

## **Exploring African Americans Students' Perceived Therapeutic Outcomes Based on the Race and Gender of their Therapist(s)**

African Americans' attitudes toward therapy is a phenomenon that is commonly studied in the literature. Earlier research found that African Americans were least likely to seek professional psychological help in comparison to their non-black counterparts, due to factors such as stigma, lack of access to resources, socioeconomic status, and cultural mistrust (Cruz et al., 2008; Arday, 2018; & Green et al., 2020). These factors often influence people's attitudes toward therapy causing them to underutilize services, go untreated, be treated by non-professionals, or to unhealthily self-soothe (Conner et al., 2010 & Ward et al., 2013).

Race and gender matching among therapists and clients is another topic that has been heavily studied. However, the demographics for these studies have primarily been White female participants. Even in studies where there were other populations, White women have been the largest demographic in these studies. Additionally, race and gender matching studies have predominantly focused on the impact that matching has on therapeutic alliance. Therefore, there is a gap in the literature around how these factors influence clients' perceptions of the outcome therapy, specifically Black and African American students.

Exploring the effects that socioeconomic status, racial identity, the race and gender of the therapist have on Black clients' perceptions of therapeutic outcomes is important to add to the literature because it will bring awareness to the reasons why mistrust toward psychological help exists within this population. Finally, it will reinforce the importance of clinicians having patience and empathy when working with Black and African American clients.