., 2003, p. 41). Another theme is the need for educators to remedy their negative assumptions and biases of culturally different parents and to increase their understanding of cultural dynamics of culturally different families (Griffin, 2016; Harry & Klinger, 2006). Introduction of culturally competent training for educators, intentional examination and elimination of biased, negative assumptions and racism by educators, and support of parent advocacy is necessary to meet this need of Black parents (Harry & Klinger, 2006; Hess et al., 2006; Stanley, 2015). Without educator-focused culturally competent training as well as anti-bias and anti-racism training, educators are likely to continue to make decisions about the inappropriate referral and placement of Black students into special education and keep these students in restricted settings, once they receive special education services.

Education and training were another theme from research with Black parents of a child with a disability. Additionally, in a mixed-methods research account, Black parents indicated that they would like more education on their child's disability and the need for external, community supports to meet their child's needs (Landmark et al., 2007):

> The African American parents' responses tended to focus on outside supports, financial supports, and parent education. Outside supports included agencies, local universities, and therapists. Financial support did not mean support from the school, rather that if some of their financial pressures were lifted it would be easier for them to be more involved in their children's transition process (pp. 74-75).

The authors noted that among the participant groups (Black parents, Latinx parents, Chinese American parent, and European American parents), Black parents had less knowledge about the legality of a transition plan in their child's IEP (Landmark et al., 2007). Hess and colleagues, in their study utilizing focus groups, which included Black and Latinx parents of children with high incidence disabilities, confirmed parent need for access to information, including on their rights in the special education process (2006). Parent need for training on their special education-specific parent rights is a repetitive theme across the research and indicates a knowledge gap for some Black parents of students with high incidence disabilities (Hicks, 2018).

Parent Perspectives on Transition Planning

Insights from Black parents of young adults with a disability highly matter since parents continue to offer support after their child graduates from high school (Bianco et al., 2009; Miller-Warren, 2016). In a quantitative study of demographically diverse rural North Carolina parents (range of socioeconomic status and race/ethnic identity), results about their child's "secondary transition planning process" (Miller-Warren, 2016, p. 31) proved insightful. The researcher mailed out a closed-ended survey to parents whose young adult child recently graduated from high school, was served in special education, and had a range of disability labels (including those categorized under HID and) intellectual quotients (Miller-Warren, 2016). While the majority of the parents responded that their child had a transition plan, received a referral to an external community agency, and took career development courses in high school, other responses were concerning (Miller-Warren, 2016). For instance, only half of the parents reported that their child was employed, and a little more than a third of the parents noted that their child was enrolled in a postsecondary institution or training program (Miller-Warren, 2016). Additional data showed lower response rates about other critical postsecondary transition planning areas.

Only one of 23 parents agreed that their child received training during high school on self-determination and self-advocacy skills (Miller-Warren, 2016). A little over one-third of the parents reported that their child established with a representative from an external community agency (Miller-Warren, 2016). Finally, with the above supporting data and "only 16.7% of the parents felt that their children were prepared to meet postsecondary challenges after high school" (Miller-Warren, 2016, p. 34), it is evident that competent transition planning work needs to be conducted by secondary educators and postsecondary organizations (institutions and community agencies) in conjunction with parents and their child with a disability. Otherwise, students with disabilities will continue to be unable to meet their postsecondary goals, and their parents will be at a loss for how to help them.

Black parents of students with high incidence disabilities desire personalized relationships with educators rather than perfunctory relationships with educators (Landmark et al., 2013). Parents "also feel more part of the transition process when they have more personal interactions with school staff" (Hetherington et al., 2010, p 164). Parents involved in focus groups noted that they perceived their experiences with school systems to be "too little, too late" (Hetherington et al., 2010, p. 167). Additionally, parents who expressed to the IEP team/special education teacher that they believed they were receiving information related to transition plan too late in the child's schooling felt that the special education teachers were dismissive, indifferent, and distant (Hetherington et al., 2010). Some parents valued the positive way in which educators interacted with their child, while other parents were not privy to such support (Hetherington et al., 2010).

Unfortunately in this study, none of the parents reported experiencing effective transition planning with the school. Factors cited included lack of communication from the school, feelings of loneliness that the parent was the only one who truly cared about the transition process, educator low expectations for the student with a disability, educator incompetence regarding appropriate transition planning, arbitrary transition goals, and “absence of self-determination skills, career planning, and job skills” (Hetherington et al., 2010, p. 168). While some parents participate in a research study to describe their experiences with transition planning, other parents take a different approach.

Some parents are so incensed, for good reason, that school systems denied their child with a disability with a free and appropriate education (FAPE), and they take the matter to court (Prince et al., 2014). Parents of students with a disability charge that school systems neglected to provide their child with adequate transition planning, in the form of vague transition planning goals, lack of transition assessments, and failure to invite and encourage their transition-age child to attend and participate in his/her/their own IEP meeting (Prince et al., 2014). Some parents prevail with this approach, while at other times, the courts ruled that school systems’ transition planning actions were adequate and appropriate (Prince et al., 2014).

Parent perspectives about transition planning extend to those secondary school processes that are outside the domain of special education. State departments of education have varying participation with federal mandates for school systems to implement individualized learning plans (ILPs) [also known as individualized graduation plans (IGPs)] for all students in high school (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016). School counselors are responsible for fulfilling state requirements for student related to ILPs or IGPS, as defined by their state. ILPs are a means to "assist students in successfully transitioning by helping them explore postsecondary options, identify goals for college and/or a career, and develop the skills needed to achieve their goals through course alignment and extracurricular activities (Skaff et al, 2016). The authors contend that ILPs are an underutilized tool that is a promising mechanism to further support transition planning for students with disabilities (Skaff et al., 2016). Their mixed-methods research in Louisiana, South Carolina, and Washington consisted of queried parents and educators in states whose ILP policy contained specific language for their views on the quality of ILP development with students with disabilities (Skaff et al., 2016).

Results from this research of parents revealed several themes. Similar to other transition literature focusing on parent perspectives, the parents in this study believed that their schools' work to prepare their child with a disability for postsecondary education or work was inadequate (Skaff et al., 2016). ILPs ought to be more comprehensive and involved than merely having students complete a career interest inventory at one point in high school. Parents of students with disabilities envision that they and their child receive "information on career options that match (their) child's strengths, interests, and needs" (Skaff et al., p. 74). While 74% of parents of able-bodied students affirmed that the school was providing satisfactory training for transition, only 47% of those parents of a student with disability shared that same opinion (Skaff et al., 2016). Additionally, 51% of parents of students with disabilities noted that ILPs needed to include students learning skills related to seeking employment, and of those parents, nearly half expressed that the school ought to offer more "career-related courses or learn occupational skills" (Skaff et al., 2016, p. 74). Around a quarter of the parents (26%) of a student with a disability also recommended that schools do more to involve parents with the ILP process (Skaff et al., 2016).

Special education literature on parent perspectives on the transition process is informative for all school professionals participating on the IEP team, including the school counselor. This research is unfamiliar to school counselors, as they are more likely to consult with professional literature that is specific to the school counseling profession. Ironically, in postsecondary institutions' colleges of education, departments of school counselor/counselor education are often located in the same building as special education departments, yet these professions often work apart, in the silos of their own disciplines. If school counselors receive no exposure or modeling of the relevance of consulting the professional literature of other educational disciplines, they are unlikely to access such a resource. Further, Landmark and colleagues recommended that school officials who oversee the transition plan provide training to parents to increase awareness of the transition plan (2007). A reported barrier for Black parents for participation in transition plan meetings related to work responsibilities (Landmark et al., 2007).

Paradox of Parent Advocacy

With IDEA (2004), the onus of responsibility for making a change to an existing IEP or for voicing a concern about related assessments for IEP eligibility lies in the domain of parents, even if "most parents do not have experience working within an educational system and are unaware of the educational options and services available" (Phillips, 2008, p. 1828). IDEA provides no stipulation that schools train parents on their parental rights and does not provide funding for parent advocates for a child with a disability (Phillips, 2008). Parental advocacy fails if parents of a child with a disability do not have the knowledge to do so (Phillips, 2008). Contrarily, even if a parent has the social capital to help his or her child, this is not a guarantee that the outcome the parents seeks for their child will occur (Gillborn, 2015). This is certainly true if the nature of the school system is unequitable for Black families of youth with disabilities, as Gillborn (2015) describes as the context for the special education system in the United Kingdom:

> Despite the reassuring and inclusive tone of government rhetoric, and in contrast to the often encouraging initial verbal response from schools, in reality, the Black middle-class parents' experiences suggest that the needs of the Black child go largely unmet within a system that uses dis/ability labels as a further field of activity where racist inequities are created, sustained, and legitimized (p. 283).

Parent Involvement

Historically, educational literature (including special education literature) erroneously classifies Black parents' involvement with their child's school as aloof and lacking (Harry & Klinger, 2006). Harry and Klinger witnessed many teacher participants in their research endorsing a belief of "poor parental participation as a key factor in special education placement" (2006, p. 74). Accordingly, quantitative research posits lower rates of participation in IEP meetings among non-White families as well as lower rates of satisfaction with the IEP process (Wagner et al., 2012), but again, context is often missing from these findings. NLTS-2 longitudinal data found that Black parents were less likely to attend the most recent transition IEP meeting for their child (Wagner et al., 2012).

Traditional parent involvement literature has culturally-defined assumptions (White, middle-class culture) of what “appropriate” parent involvement looks like, though a supplemental body of research offers a broader, culturally aware, and nuanced perspective on barriers to parent involvement and examples of what parent involvement looks like outside its mainstream portrayal (Doucet, 2011). For parents who support their family with more than one job, an expectation of traditional parent involvement of attending school functions or chaperoning events is not practical. The parent who supports their family by working multiple jobs communicates the importance of school to their child by moving their child to a school where the child will have access to more educational resources and postsecondary planning (Connor, 2006; Smith, 2009). Additionally, many parents never enroll in nor complete college. Therefore, they do not have the social, educational, or educational capital to know how to help navigate their child through the college admissions process (Smith, 2009; Yosso, 2005). However, such parents possess aspirational capital with strong hopes for their child’s postsecondary future and may solicit navigational capital in the form of help from their own social network to help their child with the college application process (Smith, 2009; Yosso, 2005).

Embedded in special education law is the exhortation that parents be involved in decisions that impact the creation and implementation of their child’s IEP (IDEA, 2004; Phillips, 2008). Engaged parents contribute to higher outcomes for their child’s educational and postsecondary success (Stanley, 2015). Special education literature, as a whole, is including more research concerning the perspectives of culturally diverse parents, particularly Black parents (Kozleski et al., 2008; Ziontz et al., 2003). Black parents of a child with a disability repeatedly cite the need for welcoming and validating communication from school personnel, and desire an authentic, collaborative working relationship with school personnel (Kozleski et al., 2008; Stanley, 2015; & Ziontz et al., 2003). This is a realistic expectation on behalf of parents, especially those who find themselves interacting with one of the most complex realms of public education, special education. Correspondingly, school counselors are adept at building positive, genuine, and collaborative relationships with parents. Various sections of the ASCA code of ethics and position statement on working with students with disabilities focus on ways that school counselors support parents (ASCA, 2016a; 2016b)

Research with Black Parents of Children with Disabilities by Counselors

Research on perspectives of Black parents who have a child in special education by counselors is very nascent in the field of counselor education, school counseling, and rehabilitation counseling. A more recent article published in a non-school counseling journal is proof (Hannon, 2017). Though not universally classified as a high incidence disability, the research of a Black school counselor educator and parent of a child with autism centered the perspectives of Black fathers through narrative methodology (Hannon, 2017). Hannon’s findings stressed the need for school counselors to assist Black fathers with identifying and accessing supportive social/cultural capital resources, using a strengths-based approach when working with Black youth with autism. Hannon also described the need for school-based family counseling (Hannon, 2017). While the last recommendation for implementing school-based family counseling is outside the decision-making capacity of a school counselor and under the domain of district leadership and funding, school counselors are equipped to employ the first two recommendations. In fact, Hannon's recommendations align with research literature that recommend school counselors connect Black parents of youth with disabilities with relevant, affirming cultural and social networks (Durodoye et al., 2004). Similarly, a related concept in school counseling literature is community resource mapping (Griffin & Harris, 2010). More recently, in special education transition literature, the concept is:

> Diversity-informed mapping—the targeted mapping of personal, local, and institutional assets of a community relevant to the needs of CED [culturally and ethnically diverse students and families…it expands the catalog of options for CED students by recognizing the existing "invisible" resources…transition professionals must aim to acquaint themselves with indigenous assets and restructure resource mapping to produce more consonance between the cultural and ethnic elements of the student, family, community, and school by creating new relationships with community partners (Achola, 2019, p. 191).

Mothers in one study desired that their child's special education teacher or school district implement parent support groups for parents of students with disabilities, particularly group for Black parents (Hicks, 2018). Notably, one of the mothers advocated at both city and state levels for school systems to enact such accessible parent support groups in urban schools, but government officials denied her request for reasons of funding and time constraints (Hicks, 2018). While the recommendations section contained a general charge to counselors to do more to service minority parents by growing in cultural competence, it did not provide specific details for the role that school counselors fill when it comes to advocating for Black parents and their child with a disability in the postsecondary planning process. It primarily consisted of a chart (Table

3) outlining CORE (Council on Rehabilitation Education, since merged with CACREP) and CACREP standards, very brief terminology related to multicultural and social justice counseling competencies, improvement areas, and a few recommendations for counselor education programs (Hicks, 2018, pp. 133-134).

On one hand, it is encouraging to see more research literature center the perspectives of Black parents of a school age child or young adult with a disability, related or unrelated to the transition process. It is evident that targeted research with Black parents of a child with a disability needs to occur, specifically, by school counselors, since school counselors support all students in a school with postsecondary planning. School counseling literature and ASCA code of ethics (2016a) position school counselors as school leaders, social justice advocates, and collaborators with parents, guardians, and community members that advance positive academic, social-emotional, and career planning outcomes. School counselors are capable to lead such research with Black parents with a young adult child with a disability regarding their experiences with postsecondary transition planning.

To exclude the voices of Black parents of a child with a disability on improvements that a school can make to support the child's transition process from high school to postsecondary plans is to collude with historical forces of oppression on this population of parents and students. School counselors need to show Black parents that they and their child with a disability matter by ensuring that the family is prepared for their child's transition to work or college through centering their perspectives in school counseling literature. Love (2019), eloquently states:

> We who are dark want to matter and live, not just to survive but to thrive.

> Matter not for recognition or acknowledgement but to create new systems and structures for educational, political, economic, and community freedom (2019, pp. 1-2).

Disability Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) emerged from legal studies that sought to center legal research on topics of race and racism. It is a type of "legal scholarship that sought to understand how White supremacy and its oppression of People of Color had been established and perpetuated" (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015, p. 5). CRT seeks to refute the common belief in society that racism is in the past or consists of observable behavior by an individual. Instead, CRT scholars advance the fact that racism exists across social contexts including social institutions, such as educational systems. CRT scholars seek to challenge the status quo and use the theory as an "analytical tool for interrupting racism and other forms of oppression" (McCoy & Rodricks, 2015, p. 5). In other words, a scholar who resonates with and is active in utilizing the dynamic theoretical framework of CRT is a person who is committed to carrying out social justice on behalf of communities of Color.

Purpose of DisCrit

Many theoretical branches emerged from CRT over the decades; one of those theoretical branches is Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) (Annamma et al., 2018). DisCrit emerged in response to scholars contending that both CRT and the field of disability studies did not succinctly acknowledge how persons of Color with a disability experience oppressive societal forces (Annamma et al., 2018). DisCrit seeks to examine the intersectional nature of racism and ableism across contexts. Annamma and colleagues

(2018) propose that racism and ableism have an ongoing, mutually reinforcing relationship. This dynamic manifests itself in the fact that students of Color, particularly males, are overrepresented in special education in both the United States and the United Kingdom (Annamma et al., 2018; Gillborn, 2015).

Knowledge Construction of DisCrit

Building on CRT's epistemological approach, DisCrit values the experiences and perspectives of people of Color who received a disability diagnosis. DisCrit scholars view "subjugated knowledge" (Connor, 2006, p. 158) as essential to building knowledge and is a rationale for the existence of DisCrit. An extended view is that the family members, particularly, Black parents of a young adult child with a disability, have important perceptions, knowledge, and experiences about postsecondary planning to add to research literature. Such an epistemological view is related to critical theory's resistance to expert knowledge, one-dimensional culture, standardization, and instrumental reason (Prasad, 2018). Critical theory supports the view that other narratives, particularly historically marginalized voices, should critique social institutions and engage in social justice-informed transformation of social institutions (Prasad, 2018).

Construction of Reality and Values in DisCrit

The DisCrit paradigm's ontology is that social reality is incomplete if it excludes the perspectives of multiple subordinated social groups (people of Color who have a disability and other marginalized identities). DisCrit's ontology also resists the oppressive nature of dominant groups and individuals at the macro and micro levels of society to decide what knowledge is accepted, real, and legitimate (Connor, 2006). The subjective realities of double marginalized social groups, such as Black students with high incidence disabilities and their parents, are often hidden and not encouraged to be brought into the public sphere. DisCrit criticizes the fact that narratives and performance of middle class, White, able-bodied students comprise the standard for all students in education. While some discourses and narratives (primarily of White male individuals with disabilities, for example, Lee and Jackson, 1992) have been accepted, those of other intersecting and marginalized identities are not as predominant in the research literature, such as Black students with high incidence disabilities and their parents (Holmes, 2018; Prasad, 2018).

DisCrit's axiology covertly maintains that all people are equal. DisCrit scholars and related CRT-informed scholars challenge the status quo in their respective social institutions and research (Connor, 2006). The axiology of DisCrit stems from critical theory, which has a "commitment to social critique and praxis" (Prasad, 2018, p. 167). Critical scholars for DisCrit include Annamma, Connor, Ferri, and Gillborn (Annamma et al., 2013).

Assumptions of DisCrit

DisCrit has seven primary assumptions. The first is that racism and ableism are reinforcing oppressive forces, whose goal is to center ability and Whiteness as preferred traits (Annamma et al., 2013). A second assumption about DisCrit is its emphasis on the multiple identities that individuals hold, rather than only focusing on one identity, and oppression exists within and across multiple marginalized identities (Annamma et al., 2013; Annamma et al., 2018). The third assumption invokes the rejection of the social construction of race and the biological construction of ability/disability (Annamma et al., 2018). DisCrit's fourth assumption advocates for the underscoring of the experiences and stories of the marginalized, particularly those who are multiply marginalized. DisCrit scholars need to make space for such marginalized voices (Annamma et al., 2013; Annamma et al., 2018). The fifth assumption highlights the historical and legal contexts in which denied individuals' rights due to their race and disability status (Annamma et al., 2013; Annamma et al., 2018). Assumption number six of DisCrit holds that traits of Whiteness and ability are considered normative. Educational gains for individuals who are non-White and have a disability primarily occur due to interest convergence of dominant social groups (Annamma et al., 2013; Annamma et al., 2018). The last assumption of DisCrit is expected, due to its nearness to CRT: activism and resistance, particularly embedded in communities of multiple marginalizations (Annamma et al., 2013; Annamma et al., 2018).

Applicability of DisCrit in Educational Research

Educators enlisting input and collaboration from such communities to promote social justice is critical and necessary (Mahon-Reynolds & Parker, 2016). Hence, school counselors with a DisCrit theoretical lens conduct research with Black parents of students with high incidence disabilities concerning experiences with postsecondary planning bring those parents' perspectives to center stage. Such researchers highlight occurrences of Black parent advocacy, activism, and resistance on behalf of their young adult child with a HID during postsecondary planning activities in high school as a way to change the typical deficit narrative of Black parents of students with disabilities.

DisCrit evaluates and offers solutions for dismantling oppression is in the field of education (Annamma et al., 2013). The number of researchers asserting the term DisCrit is gaining momentum. Most of the literature that notes explicitly this theoretical approach is found in doctoral dissertations by special education teachers (Annamma, 2013; Holmes, 2018; Stanard, 2016), a quantitative counselor education doctoral dissertation (Brodar, 2018), research by special education university faculty (Annamma & Morrison, 2018; Banks, 2017; Gillborn, 2015), and educational leadership literature (DeMatthews, 2020). DisCrit is an invaluable way to guide research methodologies to answer research questions while giving space to the historically double marginalized voices.

DisCrit Research by Educators

Banks described DisCrit as an "emerging theoretical framework that analyzes that interdependence of racism and ableism" (2017, p. 98). In her study, she explored Black male students' perceptions and experiences with a learning disability at a historically black college and university (HBCU). Banks wanted to understand the stories of P-16 educational experiences related to the young men being Black and having a disability label (2017). One of the study's research questions was to learn how "African American males labeled as students with learning disabilities perceive that race/ethnicity, gender, and disability status impact their opportunity to learn" (Banks, 2017, p. 98). The researcher used semi-structured phenomenological interviewing as a way to collect data (Banks, 2017). Findings showed that the participants experienced pejorative narratives and misunderstandings from P-16 educators based on race and disability status. However, participant's accounts espoused that the disability label was more indicative of a P-12 general education teacher's inability to meet the diverse learning needs of all students in a classroom or college professors' resistance to requests for academic accommodations (Banks, 2017).

Annamma contended that methodological pluralism guided the way she integrated various methods to study educational experiences and trajectories of young women of Color who were part of the school to prison pipeline, via DisCrit Theory and related critical theories (2013). She centered her participants' stories through education journey mapping, interviews, observation, elicitation techniques, and focus groups. Also, the Annamma viewed her research as participatory, despite the high surveillance of the research setting of juvenile jails and related areas (Annamma, 2013). She posited that her methods and data collected helped answer her primary research question, "What are the education trajectories of incarcerated young women of color with disabilities in the School to Prison Pipeline?" (2013, p. 66). Participants noted that their P-12 teachers neglected to see the sociocultural context in which they lived. Teachers dispensed personal responsibility and meritocracy narratives while criminalizing the young women, rather than trying to understand them and advocate for them (Annamma, 2013).

Holmes recognized that DisCrit "builds on the work of CRT in documenting the lived experiences of people of Color with disabilities to problematize being labeled as raced and disabled" (2018, p. 62). She showcased one Black male's educational and work experiences with multiple disabilities over time through narrative inquiry. She wanted to provide answers so that educational stakeholders might change policies to assist better African American male students with disabilities (Holmes, 2018). Her research provided a counternarrative of a young man with double marginalized identities to interrupt the dominant educational narratives of White, non-disabled students (Holmes, 2018).

The young man participated in multiple supportive opportunities while in high school and college (a college outreach program for Black students in high school, a summer bridge program at a community college, and vocational rehabilitation services in college). He maintained a resilient attitude and a supportive social network, but oppressive barriers remained (Holmes, 2018). Full college academic accommodations were out of reach because vocational rehabilitation only paid for a preliminary psychological exam. Consequently, this curtailed possible full accommodations at the college.

Pertinence of DisCrit to This Research

DisCrit values the belief that all people are equal. Therefore, DisCrit researchers are motivated to challenge the status quo in their respective social institutions and research (Connor, 2006). DisCrit resists dominant group narratives and the propensity with which individuals at the macro and micro levels of society determine what knowledge is acceptable and legitimate (Connor, 2006). Therefore, such research validates and publicizes the knowledge and realities of double marginalized social groups, such as Black parents who have young adult child with a disability. Outside of the DisCrit theoretical framework, such realities and knowledge remain shrouded in obscurity. DisCrit helps school counselors elevate the needs and perspectives of Black students with disabilities and their parents and incorporate their input to embark in collaboration for equitable postsecondary outcomes (Mahon-Reynolds & Parker, 2016). This research aims to use the DisCrit framework to explore how a Black parent perceives their child’s race influencing the postsecondary planning process, as well as how the parent interprets their child’s disability status intervening with race to impact the postsecondary planning process.

Chapter Summary

Given the research, high school counselors are pivotal parts of the postsecondary planning process for all students with disabilities, particularly those who identify as Black and have high incidence disabilities (Durodoye, 2004). For successful postsecondary outcomes to occur, it is incumbent upon the high school counselor to arrange their comprehensive school counseling program in a way that promotes effective career development programming that is equitable for Black students with high incidence disabilities. Moreover, Black parent support is paramount to the success of the students' postsecondary goals (Harris et al., 2016). Further, the research points to the high school counselor initiating collaborative working relationships with Black parents of students with high incidence disabilities (Durodoye et al., 2004; Gatlin & Wilson, 2016). The absence of scholarly work by school counselors with Black parents to improve postsecondary outcomes for their child with high incidence disabilities shows the importance of such work.

By a high school counselor recognizing and respecting the vital role that Black parents play during the high school years and post-high years in their child's life, the high school counselor adheres to ASCA's ethical code principles of responsibilities to not only students but to parents of youth with disabilities (2016a). The federal charge for school counselors to do more to support Black students (ASCA, 2020) begins with a high school counselor prioritizing and pursuing research that builds the counternarrative accounts of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities (Annamma et al., 2018). The theoretical model of DisCrit enables a high school counselor to incorporate the lived experiences of historically marginalized parents, such as Black parents of a young adult with high incidence disabilities into the research. This study aims to resist deficit-laden portrayals of Black parents of students with high incidence disabilities in order for the high school counselor to challenge the ableism and racism that blocks African American students with high incidence disabilities from achieving their postsecondary goals. (Annamma et al., 2018; DeMatthews, 2020).

In summary, the research literature intersections of special education, school counseling, and higher education point to the vital role that high school counselors serve with building Black parent capacity in order to ensure that relevant and successful postsecondary planning for their child with high incidence disabilities occurs. High school counselors querying Black parents' perspectives of a young adult child with high incidence disabilities regarding the postsecondary transition process are absent from the research. By embarking on this research, a high school counselor centers the narratives of and elicits input from historically marginalized parents to improve the postsecondary transition process for Black students with high incidence disabilities. The ultimate effect will help catapult Black students with high incidence disabilities to improved, equitable postsecondary outcomes.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Overlooked in school counseling literature are Black parents' perspectives of their young adult child with high incidence disabilities on their child's postsecondary planning process. Special education literature informs educators that young adults with high incidence disabilities and their parents face gaps in knowledge and understanding about the successful transition to and navigation of postsecondary life (Yung-Chen et al., 2019). Educational literature compels school counselors to equip both Black parents and students with high incidence disabilities with the unique legal and procedural information that the students need for postsecondary planning (Harris et al., 2016).

Young adults with high incidence disabilities have more difficulties in their life after high school. Challenges include low high school graduation rates, high college attrition rates, earning low wages, and a lack of personal skills (self-advocacy and self-determination) to lead a successful postsecondary life as compared to their non-disabled peers (Newman et al., 2011). Since Black young adults with high incidence disabilities retain the influence, support, and advocacy of their parents after exiting high school (Miller-Warren, 2016), this research aims to delve into the perspectives and experiences these Black parents have regarding the process of postsecondary planning. The main research question is: "What are Black parents' lived experiences regarding the postsecondary planning process for their young adult child with high incidence disabilities?” Therefore, this chapter outlines this phenomenological study’s research design, data collection, and data analysis elements.

Qualitative Research

Educational literature provides a convincing case for educators, such as high school counselors, to partner with Black parents, and even more so, to collaborate with Black parents of a child with high incidence disabilities (Durodoye et al., 2004; Harris et al., 2016; Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2010). Nevertheless, school counseling literature lacks qualitative research on Black parents’ lived experiences concerning the postsecondary planning process and their child with high incidence disabilities (Hannon, 2017; Hicks, 2018). The conclusions from special education and school counseling literature establish that positive postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities require several ingredients. One ingredient is early, culturally competent IEP transition planning (Achola, 2019). Another critical factor is the student with high incidence disability and his/her parents having an engaged, social justice-oriented high school counselor (Durodoye et al., 2004). Such a school counselor adds to the IEP team by providing resources, knowledge, and the social capital by which Black students with high incidence disabilities and their parents need to embark on an active trajectory from high school to successful postsecondary life (Harris et al., 2016; McCoy, 2010). For the high school counselor to work effectively with Black parents of youth with high incidence disabilities, school counselors need to solicit the perspectives of such parents related to postsecondary planning (Holcomb-McCoy, 2010). While scholars recommend that high school counselors collaborate with parents of marginalized identities, research that intentionally centers the lived experiences and vantage points of Black parents of young adult children with high incidence disabilities related to postsecondary planning is absent.

School districts are accountable to students, parents, and community members for numerous outcomes. Most typical are results associated with academic achievement outcomes, such as assessment data and graduation rates of students. School systems publicize such data in the form of school data reports and annual local school profiles. One of the implicit norms of the publication of positivist data is continuous improvement. However, quantitative research is just one puzzle piece in the spectrum of student data. Qualitative research offers a unique vantage point for school district officials and their respective school communities to understand better and support their families. Qualitative inquiry investigates the experiences, strengths, and needs of a specific group of participants regarding a research topic or phenomenon (Hays & Singh, 2012). Subsequently, such inquiry results offer information in context for school systems to improve their practice by intentionally incorporating the perspectives of historically minorized students and parents. One example of practical implication from a qualitative study is the need to incorporate culturally competent, multicultural pedagogy to better meet the needs of students of Color (Khalifa et al., 2016). Flick espouses a similar view: qualitative research can address "social problems of vulnerable groups for making a contribution" (2015, p. 600), all the while offering an alternative source of data as opposed to the deficit narrative for certain groups of students, originating from quantitative statistics with no historical and sociopolitical context. An implicit value of critical theory, the grandparent theory of DisCrit, is that social institutions and their practices are fair game for receiving criticism (Prasad, 2018). Critical theory, as it pertains to qualitative research, prizes using research for the “goals of human liberation and social justice” (Prasad, 2018, p. 157). Qualitative research is the perfect vehicle for a researcher to collect detailed descriptions of participants within a specific context.

Phenomenology

The qualitative methodology of phenomenology is appropriate for this research study due to its emphasis on highlighting “that which tends to be obscure” (van Manen, 1990, p. 32). Relatedly, Moustakas elucidates the strength of phenomenology as

> The *first* method of knowledge because it begins with ‘things themselves’; it is also the final court of appeal. Phenomenology, step by step, attempts to eliminate everything that represents a prejudgment, setting aside presuppositions, and reaching a transcendental state of freshness and openness, a readiness to see in an unfettered way, not threatened by the customs, beliefs, and prejudices of normal science, by the habits of the natural world or by knowledge based on unreflected everyday experience (1994, p. 41).

The phenomenological approach enables a researcher to “determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13). By eliciting the experiences of several Black parents of young adult children with high incidence disabilities concerning the postsecondary planning process, a researcher can elevate these parent participants’ knowledge and descriptions of a shared phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). An intentional focus on extracting the essence of shared experiences across participants and centering those experiences diminishes the tendency for such experiences “to be obscure, that which tends to evade the intelligibility of our natural attitude of everyday life” (van

Manen, 1990, p. 32). Ultimately, the fundamental aim of phenomenological knowledge is to gain an “understanding of meaningful concrete relations implicit in the original description of experience in the context of a particular situation” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 14).

Relationship with Participants

Researcher reflexivity is a mindset that permeated my approach in working with the research participants. In the context of academic research, reflexivity refers to the “researcher’s ability to be able to self-consciously refer to him or herself in relation to the production of knowledge about research topics” (Roulston, 2010, p. 116). Suzuki and colleagues affirm that “data gathering is reflexive in that it requires the researcher to engage in critical self-reflection” (2007, p. 296). As a middle-class, able-bodied, White researcher, I understand that my research study with Black participants resided within social and racial dynamics (Best, 2003). My various privileged and subordinated identities influence my assumptions, biases, and knowledge through which I view other individuals. As a middle-class, White educator and Ph.D. candidate who attends a prominent, predominantly White state postsecondary institution, I was aware of the potential power dynamics that could exist in my interactions with Black parent participants. I sought to be transparent with my participants about the purpose of the research study and why their perspectives were being solicited. Although I have training and work experience in the areas of special education and school counseling, I did my best to bracket those experiences and simply be an observer of the perceptions and meaning-making of the participants in this study.

Additionally, I concur with Suzuki and colleagues about the importance of being sensitive to processes of “entry and rapport” with participants (2007, p. 298). Before a researcher presenting the participants with the official informed consent and institutional review board paperwork, the researcher seeks and negotiates entry into the participant’s lifeworld (Suzuki et al., 2007). The researcher accomplishes this by authentically communicating the researcher’s motivation for the research and purpose of the research study with the participant(s) while learning about the participants’ goals. Similarly, the researcher authentically and sincerely aims to find alignment between the goals of the research and the goals of the participants. (Suzuki et al., 2007).

Upon completion of informed consent procedures and the beginning stages of participant participation in the study, I conceptualized how to aim to diminish the power differential between myself as the middle-class, White researcher and the Black parent participants. One area that I was mindful to minimize this power imbalance was in my choice of language. Researcher use of educational jargon and terminology with participants symbolizes social and professional barriers, especially if participants have negative past experiences with school systems and educators (White, 1997). Consequently, I incorporated some of the language used by the participants during the interview process to build rapport and communicate effectively (White, 1997).

From a nonverbal communication standpoint, I wanted to convey to my participants that their time is valuable, establish a welcoming, comfortable interview experience, and provide time after the interview for the participant to engage in an informal conversation with me (Peterson, 1997). By making the time commitment with the interviews explicit in the informed consent and providing participants a choice with the number of interview sessions they engaged in within their time frame, I communicated to participants that I honored and valued their time. I conveyed to my participants that while I may have some exposure to working with Black parents of students with high incidence disabilities, I had not heard their specific story about their experiences with the postsecondary planning processes for their child when their child was in high school. I expressed genuine interest in each of the participants and strove to approach the research space with cultural humility.

There were moments of silence during the interview process. For instance, White notes the important effect of the variable of silence in the interview process with participants (1997). Similar to this researcher who interviewed participants of different social identities and if silence emerged in the interview, “my silence was important because I had presented myself as someone who wanted to learn from them, who did not have all the answers” (White, 1997, p. 109). Relatedly, Dunbar and colleagues contend that a shrewd interviewer leans into the silence surrounding an interview, particularly if the participant is a person of Color (2002). Any working relationship is enhanced by honesty and mutual disclosure. My participants “have a biography that is socially and historically mediated” (Dunbar et al., 2002, p. 295). Therefore, I wanted to be sure that I heard their relevant lived experiences, as informed through their unique, diverse social contexts (Dunbar, 2002).

The concept of reciprocity in research emerged as a salient feature throughout my data collection process. Trainor and Bouchard (2013) expounded about the topic of researcher reciprocity with participants in qualitative research. I, too, understood possessing a “stance of reciprocity” (Trainor and Bouchard, 2013, p. 1001) to be a form of gratitude to the participants for vulnerably sharing about their experiences and contributing to this study. As I reflected on the content that the participants shared and how they gave of their precious time, I wanted to enhance their participation efforts beyond the provided incentive at the end of the study. Therefore, as I came across workshops, websites, or scholarships that might be of interest to some of the participants based on the stated needs of their young adult child with high incidence disabilities, I disseminated that information to some of the participants.

Procedures

Participant Selection

Qualitative research uses purposive sampling to pinpoint individuals in a population group who have specific characteristics that enhance the likelihood of "enriching the understanding of an experience" (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 140). The primary metric in qualitative research consists of participant experiences on a given topic by the researcher (Polkinghorne, 2005). Therefore, I sought out potential participants who meet participant criteria for inclusion in the study as well as have the capacity to engage in the research and data collection process fully (Johnson & Christensen, 2017; Polkinghorne, 2005). The participants needed to meet research inclusion criteria and "adequately reflect on their experience and verbally describe it" (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 140). Inclusion criteria for this study was delineated prior to soliciting potential participants (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). For the current research study, fourteen participants met the criteria to participate. This number of participants is typical of a phenomenological study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Recruitment

Black parents of young adult children with high incidence disabilities were the primary audience sought for involvement in this study. These participants had specific characteristics that would contribute to the research goals and the specific experiences sought. This sort of intentional sampling is also known as purposive sampling (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). The study's sample consisted of those Black parents whose child with high incidence disabilities attended a public high school and had an IEP. The educational attainment level of the young adult child did not need to be a high school diploma. The rationale for this specific group of parents was because public schools (and not private ones) must legally provide a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment under IDEA (2004) to a child with a disability. In contrast, students with high incidence disabilities who attend a private school are not subject to such protections as a free and appropriate education due to standard tuition and fees charged by a private school (Underwood, 2017). Also, inclusion criteria for participants include those with parents whose child with high incidence disabilities had graduated from high school or exited high school (for a general equivalency exam (GED) or for work) within the past few years (Class of 2017 to Class of 2021). My purpose with setting a time-frame criteria is that the participants may be less likely to recall relevant information about their child's experience with the postsecondary planning process the longer time elapses.

After receiving approval from University of Georgia's Institutional Review Board (IRB), I created an electronic recruitment flyer that briefly described my research study and the participants I intended to reach. The recruitment flyer contained participant criteria, my contact information, and desired commitment (number of interviews) from the potential participants, as well as a potential incentive for the participant participation. Recruitment was a rigorous, multiple-months-long process. There were different methods by which I attempted to recruit potential participants. A majority of my recruitment efforts occurred through personally contacting hundreds of contacts in my personal and professional social networks across the U.S., including follow-up emails or texts. I contacted various non-profit organizations, special education law firms, vocational-oriented businesses, and private companies that serve individuals with disabilities. On social media, I joined about 30 Facebook parent and professional groups affiliated with youth and adults with disabilities. One participant emerged from recruitment efforts in Facebook parents of special needs children's groups.

As Banks (2017) models, I contacted several disability support service offices at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) (10) and Georgia Technical Colleges with a recruitment email and flyer intended for Black students with high incidence disabilities to give to their parent(s). Georgia has a number of comprehensive transition postsecondary programs (CTPs) connected with public postsecondary institutions. I contacted directors of six Georgia CTP programs about my research. I also emailed thirty faith communities (churches) that identified as being predominantly Black, around the state of Georgia, such as African Methodist Episcopal churches. In conclusion, the recruitment method most beneficial was communication with personal and professional contacts who served as gatekeepers to help locate interested and eligible participants.

As prospective Black parents contacted me via phone, cell, or email, I replied to them to establish a day and time for a brief telephone screening. During the brief telephone screening, I introduced myself, described the purpose of the study, and determined their eligibility for the study, as well as answered questions. If the parent met the study's eligibility criteria, I verbalized this to the parent and outlined the next steps. I confirmed that I had the correct email address for the parent and emailed the parent the recruitment letter (Appendix A), demographic questionnaire (Appendix B), and the informed consent form (Appendix C).

Institutional Board Review Process (IRB)

My dissertation committee granted their approval of my plans for this study. Prior I completed an IRB application in the University of Georgia's IRB portal prior to contacting any prospective participants. Once I received approval from the IRB to conduct my research, I formally announced my study to gatekeepers and others. One of the items submitted to the IRB for review was the informed consent form that I created to give to future participants. Information necessary for the informed consent form included the purpose and procedure of the interviews, information on the potential risks and benefits of participation, a statement on how the identity of the participant(s) would be kept private and confidential, and the voluntary aspect of participation (Office of Research, n.d.).

I distributed the recruitment letter (Appendix A) and recruitment flyer to the potential participants through email, social media, and face-to-face. I followed with a phone call, text, or email to potential participants to schedule a time on the phone where I gave a synopsis of what the interviews would entail, reference content in the informed consent letter, and provided the potential participant with the opportunity to ask questions. Upon the individual agreeing to participate in the research study, I emailed him/her a recruitment letter (Appendix A), demographic questionnaire (Appendix B), and informed consent form (Appendix C). We scheduled a day and time for the interviews. I gave participants the option of completing two separate interviews or completing one interview combining questions from the two interviews. I reminded the participants that their participation was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time. As an incentive for participation, a $25 Amazon gift card was certified mailed in a thank you card to each of the fourteen participants, once the study was completed.

Data Collection

Data collection or data gathering (Vagle, 2018) is the process of a researcher collecting "anything you see, hear, or that is otherwise communicated to you while conducting the study" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 89). Phenomenological data collection involves the researcher proactively establishing boundaries for the information collected relative to the phenomenon (Vagle, 2018). Maxwell (2013) posits that the qualitative researcher is "the research instrument" (p. 88). Using one's senses to "gather info and to make sense of what is going on" (Maxwell, 2018, p. 88), the researcher maintains a thoughtful presence throughout the research process to assess for details that need to be adjusted. The following includes the data points that the researcher utilized to investigate the identified phenomenon.

Demographic Questionnaire

The researcher sent a demographic questionnaire to each of the potential participants to gain contextual information and to ensure that their specific demographic information meets the study's criteria. Criteria for the inclusion of participants in this study includes the following details:

- The participants identify as a Black parent or guardian.
- Participants subscribe to having a Black young adult child who had an IEP in high school.
- Participants' young adult child had a disability label in one or more of the following categories: emotional/behavioral disturbance (EBD), other health impaired (OHI), mild intellectual disability (MID), specific learning disability (SLD), or speech language impairment (SLI).
- Participants' young adult child attended a public school in the U.S.
- Participants' young adult child graduated or left high school in 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018, or 2017
- Participants are willing to share their experiences with the researcher.
- Participants communicate in the English language.

On the demographic questionnaire was a section for the participant to provide a pseudonym for themselves and to provide a pseudonym for their young adult child with high incidence disabilities. Many of the participants provided initials for themselves and their child. Examples of other questions asked in the demographic questionnaire included the educational level of the parent and parent's marital status when the child was in high school. Questions relating to the child with high incidence disabilities included the type of high school diploma earned and activities the child was involved in during high school and post high school. For participants who did not provide a pseudonym for themselves or for their young adult child with high incidence disabilities, I assigned the pseudonyms.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The purpose of the interview in a qualitative study is for the researcher to guide and provide direction to the participant(s) to describe their experiences related to a topic (Suzuki et al., 2007). This study utilized the semi-structured interview format to elicit the experiences of its participants. The interview style incorporated elements of phenomenological interviewing and feminist interviewing (Roulston, 2010). Phenomenological interviewing consists of asking research participants open-ended, semi-structured questions intended to produce a "detailed and in-depth description of human experiences" (Roulston, 2010, p. 16). Feminist interviewing seeks to promote a collaborative, non-hierarchical working relationship with the participant (Roulston, 2010). By utilizing both types of interviewing styles, I attempted to access a comprehensive account of the participant's experiences with their child's postsecondary planning processes (Moustakas, 1994). As needed, I used verbal statements as a way to probe the participants to elaborate on their answers.

The interview protocol (Appendix D) contained primarily open-ended questions by which the researcher used to query and clarify participants' experiences. Educational research informed the development of the interview questions (Bianco et al., 2009; Gonzalez, 2018; Hetherington et al., 2010). Many of the interview questions were field-tested in Summer 2019 (Designing Qualitative Research course at the University of Georgia) with two Black mothers whose young adult sons had a disability. In early 2021, interview questions were refined and piloted with two other Black mothers with young adult children with high incidence disabilities. Interview questions were revised to ensure comprehensibility and follow the phenomenological format to query participants' recollection of an experience (Moustakas, 1994).

In order to have a conversational-style interview, I used my listening skills and skills of demonstrating immediacy and follow up questions with participants (Roulston, 2010). As I utilized the questions with participants, if a participant had difficulty understanding one or more of the questions, or if a question caused the participant to provide an answer that was unrelated to the research question, I rephrased the question. As Vagle advised, the researcher needs to take ownership of monitoring and "regaining the focus on the phenomenon" with participants throughout the interview process (2018, p. 89).

There were two separate interview sessions with each participant or a longer combined interview with each participant. The interview protocol for each session had 12 to 13 questions. Each interview took about 45-90 minutes. The interview protocol contained questions about the participant identifying the target phenomenon, elucidating background information, and describing experiences, feelings, and meaning related to the phenomenon. Before beginning each interview session, the researcher reminded the participants of informed consent and their rights during the interview process. Once the participants provide verbal consent, the researcher used a digital audio recording device and the recording feature on the Zoom conference platform to record each interview session. I used the participant's pseudonym in the text of the transcription. If the participants used specific geographic names, place names, and names of other persons, I removed identifying information to protect the confidentiality of the participant and his or her child.

Zoom has a feature where it provides a numbered, line-by-line, transcript of a video recording. I downloaded this transcription to new document, listened to the recording as I reviewed the text interview transcript, and cleaned up the transcript. It took a few days to complete this task to ensure accuracy of each interview transcript. Within a week or so, I emailed the transcript(s) to the participant to review the intended meaning and provided the opportunity for the participant to let me know if he/she wanted any part of their answers retracted. If a participant's answer was unclear to me, I also included a question for the participant to clarify the answer and provided the line number, interview question, and participant answer. The researcher conducted data analysis tasks for data collected interviews after each interview.

Supplemental Items

Physical data complement data collected in interviews. Physical data consists of photos, "documents, records, and artifacts" (Suzuki et al., 2007, p. 314). As indicated in the demographic questionnaire, participants were welcome to send me a copy of their child's special education paperwork, such as the high school IEP, including the transition plan, with identifying information removed. While some of the participants expressed that they thought they forwarded me their child's transition plan, I did not receive such special education documentation. One parent submitted a different kind of supplemental item concerning her child. The document was a biographical booklet about the child with individual pictures of the child, family pictures, and text descriptions of activities and hobbies that the child enjoys. The biographical booklet provided a visual reminder that corroborated the parent's rich descriptions in the interview sessions of advocacy for her child over the years.

Data Analysis

Phenomenological data gathering and analysis of phenomenological items are simultaneous, ongoing processes (Vagle, 2018). It is essential that a researcher is continuously immersed in the study's data and views the data from a micro level to a macro level and vice versa. Vagle describes it accordingly:

> Whole-part-whole analysis methods stem from the idea that we must always think about focal meanings (e.g., moments) in relation to the whole (e.g., broader context) from which they are situated—and one we begin to remove parts from one context and put them in dialogue with other parts, we end up creating new analytic wholes that have particular meanings in relation to the phenomenon. (2018, p. 108).

As I conducted the interviews with participants, I jotted down notes of thoughts and reactions I had to the verbal and nonverbal communication from them during the interview. Maxwell explicates the importance of regular memo-writing as not only documenting "analytic thinking about your data, but also facilitate(s) such thinking, stimulating analytic insights" (2013, p. 105). After the interview, I wrote a summary of my impressions of the interview in a reflexive journal and field notes. In these writings, I "develop (-ed) tentative ideas about categories and relationships" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 105). This reflective process helped me develop a plan for the next interview with the same participant or new participant. The plan included clarifying questions that are "important to describe/interpret/represent the phenomenon" (Vagle, 2018, p. 111).

Phenomenological Reduction

Bracketing relates to the phenomenological reduction notion of Epoche, or the suspending of one's presuppositions regarding a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994; Vagle, 2018). While a researcher cannot empty oneself of one's prior knowledge on a subject, the point of bracketing is to deemphasize the influence and centrality of one's knowledge in pursuit of new understandings and ideas (Moustakas, 1994). During this study, I bracketed or parsed out my presumptions throughout the research process so that the research highlighted my participant's experiences with the target phenomenon (Vagle, 2018). The goal of these reduction efforts is to "suspend everything that interferes with fresh vision" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 86) so that new knowledge via the experiences of the participants took center stage in the research study.

Phenomenological Data Analysis

Creswell and Creswell's specific data analysis process informed my own data analysis plan (2018). I listened to the interview audio and listened for phenomenological content (Vagle, 2018). With the interview transcript in front of me, I read the whole interview in its entirety before taking notes (Vagle, 2018). On a second reading of the interview transcription, I took notes through "line-by-line readings" (Vagle, 2018, p. 110). I made notes in margins and composed notes in a journal. Next, I enacted horizontalization of the data and phenomenological reduction (Moustakas, 1994).

The research team and I read through transcripts for two participants. We practiced coding the transcripts both together and independently. We each identified meaningful statements or horizontalization of the data. The research team attempted to highlight those participants statements and quotes which captured the essence of their experience with the phenomenon under study. Additionally, the research team discounted those repetitive and overlapping statements and phrases by participants. Meaning units were converted into categories, and from there, themes emerged.

Through horizontalization of the data, I identified meaning units that related to the phenomenon. Redundant, repetitive, and overlapping data went through the phenomenological reduction process. Later, I reread the same interview transcription and developed themes from clustered meaning units (Moustakas, 1994). Those themes needed to be arranged into textural representations of the experience and then into a structural representation of the experience (Roulston, 2010). Subsequently, those textural and structural descriptions were amalgamated into unified essences or "meanings and essences of the phenomenon" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 119).

To supplement the data analysis process mentioned above, I also utilized coding procedures. Those coding procedures were a combination of predetermined or a-priori codes that I created from a literature review of DisCrit Theory and a literature review of Black parents' experiences of the postsecondary planning processes for their young adult child with high incidence disabilities. Creswell and Creswell recommend that such a codebook includes an inventory of codes, a label for the codes, a definition of the codes, and other information (2018). I provided the study's codebook to the research team as a resource as they analyzed data from interview transcripts.

In addition to this codebook, the research team used other codes throughout the data analysis process, such as descriptive, in vivo, and process codes (Holley and Harris, 2019). After the research team reached consensus on the presence of similar codes across type (descriptive, structural, in vivo, and process), we grouped codes by group category. Through consultation with my research team members, I made plans on how to best convey the participant experiences with the phenomenon in the findings section.

Trustworthiness of the Data

Scholars view data trustworthiness as the extent to which a research study results are correct, and the study's "findings and conclusions are based on maximum opportunity to hear participant voices in a particular context" (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 192). In other words, since the qualitative researcher is the primary data collection instrument, the researcher needs to arrange the study's research design to minimize common researcher effects: researcher bias and reactivity (Maxwell, 2013). Trustworthiness or validity threats diminish conclusions and interpretations of a qualitative study (Maxwell, 2013). Therefore, best practices underscore the need for the researcher to outline how the research design will incorporate multiple strategies "to assess the accuracy of findings as well as convince readers of that accuracy (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The following strategies were implemented to promote trustworthiness for my study.

Triangulation

For themes from the study's findings to be convergent and thereby warranted, I used the validity procedure of triangulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I obtained data from semi-structured interviews with fourteen different participants. Therefore, I met the standard of the range of participants required in a phenomenological study (Hays & Singh, 2012). Also, by offering participants' the option to contribute special education-related documents or other documents related to their young adult child's postsecondary planning process, this additional method of data collection confirmed the conclusions which arose from the data analysis stage of the study (Maxwell, 2013; Johnson & Christensen, 2017).

This research findings' credibility was enhanced by incorporating a research team of investigators for data analysis and interpretation (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). The research team consisted of myself and two other counselor education doctoral students who are school counselors. One research team member was a Black female. The inclusion of a Black research team member was paramount to me because being a White researcher, I have the capacity for unintentional biases and assumptions about data from racially/ethnically different participants. I did not want any biases and assumptions from Whiteness to obscure interpretations of the data. Both research team members completed qualitative research coursework and had experience working with students with disabilities and their families in public school settings. Each member of the research team was aware of potential assumptions concerning prior experiences with Black parents of youth and young adults with disabilities. The research team members exercised reflexivity and were able to suspend such assumptions when reading and coding participants' interview transcripts. The research team met at least three times, and independently coded interview transcripts, and assessed codes, categories, and themes. By utilizing a research team, the data analysis process was made transparent to them, in order to deduce research bias and ensure integrity with more than the primary researcher responsible for evaluating and analyzing the data.

Concurrent Data Collection and Analysis

Qualitative research is a dynamic inquiry where the researcher continually remains connected to the data to adjust the future steps of the research process (Hays & Singh, 2012). Maxwell exhorts qualitative researchers to start "data analysis immediately after finishing the first interview or observation and continue to analyze data as long as he or she is working on the research" (2013, p. 104). Therefore, I worked to secure the first interview transcript for each participant immediately after each the interview ended to start analyzing patterns and “develop tentative ideas about categories and relationships” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 105).

Member Checking

Member checking is an essential strategy to build the trustworthiness of a research study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Hays & Singh, 2012; Maxwell, 2013). This strategy requires more than just sending a transcribed interview to the study’s participants for an accuracy check (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Member checking involves the researcher providing drafts of “specific descriptions or themes back to participant” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 200) to confirm the intended meaning of what the participants said against the interpretations the researcher is making (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). This strategy is also used during interview sessions when the researcher uses probes with the participant to verify that the researcher understands participant interview answers (Hays & Singh, 2012).

During data collection and data analysis, I emailed each participant an electronic copy of their transcribed interview(s). For a few of the participants, I had questions about their answer of the context of their answer. Some of the participants provided clarifying responses by email. None of the participants disputed information in their interview transcript(s). After completing the data analysis phase of this study, I emailed the fourteen participants a summary of the themes, findings, and examples of the research. In the email, I asked each participant to reply and indicate if they can relate to the overall findings of the research. There was a low response rate, possibly due to the fact that the email was sent during a holiday week. Three participants replied by email that the findings of the research did mirror their own experience.

Rich Thick Description

A researcher who uses more contextual, process-oriented descriptions in his or her write up of the study's findings enhances the reader's ability to discern the meaning in the accounts of the participants (Hays & Singh, 2012). By doing this, the researcher can ground the data in a way that elucidates the study's conclusions and makes a case for the results to be generalizable to other contexts (Hays & Singh, 2012). Thick description also pertains to the researcher's description of research bias, participant recruitment, use of participant direct quotes, and citing the "professional, ethical, and cultural implications of the findings" (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 214).

The readers of this research will have an intimate lens on the phenomenon of the perspectives of the Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities regarding the postsecondary planning process. Use of direct quotes, affective statements, metaphors, and descriptive accounts of participants' retrospective recollections all contribute to the rich, thick descriptions in this research. Thereby, such detailed, personal descriptions illuminate the everyday realities for such historically marginalized participants whose accounts are "traditionally not acknowledged within research" (Annamma et al., 2018, p. 58).

Audit Trail

Keeping an inventory of evidence collected during a research study upholds ethical and professional responsibilities (Hays and Singh, 2012). In the event the inventory of evidence requires an audit, the researcher is able to access this information collected throughout the study. Holley and Harris (2019) posit that an audit trail "describes precisely what the researcher did and the order in which the data were collected to convince the reader of the appropriateness of the research path and related decisions” (p. 172). This data is sharable with readers and supports other qualitative researchers in that some of the data processes can be replicated (is reliable) (Holley and Harris, 2019). Examples of components of my audit trail include telephone screening forms, informed consent forms, demographic questionnaires, interview protocol, drafts of codebooks, checklists, memos, reflexive journal, description of a document submitted by one of the participants, and transcriptions (Hays and Singh, 2012).

Reflexivity

A qualitative researcher is sensitive to the fact that one is “able to self-consciously refer to him or herself in relation to production of knowledge about research topics” (Roulston, 2010, p. 116). In other words, a researcher has an ongoing and critical self-awareness of how one’s assumptions and actions can influence the research process and subsequent interpretations of data (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). Vagle argues that reflexivity is embedded in a phenomenon regardless of one’s self-awareness and methodological actions (2018). Accordingly, it is necessary that a researcher intentionally monitor aspects of one’s reflexivity continually. A way to achieve this is through regular reflexive journaling (Hays & Singh, 2012). I engaged in reflexive journaling throughout the research process to notate my thoughts, feelings, values, biases, and assumptions. Reflexive journaling was helpful to manage feelings, biases, and automatic interpretations I made during the recruitment process and data collection processes (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Memos

Keeping memos are an invaluable throughout a research study process, but especially so while conducting data analysis. The use of memos served as a way to document my thinking surrounding data analysis and serve as a memory aid of sorts (Maxwell, 2013). Memos bolster the credibility and authenticity of a study's trustworthiness since they are a data analysis tool (Hayes & Singh, 2012; Maxwell, 2013). Memos are beneficial in that they "also facilitate (analytic) thinking, stimulating analytic insights" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 105). Therefore, I wrote memos extensively throughout the research process. Memos written after an interview and after re-reading an interview transcript assisted with hypothesizing patterns in the data, as well as unexpected findings and negative examples. At times I would write a memo when I was away from the data because distance from the data provided new insights. Memos were also instrumental in communication with research team members so as to affirm if the researcher was on track with consistent interpretations of the data.

Negative Case Sampling

Negative case sampling refers to a researcher reporting information or a case that is dissimilar to the majority of themes in the study. Exposing divergent themes or examples from participant accounts enhances the credibility of a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Rather than report only the findings that support other participant accounts, I admit that some participant accounts demonstrated an experience that ran counter to my participants' dominant accounts (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Thus, including participants' accounts that negate my "expectations and generalizations" (Johnson & Christensen, 2017) will support attempts to decrease researcher bias.

Subjectivity Statement

My work history in education (former middle and high school special education teacher) and social justice identity in my current role as a high school counselor influence the cognitive schemas and perceptions by which I view research. One dimension of my professional work history was as a special education teacher at a Title I middle school in a metropolitan school district with students with high incidence disabilities who received special education services in self-contained, resource, and inclusion settings. Those high incidence disability eligibilities included specific learning disability (SLD), speech language impairment (SLI), other health impaired (OHI), emotional behavioral disorder (EBD), and mild intellectual disability (MID). The majority of my students' parents were Black and Latinx.

In my interactions with the students and their parents, I was concerned about the students' eventual transition to high school and beyond. I feared that in a large high school, the students' postsecondary planning needs would not adequately be met by their future high school special education teacher/case manager and future high school counselor. From readings in educational literature and first-hand accounts, I understood that parent involvement with their child's school tends to decrease as a child progresses through school (Epstein and Associates, 2019). I also learned that schools tend to value the parents who contribute the most time, resources, and labor to schools (typically, White, middle-class and higher income, and non-disabled) (Cucchiara & Horvat, 2009; Doucet, 2011). Due to my personal experiences with schools and observation of parent interactions with schools, I understood that historically marginalized students need parents/guardians who can articulate their child's needs and advocate that those needs be met in ways that will cause school officials will listen and act. If the needs and assets of historically marginalized parents are not acknowledged and recognized in a school, then it is likely that the needs of the historically marginalized children of such parents will also tend to be ignored and overlooked in the school setting.

As a high school counselor, I want to educate and prepare my students with high incidence disabilities for the challenges and opportunities that lay before them after high school. As echoed by many scholars, I firmly believe that school counselors are best positioned to promote successful outcomes for Black students with high incidence disabilities when they commit to collaborating with Black parents in a culturally competent, supportive, and positive manner (Durodoye et al., 2004; Harris et al., 2019; Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2010). School counselors serve as social justice advocates and gatekeepers of vital information for youth with high incidence disabilities and their parents. Therefore, I view this research as a way of holding space for parents whose perspectives and lifeworlds are typically not heard in the school counseling literature. I believe that Black parents of students with high incidence disabilities are an underutilized collaborative partner for school counselors. For social justice advocate school counselors, they ought to recognize how integral a role Black parents play in supporting their child with high incidence disabilities with the postsecondary planning process. Since Black parents continue to support and guide their child after high school, school counselors need to leverage the support and collaborative relationship with these parents during the child's high school years.

In addition to my work experiences and immersion into educational literature on best practices for school counselors advocating for marginalized communities, Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) also informs my research (Annamma et al., 2013). I do ascribe to the belief that the sinister forces of racism and ableism work implicitly and interdependently in schools (Annamma et al., 2013). Visible ways to see evidence of DisCrit theory is through poorer in-school and post-school outcomes for Black students with high incidence disabilities. Examples include inadequate school funding, insufficient training of school counselors and special education teachers, non-culturally responsive curriculum, exclusionary discipline, the pre-school to prison pipeline, disproportionate referrals to special education, and restrictive placements within special education (Blanchett, 2006; Equal Justice Society, 2016; Equal Justice Society, 2018; Goodman-Scott et al., 2019).

The other variables impacting my researcher identity are my professional identity as a professional counselor and my privileged social identities (White, middle-class, highly educated). The participants are there to share their lived experiences regarding the research question, and my role is as an inquirer of their experiences and not of attempting to help them make goals for their young adult child's life. As a result of interactions with the participants, rapport and trust were built. I attempted to minimize power dynamics between researcher and participant by mutual self-disclosure and through showing up as a researcher who sincerely cares for them and their child's interests (Dunbar et al., 2002).

Researcher Assumptions

There are a few assumptions I hold as a researcher that deserve illumination. First, I contend that both Disability Critical Race Theory and the methodology of phenomenology serve as conduits for shining a light on the topic of Black parents' experiences with their young adult child's postsecondary planning process. Disability Critical Race Theory "privileges voices of marginalized populations, traditionally not acknowledged within research" (Annamma et al., 2018, p. 58). Conjunctly, phenomenology prepares a researcher to be able to "enter into a questioning mindset, where we try to become curious about things that we otherwise treated as obvious" (Vagle, 2018, p. 13). Although I had a few assumptions and predictions about content my future parent participants would share, I entered the interview space ready to hear brand new, unique experiences.

Next, because I embarked on cross-racial/cross-cultural interviewing as a White researcher, I was aware that the construct of race, particularly, the location of Whiteness, cannot be subtracted from my research (Best, 2003). Relatedly, Best (2003) concludes "people of color have historically engaged in a form of self-censoring in the presence of those with power (largely as acts of self-preservation) and White folks rarely see themselves as racial meaning makers" (p. 909). I cannot speak for the Black parent participants to ascertain what their level of self-censoring during the interviews may have been. Ultimately, the participants were willing to complete one or more semi-structured interview(s), they demonstrated honesty throughout the interview process, and they even surprised me with their level of transparency about their experiences, even when race was a factor in their answers.

Ethical Considerations

A researcher must be mindful of potential ethical concerns in their research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Maxwell, 2013). Research methods infused with the ethical principle of beneficence need to promote autonomy and enhanced well-being for the participants (Sieber & Tolich, 2013). The overarching goal of the foundational principles of human research (autonomy, beneficence, and justice), also known as the Belmont principles, is to protect participants and ultimately “help uplift portions of society” (Sieber & Tolich, 2013, p. 40). The American Counseling Association code of ethics (ACA, 2014) state that the counselor researcher is entrusted with “their participants’ welfare throughout the research process and take all reasonable precautions” (Section G.1.e., p. 16) to preserve the participants’ physical, psychological, and social safety. Being mindful that the trust a participant places in a researcher is a privilege, it is best that a researcher continually strives to minimize the intrusion and risks for participants (American Educational Research Association, 2011; Maxwell, 2013).

Before the study’s commencement, I reviewed the informed consent forms with each identified participant. Also, I required that participants send me their completed informed consent form before embarking on the data collection phase of the study. I reminded participants that their participation is voluntary during the research study, and they are permitted to withdraw from the study at any time. Before recording the interview(s), I gained verbal permission from each participant to record the interview(s). Additionally, I communicated to the participants that I respected their anonymity and privacy and described how this translated in the data collection and data reporting stages of the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Because I utilized my personal social networks to recruit potential participants, I need to disclose that I casually knew three of my participants. However, I was not aware that these three parents had a child with high incidence disabilities at the time of recruitment. Nor was I aware of the dynamics of their experiences with the postsecondary planning process regarding their young adult child with high incidence disabilities.

A thoughtful researcher considers ways to reduce the power dynamics to enhance the researcher-participant relationship as related to the location of the interviews, the arrangement of time for the interviews, and building in enough sessions, so it does not feel rushed and build in debriefing time at the end (Peterson, 1997; Suzuki et al., 2007). Relatedly, I conducted the interview(s) over Zoom conferencing platform at a date and time that suited the participants and structured in breaks. The recorded interview sessions via audio and Zoom audio and video recordings were deleted to maintain participant anonymity. In summary, sensitivity to ethical considerations permeated the research study, including creating the initial design, to the interactions with participants, to the write-up of the findings.

Chapter Summary

This chapter describes the phenomenological methodological approach and theoretical framework of DisCrit that will be used to explore Black parents' lived experiences regarding their young adult child with high incidence disabilities and the postsecondary planning process. No school counselor researchers, counselor educators, nor school counselor educators have focused on this demographic of Black parents related to the phenomenon of the postsecondary planning process. This research study is designed to promote an awareness of the experiences of the participants for school counselors, counselor educators, and other educators. The data to be collected for this proposed research study will answer the research question: What are Black parents' lived experiences regarding the postsecondary planning process for their young adult child with high incidence disabilities?

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter presents outcomes of a qualitative study exploring lived experiences of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities concerning their perspectives of the postsecondary planning process. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the perspectives of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities on the postsecondary planning process. The following research question anchored the research study: “What are Black parents’ lived experiences regarding the postsecondary planning process for their young adult child with high incidence disabilities?” Semi-structured interview questions contributed to participants’ thick descriptions of their lived experiences of being a parent of a young adult with high incidence disabilities while encountering the child’s postsecondary planning processes.

The chapter comprises unique findings developed from the semi-structured interviews with fourteen Black parent participants on the Zoom conferencing platform, as well as information derived from the completed demographic questionnaires. This chapter commences with a collection of participant introductions with his/her pseudonym and child pseudonym. For participants who did not provide a pseudonym, one was created for them. Contextual information about each participant in terms of participant’s geographic location, family composition, description of the young adult child with high incidence disabilities, and other pertinent details are offered. Research findings from the participant interviews are presented to elucidate common descriptive themes. Summarized findings are differentiated by the five themes derived from the data. The five themes coalesced across participant experiences of the targeted phenomenon of lived experiences of Black parents of young adult children with high incidence disabilities regarding the postsecondary planning process. Identified five themes include the following: (a) Experiencing invisibility by a lack of inclusive postsecondary planning, (b) Feeling marginalized due to collusive forces of ableism and racism, (c) Persevering role of Black parents through postsecondary planning processes and beyond, (d) Navigating inequities through social supports and other supports, and (e) Enacting ongoing resistance and advocacy.

Participants

This research study involved fourteen Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities from three states: Georgia, South Carolina, and Michigan. Thirteen of the parents identified as mothers, while one parent identified as a father. The age range for the parents was 36 to 58 years of age. The median age for the parents was 49 years. The Black young adult children of the participants left or graduated high school between the years 2018 to 2021. For the students who left or graduated high school in the years 2020 and 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the final years of high school. As a result, students accessed their education, for at least one semester, via online or virtual learning. Ten of the fourteen parents, or 71% of the parents, experienced their child’s final high school years and postsecondary planning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic were state and national news accounts of police violence and White citizen violence toward Black men and women. Each Black parent participant made implicit and explicit references to such traumatizing racial violence and his/her accompanying reactions to it, especially as related to young Black men. Participants expressed a striking vigilance and fear for their Black young adult child's safety and associated safety precautions. The next section provides descriptions of each participant and their child/children with high incidence disabilities based on data from participants' demographic questionnaires and interview transcripts.

Johnetta has two master's degrees and works full-time at a four-year public postsecondary institution. She is on the board of directors for a state-wide social services resource for families with a child with a disability and individuals with a disability. Johnetta lives in a metropolitan area in Georgia and notes that her child's most recent high school was in a rural area. Her marital status is divorced. Ricky is her oldest child. He attended two public high schools and graduated in May 2020 with a high school diploma. His special education eligibilities consisted of emotional/behavioral disturbance, mild intellectual disability, and specific learning disability. Ricky is awaiting placement into a residential vocational rehabilitation program in Georgia through Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA). The COVID-19 pandemic shut down the GVRA residential program resulting in a year's delay in Ricky's post-high school plans.

Barbara has an educational specialist's degree and works as a full-time professional school counselor. She is married and resides in Georgia in a metropolitan area. Her perspectives are unique in this study due to her professional experiences in grades K-12 as a professional school counselor and because she is the parent of a daughter, Briana. All other parents in this research have sons who have a high incidence disability. Briana is Barbara's youngest child. Briana attended two public high schools with the location of the most recent one being in a suburban area. Her special education eligibilities were emotional/ behavioral disturbance and mild intellectual disability. Briana participated in various athletic teams with Georgia Special Olympics. Briana completed high school in May 2020 with an IEP diploma. She is currently enrolled in a post-high school educational program.

Cassie attended college for three years. She has two sons with disabilities and is a single parent of four children. Cassie also has another child who receives special education services due to medical diagnoses that require more specific interventions and supervision. Cassie resides in a metropolitan area of Georgia. She transitioned from the health care field to the field of education, where she works full-time. Mark's high school special education eligibilities were mild intellectual disability and speech and language impairment. Mark attended one suburban public high school and graduated in May 2019 with a high school diploma. While in high school, Mark worked a few different part-time jobs and completed a career pathway in information technology. He enrolled at a local technical college in August 2020. Mark is currently enrolled as a full-time college student.

Tamara is married and has three children, two sons and a daughter. Tamara earned a bachelor's degree and works full-time. Her middle child, Penny, a son, received special education services through his eligibilities of emotional/behavioral disturbance and specific learning disability. Tamara lives in a metropolitan area of Georgia. Penny attended one suburban public high school. He graduated in May 2019 with his high school diploma. During high school, Penny worked part-time, volunteered, and participated in extracurricular activities. Penny is enrolled as a full-time college student at a public four-year postsecondary institution in Georgia.

Rosalyn is married with an only child, her son, Anthony. She lives in a metropolitan area of Georgia. Rosalyn earned a master's degree and works as a librarian. She is a skilled researcher who uses those skills not only for library patrons but also for her son. Rosalyn published an article in a peer-reviewed journal specific to professionals and organizations who work with individuals with disabilities. She introduced her son to various technology application tools as compensatory strategies to assist with his executive functioning skills. David's special education eligibilities in high school were other health impairment and specific learning disabilities (dyslexia and dyscalculia). David attended one suburban high school and graduated with his high school diploma in May 2021. During high school, David worked a few part-time jobs and completed three career pathways (hospitality, information technology, and marketing). Due to numerous challenges that David and his mother endured during the high school years with his IEP not meeting his unique learning needs, David will be pursuing work certification instead of his original plan of pursuing a four-year degree.

Stacey is a military veteran and single parent of three children. Her middle child, Kyle, has high incidence disabilities. Stacey's oldest child, a daughter, had a gifted designation while in K-12 schools and just completed her master's degree. Stacey referred to her oldest child as Kyle's "second mom". Stacey is single, lives in a metropolitan area in Georgia, and works in the special education field. Kyle's special education eligibility in high school was other health impairment. Kyle attended one urban high school and participated in JROTC for many years. Outside of high school, Kyle participated in volunteer activities and interned at a radio station. He graduated in May 2021 with a high school diploma. Kyle will be attending a local technical college and hopes to transfer to a large postsecondary institution in two years to earn a bachelor's degree in journalism. He continues to intern at a local radio station under the supervision of his mentor, a Black male, a long-time resident in their community.

Louise is a married mother of three. Louise and her family live in a metropolitan area in the state of Michigan. Louise holds a bachelor's degree and works full-time in the early childhood development field. Her oldest child, John, attended two high schools. His special education eligibility was specific learning disability (nonverbal learning disability). John graduated from an urban public high school with honors in June 2021. During high school, John worked full-time, completed a culinary arts career pathway, took honors courses, and participated in extracurricular activities (i.e., chess team, engineering club). Louise helped connect John with a Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) social worker. He will be attending a four-year public institution in Michigan. John's goal is to earn a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. Louise helped John obtain a mentor, a Black male physician. John's mentor is the nephew of Louise's former supervisor/mentor.

Tara is a divorced mother who lives in a metropolitan area of South Carolina. She earned a bachelor's degree and works in the human resources field. Tara's mother is a retired school administrator, and her father worked at a postsecondary institution. Tara is a business partner with her state's business coalition and promotes the employment of individuals with disabilities. Tara has an older daughter who received special education services in school. Tara's second child, Anthony, received the following special education eligibilities in high school: mild intellectual disability, specific learning disability, and speech and language impairment. Anthony attended one suburban high school. He graduated in June 2021 from high school with an occupational certificate. During high school, Anthony worked part-time, completed a career pathway, and participated in extracurricular activities. Currently, Anthony works part-time and participates in an internship with a local hospital's culinary department, through a short-term young adult life skills program. That program focuses on job training and life skills. Anthony's family is exploring comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs in Georgia and South Carolina for him to attend eventually.

Michelle is a married mother of four children, all attending public postsecondary institutions in Michigan. Michelle and her family live in a metropolitan area of Michigan. She has an associate degree and recently returned to college to complete a bachelor's degree. Her son, Cortez, received the special education eligibilities of other health impairment and speech language impairment. Cortez attended one urban charter high school, where he graduated in June 2019. During high school, Cortez volunteered regularly in Detroit with his family. Cortez attended a nearby community college and recently enrolled at a four-year postsecondary institution. Cortez will commute there with his mother (who will be pursuing her bachelor's degree at the same institution). Michelle is in the process of applying to MRS on behalf of her son for future job-related assistance.

Edith is a married mother of three sons who lives in a metropolitan area of Michigan. Edith attended college for a few years and works full-time. Her youngest son, Noah, received special education services under the emotional/behavioral disturbance eligibility at one suburban public high school. Noah graduated in June 2020 with a high school diploma. While in high school, Noah volunteered with his family in Detroit and took some career pathway courses. Noah is in the process of enrolling in a residential vocational program overseen by MRS and receives communication from his MRS social worker. Additionally, Noah is in the process of applying to college. Since high school graduation, Noah held a part-time job, and he is currently searching for a new job.

Cookie is a married mother of three who lives in a metropolitan area of Georgia. Cookie earned a master's degree and works full-time. Sonic, her middle child, received special education eligibility of mild intellectual disability. He attended two public high schools and graduated from a suburban high school in May 2019 with a high school diploma. While in high school, Sonic worked part-time in restaurants and volunteered with his family. Sonic will attend a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program at a public postsecondary institution in Georgia. Sonic will reside at home while commuting to the campus with his mother, who works at the same postsecondary institution. Sonic's older brother attends the same postsecondary institution where he is pursuing a four-year degree.

Paula is a married mother of two sons. She lives in a metropolitan area in Georgia. Paula is also a caregiver for an adult brother who has autism and is the primary educator in her extended family about disability matters. She works part-time in a public school system in a role that supports parents of children with disabilities. She attended college for a few years. Both of her sons, Black Panther and Dark Vader, have a high incidence disability. Darth Vader is her oldest son. His special education eligibilities in high school were mild intellectual disability, specific learning disability, and speech language impairment. Darth Vader attended one suburban, public high school. He graduated from high school in May 2020 with a high school diploma. Paula obtained a GVRA counselor for Darth Vader. Black Panther is Paula's youngest son. His special education eligibilities were other health impairment and speech language impairment. He attended one suburban, public high school and graduated in May 2021 with high school diploma and with honors. Black Panther seeks work and has a GVRA counselor. Both Darth Vader and Black Panther volunteered with their family during high school.

Kevin is a married father with a master's degree. He works full-time. Kevin lives in a metropolitan area of Georgia. He is the parent of an only child, his son Mike. Kevin attended a large, elite public postsecondary institution in the Midwest. Mike received the following special education eligibilities in school: mild intellectual disability, other health impairment, and speech language impairment. Mike attended two public high schools in suburban areas and graduated in May 2020 with a high school diploma. While in high school, Mike worked part-time for nearly two years at a supermarket, had a summer internship at a zoo, completed a career pathway, and was a member of an athletic team for his high school.

Denise is a married, working mother with a bachelor's degree from a private postsecondary institution in the Midwest. Denise is married to Kevin, and they have one child, Mike. Denise and her family reside in a metropolitan area of Georgia. Mike will be attending a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program at a public postsecondary institution. Mike has a GVRA counselor. Denise and Kevin opted for Mike to remain at home while he attends the comprehensive transition and postsecondary program.

Discussion of Themes

This section outlines the five identified themes extracted from participant interviews: (1) experiencing invisibility due to lack of inclusive postsecondary planning and options, (2) feeling marginalized as a result of collusive forces of ableism and racism, (3) persevering role of Black parents through postsecondary planning and beyond, (4) navigating inequities with social supports and other supports, and (5) enacting ongoing resistance and advocacy. Influenced by Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit), these five themes amplify how Black parent participants experienced their child's postsecondary planning process in conjunction with their child having parallel discrimination experiences due to being Black and having high incidence disabilities. The five themes collectively demonstrate how racism and ableism interact and impact Black parents with young adults with high incidence disabilities concerning the postsecondary planning process. The latter three themes reveal the resourcefulness, perseverance, and intentionality of the participants in their pursuits to propel their child forward to a safe, thriving future of their own choosing despite multiple oppressions experienced by parent and child with postsecondary planning.

Experiencing Invisibility by Lack of Inclusive Postsecondary Planning and Options

The first theme that emerged from the interview transcripts was the pervasive feeling of invisibility that Black parents hold as they collaborate with their child with high incidence disabilities to explore postsecondary and work options post-high school. Participants described their perspective of the status quo operating procedures in high schools [U.S. public high schools] as quintessentially ignoring the untapped potential and college and career planning needs of Black students with high incidence disabilities and their families when it comes to postsecondary planning preparations. All parents endorsed nonexistent or very minimal educator-initiated postsecondary planning efforts during high school. For many parents in this study, they were under the impression that the individualized education plan (IEP) team handled all of the postsecondary planning for their child with high incidence disabilities. To many of the parents, the professional position of "school counselor" was interchangeable with the professions of "special education case manager" or "school social worker". This may have been due to the fact that a special education teacher and/or school social worker were the primary educators of contact for the participants.

In the case of the parents in this study, the reality of minimal to no involvement by their child's school counselor concerning postsecondary planning with them and/or their child obfuscated the premise that a school counselor ought to be a resource to Black parents with a youth with high incidence disabilities. Several of the parents in this study had young adult children, both with and without a disability. Therefore, the parents endorsed completely different experiences with each child's postsecondary planning. The inferred takeaway from these accounts is that the school system favors those with able-bodied status since the system views ability as normal and affirms it [validates and rewards highest achieving students with the time, information, and labor devoted to neurotypical students' postsecondary planning from high school counselors]. Concerning those students with high incidence disabilities and their preparation for post-high school life, this group and their parents are the most neglected by high school counselors and even special educators. For example, Tamara recounted the following:

> Not through his high school, I didn't get any information about any of those things, postsecondary, any of it. I've actually been learning all kinds of things about how the county has programs for, maybe not for Penny, but for kids in, who are still considered special ed—how 18 years old doesn't mean the end of it. There's all kinds of programs that I only heard about purely by accident. No one at the school ever talked about that stuff with us. So, I feel like their job [high school counselors] is to be a bridge, especially for parents who have no frame of reference. So, for me, Penny was my firstborn. I didn't know what I didn't know. And then my second son who is a year behind Penny—his college planning was completely different—he was an athlete. His was all about playing basketball, very little about academics.

Additionally, Tamara added, "I think the college planning part [for students with disabilities] was more of the same, just like special ed kids were just getting moved along through and no one really expected much from them."

Barbara, whose daughter, Briana, has an older brother, described her divergent postsecondary planning lived experiences with different children. Barbara explained:

> So, everything we did with him [neurotypical, able-bodied student] was totally different than what we dealt with her. However, he had a little bit of guidance in high school. He did the college tours, and you have meetings, but other than an IEP meeting for her, it [postsecondary planning] was based on what we [parents] knew.

Furthermore, Barbara noted that high school counselors hold incorrect assumptions regarding educators responsible for postsecondary planning of students with IEPs:

> I don’t even think it’s a topic of conversation [school counselors and postsecondary planning with families of students with disabilities]. I think they [school counselors] feel like everything is being met through the IEP. That group [students with IEPs] kind of pushes off to the side. Because they have an IEP and they are addressing it through their IEP that’s where I say that gap exists that the counselors need to understand everything is not addressed in the IEP, that there is a lot they can still do.

Barbara expounded upon the notion of the high school counselor asking about they and their daughter’s plans as a way to counteract the invisibleness they feel:

> If the high school counselor would have asked us, what were our plans for Briana it would have made us feel as though they saw a future for her beyond high school. When no one bothers to ask you, ‘What’s next for your child?’ it appears as if your child is not important or invisible. When schools discuss stats for their graduates, the focus in only on the academic dollars offered to graduates. An inclusive response would be, discussing how many students are going to trade/ technical school, are joining the workforce, or will start apprenticeship programs. An inclusive answer would include post-secondary plans for all students. One simple question would have let us know Briana was not invisible.

Cookie, a parent whose middle child, Sonic, has high incidence disabilities, recounted the difference she experienced between postsecondary planning with her older daughter with no disability and Sonic’s postsecondary planning:

> So, hers [older daughter’s postsecondary planning] didn’t have to be custom made. Hers was just sign up for school/college. Which college you wanna go to?

> Sign up, let's go! With Sonic, I had to look for resources and programs for him, just like you have to study out colleges that your kid goes to.

Concerning Mike's postsecondary planning, his father, Kevin, remembered:

> There were probably three main tracks, right, it was the military track, it was the college/academic track, or the student athlete track, and if you didn't fall into one of those, they [high school counselor] didn't really know what to do with you.

The high schools' lack of offering Black parents and their child with high incidence disabilities postsecondary options may be due to educators' deficit thinking that these students are unable to attend college. Relatedly, Denise commented:

> I think that because Mike did not express interest in the higher education tract, that there wasn't any extensive conversation about a plan on what to do after high school, and I don't think there was as many options presented truly about what to do [postsecondary options presented by high school counselor] if that wasn't an idea or if you weren't ready to go to college right away.

Louise agreed that educators' deficit thinking about students with high incidence disabilities and their postsecondary plans is a barrier to their child's future. Louise had no interactions with her son's school counselor, but rather, communicated with his IEP case manager who suggested:

> We're gonna put him in a trade…I was thinking maybe like building?
>
> [Louise] He's not a builder, you got engineering?
>
> [IEP case manager] Ford [Motor Company] has a program.
>
> [Louise] Okay, let's get him over to Ford. But it was more like line work [assembly line].

> [IEP case manager] What are you saying?
>
> [Louise] What I’m saying is that he can build the car. He’s in a trade. You’re just going by what’s on paper. Watch him work. And she [IEP case manager] came back and said, ‘I’m so sorry, I had no idea’.

Louise recounted another IEP case manager’s low expectations/bias about John’s post-high school future: “He’ll only be able to put a bolt on a screw” [working part-time in a restricted, sheltered work environment with other adults with a disability].

Stacey, the parent of Kyle, works in the special education department at a middle school in the same school system where Kyle attended high school. Stacey observed the following trend with not only her son, Kyle, but for her former Latino students with disabilities who had an IEP:

> I will be completely honest with you, I think when it comes to students that are labeled as that has some form of disability, I think they get left behind in the postsecondary review. They [educators] just want to give them a piece of paper [diploma or certificate] not actually prepare them for going into the workforce, or even giving them options. And most of the time, it’s minority students, it’s minority males as well.

Barbara, a professional school counselor with over fifteen years of work experience at all levels, elucidated this phenomenon:

> Working in a school is very interesting. A lot of students, of course, the focus becomes on your higher students [who earn higher achievement scores and grade point averages] or trying to make sure they are set up to where they’re gonna go [after high school]. The middle students that fall in the middle [average] kind of

> fight for themselves. And the students that fall in the category with my daughter, the parents really have to do more of the work [postsecondary planning] than anything else.

Michelle, whose son Cortez attended an exclusive charter high school in Michigan, recalled that there were under twenty students at the high school with an IEP. She remembered one of her child's special education teachers advocating for academic accommodations for these students to the school's new administration. School administration told Cortez's special education teacher, "This school is not really meant to have a special ed department." Michelle connected this ableist mindset and resistance to the reality of students with disabilities at her child's high school to the lack of postsecondary planning at the school for students with disabilities, "Counselors more focused on, if you will, the regular students than they were those in special ed [regarding postsecondary planning]."

Stacey connected the invisibility of students with high incidence disabilities in a high school and their families regarding postsecondary planning because high school counselors have high caseload numbers:

> I feel like they [high school counselors] just know kids by numbers and if you're not in that top bracket then they are not real, I guess, concerned with you, and they don't show you the options, or it could be, you may have one counselor that is doing their job [supporting students with disabilities] but they are so few and far between, because you have like 1300, that's a lot of students.

For Johnetta, visibility of Black parents with a child with high incidence disabilities and the postsecondary planning process related to intentional inclusion for these students and families by high school faculty, however the reality was different:

> But then nobody else is really involved [with students with disabilities], no principal, again, no [school] counselors, none of the other students [general ed], so it's still like these students are not visible. There's information [postsecondary planning] that we didn't even get but students in the same grade would get, so really more deliberate inclusion, really intentional inclusion in those career nights or in certain field trips. More deliberate inclusion, an earlier start on preparation for transition in the workplace. I think with students with disabilities is that maybe you wait until their junior or senior year to start talking about life skills and those things, but those should happen earlier because it's going to take them longer.

The majority of parents in this study had a child was enrolled in high school and graduated during the COVID-19 pandemic in the years 2020 or 2021; their child finishing high school during the pandemic made up ten of the fourteen participants (71%). Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on their child's postsecondary planning processes impacted them in broad ways. Rosalyn, who works in a small department with constantly changing work hours, was unable to access her son David's high school's virtual college and career planning events. The disorienting effect of the pandemic lasting so long impacted Kevin the following way:

> You look up and the year's gone [due to COVID-19] and 'Wow, he [son, Mike] had a whole year at home [after graduation] with no support or not progress, that's not good, so now we gotta scramble to find something'. So, I would love to

> say our plans have been step by step, very concrete, very detailed, but they've been kind of we've been taking it one day at a time.

Johnetta and Edith, in different states, looked forward to their respective sons (Ricky and Noah) enrolling in state vocational rehabilitation training programs [residential] to build independence and job skills. However, the COVID-19 pandemic shut down those programs with no alternate training options. Johnetta expressed her disappointment related to this:

> I guess, because again, asterisk COVID, right, because of having those expectations and when the expectation gets shattered it's a different kind of hurt, you still grieve it. I hate that we kind of aren't doing what we intended to do, but honestly, I was very afraid of him being away.

Edith hoped that her son, Noah would experience success with the state vocational rehabilitation program:

> They had a campus of course, COVID changed all this. They had a campus that was supposed to train him, train them on a trade and then he could go to that and then he could enroll in school and then go part-time to school and then have that job training. And then that got put on hold because of COVID. And so, he's just been vegetating, vegetating for a long time.

Moreover, waiting on a postsecondary plan to begin is a shared experience for those Black parents whose child with high incidence disabilities is pursuing supported/sheltered part-time work, with or without the assistance of state vocational rehabilitation. Barbara and Paula report that even adult day programs [providing recreational skills, self-advocacy skills, social interaction skills, etc.] have waiting lists for young adults with high incidence disabilities.

High school educators, including high school counselors, omit informing and educating parents of youth with disabilities and the youth with disabilities during high school about the range of postsecondary options available to them. Paula, who works as a part-time parent mentor in a large public school system, (with majority demographics of Black students and families), admits that this lack of educating parents of youth with disabilities about postsecondary options is problematic. Many of the parents who reach out to her are those parents whose child has left or graduated high school and the parents are asking questions about their child’s post-high school life. Paula described this phenomenon:

> Parents [of youth with disabilities] did not know what postsecondary options are. Even when I wasn’t working in the school, I didn’t know a lot about postsecondary, those comp waivers, family support funding, different things. I would just focus on the IEP and making sure he’s getting through school. You have to figure out what the next level is and that is the struggle for a lot of our parents, to figure out what the next level is. I had to figure out what was the demographics of who needed the most services. So, when I looked, I noticed it was our kids that were in high school. Transitioning should not just start when they get to high school…you [parents] should be prepared before. I’ve seen 90% of our kids [with an IEP who left or graduated high school] sitting at home, some of those parents of those who were sitting at home came back and, ‘I didn’t know this, this was here, and I didn’t know you’re supposed to fill out this [forms]’.

Similarly, three of five parents whose child enrolled with a postsecondary institution, Cassie, Tamara, and Michelle, reported that their child did not know about registering with disability support services at their postsecondary institution. Had high school educators known or cared about the necessary knowledge/related needs of these Black parents and their young adult with high incidence disabilities for postsecondary life, the needs of these parents regarding setting up their child successfully for postsecondary life might have been more visible.

Feeling Marginalized due to Collusive Forces of Ableism and Racism

Participants in this study disclosed accounts of social marginalization related to their or their child's experience with ableism, racism, or both ableism and racism during high school. The participants expressed fear and anxiety for their young adult child's safety, a strong vigilance to be proactive for their young adult child's safety, and the unique mindset of helping their child with high incidence disabilities navigate their future in society as a young Black adult. The current toxic racial climate in the United States against Black individuals was a common variable in participant interviews concerning their experiences of their young adult child with high incidence disabilities' postsecondary planning.

Ableism

School system and school norms, practices, and actions, as well as educators' inaction and educators' implicit bias toward Black students with high incidence disabilities, contributed to upholding ableism. Rosalyn advocated for her child, David, throughout his K-12 education. She reported enduring unprofessional behavior from special educators for years. It was as if the special education team did the minimum to help her child. Rosalyn reported that her son's IEP team stonewalled her efforts to uncover his learning challenges with math after receiving the special education eligibility of specific learning disability in the area of reading fluency and comprehension. Only years after the diagnosis of dyslexia did the IEP team decide to add dyscalculia, a math processing disorder, to David's IEP in his sophomore year of high school. This negligence of the IEP team, Rosalyn believes, led to David abandoning his postsecondary goal of enrolling at a four-year university to study computer programming. The abandoned dream was due to persistent challenges during high school to get the correct eligibilities on David's IEP and appropriate, correlating academic accommodations. Rosalyn relayed the overall toll that dealing with the school and special educators took on her:

> I think I have post-traumatic stress disorder from dealing with them. Because I should not think about somebody's name and hold my breath taking a deep breath at least do a count of seven in order not to want to think, 'How can someone so incompetent still keep a job? How can someone be in the field when they're supposed to be educating and then, no they're not?'

Public schools like the one John attended still ascribe to a singular notion of ability and see learning differences as deficits. (Annamma et al., 2018). Louise admitted that a teacher once called her son, John, "retarded" upon learning that he did not read in a way that the teacher expected in one interaction with John (Sue, 2010). Unfortunately, this is not an uncommon incident. An acquaintance of Louise, a Black mother of a child with a high incidence disability who was a peer of Louise's son, John, recounted a similar ableist slur toward her son by a teacher. Louise inferred that current school practices still place students in an ability hierarchy and do not recognize the assets of technology that can level the playing field for students with disabilities:

> Because I believe she [a special educator who saw greatness in John] knew so many boys, or Black boys get categorized as the word we don't use in our profession, 'retarded'. 'What's wrong with 'em? Can't read or write.' But now that we're moving into an age of technology, that skill set [reading long passages and answering comprehension questions] is needed, but it's not essential. My child is adapting to the times because he's like, 'Oh, I can figure it out on a computer!'

Although Cortez' high school had highly selective student admissions, and only a few students with IEPs attended the school, Michelle noted the following: "It was a very challenging school, very challenging for those with special needs. They were not looked after and taken care of like I felt they should have been". She described the following example:

> She [IEP case manager] advocated, even with the principal, to make sure the teachers would give Cortez extra time he was supposed to have in this high school. [Cortez's general education teachers]: 'No, no, I don't want to do that [provide accommodations].' They were not consistent [teachers providing accommodations] …we struggled with that for four years, it was a fight. We're like, 'But it's an IEP, it's a legal form.' And it's because he didn't look like he needed extra help.

Michelle, in dealings with teachers and administrators at Cortez's prestigious charter high school, commented on the sharp difference that administration makes in how they treat students with high incidence disabilities:

> The [former] principal was very supportive of the special challenges group…so if the resource teacher [special education teacher] shared something with her, the principal said, 'Absolutely, I'll send that letter out to the teachers [general education]. [The new administration] they were in cahoots that we shouldn't have this here [students with IEPs], that there shouldn't be special needs classes, special education here [in the school].

Moreover, Michelle did not count on involvement by high school counselors to assist her with Cortez's postsecondary planning:

> They were all overworked is all I can say. There's too many students and not enough people to manage [the student's needs]. I don't think she [school counselor] even probably knew who my son was, never attended IEP meetings, but they don't have time to come to that, nothing through school [no postsecondary planning, no career assessments].

Related to early postsecondary preparation, both Tara and Paula viewed postsecondary planning for their sons with high incidence disabilities as something that occurs during high school for their child in terms of access to career and technology education (CTE) pathways [sets of courses in a specific career domain] and programming. Paula's younger son, Darth Vader, who was served in a resource setting, attempted a work-based program/career academy with CTE pathways in their school system. Unfortunately, this program was inaccessible to students with disabilities. Paula explained:

> Even to get out in the work-based program…because we have a career academy here in our county but for some kids that are on IEP, really can't participate over there because it's such a high level on where they [teachers] want them [students] to be. They have them working on computers, media, working on cars, nursing, culinary, childcare, they have a lot of stuff over there, but if you're not in a regular general ed classroom setting, if you're on an IEP, they don't know how to service your child there at that location.
>
> Cuz I tried to send my youngest one there [Black Panther], he went there for a year, but he failed. I got him a co-teacher to go in with him, but the co-teacher, it was for media, and the co-teacher said, 'Well, I don't know nothing about the program', so he couldn't help him [student]. So Black Panther went there for a year, then I just pulled him back to the high school.

In the school system that Tara's son, Anthony, attended, there was a culinary CTE program. However, Anthony's high school counselor served as a gatekeeper for his access to that program. Tara recalled:

> It was [communication from the school counselor], 'Well, these classes are really hard, and it's really competitive.' It was almost as if, 'I don't know if I want to take that spot and give it to this child with a disability when this typical child is in [or deserved that program spot]. But I think they knew me well enough to know that my child was going to be in that spot.

Racism

Participants relayed their experiences amidst the landscape of the constant news cycle about racial injustices and police brutality against Black individuals. Such traumatic events led the participants to express fear and anxiety about their Black young adult child’s ability to be safe and navigate their own life choices in a society that is so blatantly racist. Edith maintained:

> I think over the last couple years, especially the last two years [since 2019], I’ve always been fearful for my kids. It’s even more so [fear-inducing] especially for Noah, because he can have a temper. I think with Noah, just through him talking, because he is an introvert, he will not say anything, and somebody may get the wrong idea because he’s quiet. And then there was this kid named Elijah [McClain]. And his death just floored me. He just kept saying, ‘I’m just different, I’m just different. I don’t hurt anybody.’ And they [police] still killed him. I think it makes me want to protect him more and hold him more. I don’t want anything – my kids—they’re not gonna hurt anybody, none of them, but the color of their skin is going to dictate what happens to them.

Similarly, Louise, mother of John, remarked:

> It’s been hard to protect your child. It’s been many a night, ‘Is he gonna make it? Does he understand he can make it, now he’s leaving me?’ And during the George Floyd thing, there was a little boy who got killed out in Denver, [Elijah McClain], and I worry about that because [Elijah was young black Male with a disability] my son doesn’t know how to advocate for himself, he’s been in a bubble, he’s always had us.

Black parents preparing and educating their Black child how to interact with police is even more salient when that child has a disability. Stacey expressed her heightened vigilance level of this dynamic to protect her Black child with a disability and used the metaphor that she's in "unchartered waters right now":

> You can't hit him [Kyle] with too many questions at one time, so let's say, God forbid, if he's pulled over by the police. And they start questioning him, he starts to stutter, and he gets frustrated, he starts clenching his fist, making a fist, and I have to tell him, 'You can't do that' when we would do role-playing. I said, 'Even if they're in your face, do not clench your fist, take a deep breath, and then you speak just like you've been taught in therapy. Inhale, exhale, take your time when you're speaking. I have a Black male in America. So, I make him conscious of things and we were talking about, especially when Trayvon Martin was killed with the hood because my son always has a hood on his head. I'm like, 'Kyle, you know you can't wear a hood all the time…if you just happened to be pulled over and stopped by the police, what are you gonna do?'

Furthermore, Johnetta explained:

> And to be Black and not just have a disability, have autism, in particular, or any type of neuro-divergent disability, the scary part is that I feel like a non-Black parent, if their child has spectrum disorder, right, and their child goes into crisis, you can call the police, you can get help, but for me, that's not really an option. Calling the police…something has to be already super bad before I call the police, because my assumption is that police will come, they'll see him, maybe he's agitated, maybe he's acting out, and they will react, and so yeah, that's the biggest role that race plays.

Edith admitted that Noah received offensive racial slurs from both Black and White students in high school. Kevin reflected on challenges he and his wife observed Mike to endure, during senior year of high school, as related to racism and indifference by educators in their response to the racism.

> There became questions for us about his [Mike's] safety and some concerns about his interactions with certain students, kind of how he was being treated, how he was treating others, that were escalating to a point beyond what you would consider just simple school misunderstandings, to the point where he was receiving threats and texts, forms of, usage of the n-word. And then when [we] would go to the counselors and the team about it, they would kind of play it down. [School staff]: 'Oh yeah, we'll talk to 'em, we'll figure it out, we'll get to the bottom of it.' And we really felt that that was not being addressed, and it definitely wasn't being addressed appropriately, per what the school stood up and said that they would do.

Ableism and Racism

Special education, enmeshed in multiple oppressive systems including White supremacy and ableism, has a long history of White teachers disproportionately referring and finding Black students eligible to receive special education services. Moreover, once in special education, Black students' trend toward being placed in the most restrictive environments (Zion & Blanchett, 2011). In the case of Penny, although Tamara knew he needed such services, she was also aware of the disproportionality of Black students in special education. Tamara understood the broader societal oppression toward the Black community in conversations she had with her son, Penny:

> This sending you to special ed is proven to be a way to decide how we're going to build other schools and other prisons and other resources in the community and so are you going to use this opportunity or are you going to learn how to be a prisoner? That was when we were locking them in those rooms [seclusion rooms], where we were showing, teaching them how to be a prisoner back then.

The participants delineated distinct and broad accounts of ableism and racism as related to their Black child with a high incidence disability. Consequently, these inequitable oppressions exist concurrently for some of the participants in the form of their child receiving punitive and inequitable discipline consequences. Five of the parents reported attempts by their child's school to push their child out of the local school as a result of a burned-out special education teacher (Johnetta) an IEP team recommending the most restrictive educational setting (Barbara), or due to a behavioral incident committed by the child in high school (Michelle, Kevin, and Denise). Of those five parents, two stated that the school succeeded with transferring the student to a new school and two parents moved their child to a new school due to safety concerns for their child.

Denise, the mother of Mike, recalled that at her son's first high school, the demographics of the faculty were majority White, with maybe one percent of the faculty being Black/African American. The demographics of the student body for the first high school were seven percent Black/African American and the rest, predominantly White. Kevin presented he and his attorney's view of Mike's high school's legal team manipulating educational policy loopholes concerning Mike's due process rights (Fisher et al., 2021):

> There was a direct avoidance of having that hearing [manifestation determination hearing]. The school did not want to have it. They fought vigorously to not have that hearing. So as an example, if you were suspended for more than a certain number of days, then you had to have automatically have to have a manifestation [hearing meeting], they [high school] would go one day less than that time frame. And then they said, 'Well, it has to be sequential so if there's a break in-between, it kind of resets'. So, then they would give him another suspension for right up until that time frame began, and we would ask, 'Can we have a manifestation hearing? The doctor has written a note saying that this behavior is part of his manifestation'. And they would [say], 'No, we're not at that point, we think it's all behavioral and we have chosen the code of conduct and the student discipline [handbook] to deal with this.'

Michelle's son Cortez had difficulty in his first year of college, compounded by a change to all online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, Cortez's younger brother, a high school senior with autism spectrum disorder on his IEP eligibility, experienced the full force of school discipline despite his behavior being a manifestation of his disability. Michelle reported that not only was her other son's behavior a manifestation of his disability, but the school did not provide any homebound educational services or permit the student to return to school immediately (Fisher et al., 2021). The school system attempted to displace Michelle's son to another school that was "not as academically prepared as the first one, the one he was in." Michelle asked, "Why would we go from the number one school to the number four/five school that we don't even know what they're teaching over there, and why are you moving him?"

Similarly, Barbara experienced her daughter's school recommending Briana be moved to a different school that was the most restrictive educational setting. She offered the following lessons to other Black parents with a child with a disability.

> African American parents need to understand their rights when it comes to their child in school [child with IEP]. It's so important and understand what they [school officials] cannot do legally with regards to things that they can't just send your child to another setting without a process or kind of just putting your child out of school for extended periods of time that there's a limit to that as well with the law. I think they [parents] should know, just understand their rights, because there is more of a chance with them [child] being put out of school. Because they are minority, that stigma is in place, even though your child had a disability and that's something that they have to understand and I know I struggle with trying to get people to understand that you want to categorize her as other students [without a disability], and she's not. That was a big battle.

In the case of Paula, whose sons attended a majority-minority high school in a similar demographically arranged school system, noted that a senior official of special education in her school system once espoused that she feels like the K-12 education system is setting up youth with disabilities up for failure because they may not be able to obtain a job once they graduate. This resignation of a school district leader of special education to the status quo that ableism [as well as racism] is to be expected for their students is unfortunate and the mindset pervasive.

Many of the participants described existing in a space of being misunderstood and stigmatized within their specific racial community, the Black/African American community, due to members of their own families, churches, and other community members minimizing the diagnosis and needs of their child with a high incidence, often invisible, disability. Johnetta thoroughly acknowledged her experience with this topic:

> People will have grandparents who just don't think that they [Black young person with high incidence disability] have it [invisible disability]. That's actually a common thing. A lot of times it is generational. Younger folks seem to be a bit more accepting but…understand that, like going to church and going to places like the barbershop. The church, the barbershop, and these are considered to be institutions in Black communities because your child's behaviors are weird or because your child might meltdown, or because your child can't deal with noises or sounds or you just get tired of people asking you what's wrong with your kid. So, I think that's important for counselors to kind of realize that a Black parent, in particular, is going to be dealing with that. And planning for the future, like we got those things on top of it…but I think it's helpful for [school] counselors to be aware of those particular things, the stigma [toward Black individuals with disabilities] within the community [Black community] and our reluctance to ask for help, particularly with authority figures. You just never know, we are in Georgia, and Georgia does not have the best history [history of racism toward the Black community].

Similarly, Cassie and Michelle described the implications of such stigma in their respective racial communities. Cassie resigned herself of having no outlet (either in churches or in economically impoverished areas) to connect with others in the Black community in an educational and supportive way who have a loved one with a disability.

Michelle admitted that acceptance of reality about her children with disabilities spurred her to action, despite lack of examples in the Black/African American community of that:

> That is definitely the African American community; you don't have mental problems, you don't have psychological issues, and if you do, you don't talk about them, then you don't move forward to get your child what they need, and I guess it continues to be a cycle for some. But when I started seeing something in my kids, I have to do something. That's my job.

Likewise, Tara initiated a change for her family to no longer attend a predominantly Black church and eventually moved to a predominantly White church that was more inclusive and accepting of her two young adult children with a disability.

> Even at the church we attended [Black church] I really tried to lobby for a ministry that would not separate, but how we can be more inclusive of students, people with disabilities, especially, and it just wasn't their ministry. I found another church that was predominantly White, they participate in a wonderful Bible study group for young adults with disability, mainly Caucasian. And a lot of things I do, I just don't see my community here…

Tara explained the background for such stigma in the Black community for a Black individual to receive a disability label due to the disproportional rates of Black children referred to special education.

> There's a history of African Americans who are typical and capable of being labeled as special needs, so that you have that history there. So, a lot of parents fight against that, because it was just you know, "there's a behavior problem". No, that's a just a young boy being young, and they're put in a special class and

> then they're labeled. So that there is that to overcome, just understanding the history.

Like the aforementioned parents, Paula recounted the stigma that her mother's generation has and continues to have toward family members who are not "typical". Some of these family members with a disability remained "hidden" from members of the extended family and were subsequently named "backroom babies". Extended family members did not know about these secret family members with a disability. Paula's reaction to this family secret included an indignance toward the older family members:

> Your child could have this type of service, let's try to get them help. We're going to make sure they can grow up and be successful. What's going to happen to them if anything happened to you?

Beyond the family and community spheres, racism and ableism especially exist in the domain of public education. For example, Stacey believed that public education focuses primarily on those able-bodied, typically White, high-achieving students:

> I think the whole public education system looks at academics and are totally tunnel vision where, we're only worried about that top 10%, and if you have a disability, then of course, you're going to be bottom barrel, and if you're of a minority group, you definitely gonna have a struggle, if you don't have anyone to advocate for you.

Tamara grieved the missed opportunities that her son, Penny, could have had to prepare for postsecondary life socially and academically because the school system discovered his specific learning disability too late due to focusing on false assumptions that Penny only had emotional behavioral challenges that impeded learning:

> I wish we would have gotten to the learning disability [eligibility] a lot sooner. I think some of that EBD stuff was tied to, 'He's Black, and he's having a tantrum because he's Black. He's tapping or standing up or whatever, he's Black. I felt like they were treating the White kids…there was hardly any White kids in special ed. And I've seen some bad White kids, they just get to do whatever they want. So, I wish we would have gotten to the learning disability way ahead of time and understanding that the behaviors were most likely tied to a learning problem and not some parenting problem or I'm not disciplining him enough. And we missed out on so many opportunities because I, for a long time, letting them lead because they were the professionals, they were trying to help me, I thought.

Rosalyn underscored how public-school curriculum is still embedded in a White supremacist paradigm and students of Color with and without disabilities miss out on learning experiences that center diverse learning styles as well as culturally diverse authors:

> [Educator bias showing up] 'Oh the child comes from a text-poor background'. People who come from low socioeconomic or diverse backgrounds, you forget, they have a rich oral history, and ours are called griots. So, if I have griots, I'm pretty sure that the Hispanic grandmothers telling tales of the family history and so forth…do not think that because there is not a text background there, because if people can ear-read with audio books, what make that different from them learning oral history in stories? So, they sit up and put a bunch of labels on stuff instead of teaching. They stagnate and prolong things to keep from teaching.

Not only did parents report seeing dynamics of racism and ableism play out in the schools, but the same dynamics manifested in state vocational rehabilitation programming. Paula, with what she learned about vocational rehabilitation services, noted the following:

> All the parents only had two options for work [for their young adult child]: to go to work, stocking, or cleaning. And most of these kids were African American boys. 'Can't African American boys do more than stocking and cleaning?' Once they get into those jobs, the jobs still don't do no type of training, does not show them what they need to do, they [employer] just saying you're working, but then they take you off the schedule.

Louise reported the following encounter with a social worker from vocational rehabilitation. The social worker attempted to persuade Louise to send John to a residential vocational program located hours away from the family to learn how to be a custodian.

> [Social worker] 'It's a beautiful school, they teach you a trade, he'll learn how to be a custodian, things like that.'
>
> [Louise] 'It sounds like a wonderful college it's free you go learn a trade, you learn how to live on your own, they teach life skills. But this ain't the route for him.'
>
> [Social worker] 'Well, let's just see'.

Louise implied that the social worker from state vocational rehabilitation continued to hold low expectations for her son, including speaking highly of John's temporary summer restaurant job, saying, "It sounds like it's a good paying job."

Persevering Role of Black Parents Through Postsecondary Planning and Beyond

Participants in this research demonstrated a high amount of investment in their child and his or her future during the postsecondary planning process and beyond. The participants expressed the delicate balance of supporting their young adult child with high incidence disabilities, while providing the child the mental and physical space to exercise independence. Each participant had unique ways of educating, guiding, and protecting their young adult child with high incidence disabilities through the complex landscape of life during high school to post-high school. Moreover, the persevering role of these participants as a parent of young adult child with high incidence disabilities exacts a mental, emotional, and physical toll for most of the parents.

Michelle, Louise, and Denise shared the conviction that their role of being a supportive, helpful parent to their young adult child with high incidence disabilities does not cease upon the child matriculating from high school. Michelle commented, “You have to be prepared to help this child the rest of their life even though you might not have to, be prepared to do so, just in case.” Louise recounted a challenging chain of events the months following John’s high school graduation, including the loss of his valuable personal information (his COVID-19 vaccination card and wallet) in another state:

> These are things, what I would tell other parents, like it doesn’t end. And you gotta learn how not to be critical. I think I’ve made a lot of mistakes, but I’ve also had to backtrack and say, ‘Hey, I’m proud of you, it’s going to be okay’. That’s the biggest thing, stay involved.

Denise realized that her son’s journey to self-sufficiency and success may take a circuitous route:

> I also wanted to bring him [Mike] to get to a point where he could self-advocate for himself, knowing that this is not something [disability] that's going to go away into adulthood. I do see and acknowledge some of those little milestones when it comes to self-advocacy…just something simple as wanting to work and even though he has had a work history…we tried to instill some of the things that many parents do that you have to work to earn and to acquire things you're not going to be able to get through life with someone just handing something out to you and so there has been a history of him seeking some employment and I've overheard him talking to a business asking if they work with individuals with disabilities.
>
> Although we as parents sometimes question our decisions along the way, looking at those little moments helps me to feel that although we're slow moving, we're gonna get there.

Paula described the impact of transitioning her child to life after high school while promoting her older son's autonomy to make his own decisions:

> It's been rocky, very rocky. Yeah, we're still in the pandemic. And it's kind of hard because the oldest one don't want to go out or don't want to do a lot [due to anxiety], and we just finally got his first vaccine because he told me he wasn't going to do it, and I have power of attorney. I'm working on guardianship, but I was trying to let him make that choice. I was trying to give him the opportunity…he's really bad with allergies and pre-diabetic.

The multifaceted parent role that Louise embraced consisted of educating John on how to accept himself with his learning disability and racial identity as a young Black man, as well as making the most of the opportunities presented to him:

> With all the racial disparities going on, I knew I really have to make him aware of who he is, how he learns, prepare him for that everyone's not going to understand him. He has to own who he is; he has to embrace it. I think in high school, especially with the clowning and acting out, that was his way of masking who he was. And as an African American mother I'm like, 'That's not tolerated. That's gonna get you killed'. I had to teach him, own who you are. Stop shrinking back and stop hiding. Stop masking who you are. You don't owe anyone an explanation. And I think that's prepared him. If you're White, Black, Hispanic, whoever you are, own who you are. It's not up to you to explain how you process information, it's up to you to take what you learned, understand that you get/have these accommodations and make the most of that opportunity.

Most of the participants gave examples of wanting to provide more support, but due to the child being a legal adult, those parents without legal guardianship of the child played more of a supporting role due to legal rights under HIPAA and FERPA transferring to the young adult child. The participants described the ways in which they navigated supporting their young adult child with high incidence disabilities from a distance. Participants Tamara and Michelle recounted how they continually encouraged their sons to register with their college's office of disability support services once admitted to college. Tamara explained:

> I have been after him to do it, but I noticed maybe second semester of his freshman year he was really drowning and finally went off to get some tutoring and stuff, but see, I feel like Penny's learned over time that this is not something to broadcast, and I'm embarrassed about [getting help due to learning disability].

> So even asking for tutoring, I had to force him to do that, but he wanted to just go in there and ask for tutoring, just like any student would do. I had to hack his email accounts and email the person myself to say, ‘I have a learning disability…I need help with being organized…I need help with…’you know what I mean? Because a regular tutor is not what he needed at that time.

Likewise, Michelle commented:

> If I could have done it for him, I would have, but you know they don’t let you talk for him [to disability support services office]. That was so hard for me, because the first year he just didn’t get it done. I kept saying, ‘You gotta get over there, son, and you need this extra help, can’t you tell?’ So, he finally got connected, I think, this school year. So, I think it’s just this summer that he’s actually been able to take advantage of getting the extra time and things like that.

Participant support in their child’s postsecondary life occurred beyond the academic setting, or more specifically, related to the young adult child’s mental health. Edith’s son Noah experienced negative side effects (physical aggression) through a newly prescribed depression medication. Edith wanted Noah to return to the prescribing psychiatrist to update her, but she states that Noah “felt like they basically threw medicine at it, as opposed to figuring out what he needed to cope with it”. Consequently, Noah did not want to return to his psychiatrist. Through discussing this with her son, Noah, Edith helped him come to the decision to obtain a new psychiatrist. Edith recognizes that appropriate medication management and mental health wellness are crucial for Noah’s daily functioning and for his ability to follow through with details related to his post-high school vocational training plans. Edith, as well as other parents in her situation, are in a challenging predicament once their child with high incidence disabilities turns 18 years of age:

> On top of that, you don't have access to these people (therapist and psychiatrist) So, it's not like I can call and talk to them because Noah is 19, so it's like, [Psychiatrist]: 'Is he there? He has to give me permission to talk to you.' Well, doggone it, I want to tell you something that I don't want him to know about! I tried to talk to him [Noah] beforehand and give him the tools. Because what I try and tell Noah is, 'I'm only here for a certain amount of time and there's gonna come a time where you got to be in charge of you, and I need you to get to the independence, so you'll be okay with that'.

A noteworthy aspect of the persevering role of parents in their child's postsecondary planning process and beyond are the perspectives of participants who identified as single parents. Four of the fourteen participants in this research identified as single parents. One of those four participants, Johnetta, parent of Ricky explained:

> We might not have that same level of community support and also just a pure demographic statistic, a Black parent is more likely to be a single parent, and that is super stressful. And single parents are likely to not necessarily have the best access in terms of health care needs and that's something [school counselors] need to be aware of, that they [Black parents of youth with high incidence disabilities] might be just working with a regular pediatrician not even a developmental pediatrician. We were blessed we have an excellent developmental pediatrician but not everybody [has that] just because the networks are different.

Another single parent, Cassie, described the impact of finances and traumatic events on her outlook with supporting her son, Mark.

> It's very difficult for our Black children, like it's very hard. I have so much fear and I'm trying to move us to hope. Just the financial aspect of it, because a Black single mom, our income is not that big. Any change in my income, that impacts his abilities to have fun things or even transportation, so a lot of fear on so many levels. It's a lot. His car was in a car accident recently. So, we've been doing everything [including college] online. He's trying to save up for another car right now. We had two accidents, one was a Dollar General truck backed into him and dragged his car, that big eighteen-wheeler. Then, like a month later, the lady t-boned him, so that totaled his car, and I think mentally it shifted [for Mark] in a sense of, 'Is it me, mom? I don't even want to drive!' But I'm grateful that I am the mom that I am with the patience, and just the assurance of, 'It's okay, you can't give up, we can do baby steps.' We've had ups and downs but we're going [forward].

Cogent to the persevering role of Black parents to their young adult child with high incidence disabilities during and after high school is how the parents described the physical and mental impact of sustaining this supportive role to their child. Denise believed that her own self-doubts about Mike and his postsecondary planning process are related to the "trial and error" nature of the journey. Louise described the significant timing of participating in this research overlapping with her son, John's high school graduation in 2021:

> When I saw it [research recruitment flyer], I wanted to cry because I'm like, 'God, those divine moments! I gotta connect with Erin. We can land this plane now.' [supporting child in high school and in transition to college], even though it's been turbulent, and I cried, actually sat in a room and cried by myself, because I was like, 'God, it's been rough, it's been hard.'

Louise later recounted the strain of this enduring role of supporting John.

> I was tired, I was like, 'I'm ready for you to leave [for college].' Mentally, I'm just about blown. You all just don't understand, what being a co-pilot on this plane has been like because he [John] doesn't have that timeliness because he was like last minute, 'Can you take me to work?' And I say, 'I'm ready for you to leave, so you can learn how to take care of yourself.'

The cumulative emotional, mental, financial, and physical invisible labor that these Black parents contribute to their child with high incidence disabilities and his or her postsecondary plan is obvious. Relatedly, Michelle summarized the entire process as "physically and mentally exhausting, there's a lot of repetition". Single parent participant Tara, who works full-time, reported that seeking postsecondary resources for her child Anthony, such as Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act (TEFRA)/Katie Beckett Medicaid Program, comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs, and other resources, is "not easy to navigate" and the information is not "easily readily available without it becoming your full-time job; you can miss some things because you just don't have enough time." Tara wished she had a "personal assistant" to help her navigate such information. Vocational rehabilitation in her state was unable to assist her with this exploration of postsecondary resources due to a lack of manpower and willingness. The amount of time these participants devoted to curating their child's postsecondary plan due to the school system's indifference and neglect of their child's unique postsecondary needs is substantial. Furthermore, the participants contended that the support their social connections and wider community network provides them is invaluable.

Navigating Inequities through Social Supports and Other Supports

Despite the negative, inequitable, and isolating circumstances and oppressive systems the participants encountered regarding the postsecondary planning process for their child with a high incidence disability, these parents garnered fortitude through their various social connections. Social connections and networks served as vital supports for the participants. Participants most often cited essential social support during the postsecondary planning years from their spouse, extended family [grandparents, siblings, other family members], friends, disability-allied non-profit groups, and groups on social media (Facebook) related to empowering parents of youth/adults with disabilities.

For example, Tara credited Anthony's postsecondary readiness to several key supports:

> I'm very blessed that I have a tremendous support system with my family. I am a solo parent, I'm divorced, and so my parents were instrumental in helping me. My best friend—she's constantly looking for resources and supporting and helping. I have a sister. My family play a critical role. We did this together.

Less frequently occurring social support originated from co-workers (those in the field of education), fellow church members, mentors, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and a school counselor. The exception to the aforementioned examples of social support occurred for Tamara. Tamara did not recall any social support in any form, regarding preparing Penny for life after high school.

The majority of participants were mothers (n=13), of those nine mothers who had a spouse, only about half of those participants endorsed salient social support from the spouse during the child's postsecondary planning years. Spousal support occurred most often in the form of tangible/financial support (funding various postsecondary endeavors for the child), informational support (spouses having shared goals for the child with high incidence disabilities), and emotional support (listening, validating one another).

For example, Cookie remembered:

> You always got to have a plan in place. To get ready for the world. So, me and my husband had a plan in place already [for Sonic] to get him ready for the world, ever since he was in the tenth grade.

Likewise, Denise disclosed a similar outlook:

> It is not without challenge [impact of Mike's postsecondary transition]. I would say, probably 85% of the time, we're kind of on the same page. I can't say enough about how that has really helped us to kind of navigate through this experience with Mike.

Family support is a common thread across the participants in this research. Most of the participants referenced current accounts of family member support. On the contrary, Stacey held endearing memories of her aunt, a mentor to her during her teen and young adult years, who had six children of her own. The tenacious example of her aunt and her wise words live on in Stacey's life as she supported Kyle's postsecondary preparation and path:

> So, I was a student that had no direction. My sophomore year I became rebellious. Until I was 16 and I met my aunt.

> [Aunt] ‘Look, college is a possibility’.
>
> [Stacey] ‘I can’t afford it.’
>
> [Aunt] ‘College is a possibility’.
>
> She was my mentor, she had six children, all of them college educated, hell, one of them went to MIT, on a full ride, then went to Stanford for his masters on a full ride. My aunt’s state of mind was, ‘If I can’t get it for free, it’s going to be almost free’. And when it came to education, she was very adamant of, ‘You should not walk out of college in debt. It is a stepping-stone, not a gravestone. So that’s some of the things she instilled in me. And that’s why I tell the kids in middle school, have a plan, strategize, plan it out, and execute. It makes life so much easier. Now unfortunately strategize, plan, and execute don’t always work in my house with mine. It takes a little bit more strategy.

Rosalyn reported having a tight-knit family, that they are a continual presence in David’s life, as in a layer of backup support to her and her spouse. She commented, “Because if I’m having trouble with him [David] and he’s being really, really headstrong, I’m calling his uncles. I’m calling all four of them.” Rosalyn drew on the cumulative career experiences and knowledge of her extended family when she instructed David to conduct informational interviews with many of them who were tradesmen prior to retirement. This activity gave David a new perspective on the breadth of work experiences and specialties of his great uncles and grandparents, even if he had interest in pursuing dissimilar paths.

Kevin presented a dichotomy of support from a set of Mike’s grandparents. On one hand, one of the grandmothers, a White retired educator, had postsecondary preparation conversations with Mike. Conversely, this grandmother was under the impression that if Kevin and his spouse were “really nice to them [Mike’s educational team], they’ll help your son.” Kevin admitted there was “some level of support” from the family, but due to generational differences and gaps in knowledge about disability matters and post-high school options, family support was variable. One knowledgeable grandparent of Mike introduced Kevin to the possibility of a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program for Mike after learning about the program in an informal way.

Two of the participants specifically mentioned the social support of a trusted coworker. Barbara recounted a former professional school counselor co-worker/friend who is familiar with her daughter, Briana and is a good support to the family.

In the case of Johnetta, interactions with her coworker at a postsecondary institution provided her with new transition information that ultimately altered Ricky’s high school academic track and subsequent postsecondary path:

> When Ricky started his ninth-grade year, I was working at a technical college, and my office was right next door to the disabilities [office] coordinator, so I was able to glean a lot working next to her. She was the first person to mention a GVR residential program and other options. I also made the decision that we definitely will be pursuing a regular diploma. Because day in, day out, we would have students would come try to enroll with a transitional diploma and we would be like, ‘I’m so sorry, you have to go get a GED.’ And I did not want Ricky to be in that situation.

Stacey highlighted how a Black male mentor in the community has made a difference for Kyle as related to preparation for life after school:

> Mr. S said, ‘I want him this fall and he can do stuff at the radio station.’ And I was like, cool, because that’s another way for Kyle to increase his confidence in his social skills. I totally enjoy Mr. S because he took the time where most would have not. He actually took the time and encouraged Kyle, gave Kyle responsibility, and everything.

A parallel observation of timely support from a mentor, albeit a mentor to participant, occurred for Louise:

> Ms. P is/has been my rock. She just always shows up, divine encounters, yes. ‘I could see John had character…you have to always understand how he learns.’ Be connected to his team, create a village. Because they’ve helped me when I’ve gotten tired. When I got exhausted, Ms. P was like, “Well, Louise, imagine, I did this 20 years ago with three boys [each with a disability] and I was a single mom!’ I was like, ‘That’s why you’re my hero!’ Ms. P was like, ‘You can do it, Louise, with your one [child with a disability]. He’s gonna be great, you just can’t get tired. But I’m here to run the rest of this race with you.’

For many of the participants, not only did family members and others play a key role in providing support during the challenging times of their child’s postsecondary planning but so did others in the community. Namely, this support emerged from other parents of children and young adults with disabilities and disability-allied groups, non-profit organizations, and parent groups of youth/young adults with disabilities on social media.

Johnetta admitted that she appreciated social spaces where she could interact with other parents of a child with a disability. She attributed one of these spaces as a county transition fair, which was "a really great space to interact with parents and other professionals who are dealing with the same issues and that's probably the best part…a real sense of community." Johnetta believed that "great learning" occurs with this community of other moms and dads of a child with a disability. Barbara related to appreciating this source of support as a means to gain information to help her child since she and her spouse initiated postsecondary planning for their daughter, Briana:

> [Postsecondary information for Briana] was based on what we knew, and really, that was from other parents, people that I knew that worked in special education…other people kind of gauged us on and told us this what you need to start thinking about and looking into so that was part of our focus, along with she participates in Special Olympics. With those parents, it was a lot of insight because their kids were older. And so, they told me certain things you need to make sure you take care of this, and don't wait too long with this…

Tara, too, credited her interactions with other parents of youth/young adults with disabilities as her "lifeline, and building those connections has been essential." Additionally, Cookie mentioned the notion of knowing she is not alone in the journey to support her son in his life post-high school. She drew comfort from camaraderie with other parents of youth/young adults with disabilities, regardless of the racial identity of the parent. Cookie explained:

> When I saw the peak [of the postsecondary goal] when I talked to parents of other races, we're all running the same race, we are doing a 'SOS, help us!' type of a

> thing. We focus on helping the children out. I have been around a lot of Caucasian parents, and we all say, ‘Lord help us!’ Cuz, we know the “normal’ world out there, will eat them up [young adults with disabilities].

Increasingly there is more of a presence of disability-allied non-profit groups and foundations. In Georgia, Parent to Parent of Georgia is a familiar resource for parents of youth with disabilities. In this research, several parents identified Parent to Parent of Georgia as a helpful resource. Moreover, Special Olympics, an international organization, not only offers individuals with disabilities the ability to participate in adapted sports and compete at a high level, but the opportunity for parents, guardians, and families of these individuals to interact, share information, and build social connections are immense. A few participants’ children were also involved with Special Olympics. Another parent/friend that Paula gained through Special Olympics will be collaborating with that dad to trade job coaching services with each other’s sons. Tara currently participates in a disability advocacy organization in her state, which supports parents. Tara’s daughter and son, Anthony, follow her social advocacy involvement example by participating in a different disability advocacy organization.

The advent of social media as a platform unites affinity groups and non-profit groups to promote their mission and services. Two participants in this research, Rosalyn and Cookie, reported groups on social media as valuable resources for parents embarking on the postsecondary planning process through building knowledge about nuances of learning differences/disabilities, collaboration with like-minded advocate parents, and learning from professionals. Cookie cited Instagram as an invaluable resource to locate 501© (3) organizations and a way to get connected with others. Rosalyn named over five

Facebook groups she joined as well as credited specific professionals for building her knowledge of special education processes. Rosalyn started her own Facebook disability justice advocacy group with another like-minded parent. Online communities provide much social support for Black parents of youth and young adults with disabilities.

Reports of social support received from participants' child's educators regarding the postsecondary planning process varied. A few parents documented support by their child's special education teachers and some of the paraprofessionals. Tara acknowledged the major role that the "lead teacher in the occupation certificate program" served with Anthony's career planning. Tara remembered that special education teacher honoring Tara's focus on finding a meaningful job for Anthony: "[teacher] partnered beautifully and just went above and beyond". Cassie noted informational social support in the form of education about nearby postsecondary institutions from Mark's school counselor and referred to the school counselor as "very supportive and being a bridge". Cassie noted that she initiated communication with Mark's high school counselor every few weeks. Parent of Black Panther, Paula, reported that her oldest son's former teacher continues to be a trusted presence in the family's life. The former teacher takes Black Panther into the community [likely builds his socialization skills and other skills] and is sometimes a caregiver for him. Paula explained, "My biggest support, Dr. J., because I told her, if anything happened to me, she would take my child [Black Panther]."

Finally, social support for participants occurred in the realm of faith communities/churches. Participants did not identify the denomination of their congregations [Christian]. Cookie, Louise, Michelle, and Tara espoused support (emotional and informational) from their local churches. Cookie disclosed that her church has been “encouraging us to continue with Sonic’s education [postsecondary] and advocate for him and others and are very pleased with our commitment and service to God by helping people who are less fortunate”. Louise revealed that one couple at church loves her son and tells her John reminds them of their son. Another church member connected John to a summer restaurant job, and one of the pastors and his family are huge fans of John. This visible, ongoing support from the church family encouraged Louise because “family [biological] doesn’t understand him”.

Reports from participants detailed a continuum of beneficial social supports. To the extent that participants identified and utilized the social supports available to them, that social support appeared to make an acute difference in the postsecondary trajectory process and participant perceptions of that experience.

Enacting Ongoing Resistance and Advocacy

All participants depicted varying ways in which they persistently used their agency, knowledge, and voice to engage in acts of resistance and advocacy to traverse the multiple marginalizing oppressive systems and individuals that attempted to curtail the postsecondary journey of their child. Despite deficit mindsets of professionals, racist and ableist educational environments, nonexistent to minimal postsecondary options presented by high schools and community agencies, and inadequate, culturally incompetent, student-uncentered transition plans, the participants in this research resisted status-quo systems and advocated in unique ways on behalf of their child with high incidence disabilities. Each participant’s lived experiences and actions encapsulated a firm resolve and keen vision for an inclusive, independent, and purposeful future for their child with high incidence disabilities despite professionals and systems being unable to see the child's strengths and potential to be a contributing member of society.

While in the high school setting, several of the participants spoke up about what was specifically missing in either their child's educational programming (including the special education transition plan) or postsecondary planning, and the participants assertively communicated their requests to school officials on behalf of their child. Nearly half of the parents in this research disclosed that they obtained a special education advocate (free or fee-based) and/or a special education attorney during their child's high school years to ensure that their child's educational rights under IDEA were upheld.

Tamara and Michelle advocated on several occasions for their sons' teachers to implement the IEP accommodations in their classes. Tamara described that teacher refused to offer Penny his entitled IEP accommodations "until I went up there kicking and screaming". For Tara, advocating for her children and other children with disabilities became a way of life. She reflected: "There were several times when they [school IEP team] did begin, try to reduce some of those services, you just have to constantly be an advocate". Tara talked to teachers at Anthony's school to advocate for the school to host workshops geared toward parents with a child with a disability [and postsecondary planning], but it didn't happen. Stacey concurred with this dynamic role of being a parent-advocate:

> You have to be vigilant, you still have to advocate for the child, even though your child is an adult, you are still their advocate. Because your interpretation of things and their interpretation of things will help him or her become successful in postsecondary education.

Accordingly, Stacey viewed labels as limitations, so while she has educated Kyle on his learning differences and how he can self-advocate. She expounded:

> I've never told my child he was disabled because I feel like society makes that a crutch of acceptance and limits you. When you hear the word disabled, when you hear the word autism, you think of a child that has mediocre brain function, which is definitely not true.

For Tamara, she received no postsecondary planning support or education from her child's IEP team or school counselor, so she initiated her own postsecondary preparation plans for Penny. She had Penny attend "Black college tours", participate in SAT/ACT test preparations, and she even located a small public postsecondary institution to meet his needs and successfully advocated for Penny to attend there. Tamara explained, "I specifically was steering him toward this small campus because they have a very small student to teacher ratio, kind of trying to recreate a special ed for him."

Rosalyn, extremely knowledgeable not only about her child's disabilities (dyslexia and dyscalculia) before the school system assigned David those labels, but she was more informed about the empirical evidence for interventions for those learning differences than her child's special education teachers, IEP team, and school system special education office. The school district's special education director tried to get Rosalyn to accept a remediating reading program for David at school, but Rosalyn countered that the empirical research did not show that the program was for individuals with dyslexia. Even after David had an IEP, the school did not acknowledge that he had dyslexia on his IEP. Consequently, Rosalyn advocated for her son by requesting an independent educational evaluation (IEE). Before the COVID-19 pandemic and many schools transitioning from face-to-face learning to online learning, Rosalyn reflected on resistance she faced for a basic request of David's teachers:

> And I was fighting for them [teachers] to at least use a google calendar to put up work, so I know what type of work he had and when stuff needed to be due, we could set up a calendar system for him so he'll learn the plan, so we can help him with his executive function skills. [According to teachers:] "Oh, well, he needs to be more independent."

Unflinching in her advocacy role for her child, Rosalyn ultimately filed a state complaint with the Georgia Department of Education and a federal complaint with the Office of Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education against her son's school for failing to provide him an appropriate education in violation of the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA). A natural advocate, Rosalyn plans on continuing to advocate for other students with disabilities in her county by creating an online parent library to educate parents on "how to find information and to utilize [it], basically, in the areas of reading." Along with advancing that business plan, Rosalyn has other ideas to inform postsecondary planning for both parents and youth/individuals with disabilities.

Likewise, participant Michelle resisted her son's marginalizing school system's attempts to ignore and disregard her son's educational rights by filing a complaint with the Michigan Department of Education. Michelle also obtained assistance from a regional special education advocate to help her navigate a bureaucratic, complex school system by fighting for her son. While waiting on a decision, Michelle and her family went to a school board meeting to follow up with the school superintendent who received a grievance letter from Michelle. She remembered the demeanor of the school superintendent, “He hung his head because he knew who we were, and we’re not going away!” Michelle attributed divine assistance for their victory, “God was on our side…God’s like, ‘You’re not gonna mistreat my child!” As a result of the state department of education ruling, Michelle recounted:

> We won the case. [It] just came down that everything they [educators] did was wrong, that they should have had him back in, really, the next day. The school—all of the teachers, administrators had to get training on how to treat and teach kids with special disabilities. Unfortunately, but fortunately, all of this had to happen in order for hopefully future kids, to get what they need.

Cassie actively communicated with her son, Mark’s school team, for gaining knowledge, in the effort to support Mark to get what he needs during high school and after. In speaking about both of her sons who have a disability label, Cassie commented: “I want to make sure they have what they need, because I can’t always be next to them, but if I’m connecting them with the right resources, then they’ll have access to what they need.”

Relatedly, participant Barbara described she and her spouse’s proactive mindset toward educators during daughter Briana’s K-12 school years:

> It’s always been, we need you to understand this is who we are, we are a team, we’re here to work with you. And we’re not going to let you leave us out, that’s not even a possibility. We’re here to support you, you need anything if we can, we got you.

Consequently, Barbra and her family created an annual biographical booklet about Briana that they distributed to all school faculty and staff working with Briana to educate them about her. Without this affirming, strengths-based booklet that shows Briana, holistically, as well as within the context of her family and community, beyond her IEP, Barbara feared that educators would view Briana through the negative lens of her discipline history. The booklet was also a way for Barbara to proactively set the positive narrative of Briana's expansive life to run counter to that of her lengthy behavioral/discipline record. Barbara recognized the reality that for most of Briana's educational life, she was the only girl and the only Black student, in her special education self-contained classrooms. Thus, Barbara intentionally disseminated the biographical booklet to all members of the educational team (including ancillary staff such as bus drivers, etc.) to help reduce the staff members' potential implicit biases while working with Briana.

Participants understood that for their child to have somewhat of a linear progression from high school to the postsecondary institution, other organization, or the workforce, those outside institutions required specific, updated special education/disability-related documentation, such as an updated psychological evaluation. Despite initial resistance from the high school IEP team, participants (Barbara, Louise, and Denise) advocated for and eventually obtained a new psychological report after their child underwent testing. On the contrary, Cookie desired a more thorough psychological evaluation for Sonic, so she paid for Sonic to receive psychological and vocational testing with an outside psychologist/psychometrician. She was pleased to get this "custom made" report since Sonic's comprehensive transition and postsecondary program (CTP) required updated documentation. Furthermore, Cookie supported and advocated for Sonic to be admitted to the CTP by helping him apply to the program, as well as securing the required references for him.

At definitive points in their child's education, when circumstances were opposite to what the participants imagined, these parents demonstrated advocacy for their child by changing residences or maneuvering for a school change so their child could attend a different school (Louise, Edith, Kevin, and Denise). Louise recognized the writing on the wall to make a change for John's academic and ultimately, postsecondary life:

> Then ninth-grade year he was just falling behind, making F's, and his teacher told me, 'Get him outta here. He's a smart child. We don't have the teachers to…John needs consistency, someone to learn his style', so there were a lot of subs, teachers quitting. There was no consistency, so we moved him over to high school 'B'.

One participant, Tara, demonstrated an awareness of the strength of joining others to resist inadequate system support for their children with disabilities. In Tara's case, this resistance was toward her state vocational rehabilitation office, and it required additional follow up advocacy actions for Anthony:

> We, being the school and parents because we had some really bad experiences with South Carolina [Voc] Rehab and we have a meeting with them and they didn't really like us after that, and they really hadn't come around as much, which is really sad that it wasn't a matter of, [Voc Rehab]: 'Oh, wow, we need to do better for [clients]', that's it. But his VR counselor now, he's ready to do whatever but a lot of times, it takes me…it's kind of a check-in. I call him saying, 'Hey, we're doing this, what can you provide? Can you do this for us?' They didn't come to any of the IEP meetings, even though, in the past, they were invited to that, but they barely came to the school.

Additionally, some participants chose to extend their advocacy from the personal/school level to that of a state level. Johnetta and Tara hold positions on state committees that advance the cause of disability justice. Cookie, with her new job at a postsecondary institution's CTP, eagerly awaits going to the state capital of Georgia to advocate for postsecondary education and resources for individuals with disabilities, as part of her job role. Barbara continues her advocacy path through state-wide professional learning workshops to K-12 professional school counselors concerning individuals with autism to build their awareness and knowledge on how to support students similar to Briana. Barbara's social justice advocacy for individuals with disabilities extends to raising educator awareness about the postsecondary planning knowledge gaps for the parents and guardians of these students.

> If parents are not aware of postsecondary options for students with disabilities, they view graduation as the end of success for their children. Many students with disabilities leave school to sit at home all day with a parent, guardian, or caregiver. Many students with disabilities can contribute to society if given options. Right now, parents of children with disabilities see aging out of public school as the end of success in life. When it's done, it's done.

In summary, every instance of Black parent advocacy across settings and type of advocacy enacted, led to somewhat of an improved outcome for their young adult child with high incidence disabilities. Accounts of Black parent advocacy for their child with high incidence disabilities helped minimize the large divide between high school graduation/departure and post-high school life. Other participants may relate to Louise's experience of the difference that her advocacy made in her son's life:

> If he [John] had not had a support team or me with an inside knowledge outside of being his mom, he would probably be a dishwasher or server because they [IEP team/educators] wouldn't have allowed him to go to school, there were many times they [IEP team/educators] were like, 'Well, maybe we should just put him in a special program….'

Black parents are a vital resource to equip their young adult child with high incidence disabilities to travail the "unchartered waters" [participant Stacey] of post-high school life because "there is no bridge" [participant Louise] to arrive there. While each participant experienced unique challenges in preparing their young adult child with high incidence disabilities for life after high school, each participant surmounted systemic barriers and feelings of being othered through non-inclusive postsecondary planning processes. Participants utilized social supports, community supports, and personal and collective acts of resistance and advocacy to overcome a myriad of barriers for preparing their child for post-high school life. Research literature exhorts school counselors to collaborate with parents of students of underserved social identities, particularly students with disabilities, regarding academics, social-emotional learning, and college/career readiness (ASCA, 2016b). In the accounts of the essence of the lived experiences of these Black parent participants, school counselor involvement was indicated in just one of the participants' experiences (Cassie) concerning their young adult child with high incidence disabilities' postsecondary planning process.

Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined detailed descriptions of the lived experiences of fourteen Black parents of a young adult child with high incidence disabilities had concerning their child’s postsecondary planning process. The guiding research question was: What are Black parents’ lived experiences regarding the postsecondary planning process for their young adult child with high incidence disabilities? The data collected from demographic questionnaires, semi-structured interview transcripts, supplemental item, and researcher memos coalesced to provide a comprehensive picture of the target phenomenon studied. Meaningful statements and quotes were collected across individual semi-structured interviews. Five recurring themes emerged from the data. The first theme, experiencing invisibility by lack of inclusive postsecondary planning, reflected collective accounts of the Black parents in this research understanding that they and their child with high incidence disabilities were excluded from what they perceive dominant social groups (White, able-bodied) to have access to. The second theme, feeling marginalized due to collusive forces of ableism and racism, explicated the impact of the overt and covert ways that ableism and racism are enmeshed in individuals and systems related to postsecondary planning that ultimately negatively impact Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities. The third theme, the persevering role of Black parents through postsecondary planning and beyond, depicted the significant role that these parents demonstrate to support their young adult child in his or her postsecondary goals. The fourth theme, navigating inequities through social supports and other supports, detailed the essential social relationships and social networks the participants accessed to demonstrate agency and co-construct solutions to assist their young adult child with high incidence disabilities to maneuver through vast inequities related to their child’s postsecondary plans. The final theme, enacting ongoing resistance and advocacy, highlights the individual and collective ways that Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities resist educational and postsecondary planning inequities. The following chapter includes a discussion of research results, a section on implications for counselor education programs, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study sought to understand the phenomenon of postsecondary planning processes as experienced by Black parents of a young adult child with high incidence disabilities. The outcome of this study provides an enhanced understanding of the perspectives of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities about the postsecondary planning process. The anchoring research question for this phenomenological study was: "What are Black parents' lived experiences regarding the postsecondary planning process for their young adult child with high incidence disabilities?" Fourteen participants across three states participated in semi-structured interviews on the Zoom conferencing platform. Phenomenological data analysis and participant quotes from interviews revealed five themes. The five themes consisted of: (a) experiencing invisibility by lack of inclusive postsecondary planning and options, (b) feeling marginalized due to the collusive forces of racism and ableism, (c) persevering role of Black parents through postsecondary planning processes and beyond, (d) navigating inequities through social supports and other supports, and (e) enacting ongoing resistance and advocacy. This chapter entwines the related research literature with conclusions from the findings, implications for various stakeholders, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to discover the perspectives of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities on the postsecondary planning process. This study investigated how Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities experienced their child's postsecondary planning process. The study attained its aims through synthesis of within-participant and across-participant experiences of this phenomenon and subsequent meanings (Moustakas, 1994). This study meets a need in the research literature concerning perspectives of Black parents of youth with high incidence disabilities as related to postsecondary planning processes for the young adult child. The accounts of such participants are missing in the school counseling literature.

Discussion of Research Findings

Employing phenomenological data analysis processes provided me the opportunity and means to explore the individual participants' meanings from their lived experiences as Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities on the postsecondary planning process. From the participants' answers to the literature-informed interview questions and outside interview-communication with participants, the researcher discovered that the participants found the experience reflecting on their experiences with postsecondary planning processes to be beneficial. The researcher and participants created and maintained a respectful and honest rapport. This was evident in feedback from participants. For example, between interviews, after the researcher thanked a participant for her participant, the participant replied via text, "Thanks for the opportunity, Erin! I found it cathartic. I'm looking forward the next interview". Another participant, during a combined interview, implied how the interview process felt validating to her:

> This is fun, I love this. To be able to talk and laugh and you understand where I’m coming from, that’s what I love. It’s not like talking to some people, that you know, they don’t have a clue. But this helps me, this is like therapy, can I meet with you once a month [laughing]?

This research utilized Disability Critical Race Theory (Annamma et al., 2018) as the theoretical lens by which to analyze the data and provide a vehicle for Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities to assert their personal experiences about their child’s postsecondary planning processes. Disability Critical Race Theory or DisCrit framework offers a lens of empowerment through counternarratives of parents not typically queried in school counselor literature: Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities. Additionally, an epistemological commitment of DisCrit is production of “new knowledge rooted in intersectional commitments, seeks to understand how interlocking oppressions of racism and ableism work in tandem…in the search for equity” (Annamma et al., 2018, p. 63). For too long, students with disabilities, especially Black students with disabilities and their families, have been denied equity and equal opportunities in K-12 settings (Blanchett, 2009; Harry & Ocasio-Stoutenburg, 2020; Gillborn, 2015). The DisCrit framework provided an unfiltered vantage point by which to underscore the multiple marginalizations that this population encounters, as well as depict the ways in which “they resist entrenched inequities” (Annamma & Morrison, 2018, p. 3). Employing DisCrit framework with this population of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities provides the intersectional space for the participants’ unique experiences with the phenomenon of postsecondary planning to be evident. The use of DisCrit framework with this population occurred in extant literature of Black parents of youth with a disability (Ocasio-Stoutenburg, 2021).

Incorporating DisCrit permits me, as the researcher, the means to carve out the space to centralize the experiences of the fourteen participants. As a result, the participants are the experts of the phenomenon being studied, and their meaning-making of their experiences with their young adult child's postsecondary planning is the primary concern (Annamma & Morrison, 2018). While several tenets of DisCrit framework mirrored the participant accounts, the fundamental tenet serving as the fulcrum for this study was tenet four, "privileging voices of marginalized populations, traditionally not acknowledged within research (Annamma et al., 2018, p. 58). Historical literature on the perspectives of parents of children and young adults with disabilities concerning various topics is saturated with White parent participants (Harry & Ocasio-Stoutenburg, 2020; Kozleski et al., 2008). This study examined the experiences of fourteen Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities on the postsecondary planning process. Through shared experiences regarding the phenomenon of the postsecondary planning process among the participants, five themes emerged through the lens of DisCrit.

The words that the participants reported to describe their experience with their child's postsecondary planning process was largely challenging, stressful, frustrating, difficult, fear-producing, tricky, mentally and physically exhausting. Metaphors utilized to describe the postsecondary planning process included "roller coaster", "unchartered waters", "rocky", "drinking through a water hose", and "custom-made".

An interesting point to note is that four of the participants had an older child without a disability, so they were able to note a very different experience in the postsecondary planning process between their children with and without a disability. Another parent with a middle child close in age to her oldest child/young adult son with high incidence disabilities noted that her middle son is an athlete, and their experience has been totally different as compared to no support from her oldest son's school, neither from the child's IEP case manager nor high school counselor.

The study adds to the literature in several ways. First, a salient takeaway of this research was the plethora of invisible labor (cognitive, emotional, and physical) that participants undertook during their child's postsecondary planning process during high school and even after high school. By and large, the common experience across the participants was that their child's high school, IEP team, and school counselor provided nonexistent or minimal postsecondary planning for their child in preparation for life after high school. The divergent examples were Cassie and Edith. Cassie noted her appreciation for her child's high school counselor for providing resources about college to her and her son. She did note that she made the effort to initiate monthly with her child's high school counselor to check in and maintain lines of communication. Edith recalled that her child received early information about postsecondary planning, though it was not specific to his needs, secondary to his emotional/behavioral disorder eligibility. Therefore, the onus was upon the parent to embark upon the roles that various individuals at the school play since postsecondary planning was lacking from the school. Second, the study adds to the literature by providing a sample of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities about their perspectives on the postsecondary planning process. The inclusion of a school counselor researcher, the DisCrit framework, and the phenomenon of postsecondary planning contributed to the literature.

Next, the shared mindset across the participants was to ensure that their child had access to resources to help he or she be successful for life after high school. The new insight gleaned from the parent interviews was that these parents had a collectivist-orientation toward caring for the benefit and success of other young people with high incidence disabilities and their families (Cucchiara & Horvat, 2009). Researchers (Cooper 2009; Stanley, 2015) call this communal care or othermothering. This describes the unique ways that Black women are concerned about the collective well-being of others (Cooper, 2009; Stanley, 2015). Participant Michelle reflects this sentiment as she recalled the takeaway from the state ruling on her child's school ordering unfair, punitive discipline for a minor discipline infraction. The result was her child's school administrators and staff were ordered to professional learning on how to support students with IEPs. "Unfortunately, but fortunately, all of this had to happen in order for hopefully future kids [with disabilities], to get what they need." Participant Barbara expressed disbelief with not only the high financial cost of pursuing legal guardianship of her daughter, but communicated perplexment on how such costs would impact other families: "We talked about costs and I'm curious as to how families [without financial means] handle the cost, because it was $600…what about people who aren't able to pay the cost?" Three other mothers conveyed empathy for Black young adults as well as older adults with high incidence disabilities whose parent(s) did not pursue special education services for their child by having their child evaluated and diagnosed during the K-12 years. The following section is a review of the emergent themes from the data analysis, within the context of extant literature.

Experiencing Invisibility by Lack of Inclusive Postsecondary Planning and Options

Participants in this study were asked to reflect and discuss their experiences with and thoughts about postsecondary planning processes in relation to their young adult child with high incidence disabilities. By and large, participants expressed that the high school(s) their young adult child with high incidence disabilities attended, along with special educators, were most concerned about academics to the negation of postsecondary planning. This finding is consistent with the literature on how postsecondary planning for students with disabilities needs to focus not just on academic achievement but to build the other skills for such students, such as self-advocacy and self-determination, among other recommendations (AIR, 2013). The goal of the prioritization of academics was the student earning a high school diploma or certificate of attendance. The participants perceived that their child was just being moved along so that he or she could exit high school. When asked about any memories of postsecondary planning support, education, or opportunities for their child, the general consensus from the participants was that they were not asked what they or their child's plans were for post-high school, and that the IEP team dictated and led the charge for what options the child would have after high school. Transition plans, as required under IDEA, were said to be minimal, basic, such as checking off boxes for compliance, and were not child specific. This sentiment is congruent with other findings in the special education field about transition planning being more cursory than helpful to the child and family (Hetherington et al., 2010; Prince et al., 2014). Participants whose child had a documented mental health disorder or ongoing behavioral challenges reported that there was no provision in the child's transition plan addressing mental health services and support, which differs from recommendations in the literature (Poppen et al., 2016).

Several of the participants compared and contrasted the postsecondary planning experiences between their child with high incidence disabilities and their child who was considered neurotypical or did not have a disability. Because of this and the participants' own familiarity with the college application process, the participants had a cognitive frame of reference for what postsecondary planning processes were in place for the students without a disability: college and career fairs, workshops, college tours, signing up for the ACT/SAT, taking career assessments, working on a resume and job interviewing skills, and extracurricular activities. However, when it came to appropriate postsecondary planning activities for their child with a disability, the participants revealed that they experienced a lack of inclusive postsecondary planning by the high school and felt that their child with high incidence disabilities was invisible to the school counselor. As a result, the participants sensed that their child with high incidence disabilities was getting left behind, since they believed that their child is ranked low in the hierarchy of thousands of students in a public high school. Parents surmised that the highest achieving, top 10% of the student body receives the most in-depth postsecondary planning services from the high school counselor. Cumulatively, these participant findings both confirm and extend literature by Zion & Blanchett (2011). Essentially, if we observe "African American students are often educated in segregated special education settings vs. inclusive general education settings, these marginalized students are being denied an opportunity to receive an equitable education [and postsecondary planning experiences]" (Zion & Blanchett, 2011, p. 2191).

Participant Stacey, employed in a public school, commented that students with disabilities get left behind, since there are not focused efforts on preparing them for the workforce or education after high school. She believes that the students most negatively impacted by this are Black males with disabilities. Participants attributed this "ignoring" of the students with high incidence disabilities and their families by school counselors due to extremely high student case load numbers. This supports research that shows benefits for students during high school and post-school outcomes when high school counselors have caseload numbers more in line with ASCA recommendations of 250:1, students to school counselor (ASCA, n.d., Cholewa et al., 2015; Hurwitz & Howell, 2014; Lapan et al., 2012).

Parents reimagined what inclusive postsecondary planning looks like for their child or other children with high incidence disabilities if inclusive postsecondary planning actually occurred. A few participants envisioned that high school-sponsored college and career fairs invite disability professionals from colleges to be available to answer questions from parents and students. In other words, representatives from university disability support service offices and university comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs are invited by high school educators to those workshops and attend. This finding correlates with best practices in the special education literature (Garrison-Wade, 2012). Other parents indicated the utility of school counselors providing a list of community resources related to postsecondary planning for their child, as well as including list of inclusive employers and local sites that accept students with disability volunteers during high school. This suggestion is reminiscent of asset mapping for transition planning in special education literature (Achola, 2019), or known as community resource mapping (Griffin & Farris, 2010) or resource mapping (Mason et al., 2021) in the school counseling literature.

The takeaway from communicating with participants was that because they do not receive adequate, timely resources about postsecondary options from either the IEP team or the high school counselor, the weight of time, energy, labor, and cost surrounding postsecondary planning is placed entirely within the responsibility of the Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities. This finding shows the impact of inequitable educational structures concerning not only on Black youth with high incidence disabilities, but it also demonstrates a negative impact on their parents and family members. This finding conflicts with ASCA code of ethics and professional standards on several fronts for school counselors to provide a comprehensive school counseling program, including postsecondary planning, to all students, including underserved students (2016a, ASCA 2016b, ASCA, 2019).

Since the participants noted the feeling of invisibility regarding lack of inclusive postsecondary planning for their child with high incidence disabilities, it is important to call attention to the fact that this group of young adult children was heterogeneous, as described by their parent. That is to say that each student high incidence disabilities had different ways that symptoms of their disability manifested, as well as his or her unique strengths and gifts. For many of the children, their high incidence disabilities were not visible, such as if they had an orthopedic, hearing, or visual impairment. It is salient to mention this because inclusive postsecondary planning looks different for different students. For those participants whose child was served in primarily self-contained settings during high school, they reported there being a voluminous amount of information online concerning postsecondary options, government supports, etc., but that the information was in various places and not centrally located. Participants agreed on how the time involved with exploration for postsecondary resources for their child could easily become a full-time job. If the participants dug a bit deeper and contacted sheltered employment programs (supported work for adults with disabilities), they learned that these programs had waiting lists, which were further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, these parents pursued other options for their child, such as comprehensive transition postsecondary programs at select postsecondary institutions.

Conversely, parents of youth receiving special education services in resource settings noted conspicuous gaps in what postsecondary options were available for their child. Because participants were not provided a wide array of postsecondary options specific to the needs and strengths of their child, the parents embarked on their own determined journey of postsecondary planning for their child. For example, parents Tamara and Michelle knew that their sons needed a postsecondary educational environment that was smaller in scope and had smaller class sizes. Tamara adroitly set out looking for and located a public postsecondary institution with those qualities as well as one that accepted students with lower grade point averages.

Paula had a unique vantage point because her older son, Darth Vader, was served in primarily self-contained settings in high school, while younger son, Black Panther, was served in resource settings. Although Paula works for a large public school system and has more social capital and knowledge of resources for individuals of varying disabilities post-high school, she greatly lamented the fact that her higher functioning son (Black Panther) is more independent and has the capacity to work, but she has to find appropriate, inclusive work for her son, and these work opportunities are difficult to find. Paula remarked that Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) provides services to individuals with disabilities based on a levels system. GVRA used to prioritize services to young adults like Black Panther, who are more independent, but she recently found out that GVRA reversed their policy and now prioritizes services to young adults like Darth Vader, who require more support. She noted that the quality of GVRA services received are based on the rehabilitation counselor assigned to the young adult, and services are not uniform. This affirms the work of Bianco and colleagues (2009), which reported factors such as inconsistency, constant change, and high staff turnover among service providers. Not only did Paula feel like the postsecondary needs of Black Panther were not met by the high school educators and the high school counselor, but she now feels as if GVRA disregards Black Panther's potential and denies work support services to him. As a result, Paula industriously goes about building social networking connections with other parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities inside and outside her county, in order to trade job coaching duties with other parents and their children with high incidence disabilities.

Other aspects surrounding the theme of invisibility with lack of inclusive postsecondary planning for these participants involve the knowledge gaps that parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities experience, as well as their child, once the child exits or graduates from high school. These findings confirm those espoused by Gregg (2007). For example, parents who do not have the information relevant to postsecondary planning processes experience a sense of lostness and contact the child's former high school for assistance after the child matriculates from high school. Parents may request information related to completing forms such as selective service, guardianship, social security disability income, and state Medicaid waivers. Parents may also have questions about state vocational rehabilitation services. Therefore, such actions by parents of matriculated students with high incidence disabilities turning to the graduating high school or school system for additional support or resources is an addition to the educational literature.

Feeling Marginalized due to Collusive Forces of Ableism and Racism

Participants in this study identified visible ways in which oppressive forces of ableism and/or racism manifested to deny equitable educational opportunities and postsecondary planning opportunities to they and their young adult child with high incidence disabilities. Utilizing the theoretical framework of DisCrit (Annamma et al., 2018) for this study, the lived experiences of the participants lend support to how "macrolevel issues of racism and ableism, among other structural discriminatory processes, are enacted in the day-to-day lives of students of color with dis/abilities" (p. 8). Ableism and racism were noted to manifest outside K-12 school walls, as some participants revealed in their observations of interactions with state vocational rehabilitation agencies.

Ableism

As shown in research by AIR (2013), it is essential that all personnel in a high school (teachers, school counselors, school administration, etc.) have high expectations for academic achievement and for post-school plans for students with disabilities.

Discrimination in the lives of the children with high incidence disabilities of the participants in this study took place on a regular basis. Because these children had persistent advocacy on their behalf through their parents/the participants, these participants freely shared their experiences of the specific reasons why they advocated for their child with high incidence disabilities. Participants dealt with hearing microinsults/pejorative statements about their child from special education teachers. Participants encountered low expectations and related occurrences of implicit bias from their child's special education teachers regarding academics and postsecondary planning. These findings diverge from work by AIR (2013).

One participant recalls that her child's special education case manager had to rely on school administration to convince teachers to provide her child with his IEP accommodations. Once school administration changed, the same participant heard a comment from new administration deriding students with disabilities, saying that the school was not intended to have a special education department. Another participant disclosed that her child was made to feel ashamed about his learning differences amongst his peers with disabilities because the teacher did not affirm the positive ways in which he used technology to compensate for his disability. These examples validate the notion of schools valuing singular notions of ability and even within the field of special education (Annamma et al., 2018). Special education teachers viewed learning differences as problematic rather than embracing learning diversity and supporting students in obtaining knowledge and skills related to executive function, assistive technology, and other compensatory strategies (Annamma et al., 2018; Ray, 2018).

According to multiple scholars in the special education field (Dougherty et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2016; Mazzotti et al., 2016), students with disabilities, including students with high incidence disabilities, have better high school graduation rates and post-school outcomes, such obtaining a full-time work, when the students take a multiple of career technical education (CTE) courses or a CTE pathway during high school as compared to their peers with disabilities who do not take CTE courses. If students with high incidence disabilities and their parents receive encouragement in middle school and in ninth grade years to pursue a CTE pathway by their school counselors and IEP team, the students are more likely to graduate high school with a high school diploma, graduate with their peer cohort in four years, and be involved in relevant work experiences post-high school (Dougherty et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2016; Mazzotti et al., 2016). While some of the participants endorsed that their child took multiple CTE courses during high school, other participants reported that the high school personnel discouraged the children with high incidence disabilities from enrolling in CTE pathway programming at the local high school or at a nearby specialty technical high school.

Paula recalled that her children’s school system had a technical high school/career academy with multiple career pathways. The local school counselor acted as a gatekeeper for student admittance to these programs and attempted to dissuade Paula and her youngest son with high incidence disabilities from applying to be in the program because of the difficulty level of the curriculum. Even with Paula resisting this ableist advice, through her child’s IEP team, it was arranged for her son to have a co-teacher in the career academy’s program and attend the program. Unfortunately, the co-teacher did not have the curricular knowledge needed to make the CTE curriculum accessible to help

Paula's son be successful, and he withdrew from the program. Likewise, the high school counselor of Tara's son, Anthony, erected barriers for Anthony's entrance to a culinary arts CTE program in their county. However, Tara persistently advocated for Anthony to be accepted to the program. Anthony successful completed the culinary arts program. These findings illustrate how ableism and singular notions of learning/ability operate and inhibit students from receiving a free and appropriate education during high school (Annamma et al., 2018).

Singular notions of ability also manifested via some of the participant accounts of their child's school mandating high school exit exams or high stakes testing. This confirms work by multiple authors (Motley-King, 2008; Pazey et al., 2015; Tefera, 2019). Watching their child with high incidence disabilities struggle with such exams after multiple attempts was painful for these participants. Time spent preparing for and taking these exams multiple times was valuable time away from the general education curriculum and time that could have been spent preparing for postsecondary goals.

Racism

While participants in this study engaged in supporting their child while surmounting micro-level occurrences of racism and ableism, the participants all commented on how fear-inducing realities for their Black young adult child were ever present. This was due to traumatic news coverage (state and national) about racial injustices and killing of Black men (including those with a disability, such as Elijah McClain). This fear that participants experienced was constantly in the background of the participants' lives and also influenced their experience of their child's postsecondary planning process.

Several of the participants commented on the fact that their child received racial slurs from both Black and White peers in high school. Participants reported inadequate follow up by school administration and high school counselors about the racial harassment their child received. Racial slurs are considered racial microassaults (Sue, 2010). For these children, participants remarked how their child was unique and did not identify strictly with their Black peer counterparts due to personal hobbies, speech patterns, and other variables. As a result, the child had difficulty finding their place in the adolescent/young adult social order, perhaps in part to different experiences with peer socialization depending on school demographics and that some of the participants admitted to limiting outside family influences on the child for the child's own protection. The fact that the majority of the participants' children graduated high school during the COVID-19 pandemic is also worth mentioning as a variable that influenced social interactions.

It is noteworthy to include that because of the toxic climate in the U.S. toward individuals of Color, such as Black children and young adults with disabilities, the participants engaged in invisible labor related to their children's safety during and after the child's high school years. To maintain parent privacy, specific ways in which they protect their Black son or daughter with high incidence disabilities will not be discussed in detail. Occurring regularly, however, are the participants having conversations with their Black young adult child with high incidence disabilities on how to be safe in the community due to violence against Black men and women. Participants including Johnetta and Stacey elaborated on the fact that they would role play and provide reminders to their sons on how to interact with a police officer in the event the child is stopped in the community by law enforcement. Such occurrences confirm literature that describes the racial socialization that Black parents enact with their sons (DiAQUOI, 2017).

Ableism and Racism

Black students with disabilities, including high incidence disabilities, are disproportionately represented as receiving punitive discipline consequences in U.S. public schools (Losen, 2018; Mallett, 2017; U.S. DOE, n.d.). These students receive higher rates of severe consequences such as out of school suspensions and expulsion (Fisher et al., 2021). These statistics reveal the insidious nature and impacts of both racism and ableism on students of Color with disabilities. Because school systems are entrenched in centering White supremacy and ableism, the natural outcome of such bias and discrimination against Black students with disabilities is to push such students out of the school system rather than to provide resources and support to bolster students' brilliance and potential (Annamma & Morrison, 2018). Some of the participants noted that the IEP team presented the "opportunity" for their child to change schools. Participants attributed the reason for this to be that their child's special education teacher was burned out from working with the child and family. Another participant reported that the IEP team subtly withdrew behavioral interventions meant to reduce her child's maladaptive behaviors. This was done in order to manipulate the child's data reports to make it look as if the occurrences of maladaptive behaviors increased despite educator interventions (non-existent). This increase in student behavioral data was presented as a rationale for the IEP team to recommend a change for the student to move to the most restrictive educational environment.

Unfortunately, several of the participants reported that their child's educational rights were violated in regard in discipline matters and parents obtained parent advocates and legal counsel to fight for their child. Under IDEA, students with disabilities are not permitted to miss more than ten cumulative days of instruction in a school year, even if the student is suspended for violating a school rule. If under a manifestation determination review hearing it is found that the exhibited student behavior was related to their disability, the school is prohibited from administering "exclusionary discipline for that behavior" (Fisher et al., 2021, p. 756). However, in the case of some of the participants in this study, their experiences differed from this legal rule (Fisher et al, 2021). One parent noted that the school administration did not provide her child special education home based services while he was suspended. Another parent revealed that the school administration restarted the "suspension time clock" several times for his child's discipline so it would not look as if the child missed ten consecutive days of instruction. In summary, these parents' experiences of interdependent oppressions of racism and ableism (Annamma et al., 2018) in regard to school discipline affirm the work of Losen (2018).

Persevering Role of Black Parents Through Postsecondary Planning Processes and Beyond

Being a parent to a young adult child with high incidence disabilities is a role that these participants cherish, yet it is role that continues past high school graduation for the child. This finding corresponds with research that states that the parent roles of youth with disabilities are "multidimensional and often focused on both in-school and post-school success" (Hirano & Rowe, 2016, p. 45). The authors further elaborate those parents of youth with disabilities are vital to the success of these young adults since they continue to help the child attain the “skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to achieve their goals”. (Hirano & Rowe, 2016, p. 45). The participants discussed how they and their child with high incidence disabilities were in a different season of life now that the child is considered “an adult” since the child is 18 years of age or older. The participants have a dual lens by which they view their young adult child. On one hand, the participants see this young person as their child, and on the other hand, they view their child has a young adult who needs practice, experience, and opportunities to gain their independence and find their unique place in the world. In the meantime, several participants remarked that their current experience with the postsecondary planning/transition process is unending and occurring in real time.

Educators such as special education teachers and high school counselors may not have this background knowledge while they are supporting the child with high incidence disabilities during the high school years. It is critical that special education teachers and school counselors are aware of the vital supportive role that Black parents play in the academic and career success for their child with a disability (Harris et al., 2016). Therefore, by the participants sharing their accounts and experiences with their young adult child’s postsecondary planning processes, this study is centering the Black parent participant voices, as they are not perspectives typically encountered or even acknowledged in school counseling research (Annamma et al., 2018).

Participants in this study served multiple, enduring roles during and beyond their young adult child with high incidence disabilities’ postsecondary planning process. The participants functioned as guides, teachers, facilitators, and collaborators with their young adult child with high incidence disabilities during and beyond their child's postsecondary planning process. Michelle's mindset was one of surrendering to the fact that she might need to be a support to her son longer than she expects. Several of the participants surmised that it was important to stay involved and engaged with their child in their transition to adulthood since it is an ongoing process. These findings corroborate research on how post-school supports by parents of young adults with disabilities is a continual process (Bianco et al., 2009; Hirano & Rowe, 2016).

Guiding the young adult child through problem solving, self-advocacy, follow-up tasks, and maintaining a positive self-concept were just a few of the shared roles across participants. Louise commented on several occasions about the manner in which she helped her son, John, problem solve. Louise used a combination of open-ended questions, straight-talk, and modeled possible ways to have a conversation with someone in order to solve a problem with her son John. Cassie believes that her son learned how to advocate for himself during college due to the example she set by advocating for him during his K-12 years. Stacey and Rosalyn gave their sons verbal reminders and strategies about how to best build their time-management and study skills during high school for their classes. Stacey had ongoing conversations with John prior to him enrolling in college about how to organize his study time based on assignments on a college syllabus. Likewise, the work of Gatlin and colleagues (2016) affirms this important role of a teacher or trainer that Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities play. Rosalyn, a librarian, taught her son, David, how to use technology as a compensatory strategy with his classes. David is pursuing training to be a certified insurance adjuster, so it is likely those same technology skills that Rosalyn taught him during high school will serve him well in his future work. For the young adult children who are pursuing a training program through state vocational rehabilitation, their parents/participants are still involved, providing their sons reminders to follow up on tasks such as turning in paperwork or responding to communication from their vocational counselor.

Maintaining a positive future vision for the young adult child with high incidence disabilities as well as helping the child build self-confidence was something all of the participants engaged in. Garrison-Wade (2012) called attention to this strength of parents in her research. Positive parent expectations are also correlated with positive post-school outcomes for individuals with disabilities (Mazzotti et al., 2016).

Participants also assisted their young adult children with their self-concept by instilling Black pride and promoting their child being comfortable in both their racial identity and in the fact that they learn differently. Louise attempted to draw her introverted son, John out, socially, and surround him with a strong, affirming African American support system for him, consisting of a Black male mentor with a disability, supportive peers on his chess and engineering teams, and a Black male employer at a temporary summer job who is a family friend/fellow church member of the family. Johnetta and Rosalyn reported that they always taught their child their own [racial] history. Rosalyn specifically mentioned her family's roots in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and her college minors in African American studies and Latin American studies as the backdrop by which she affirmed Kyle's racial identity throughout the years. A librarian by trade, Rosalyn recounted several examples of using critical literacy to affirm Kyle's racial identity, such as taking Kyle to a poetry slam on Auburn Avenue during high school. These findings may be new to school counseling literature and special education literature and add an additional dimension to the multifold roles that Black parents serve when supporting their young adult child with high incidence disabilities. Qualitative research from a DisCrit lens “privileges voices of marginalized populations traditionally not acknowledged within research (Annamma et al., 2018, p. 58).

While participants were used to taking the helm of various aspects of their child’s postsecondary planning processes and life, in their own way, they learned how to share that power or gradually reduce it with their young adult child with high incidence disabilities. Paula shared how although she obtained power of attorney over affairs for her oldest son, she permitted Darth Vader to make his own choice about getting the COVID-19 vaccinations. In this way, Paula provided Darth Vader the space to exercise his own agency to make a major decision without interference from other sources. Paula gave Darth Vader an opportunity to exercise self-determination, a vital postsecondary skill. According to the literature (AIR, 2013; Garrison-Wade, 2012), educators and parents assisting individuals with disabilities with the skills of self-determination and self-advocacy contribute to greater likelihood of success in life. Paula expressed gratitude about Darth Vader overcoming his anxiety and proceeding with obtaining his COVID-19 vaccinations by his own volition.

Glynn and Schaller (2017) identified in their research that African American young adults in the age 20-24 range who have ADHD (high incidence disability) have higher employment rates after working with state vocational rehabilitation if parent/family support is present at the time that the young adults enroll with state vocational rehabilitation services. Glynn and Schaller posited that African American parents/family members may have financially supported the young adult with ADHD prior to age 20, so this reality may have led the young adult with ADHD to wait a few years after high school before enrolling with vocational rehabilitation services (2017). This research reflects the current study's findings that Black parents and family members still play an integral role providing social/emotional and financial support in that young adult's postsecondary life.

Navigating Inequities through Social Supports and Other Supports

Participants credited their social support networks and other community and online supports as being pivotal resources to surmounting the broad and complex inequities regarding the postsecondary planning process for their young adult child with high incidence disabilities. Such inequities occurred in the form of educator implicit bias, educator racial and ableist microaggressions (Sue, 2010), and institutional and structural oppressions. In order to bolster the likelihood of success of their child's postsecondary planning and post-high school journeys in the face of external limitations that were due to "legal and historical aspects of dis/ability and race and how both have been used separately and together to deny the rights of some citizens (Annamma et al., 2018, p. 59), participants leaned on the encouragement, support, and knowledge derived from their various array of social supports (Banks & Hughes, 2013).

A central finding across participants was the theme of family support, either past and/or present. Multiple participants underscored support by extended family members and even their older and younger children. Stacey's oldest child acted as a second mother to her brother, Kyle, and as a result, reinforced time management reminders from their mother, which spared Stacey the emotional labor related to this topic. Gatlin and colleagues also found that by older siblings served a unique supportive role in the family (2016). Also, Stacey called to mind the memory of her aunt with six children who all attended college with minimal or no college debt. Stacey learned from her aunt's example when it came to Stacey's own postsecondary preparation work with her oldest daughter and son, Kyle, with high incidence disabilities. Single parent Tara attributed her ability to prepare son Anthony for his postsecondary plans on the salient support of her parents, sister, and best friend. For about half of the married participants, they cited spousal support in supporting their child's postsecondary planning process and surmounting barriers. A stepparent of participant Kevin introduced him to the idea of his son, Mike, possibly attending a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program (CTP). The one exception to the previous examples of social support occurred with participant Tamara. While Tamara had hoped for finding other parents of teens with high incidence disabilities to build knowledge and compare notes on how to support their child with the postsecondary planning process, unfortunately she did not find such a social community. Therefore, Tamara discounted accessing any social support in the way she readied and curated the postsecondary path at a four-year college for son, Penny.

A few participants expressed unique support from family members who were currently or formerly employed in the field of education. Cookie noted that her sister, a special education teacher in a different state, would take her nephew, Sonic, each summer, and work on his IEP goals with him. Cookie appreciated the fact that her sister was a reliable, knowledgeable source of information about IEPs. Cookie's sister regularly reviewed Sonic's IEPs for appropriateness, accuracy, and relevance to his life. Tara's mother was a former school administrator, so this fact likely prepared the path for Tara to be a strong advocate for her son Anthony as well as for other individuals with disabilities. Harry and Ocasio-Stoutenburg (2020) presented evidence that parents of youth with disabilities who had a family member in education or field of special education held an advantage when it came to advocacy for their child.

Similar to findings by Harry and Ocasio-Stoutenburg (2020), participants' social networks provided a rich source of multiple layers of support. Louise and Paula reported that they stayed connected with their children's former special education teachers as a form of support. Co-workers provided informational and emotional support to participants such as Johnetta and Barbara. Johnetta's interactions with a former co-worker at a technical college helped her learn about post-high school state vocational rehabilitation opportunities. Another by-product of her co-worker's knowledge was that Johnetta made the intentional choice for son Ricky to obtain a general education high school diploma and not an IEP diploma, as the latter would exclude him from entrance to a technical college.

Other sources of social support and community supports for the participants included parent advocacy groups, Special Olympics, mentors, and faith communities (church). Several parents specifically mentioned how beneficial the experience of communicating with other parents who have a child with a disability is: Johnetta, Barbara, Rosalyn, Tara, Cookie, and Paula. Information shared across parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities, especially about postsecondary planning resources and processes is invaluable. Barbara and Paula viewed their child's involvement in Special Olympics as not only being valuable for the child, but also for being valuable for the parents. Special Olympics provided these mothers a broad social web of new parent networking opportunities which resulted in furthering their knowledge of postsecondary options. Hirano and Rowe (2016) commented on this similar finding in their research with parents of secondary school parents with children with disabilities: “the informal networks of support were noted as relieving some pressures associated with ongoing self-advocacy” (p. 50). The fact that some of the participants in this research found and benefitted from social supports of other parents of youth/young adults with disabilities differs from previous research that presented findings of African American mothers being unable to locate and connect with other mothers who had a child with a similar disability as their child (Stanley, 2015).

A few of the participants received emotional and informational support during the postsecondary planning process from other members of their local church. Examples of this finding included participants Louise, Tara, Michelle, and Cookie. Tara reported the fact that she needed to leave her former Black church because the church was slow to establish inclusive programming for her two children with disabilities. Tara found more support and validation in raising two young adult children with disabilities in a predominantly White church, who had more inclusive small-groups and opportunities for individuals with disabilities. This appeared to be an addition to the literature, as this was a new finding.

A form of support for some of the participants as social media groups specific to supporting youth and young adults with disabilities. Participant Rosalyn accessed social media affinity groups for parents of children and young adults with disabilities. She engaged for years with multiple Facebook groups which helped her build her knowledge of special education processes and tools for advocacy. Rosalyn developed awareness of and proficiency with special education terminology, which culminated in an increase in her confidence and ease with which to advocate for her son, David. In the past year, Rosalyn and a like-minded parent in her county created their own disability justice advocacy group for parents in their area. Providing education to other parents about they and their child with a disability's rights is very important to Rosalyn. Cookie used Instagram often to search for postsecondary information and as a way to connect with other individuals, non-profits and 501(c)(3) groups, and resources in her area that supports individuals with disabilities and their families. As found in previous research by Cole and colleagues (2017), parents of youth with disabilities who use social media groups related to disability topics benefit in a myriad of ways, including receiving informational and emotional support to be able to cope with the unique challenges that parents of youth and young adults with disabilities experience.

Enacting Ongoing Resistance and Advocacy

The undercurrent of this research emerged as the final theme describing Black parent resistance and advocacy for their young adult child with high incidence disabilities during the postsecondary planning process. Despite minimal to nonexistent postsecondary planning for their child with a high incidence disability and multiple oppressions in the same institutions supposed to be supporting their child, each participant demonstrated "…black resilience, black resolve" (Anderson, 2016, p. 4) in the face of such multiple oppressions. Most of the participants endorsed, in some way or another, they and their child with high incidence disabilities, experiencing the collusive oppressions of racism and ableism regarding postsecondary planning processes. This finding affirms what prior literature states: "racism and ableism intersect as schools effectively disable Black families by denying them decision-making power and opportunities" (Love et al. 2021, p. 640) because K-12 schools and government agencies unfortunately continue to marginalize Black students with high incidence disabilities and their parents by excluding them from receiving equitable postsecondary planning processes. Similar to research from Allen and White-Smith, the participants in that study, African American parents, held schools and school officials accountable for unfair practices toward their Black child in high school (2018).

This final theme of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities enacting ongoing resistance and advocacy coincides with the seventh tenet of Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) framework: "requires activism and supports all forms of resistance" (Annamma et al., 2018, p. 61). Such activism, resistance, and advocacy on behalf of and in partnership with multiply marginalized individuals and their families takes diverse paths but is "linked to and informed by the community, whether that be academic or theoretical, pedagogical, or activist" (Annamma et al., 2013, p. 18). Because this study sought to understand the perspectives of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities on the postsecondary planning process, we see that each of the participants, in their own way, engaged in advocacy and resistance activities that were diverse and unique to their children as embedded in families, social-cultural contexts, and communities in which they lived. Research by Harry and Ocasio-Stoutenburg (2020), affirms the challenges experienced by parents of youth with disabilities and confirms such realities.

An unexpected finding in the study was that for many of the participants, they not only cared about positive, inclusive, successful futures for their own child with high incidence disabilities, but that they also had in mind the same goodwill toward other students with high incidence disabilities and their families. For these participants, they wanted to provide support and information about lessons learned from tough circumstances related to racism and ableism to help other Black students with high incidence disabilities and their parents. For example, though participants Barbara and Kevin had the financial resources to pay probate court fees to secure guardianship for their individual child with high incidence disabilities, they both expressed concern for how parents of lesser financial means are able to obtain guardianship for their child, if needed. Paula, in her part-time role working to support parents of students with disabilities, is limited in what she can do for parents due to time and resource constraints. However, Paula is in the process of seeking out grants so that she can offer more supports and education for parents and students with high incidence disabilities. Tamara had hoped that she could have shared all postsecondary planning information she gleaned from her independent postsecondary planning investigations, but that opportunity passed as she did not know how to organize with other parents of teens/young adults with high incidence disabilities. Michelle, Cookie, and Paula all reported concerns for Black youth and young adults with undiagnosed disabilities, that out of their Black parents' fear of the stigma of the disability label, that such individuals may never receive the supports and services due them. Finally, after attending a state vocational rehabilitation webinar with parents of young adults with disabilities, Louise remarked about who, besides the parents, cares for the accessibility needs of individuals with physical disabilities once they graduate high school. Overall, these parents extend the research topic of othermothering to postsecondary planning for students with high incidence disabilities (Cooper, 2009;

Stanley, 2015). Othermothering (Cooper, 2009; Stanley, 2015) refers to community care in African American communities where African American mothers extend concern and related actions for African American children in the community.

The participants in this study actively engaged in advocacy and resistance activities during the postsecondary planning process in light of so many informational barriers, information gaps, low expectations and implicit bias from educators, punitive discipline, and lack of inclusive postsecondary planning options. Participants extended assertive communication with their child’s IEP team and repeated their requests, even when educators resisted basic requests. In addition, participants filed state and/or federal complaints against their child’s local high school and school system for denial of the child’s educational rights. Gleaning postsecondary planning information from other parents, social networks, and professionals, both in-person and online to fuel advocacy efforts were other ways participants operated. Participant advocacy occurred in private family spheres, where these Black parents affirmed the uniqueness and brilliance of their child with high incidence disabilities and negated negative narratives the child experienced due to racism and/or ableism while at school. This finding relates to work by Banks and Hughes (2013). Banks and Hughes described experiences of African American male students with disabilities at a historically black university and how they surmounted educational inequities. The college students attributed family member support for their learning difference by rejecting negative messages from others, including the disability label itself (Banks and Hughes, 2013). Overall, this current study elucidated not only the experiences and perspectives of the participants of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities concerning the postsecondary planning process, but the study also depicted the ongoing means in which the participants countered educational and postsecondary planning inequities through advocacy and resistance (Annamma et al., 2018).

I originally delineated “high incidence disabilities” as those most commonly identified disabilities, such as emotional/behavioral disorders (EBD), specific learning disability (SLD), mild intellectual disability (MID), other health impaired (OHI), and speech/language impairment (SLI) (Tefera, 2019; Walker & Berry, 2018). In my pre-interview and interview interactions with participants, some of the participants revealed that in addition to their child having one or more of the above five traditionally identified high incidence disabilities, their child also received an eligibility of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) during the child’s K-12 enrollment. This finding corresponds with research stating that the prevalence of autism spectrum disorder is a rapidly increasing for K-12 students, both outside the school setting (medical/psychological diagnosis) and inside public schools, although it is diagnosed at higher rates by medical and psychological providers (Gage et al., 2017). Interestingly, McDonald and colleagues discovered that in their sample, K-12 students with autism received special education services at their school under the OHI classification (2019). This finding supports the experiences of this study’s participants, who noted that although their child had been diagnosed in the community as having ASD, the school’s IEP team recommended services for the child under the OHI label, not the ASD category. Relatedly, participants Tamara, Rosalyn, and Louise underscored the importance and necessity of early, accurate disability eligibility (-ies) and appropriate, relevant services for a child.

Conclusion

The data from this study center the unique, vivid experiences that Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities undergo regarding the postsecondary planning process. The five themes underscore the salient experiences of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities concerning the postsecondary planning process or lack of such a process for their child. Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities receive non-existent to minimal inclusive postsecondary planning support from educators, public schools, and vocational rehabilitation agencies. Such challenges were exacerbated by delays related to the COVID-19 pandemic, as the majority of the parents' children graduated or left high school during years of 2020 and 2021. This study's findings show that participant experiences with postsecondary planning for their young adult child with high incidence disabilities are challenging, complex, tenuous, and require a high amount of mental, emotional, and physical labor that is often invisible to educators, such as school administration, special education teachers, and high school counselors. The fourteen Black parents who participated in this study are impacted by racist and ableist educational environments and racist and ableist aspects in society-at-large. All of these negative forces ultimately impacted they and their child during the postsecondary planning process and currently. However, the participants are committed to focusing on providing their young adult children with high incidence disabilities the resources, supports, positive messages, and opportunities to achieve their post-high school goals. Participants contend that if they could communicate with educators and school counselors, they would recommend that postsecondary planning for youth with high incidence disabilities begin 9th grade and earlier, as supported by research (Hirano et al., 2018). Moreover, participants yearned for more support from special educators, administration, and school counselors, in the form of empathy and knowledge about students with high incidence disabilities, culturally competent instruction and practices in the schools, and inclusive postsecondary planning for students with high incidence disabilities. The findings of this study show the urgent need for school counselors and counselor educators to reexamine how school counselors and other counselors provide social justice advocacy interventions for Black parents and their child with high incidence disabilities. School counselors and special education teachers need training for how to collaborate with such parents to ensure that they receive the inclusive postsecondary planning and related services to which they are entitled, so that their children with high incidence disabilities do not fall through the cracks. Future research is recommended to identify ongoing, accountable ways to provide services to this population of Black parents and their children with high incidence disabilities.

Implications

The goal of this study was to understand the perspectives of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities on the postsecondary planning process. School counselors, special education teachers, and school administrators/educational leadership (and related educator preparation programs for school counselors, special education teachers, and school administrators/educational leadership) could benefit from utilizing a DisCrit framework when working with this population to intervene in the multiple marginalizations that Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities experience. This study affirms the various ways in which Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities navigate and work through constant obstacles to their child’s academic and postsecondary success. Such challenges range from structural/institutional barriers as a result of racism and ableism to low expectations, implicit bias, racial and ableist microaggressions and microassaults from educators and/or other students (Annamma et al., 2018; Sue, 2010). The Black parents in this study, with nonexistent or minimal help from their child’s high school, managed to forge the beginnings of a postsecondary path for their child during and after high school. They accomplished this as depicted by the latter three themes of the study: persevering in their parent role through postsecondary planning process and beyond, navigating inequities through social supports and other supports, and enacting ongoing resistance and advocacy. The participants in this study reported the lack of a school counselor engaging with them to collaborate with providing information on postsecondary options for their child after high school. Participants also cited minimal, superficial transition planning from their IEP team (primarily special education teacher and a general education teacher) for the child. (Hetherington et al., 2010). Participants pieced together a personalized postsecondary plan for their young adult child with high incidence disabilities either entirely on their own or through guidance from primarily informal social networks. Many of the participants alluded to the fact that COVID-19 had impacted they and their child’s post-high school plans, therefore, at the time of interviews, the participants endorsed the fact that their child’s plans were on hold or were “fluid”. Therefore, this research presents multiple implications within and outside my professional field of professional school counseling and school counselor education in order to enhance equitable outcomes for Black students with high incidence disabilities through collaboration with Black parents/guardians.

Counselor Educator Implications

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) provides clear expectations for the standards by which all postsecondary institutional counseling programs operate and by which those programs are accountable to the counseling profession and to the counseling students served (2016). Embedded in across all CACREP counseling programs are standards related to students being aware of "advocacy processes needed to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success for clients" (2016, F.1.3). Additionally, such CACREP counseling programs train students in "strategies for identifying and eliminating barriers, prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination" (2016, F.2.h). For the specialty counseling program of school counseling, CACREP describes future school counselors as securing their "roles as leaders, advocates, and system change agents in P-12 schools…and in roles in consultation with families, P-12 postsecondary school personnel, and community agencies" (2016, G.3.a &b). In school counselor preparation programs, faculty must orient students to implement "strategies to facilitate school and postsecondary transitions…and the use of data to advocate for programs and students" (2016, G.3.g & o).

Therefore, the results of this study concerning the lived experiences of Black parents of youth adults with high incidence disabilities on the postsecondary planning process inform the way in which counselor educators prepare counselors-in-training and school counselors-in-training (SCIT). The findings of this study reinforce that school counselor educators need to teach SCIT to consider the postsecondary planning needs of all students, including students who identify as Black and have high incidence disabilities, and advocate on this population and their families' behalf. Status quo postsecondary planning for the general student body is not meeting the nuanced, less visible needs of Black students with high incidence disabilities and their parents. In fact, this population of students and parents have multiple social, institutional, and informational barriers related to intentional and unintentional racism and ableism in regard to the postsecondary planning process (Annamma et al., 2018; DeMatthews, 2020).

Counselor educators and school counselor educators of all social identities need to engage with more critical theoretical frameworks, such as DisCrit, in their teaching pedagogies, assignments, and experiential activities "that can be supplemented by key readings and speakers" (Mason et al., 2021, p.7) of BIPOC scholars, disability justice advocates who identify as having a disability, and parents/family members of multiply marginalized identities. Another way to promote anti-racism and anti-ableism is to ensure that students are placed in clinical sites with diverse populations (Mason et al., 2021) and to interact with school professionals and a site supervisor who has experience with social justice advocacy for students of Color with a disability and their families.

School Counselor Preparation Programs

School counselor literature recommends more intentional training of school counselors-in-training regarding meeting the myriad of needs of students with disabilities in school counselor master's programs (Goodman-Scott et al., 2019; Hall, 2015, Milsom, 2007). American School Counseling Association (2016b) contends that school counselors ought to provide "assistance with developing academic, transition, and postsecondary plans for students with IEPs and 504 plans" (p. 2). This tall task is complex and requires explicit didactic tasks and experiential training during school counselor master's programs. Unfortunately, current literature reports that once school counselors graduate from these master's programs and are employed as professional school counselors, these professionals lack the knowledge and self-efficacy to effectively support and advocate for students with disabilities and their families (Goodman-Scott et al., 2019; Hall, 2015). School counselor educators need to demonstrate their commitment to building ongoing multicultural and social justice awareness in master's school counselor education programs through development of "culturally responsive projects" so as to "facilitate multicultural competence….and improve partnerships with diverse families" (Harris et al., 2016, p. 7). Similar projects are recommended in the form of projects around social-justice advocacy-oriented and culturally competent parent involvement projects (Allen & White-Smith, 2018; Mason et al., 2021). School counselor educators also need to highlight the importance of school counselors-in-training regularly attending 504 plan and IEP meetings during clinical experiences of practicum and internships (Hall, 2015). Relatedly, school counselor educators can stress the importance of SCIT's participating in such meetings by communicating this requirement to local school site supervisors of the SCIT's. Collaboration between special education preparation programs and school counselor preparation programs in the form of overlapping courses, assignments, speakers, and time spent with parents of students with disabilities in the field are all valuable opportunities for each profession to learn about the other and to cast a vision to collaboratively support parents and students with disabilities (Goodman-Scott et al., 2019).

One participant in the study, Barbara, a veteran school counselor, has a unique vantage point. Her daughter with high incidence disabilities never had a school counselor attend any of her daughter's IEP meetings while in K-12 school. Barbara is aware of the ASCA position statement on school counselors supporting students with disabilities (2016b). Her perspective on that ASCA position statement is as follows:

> Interesting that ASCA created that statement and they've created that verbiage, because you have graduates still coming out, who have minimal education or knowledge on how to support students with disabilities…it's taken a long time, longer than it should, that the statement is out there, and there's still not more being done [to help school counselors-in-training and certified school counselors to be more cognizant and proficient supporting students with disabilities and their families]. They [school counseling master's program graduates] still have zero knowledge of students with disabilities. You're finishing the program, and you really have no kind of idea about how special education works."

School Counselors

School counselors need a constant awareness that although they may be social-justice advocacy-oriented practitioners, they work and support students and families within school systems that have historically enacted oppressive policies, pedagogy, and environments to Black students with high incidence disabilities, with further negative impacts of such dynamics within the intersection of those double oppressions of racism and ableism. Additionally, school counselors are among the faculty in school systems who have unintentionally contributed to the growing educational debt, as well as attainment, informational, opportunity gaps for historically marginalized students

(ASCA, 2016; Thorius & Tan, 2016). There are several implications for the practices of school counselors as a result of this study's findings.

School counselor self-awareness and social justice advocacy

In order to build and maintain effective partnerships with Black parents of youth with high incidence disabilities, culturally competent and social justice advocate counselors must attain the self-awareness, knowledge, and skills about working with this population of stakeholders (ASCA, 2016; Ratts et al., 2015). As affirmed by several of the participants in this study, it is crucial that school counselors ascertain how "prejudice, privilege, and various forms of oppression based on ethnicity, racial identity, age, economic status, abilities/disabilities…family type, religious/spiritual identity…affect students and stakeholders" (ASCA, 2016, p. 5). Building one's own awareness about the effects of multiple oppressions on Black families, especially those who have a family member with a disability, assists in building empathy in school counselors. In accordance with MSJCC tenets (Ratts et al., 2015), school counselors ought to build on empathy with tangible action to intervene as antiracist (Mason et al., 2021) and anti-ableist school counselors. As a result, such school counselors increase their understanding about the multiple barriers that Black student with high incidence disabilities face during and after high school. This burgeoning empathy and understanding may result in school counselors possessing a greater urgency to support these students and their parents/guardians throughout high school in order to mitigate adverse circumstances that such students are more likely to face due to multiple oppressions of ableism and racism, both inside and outside the school building. Moreover, school counselors' social justice advocacy-identity drives them to "work as cultural liaisons or brokers to overcome or eliminate the barriers of power differentials, social class, race, [ability status], and gender when possible, and advocate on behalf of students and families, always" (Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2010, p. 56), particularly on behalf of Black students with high incidence disabilities, parents, and families.

School counselor knowledge and social justice advocacy

It is vital that school counselors gain knowledge about the historical and sociopolitical contexts in which Black parents and their children with disabilities reside in order to be able to advocate for such students and their families. Each of the single parent participants described their experiences of how being a single, working Black mom can be challenging, with dedicating a monumental amount of time to helping their child with high incidence disabilities prepare for life after high school. Participant Johnetta explicated how it is important that school counselors, especially in Georgia, understand the long-standing racism that the Black community has faced, and reluctance to seek assistance from authority figures (i.e., associating school counselors as authority figures in the child's school). Consequently, the participants expressed a desire to have postsecondary planning information and resources from their child's high school early. As they reasoned, adolescents and young adults with disabilities take more time to commit to a specific postsecondary plan. Such information assists school counselors to be able to refute dominant narratives at a school concerning Black parents of youth with high incidence disabilities and strategize for practices and policies that will bring equity to this population of students when there is a history of inequity (Mason et al., 2021).

School counselors enhancing school-family partnerships

Another finding that has implications for school counselor practice for this population of students and parents/families is the prominent role of the school counselor in the development of school-family partnerships. Participants retrospectively reported that they would have liked to have had a parent group started at their child's high school that was for parents of students with disabilities. The purpose of the group would be for social support and information sharing. Parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities encounter unique challenges related to their child's academic planning and postsecondary planning that parents of young adults without disabilities are unable to relate to. This specific group of parents have valuable knowledge and experiences that can benefit other parents of youth with disabilities. Therefore, school counselors can leverage their skills of collaboration, communication, leadership, and networking to assist Black parents of children with high incidence disabilities to determine if such parents in their school are interested in the formation of a group for parents of youth with high incidence disabilities (West-Olatunji, 2015). By school counselors initiating and participating in these parent groups, the parents have the opportunity to have conversations, raise questions and concerns and offer suggestions for improving school practices that could be barriers to their multiply marginalized child (Kim et al., 2018). Through these informal parent groups, results could be consciousness-raising for both the parents and school counselor, and meaningful connections established between the parents and school, albeit through the leadership efforts of the school counselor (Cook et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2018; West-Olatunji, 2015).

School counselors building school-family-community partnerships

Furthermore, the findings of the study also point to the need for school counselors to develop school-family-community partnerships in order to provide more support for Black families and youth of Color with high incidence disabilities during the middle school and high school years. The rationale for such partnerships is influenced by principles in Bryan and colleagues' Equity-Focused School-Family-Community Partnerships Model (EFSFCPM): "empowerment, social justice, and strengths-focus" (2020, p. 5). School counselors' skills in multicultural counseling, conceptualizing students and families from multiple perspectives (strengths-based, family systems, and ecological systems) problem solving, collaboration, and social justice advocacy can be leveraged to work with historically marginalized families and communities (Moore-Thomas & Vines, 2010). In research about a school-family-community partnership with a Black church, McIntosh and Curry (2020) cite the need for Black youth to have an expansive network of fictive kin, or other adults of Color, in addition to family members. Church volunteers provided mentoring and facilitated groups with Black students around topics of college/career talks, personal development, and positive mindsets associated with academic and personal success (McIntosh & Curry, 2020). The expected result was an increase in students' sense of belongingness in the school and community (Osterman, 2000). Other anticipated effects of such belongingness are increased student attendance in school, increased awareness of postsecondary options, and increased academic achievement.

In addition, parent/guardian engagement could also be encouraged within a school-family-community partnership. One example of engagement includes co-led parent groups by high school or school counselors and community volunteers by grade level or topic on how parents can assist students with essential core class study skills, talking about postsecondary planning, and effective monitoring of schoolwork in the home (Epstein and Associates, 2019). Reflections by participants in this study corroborate the need for more school-family-community partnerships due to potential benefits such as increased student grade point average (GPA) on the final high school transcript, more postsecondary options due to a higher GPA, increased opportunities for Black students with high incidence disabilities to practice social skills, and the building of social capital for the Black students with high incidence disabilities and their families.

School counselor-initiated pre-high school programming

Several parents in this research discussed the importance of the parent and student with high incidence disabilities getting acclimated to high school and learning about high school academic options and career pathways as early as possible. One parent recommended that the high school create a bridging program for students with high incidence disabilities during the summer prior to entering high school, just as AP students have the same opportunity. Along with holding a parent workshop as well as lessons and activities for the students, parents and students could be educated on study skills, organizational and time management strategies, as well as meet the student's high school special education case manager and school counselor. Another beneficial topic could be specific to general awareness of the student's academic accommodations based on the IEP. Building parent and student knowledge about the importance of regular school attendance, coping skills, and how to foster positive peer relations could also be topics of focus. Providing students with a brief career interest inventory and presenting results to students and parents could assist the students/parents with exposure to potential careers of interest and propel career preparation. A high school counselor could collaborate with the middle school, high school administration, and special education department in this endeavor.

School counselors and inclusive postsecondary planning

While a standard college and career workshop for parents and students is a basic ingredient in a high school's comprehensive school counseling program, social justice advocate counselors go beyond this basic requirement to meet the needs of Black students with high incidence disabilities and their parents/guardians and families. This is accomplished through school counselors collaborating with special education staff and community resources to ensure "equitable school counseling program policies and practices for all students and stakeholders" and to "promote equity and access for all students" (ASCA, 2016a, p. 7) for postsecondary planning. For example, a high school counseling department can invite college representatives who work at disability support service offices, as well as college representatives from comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs, so as to inform parents and students with disabilities on supports available to them at the postsecondary institution level (Garrison-Wade, 2012).

Beyond the standard, annual college/career classroom guidance lessons to the entire student body, school counselors could follow up with students with disabilities at a point in time after such lessons. School counselors may do a follow-up lesson about college/career preparation with students served in self-contained and resource settings. Such a lesson provides reinforcement of content/skills learned on the larger classroom guidance lesson and connects students to additional information and resources. Through such diversification of postsecondary planning in a comprehensive school counseling program, high school counselors demonstrate they are considering the needs of underrepresented populations when planning such events.

School counselors and intentional communication with parents

Example after example of the lived experiences of the Black parent participants in this study highlighted the fact that they felt invisible to their child's K-12 school counselors. While frequently occurring one-on-one communication with parents of students with high incidence disabilities and parent-counselor conferences with all families on a school counselor's caseload may be difficult due to high caseloads, school counselors ought to consider maximizing the resources they have in order to communicate with Black parents of youth with high incidence disabilities. One communication tool is via local school email blasts. School counselors can consult with local school technology coordinators, data clerks, and school administration to locate student numbers for those students who have an IEP and send out information on a monthly or quarterly basis to such parents about possible topics of interest (college/career planning activities, school resources related to college/career planning for parents to access, financial aid nights, special workshops for parents of students with disabilities, etc.). A second tool is adding a section to the school counseling website for parents of students with disabilities and regularly adding content to it. Yet another tool school counselors can utilize is sending reminder cards about events and even advertise the new disability services section of the school counseling website via a postcard to parents of students with disabilities. To maintain accessibility, the school counselor would need to ensure that content emailed and mailed out is in languages besides English that are spoken at home. The school counselor would also need to ensure that the content on the school counseling website is ADA compliant. School counselors (collaborating with a special education teacher or department chair) might also consider hosting a lunch-and-learn type presentation in person or virtually to parents of students with disabilities that could have time at the end for parent questions and answers. Finally, school counselors increase their visibility and opportunity to communicate with students with disabilities and their families by regularly attending IEP meetings, face to face, or virtually.

School counselors obtaining mentors for Black students with high incidence disabilities

Yet another finding of this study showed the power of mentoring for both Black parents and for their Black young adult child with high incidence disabilities. Mentors provide social and navigational capital through oppressive institutions such as postsecondary institutions (Yosso, 2005). In this research, two of the Black male young adults with high incidence disabilities had Black adult male mentors who were regular fixtures in their lives. One of the mentors had a learning disability and is a successful physician. Such a mentor is powerful, visible model of success to a Black young adult male with high incidence disabilities. This mentor assisted the child and parents with developing a supportive community for the child going into college. The other young adult male's mentor was also a Black male and his internship supervisor. This mentor instilled encouragement and hope and provided practical opportunities for the young man to practice social skills and vocational skills. Finally, one of the participants cited the long-term positive impact of her former supervisor/mentor in providing instrumental support and guidance for her son's K-12 and postsecondary educational experiences. School counselors advocating for Black male mentors for students with high incidence disabilities is a beneficial intervention that not only advantages the students, but helps support families as well (Durodoye et al., 2004; Gibson et al., 2019).

School counselors building parent social capital

All participants in this research endorsed the desire to be connected to resources specific to their and their child's postsecondary needs, as well as be introduced to parents who could relate to their lived experiences, while their child was in high school. School counselors meet this need by compiling and communicating to parents/guardians, a list of disability-specific providers, therapists, support groups, parent groups (face to face and on social media), special education advocacy groups, disability justice and racial justice organizations, disability-friendly employers/businesses, and other resources (Cole et al., 2017; Mason et al., 2021).

School counselors and use of data

School counselors who abide by the ASCA national model (2019a) and the ASCA school counselor professional standards and competencies (2019b) are familiar with utilizing school data to influence their local school's comprehensive school counseling program. More specifically, school counselors use school data to gain awareness and highlight/close inequity and opportunity gaps for students of historically marginalized groups, such as Black students with high incidence disabilities. Disproportionality in the areas of special education identification, placement, and discipline for students of Color and how school counselors can reverse such trends is a nascent area in school counseling research (Brodar, 2018; Shell, 2020). However, school counselors can start "small" by focusing on an area, such as academics or school discipline, through analyzing that data concerning students with disabilities, students with disabilities of Color and students with disabilities who are also coded as English language learners. By analyzing such data and communicating it and possible interventions to stakeholders (ex: restorative justice practices) such as school administration and to the school's advisory council, school counselors make strides in reducing disproportional practices in a school that negatively impact historically marginalized students (Fine, 2018).

School Counselors and Special Education Teachers

Well established in the literature, in order for students with high incidence disabilities to have successful post-school outcomes, it is crucial that their educators, during high school (school counselors and special education teachers), provide education to the students in areas of self-advocacy and self-determination (AIR, 2013; Garrison-Wade, 2012; Keenan et al., 2019). In the P-12 setting, IDEA requires annual IEP meetings and educational modifications and accommodations be communicated to all teachers by a special education teacher/case manager. Parents and special education teachers are the most common advocates for students with high incidence disabilities. As students with high incidence disabilities transition to college, the onus is upon them to register with the disability support center office and to maintain communication with that office each semester, as well as to be able to communicate with different professors about their academic needs and accommodations. If students with high incidence disabilities were provided the skills, during high school, to grow in self-awareness about their specific disability, develop the agency to accomplish their goals (self-determination), and grow in the ability to advocate for themselves, the path to two-year or four-year college would be less daunting. Several of the participants whose child planned or did attend a two-year or four-year college endorsed the topic of wishing their child had more specific instruction from educators during high school related to being more independent with decision-making, setting goals, being aware of the impact of their disability, and receiving self-advocacy skill training.

Another implication for both school counselors and special education teachers involves the importance of early, adequate academic information for students with high incidence disabilities and their parents/guardians. Educating families and students with high incidence disabilities on the array of academic offerings at a school is invaluable. Such education includes level of classes (modified curriculum in self-contained settings and resource settings, college prep content in co-taught/inclusion classes, honors classes, dual enrollment, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate), career and technical education elective and career pathway classes (including JROTC, work-based learning, etc.), and technical high school partial-day programming. Often, students select courses and programs during high school that promote and develop skills in occupational areas that hold promise for post-high school postsecondary majors or workforce areas. Participants in this study revealed that they were not provided the full list of academic offerings when their child was in high school and that their child would have benefitted from completing a career pathway during high school. Moreover, special education teachers and school counselors need to have high expectations for students with high incidence disabilities and provide students and their parents/guardians with the tools they need to be able to eventually take more rigorous classes during high school. Across participants in this study, it was evident that the child’s high school academic coursework and diploma choice was directly related to the postsecondary options available to they and their parents.

Comprehensive school counseling programs address postsecondary planning for all students typically through state and local school district-mandated college and career planning lessons that occur in the form of class-wide lessons/classroom lessons. School counselors administer career assessments (work value inventories, career interest inventories, etc.) to students in a variety of ways, most often through online platforms provided by their local districts. Special educators have access to some career assessments in the form of transition questionnaires and related assessments. In this study, over half of the parents reported that their child (or children) did receive a career assessment, but that the parents did not receive the results. One of the fourteen parents thought that her child took the ASVAB test, but she did not receive the results from her child or the school. Therefore, as indicated in the profession’s code of ethics (ASCA, 2016a), it is essential that high school counselors “provide interpretation of the nature, purposes, results, and potential impact of assessment/evaluation measures in language the students and parent/guardians can understand” (p. 5). Implications of these findings necessitate that a school system, high school counselors, and special education teachers collaborate to create a virtual classroom or electronic folder that is accessible to students/parents that contains results from both special education transition assessments and school counselor-administered career assessments and related assessments. Of course, in selecting career assessments for individuals with high incidence disabilities, educators need to be aware of what populations served as the normed standard of the assessments as well as ensure that the career assessment is accessible to the specific student with high incidence disability taking the test (Mason et al., 2021; Tang, 2019).

School counselors and special education teachers could also collaborate to plan and implement short-term small groups for students (of Color) with high incidence disabilities. The groups would be of a postsecondary-specific psychoeducational nature (McEachern & Kenny, 2007; Milsom et al., 2004). Sessions could focus on topics such as self-advocacy, knowledge of how one's disability impacts the student, soft skills required for world of work and postsecondary education, goal-setting, and self-determination skills. Relatedly, there could be a critical consciousness-raising element to the group sessions, especially in light of educating students about microaggressions due to ability status, race/ethnicity, and other identities, and how to navigate and surmount such discrimination.

An unexpected finding of great significance to inform the practice of special education teachers and school counselors is the difficult dilemma that the participants in this study faced in regard to stigma within their own racial communities with barriers in locating help related to postsecondary options for their young adult child with high incidence disabilities. For many of the participants, they reported a lack of understanding, knowledge, and of inclusive spaces to talk about disability matters, within African American communities (including within their own family) concerning the topic of individuals with disabilities. An historical perspective and context are vital for understanding this finding. Multiple participants referred to generations of trauma and discrimination against the Black community in the U.S., disproportionate referrals of Black students to receive special education services, and high numbers of racialized suspensions of Black students leading to the current school to prison pipeline. Several of the participants in this study noted their own hesitation with permitting their child to go through the special education referral process, but in the end, they knew that their child needed more supports to receive a free and appropriate education.

Some of the participants surmounted such within-group stigma and social marginalization by finding other diverse spaces (faith communities, disability justice organizations, and other social networks) with parents of varying racial/ethnic backgrounds who had a child with high incidence disabilities. As a result of this finding, school counselors and special education teachers must work in culturally responsive, sensitive ways with Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities to evaluate Black parents' current and desired social network landscape in order to meet the myriad postsecondary planning needs of their child.

Finally, another implication from this study is that both special education teachers and school counselors ought to be cognizant of is the topic of supporting the mental health needs of Black students with high incidence disabilities and their parents during the postsecondary planning process. Participants in this study highlighted examples of their own concerns for their child's mental health (anxiety, depression, race-based trauma) and awareness of suicidality among other Black teens and young adults with autism. The participants were dialed in to getting their young adult child the outside mental health supports (mental health therapist and/or psychiatrist) most beneficial for their child. However, when thinking back to their child's transition plan during high school, for those parents whose child had mental health challenges during high school, they reported that this was not addressed in the child's IEP transition plan. Special education teachers need to ensure that the youth on their caseload at the high school level are receiving the outside culturally responsive mental health supports that could be warranted, especially since statistics on this topic show that students with disabilities are more likely to have a mental health disorder (Clark et al., 2008). Students with high incidence disabilities who do not have access to mental health services are more likely to be involved with the criminal justice system (Chang & Clark, 2018; Newman et al., 2012). By special education teachers engaging with high school counselors through collaboration, consultation, and inviting high school counselors to IEP meetings, the latter group are able to offer their expertise in matters of social-emotional development and referrals to parents and families for outside mental health resources (Kaffenberger & O'Rorke-Trigiani, 2018). High school counselors can advise parents and families on the steps to take and considerations for selecting a mental health therapist for their child.

Mental health therapists with social justice advocacy orientations who are skilled working with adolescents, teens, and young adults with high incidence disabilities and who are culturally responsive to the dynamics of the racial identity of the young adult are most desirable as options for Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities. In closing, special education teachers and school counselors ought to champion their opportunity to dismantle the oppressive systems and practices of racism and ableism in postsecondary planning for Black students with high incidence disabilities and their parents through the following statement: "As educators, it is not only our responsibility to disrupt the marginalizations of the students in our care [and their parent/families], it is our power; the space where we have the influence to act." (Annamma & Morrison, 2018, p. 4)

Special Education Program Implications

The findings from this study are relevant for the field of special education. Special education teachers and administration need to begin conversations around postsecondary planning and transition planning early in high school with parents, families, and students. In this research, participants noted that they and their young adult child with high incidence disabilities required earlier transition planning due to the fact that their child's planning for life post-high school takes longer than their typical peers. Participants desired more information, resources, and access to professionals competent to work with their child with high incidence disabilities. Participants expressed that the special education teachers be more knowledgeable about specific options for their child. Since students with high incidence disabilities are not a homogenous group of students, the need for continual professional development about the transition process and postsecondary planning is ongoing. Additionally, participants desired that transition planning for their child was child and family-centered, rather than school-centered. If educators embraced and acted upon such parental input, then Black parents of youth with high incidence disabilities might be in a better situation to make educated decisions with their child about post-high school options. As espoused by Hirano and Rowe, "educators must recognize the value of parent involvement and actively work to incorporate parent contributions into education and transition planning" (2016, p. 51).

While participants mentioned the role of special education teachers and social workers in their child's postsecondary planning process during high school, school counselors participating as IEP team members were notably absent in the majority of participants' accounts. Since special education literature reports that special education teachers have concerns about high caseload numbers and little time to plan with other IEP team members, it is inferred that time limitations and excessive caseloads for both special education teachers and school counselors stand as barriers to their potential collaboration together on behalf of students with high incidence disabilities (Fowler et al., 2019). If special education teacher and school counselors possessed the knowledge, skills, and time to collaborate on an ongoing basis regarding meetings the social-emotional, academic, and college/career readiness needs of students with high incidence disabilities, these students and their parents/families would be better prepared to exit high school with a specific, culturally responsive postsecondary plan (Suk et al., 2020).

Finally, as Lalvani and Hale (2015) assert, special education teacher preparation programs need to do more to build critical consciousness in future special education teachers about the hegemonic system of special education. Relatedly, such special education teacher preparation programs need to build and reinforce special teacher dispositions of advocacy and compassion for students and families. Lalvani and Hale (2015) propose that special education teacher preparation programs utilize critical theoretical frameworks in order to dismantle the inherent "parent-professional conflict in special education" and "provide teachers with the tools required to recognize and disrupt ableist discourses and practices in schools" (p. 15).

Educational Leadership Program Implications

Multiple participants in this study underscored the importance of school administration (principals, assistant principals, etc.) having empathy toward Black students with high incidence disabilities, especially in matters related to school discipline for this population of students. Notably, many of the participants recalled that the high school administration in the high schools their children attended were oblivious to the due process rights that their children were entitled to in the context of school discipline. Participants noted the invisible nature of their child's disability, that it was not immediately obvious to the high school personnel and administration who interacted with their child. Clearly, there is room for growth for school administration as far as growing in their awareness, knowledge, and skills with which they interact and support Black students with high incidence disabilities. One of the participants sums it up well:

> [If] I could have my wish, I think that having a teacher, administrator, whoever, having more training for them on how to mitigate, how to engage, how to support, especially in those classes where the person may not be special ed trained, but they are co-taught, having some level of training or exposure to the atypical students because so much of school is social and so much of the disability is social.

Culturally responsive practices in schools are most effective when they are initiated and supported by school administration (Khalifa et al., 2016). Families and students of Color with high incidence disabilities need school leadership and processes that are congruent with areas three and four of Culturally Responsive School Leadership: "culturally responsive and inclusive school environments and engaging students and parents in community contexts" (Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 11). Furthermore, not only is ongoing training in diversity, equity, and inclusion vital for school administration, but education preparation programs for school administrators need to instill the value of regularly engaging in culturally responsive partnerships with historically marginalized parents, such as Black parents of youth with high incidence disabilities (Khalifa et al., 2016). As demonstrated by this study, participants exhibited numerous examples of strength, support, advocacy, and ingenuity as related to supporting their child through the postsecondary planning process. School administrators need to hear these strengths-based narratives of such parents/guardians of their students, in order to move away from deficit-based models of parent engagement (DeMatthews, 2020). Hirano and colleagues recommend that such school leadership be responsible for creating “a school culture that values parents and also allocates resources to put values into action” (2018, p. 51).

School administration could also benefit from utilizing a critical leadership framework in their practice, such has DisCrit (DeMatthews, 2020). As DeMatthews (2020) espouses, “principals need a critical understanding of how racism and ableism operate interdependently, and need to lead collaboratively with educators, families, and communities to reimagine their schools and classrooms” (p. 30). As evident in the accounts of participants in this study, oppressive, reinforcing forces of racism and ableism influence academic programming, educator beliefs about students and families, and “post-secondary transitions that have long-term impacts on the pathways and opportunities available to students of color with disabilities” (DeMatthews, 2020, p. 32). Therefore, school administration has work to do, along with school counselors and special education teachers, to advance inclusive education and postsecondary planning for multiply marginalized students and their families (DeMatthews, 2020).

School District Implications

School counselors and special education teachers work within sizable school systems. To advance anti-racist and anti-ableist programs and policies, more targeted interventions on behalf of Black students with high incidence disabilities and their parents need to occur at the school district administration level. School district administrators need to be held accountable for the institutional and systemic barriers that prevent special education teachers and school counselors from having the time and resources that they need to collaborate to ensure equitable academic and postsecondary outcomes for Black students with high incidence disabilities and their parents/families. Based on information shared in this study, I assert that public school systems enact the following practices to bolster inclusive postsecondary planning efforts by educators with Black families of students with high incidence disabilities:

1. Professional development on an ongoing basis to all school staff on building diversity, equity, and inclusion.
2. Student learning about diversity, equity, and inclusion (including neurodivergence/ability/disability status).
3. School counselor to student ratios that meet ASCA recommendations of 250 students to one school counselor (ASCA, n.d.).
4. Establish a full-time parent mentor at each level (pre-K, elementary, middle school, and high school) to assist parents of youth with disabilities with informational and resource needs.
5. Hire a special education transition professional who serves as a “transition coach” at every high school that supports IEP teams with up-to-date, research-based, and community information related to culturally competent transition planning (Suk et al., 2020).
6. Create a school district office of community partnerships for internships where individuals are tasked with building relationships with community partners and

stakeholders within a district for the purpose of connecting high school students of marginalized backgrounds, including Black students with high incidence disabilities, with paid internships within a small geographical radius of their home.

7. Establish a committee in public school districts comprised of individuals from the district office of advisement and counseling office, district curriculum office, district special education office, district career technical education office, the diversity, equity, and inclusion office, district school counselors, district special education teachers, and Black parents of students with a range of disabilities (including high incidence disabilities) to collaborate on evaluation of special education transition programs and school counseling comprehensive programs, data analysis, specialized programming interventions and implementation, targeted college/career planning/postsecondary planning programs to do more to prepare K-12 and students with disabilities of historically marginalized and their families for life after high school. Provide a stipend to the parents for their participation on the committee.
8. Office of special education, along with community stakeholders, organizes an annual transition to college/workforce fair for students with high incidence disabilities, promoting the event to schools, families, parents, and students.
9. Office of special education, along with community stakeholders and adult service agencies, organizes an annual transition fair for students with lower incidence disabilities and those students who will need more support. Office of special education promotes the event to schools, families, parents, and students.

10. Conduct an equity audit of CTE programs within the school district as related to admitting and accommodating students with high incidence disabilities.
11. Promote professional development for CTE teachers according to universal design for learning principles and ensure that career academies and technical high schools are prepared to admit, serve, and not discriminate against Black students with high incidence disabilities (CAST, 2022).
12. Establish more CTE programming based on projected job creation needs in the state.
13. Eliminate high school graduation tests/exit exams (Pazey et al., 2015; Tefera, 2019).

Limitations of the Study

This study provided preliminary findings of Black parent perspectives about the postsecondary planning process for their young adult child with high incidence disabilities. While the researcher conducted the study in an ethical, intentional manner, there were limitations to the study in a few areas. The initial limitation is lack of geographical diversity: the fourteen participants hailed from two Southeastern states, Georgia (n=10) and South Carolina (n=1), and one Midwestern state, Michigan (n=3). Although the participants provided thick, rich descriptions of their experiences, it would have been helpful to include participants from other regions of the U.S. (i.e., New England, North Atlantic, Northwest, Southwest, and West). The benefit of this would have been for the researcher to evaluate what lived experiences with the phenomenon the participants from more than two regions of the nation shared and which of those experiences were unique.

Another limitation of this research involves the researcher as instrument phenomenon, common in qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The primary researcher identifies her primary social identities as White, middle class, able-bodied, and childless. Despite her awareness of Epoche as she engaged in data collection and analysis, as well as bracketing her own assumptions, experiences, and values, the primary researcher is not immune to possessing assumptions and biases. It is unknown to what extent the primary researcher's biases and assumptions impacted the study itself. Due to the sensitive nature of recruiting participants of a different racial identity and with less obvious shared social identities (i.e. generational/age, cisgender, faith affiliation, and level of education), the primary researcher was hypervigilant about how she presented verbally and nonverbally to participants by phone and during the interviews on the Zoom conferencing platform. Primary researcher did her best to find common ground with participants, utilize active listening skills and attending behaviors, and include the purpose for the research, and treat each participant's experience as a fresh account. Noticeable to the researcher was that although positive rapport was developed with each participant, with many of the participants, initially, self-censoring occurred with some of the more sensitive questions related to race, racism, and ableism. Participant guardedness eventually diminished as the participants experienced more ease with the rhythms of the interview process. Because the primary researcher had dissimilar racial/ethnic social identity as participants, one wonders if participants would have divulged more information during the interviews if the primary researcher shared the same racial identity.

While there was one father represented in the study, mothers comprised the majority of the participants. Historically, research documents the dominant narrative that Black mothers tend to be the primary educational advocates for their child (with a disability/-ies) life during the K-12 years (Allen & White-Smith, 2018; Gatlin & Wilson, 2016; Stanley, 2015). The participation of the one father parent participant in the research contributed to the overall findings of the study. However, the distinct imprint of his gender identity on his lived experiences and advocacy efforts for his child during the postsecondary planning process was unable to be explored or ascertained.

The recruiting flyer and telephone screening tool included adults who identified as a legal guardian of the young adult child with a disability. Guardians include grandparents, other relatives, and foster parents. Guardians of this range were unable to be located during the recruitment period, yet their perspectives would add a unique vantage point to the research topic.

A final limitation of the study was technical glitches due all participant interviews conducted over the Zoom conferencing platform. Sometimes the researcher's and participant's wireless signal was weak, and this caused break up in communication, with the other party unable to hear the continuous flow of a statement. During one interview, due to severe weather, there was both a power and internet outage which disrupted the interview for a few minutes. Interruptions due to technical reasons deterred the flow of the conversation between researcher and participant. Thus, some words and phrases were indecipherable from the Zoom recorded word-for-word transcription of the interview.

Recommendations for Future Research

The lived experiences of the participants with a young adult child with high incidence disabilities on their child's postsecondary planning process resulted in numerous findings for informing and transforming the practices of school counselors, special education teachers, school administration, and school districts. The primary researcher acknowledges that this study was a preliminary exploration into the perspectives of Black parents of young adult children with high incidence disabilities on the postsecondary planning process. At this time, research centering the perspectives of this specific population of parents and using the theoretical lens of DisCrit (Annamma et al., 2018) on the topic of postsecondary planning within school counseling literature is nonexistent. As a result of conducting this research, many potential research directions are possible related to other theoretical frameworks, methods, and topics. The geographical residence of participants could be expanded to other areas of the U.S. Also, since the majority of participants in this research were mothers, it would be intriguing for future research to recruit more fathers and even grandparents (who were noted as guardians for the child during the high school years).

Researchers select their theoretical frameworks for reasons related to personal experiences, philosophical values, and immersion in peer-reviewed literature. For researchers influenced by social-justice advocacy frameworks, they may want to consider exploring the same phenomenon with DisCrit (Annamma et al., 2018), but along with an additional theoretical lens: Black Feminist Thought (Collins, 2000); Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005), or another theory that represents "transformative praxis" (Annamma & Morrison, 2018, p. 12).

For future researchers desiring to build upon this work, one suggestion is to have a future researcher who identifies as a Black American or African American conduct the research. While the participants in the study were very forthcoming and open about their experiences, perhaps if the researcher was of the same racial/ethnic identity as the participants, that there might be even more rich data that arises from the semi-structured interviews. The same or modified research question could be explored through methodologies such as grounded theory, a focus group, or narrative research. Another idea is for a future researcher to collaborate with parents and students (and even teachers and staff) using community-based participatory action research (CBPR) to attempt to understand disparities that exist within the school and community settings and work collectively to remedy those issues (Green, 2017; Hall & Tandon, 2017). Yet a related consideration is incorporating parent participants in a more involved way, such as collaborating with parents as fellow researchers in the data analysis, in the write-up of results, and in the dissemination of results.

Expanding upon the current participant pool to include more Black fathers and/or legal guardians is another recommendation for future qualitative research. A recommendation for a future undertaking is to seek to understand the perspectives of Black fathers of Black students with high incidence disabilities or other disabilities related to their advocacy for their child during the K-12 years and beyond. Such an exploration could add to the literature by exclusively focusing on Black male parent experiences and explore how gender identity emerges within the father's experiences with advocacy. Additionally, it would be beneficial to hear from the unique viewpoints of family members who identity as a guardian, such as a grandparent, other relatives, or as a foster parent. Their perspectives are rarely heard in the literature, yet their accounts also deserve attention and highlighting.

Public school districts are required to administer exit surveys to parents of students with an IEP at the time they leave high school or graduate from high school. Surveys are conducted via phone, mail, or electronic surveys. A final recommendation could be a secondary analysis of those exit surveys completed by parents and guardians of students who graduated or left high school at the end of an academic year. Corroborating that secondary analysis could be follow-up focus groups or individual semi-structured interviews with parents and/or former students.

Chapter Summary

Investigating the perspectives of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities on the postsecondary planning process revealed numerous findings that add to the current literature. The identified findings elucidated the experiences of Black parents of a young adult child with high incidence disabilities on the postsecondary planning process. Findings illuminated the visible manifestations of oppressive, reinforcing forces of racism and ableism and resulting experiences of marginality by the Black parents due to lack of inclusive postsecondary planning options and multiple barriers that are unique to this population of parents and their children. Due to both the lack of appropriate transition planning by the IEP team and general omission of postsecondary planning support by the high school counselor across parent accounts, the Black parents of a young adult with high incidence disabilities were compelled to breach informational and knowledge gaps on their own. Findings show that postsecondary planning experiences for the Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities incurred a high level of invisible labor for the parents. Parents surmounted oppressive systems and marginalizing experiences through an assortment of strategies.

Examples included securing social supports and other supports, recognizing the multiple roles they serve as a parent for their young adult child with high incidence disabilities beyond high school, and bolstering their advocacy efforts on behalf of own young adult child with high incidence disabilities, in addition to other children and young adults with high incidence disabilities. The findings demonstrate that school counselors, special education teachers, and school administrators have much to learn from these parents in order to transform public school systems to highlight and meet the postsecondary planning needs for multiply marginalized students. Counselor educators and school counseling educators can utilize these findings to inform their work to be intentional about training school counselors to be active in social justice advocacy practices (Ratts et al., 2015) in order to employ anti-racist and anti-ableist practices.

Practicing school counselors of different grade levels can use the findings to evaluate current practices surrounding advocating for students with disabilities in their schools in the areas of academic, career, and social/emotional development, but particularly for Black students with high incidence disabilities and their parents. High school counselors, in particular, are urged to review the findings to build more collaborative, culturally humble, and strength-affirming relationships with Black parents and family members of youth with high incidence disabilities. Additionally, school counselors are encouraged to use these findings to build collaborative relationships with special education staff and other related support professionals who support students with disabilities in their local school. Future research on this phenomenon is warranted and welcomed, as counternarratives of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities concerning postsecondary planning experiences are rare. The future of school counseling depends on its practitioners and counselor educators constantly improving on and reporting about social justice advocacy efforts with historically marginalized populations, particularly those students and families impacted by racism and ableism.

In closing, consider the words of participant Barbara, in regard to the need for school counselors to meet the postsecondary planning needs of students with high incidence disabilities within their comprehensive school counseling programs: "School counselors cannot keep avoiding this segment of the school population because they are not comfortable. ASCA states 'ALL students…'"

Epilogue

It is truly surreal to know that my dissertation journey is ending. This was all completed while working a full-time job and during the COVID-19 pandemic. I am beyond grateful to be at this point. It seems like not so long ago I was on the precipice of excitement of seeing the puzzle pieces magically come together about how my pre-proposed research idea could fill conspicuous gaps in the literature and elevate the perspectives of my future participants to benefit future Black students with high incidence disabilities, their families, and the professions of school counseling and special education. This dissertation and all that went into it are a strong testimony to the power of God, the power of community, and the power of truth-telling by Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities. This dissertation might have my name on it, but by all means, it was a collective effort. I appreciate all of my scholarly influences, both those I have met and those I have not yet met. Thank you, thank you, to all the gatekeepers who searched their networks to help find potential parent participants. I could not have done this without you. And to all the brave, ingenious, exceptional participants: your words, experiences, perseverance, advocacy, and invisible labor remain with me, and I so much appreciate you taking a risk in sharing your experiences with me. My vision is that your experiences will motivate all types of educators to make ripples of change to increase equity in schools for Black parents and Black students with high incidence disabilities.

Currently our nation and the world are still in the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic, widening learning and opportunity gaps across race, class, and ability level in K-12 school systems, and polarization, racism, xenophobia, and incivility in public spheres, social media, and in all levels of government. The Surgeon General of the U.S. recently issued an advisory and recommendations about the current state of youth mental health challenges are such that it is now an urgent public health issue (Murthy, 2021). While I recognize there is so much more work to do to advance equity work for underserved and historically marginalized students and their families, I need to recognize and absorb the blessing of small victories, in the big scheme of things, such as finishing this dissertation. I look forward to publicizing results of this study in formal and informal ways. On a personal level, I look forward to reengaging socially with loved ones and rebuilding holistic wellness practices.

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APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT LETTER

Greetings:

My name is Erin Kilpatrick and I have been referred to you due to your unique position and experience as a Black parent of a young adult child with high incidence disabilities (e.g. mild intellectual disability, emotional behavioral disturbance, other health impaired, specific learning disability, and/or speech language impairment).

I am writing to determine your interest in participating in my dissertation research study. I am finishing my doctoral studies in counseling at the University of Georgia. I am a former middle and high school special education teacher and currently work as a high school counselor. My primary research interest is gaining a better understanding of the experiences of parents who have a child with a disability, specifically, learning about the parents' experiences with their child's postsecondary planning process during the child's high school years. My research study aims to sample Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities because this population of parents is highly understudied by school counselors. This study will be the first of its kind. The study will document and center the perspectives of Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities in regard to postsecondary planning, specifically to improve practice for school counselors and counselor educators.

In order to participate, you must be

- the parent (biological, step-parent, or guardian) of a Black young adult with a high incidence disability (emotional behavioral disturbance, mild intellectual disability, other health impaired, specific learning disability, and/or speech language impairment).
- identify as Black or African American,
- over 18 years old,
- speak and understand English, and
- your child graduated or left high school during one of the following years: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, or 2021.

If you meet these criteria and are open to being interviewed two times for 45-60 minutes, I would love to send you official documents to review, sign, and return. Interviews will be scheduled at a day and time convenient for you. Upon completion of the study, each participant will receive a $25 Visa gift card.

Please let me know as soon as possible if you would like to participate by sending me an email. Or, if you know of another parent who may be interested in this project and meets the criteria, feel free to send them this message.

Thank you very much and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best Regards,

Erin P. Kilpatrick, LPC, NCC
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Counseling and Human Development Services
University of Georgia
774-553-0045, erin.pearce@uga.edu
Principal Investigator: Dr. Jolie Daigle, jdaigle@uga.edu

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Parent Name:
Parent Age:
Preferred pronouns:
Parent Gender Identity:
Other Social Identities (e.g. Religious/Spiritual Affiliation, etc.):

Parent Email address: Parent Phone number:
Parent Current Marital Status:
Parent Marital Status when young adult child with disability in high school:
Parent Education Level:
Parent Employment Status:

Household members (no names needed, just descriptors like grandmother, brother, etc.) who lived in the home when your child with high incidence disabilities was in high school:

Questions Related to Child:

Please Select a Pseudonym for Your Child:
Current Age of Your Child:
Child Gender Identity:
Overall Strengths of Your Child:

What special education category/disability label did your child receive while in K-12 school? (Circle all that apply):

Emotional/Behavioral Disturbance (EBD)
Mild Intellectual Disability (MID)
Other Health Impairment (OHI)
Specific Learning Disability (SLD)
Speech Language Impairment (SLI)

What month/year did your child graduate or leave high school?
Did your child graduate high school (circle one)? Yes No

If yes, what diploma type was earned (circle one):

High School Diploma IEP Diploma Unknown

Please circle the statements that were true for your child *DURING HIGH SCHOOL*:

- Worked Part-Time

- Worked Full-Time
- Volunteered
- Had an internship
- Completed a vocational pathway (e.g., took 2-3 related courses, such as culinary, healthcare, or information technology)
- Took challenging high school courses (e.g., honors, AP, or IB courses)
- Involved with high school athletics, music, clubs, etc.
- Received instruction from a teacher or school counselor related to:
    - ❖ Self-Advocacy Skills
    - ❖ Goal Setting Skills
    - ❖ Job Interview Skills
    - ❖ How to Find a Job
    - ❖ College Application Process
    - ❖ Learning about his/her/their disability and how it impacts day-to-day life
    - ❖ Learning about disability legislation that impacts his/her/their life at college and/or in the workplace

Please circle all the statements that are *CURRENTLY* true for your child:

- Is Enrolled as a Part-Time College Student
- Is Enrolled as a Full-Time College Student
- If in college, please name the college:
- Able to drive/has consistent access to a vehicle
- Uses Uber or Lyft or a carpool service
- Uses public transportation (train, bus, etc.)
- Pursuing a General Equivalency Diploma (GED)
- Works Part-Time
- Works Full-Time
- Unemployed due to job furlough or lay-off
- Unemployed and looking for work
- Volunteers
- Participates in an Internship
- Has a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

CONSENT LETTER

PERSPECTIVES OF BLACK PARENTS OF YOUNG ADULTS WITH HIGH INCIDENCE DISABILITIES ON THE POSTSECONDARY PLANNING PROCESS

Dear Participant,

My name is Erin Kilpatrick, and I am a student in the Counseling and Human Development Services Department at the University of Georgia under the supervision of Dr. Jolie Daigle. I would like to invite you to participate in my dissertation research study entitled, “Perspectives of Black parents of Young Adults with High Incidence Disabilities on the Postsecondary Planning Process.”

My research explores learning about the experiences and perceptions that Black parents have about their young adult child with high incidence disabilities regarding their child’s postsecondary planning process. I am pursuing this research because there is minimal information on postsecondary planning processes from the perspectives of Black parents with a child with high incidence disabilities. The research topic is understudied in the school counseling literature, and I would like to give you an opportunity to share your experiences. The guiding research question for this study is, “What are Black parents' lived experiences regarding their young adult child's postsecondary planning process?”

You have been selected as a potential participant because you and your child’s demographic information meets the research study criteria.

- You are the parent (biological, stepparent, or guardian) of a Black young adult with a high incidence disability (emotional behavioral disturbance, mild intellectual disability, other health impaired, specific learning disability, and/or speech language impairment).
- Your child attended a public high school and had an individualized education plan (IEP).
- Identify as Black or African American.
- You are over 18 years old,
- Speak and understand English, and
- Your child graduated or left high school during one of the following years: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, or 2021.

If you would like to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire, attend two individual interview sessions, review the transcript for each interview, and share any supporting documents, as related to the study (if available, child’s high school individualized education plan with transition plan). Each interview session will be approximately 60-75 minutes. Each session will be conducted either in person or using Zoom, a conferencing platform, during a time that is convenient for you. If you prefer to meet in-person for the interview, your address needs to be within 60 miles of Gwinnett County, Georgia. Once your interviews have been transcribed, I will email you a copy of each of the interview transcripts. The interview transcript is provided so that you can review your responses, make any revisions, and inform me of those revisions.

Interview sessions will be recorded by an audio recording device and by the recording feature on Zoom. A $25.00 Amazon gift card will be delivered to each participant who has completed both interviews, at the end of the study. Your name, email address, and phone number will be kept by me until you have received your incentive for completing two interviews (for accounting purposes), and then your identifying information will be destroyed. The information will be shared with the Business Manager in the Department of Counseling and Human Development Services at the University of Georgia.

Participation in the research study is voluntary. You can refuse to take part or stop at any time without penalty. There may be questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. You are welcome to not answer questions if you choose, ask for a break during the interview, or reschedule the interview. If you experience negative emotional responses after the interview, I encourage you to seek professional mental health counseling in your local area. If you choose, I can help you find mental health resources in your geographic area.

Please note that due to my professional training and licensure in Georgia as a licensed professional counselor (LPC), I am also a legally mandated reporter. In the event you share something that indicates a minor, mentally incapacitated individual, or elderly person was subjected to prior/current danger physical and/or sexual abuse, I will need to breach confidentiality and contact Department of Family and Children Services or Adult Protective Services.

Your responses may help me understand how school counselors can impact the postsecondary planning processes for Black students with high incidence disabilities and their parents. Relatedly, counselor educators, school counselors, and educational leaders who read the results of this study will learn how Black parents of such students experience the postsecondary planning process. The goal of this research is to educate educators, such as school counselors, on the need to support and implement interventions that improve the postsecondary trajectory of Black students with high incidence disabilities through collaboration with Black parents.

I will take steps to protect your privacy, but there is a small risk that your information could be accidentally disclosed to people not connected to the research. This research involves the transmission of data over the Internet. Every reasonable effort has been taken to ensure the effective use of available technology; however, confidentiality during online communication cannot be guaranteed. To reduce this risk, I will take out identifying information in interview transcripts and not include those names in the dissertation or in any future publications (names of people, institutions, school names,

and cities). For interviews scheduled on the Zoom online platform, I will provide you a specific meeting login and unique passcode. Please keep this information private to ensure that we are the only individuals in the virtual interview space and safeguard your information.
Data collected from this study will be stored in a secure environment and destroyed upon completion of the research study. The results of this study may be used in future publications and/or presentations, and your identity and your child's identity will be kept confidential. You are entitled to choose a pseudonym for use in publications/presentations.

If you have any questions about this research study, please feel free to call me at 774-553-0045 or send an email to erin.pearce@uga.edu. Dr. Daigle, Faculty Advisor, is accessible by email at jdaigle@uga.edu. If you have concerns or questions regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, please contact University of Georgia's Institutional Research Board (IRB) at 706-542-3199 or by email at IRB@uga.edu.
Thank you for time reviewing this informed consent document.

Please keep this consent letter for your records.

Sincerely,

Erin P. Kilpatrick, LPC, NCC
Doctoral Candidate
University of Georgia
Department of Counseling and Human Development Services
774-553-045
erin.pearce@uga.edu

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Hello. My name is Erin Kilpatrick. I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Georgia in the Department of Counseling and Human Development Services. The purpose of this study to is learn about the perspectives that Black parents of young adults with high incidence disabilities have about the postsecondary planning process for their child. The aim is for school counselors to learn more about the postsecondary planning experiences for Black young adults with high incidence disabilities from the perspective of their parent/parents. For this interview, I will ask you questions related to your experiences as a Black parent with a young adult child with high incidence disabilities and the postsecondary planning process for your child during your child's high school years. I want to hear about your perspectives about that time in you and your child's life and what stood out to you about those experiences.

The information discussed in the interview sessions will be confidential. Your identity and your child's identity will not be revealed in the dissertation or subsequent publications or presentations.

This interview ought to last 45 to 60 minutes. The interview will be audio and video recorded via Zoom, and I will jot down a few notes during our time together. The interview will be transcribed into written text. You will receive a copy of the transcribed, word-for-word interview. Please feel free to review the interview transcription to ensure that your responses portray what you wanted to communicate, and if not, feel free to let me know what part of your interview answer you would like to modify.

You are entitled to end the interview at any time, and you are permitted to decline to answer questions. If I ask you a question that seems unclear, please let me know and I will rephrase the question. What questions do you have before we begin the interview?

Research Question

What are Black parents' lived experiences regarding the postsecondary planning process for their young adult child with high incidence disabilities?

Demographic Information

1. In what state are you located? In what metropolitan area/city?
2. When did your child receive a disability label?
3. What disability label did your child have while in high school?
4. When was the last year your child attended high school?
5. Did your child graduate high school?
6. What was the demographic makeup, generally, of the students in your child's high school?
7. What was the demographic makeup, generally, of the faculty/teachers/counselors in your child's high school?

Semi-Structured Interview

Interview One

1. Tell me about your child.
2. Please tell me how you understand your child's disability.

3. What does postsecondary planning or planning for one’s future during high school mean to you?
4. What do you know about postsecondary planning that occurs in high school?
5. What do you think a school counselor does in regard to postsecondary planning with Black students with high incidence disabilities?
6. Please tell me about what it was like to help your child with a disability prepare for life after high school.
7. Please tell me about the family or other social supports that helped you help your child with a disability prepare for life after high school.
8. How has your child’s transition after high school been like?
9. How has your child’s transition after high school affected you? Your family?
10. How was your child’s postsecondary planning talked about in your family? (past and present)
11. How does your identity as a Black parent impact the way you guided your child with a disability preparing for life after high school? (past and present)
12. When your child was in high school, what were his/her plans for education or work after high school?
13. When your child was in high school, what hopes did you have for him/her in their life after high school?

Interview Two

14. Please tell me about any activities the high school special education teachers did to help you and your child prepare for life after high school.

15. What classes did your child take in high school that helped your child get ready to leave high school?
16. Do you recall the types of career planning interventions for students at the high school (individual student meetings with school counselor, classroom lessons, test prep, college visits, paid/unpaid internships/)?
17. Tell me about those college and career planning activities that your child accessed during high school (How did you experience observing your child go through those activities?)
18. Tell me about any high stakes testing/graduation tests that were required at your child's school/school district (How did you experience observing your child go through that process?)
19. Do you recall any activities the high school held for parents regarding postsecondary planning (workshops, college and career nights)? If so, what was that experience like?
20. Do you recall any postsecondary planning activities sponsored by the high school specifically for parents of youth with disabilities? If so, what was that experience like?
21. Tell me about your relationship with your child's school counselor when they were in high school.
22. Please tell me about the needs that you and/or your child had regarding the postsecondary planning process.
23. Please tell me about career assessments or career testing your child received during high school.

24. What would you tell other Black parents with a high-school aged child with high incidence disabilities about postsecondary planning/getting their child ready for work or education after school?
25. If money, time, bureaucracy, and the status quo in high schools did not exist, what would you have like to have seen occur in your child's high school to help them be more prepared for life after high school?
26. Is there anything you would like to share that may help high school counselors and other educators better understand when working with Black parents of a child with high incidence disabilities with postsecondary planning?
27. If you have any other experiences, thoughts, or ideas about postsecondary planning for Black high school students with a high incidence and their families, feel free to share now.

Thank you for your participation in this study. Please be aware that you may withdraw from participation. If you think of questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me or my committee chair, Dr. Jolie Daigle. I can be reached at erin.pearce@uga.edu and Dr. Daigle at jdaigle@uga.edu.

Once this interview is transcribed, I will email you a copy of the transcribed interview. Please read through the transcription to verify your answers to the interview questions. I will be in touch to schedule a second and final interview to discuss more of your experiences related to the research question. Thank you again so much for your time.