



African American fathers' coping patterns: Implications for father-son involvement and race-related discussions

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ABSTRACT

The current investigation utilizes a profile-oriented methodological approach to identify coping strategies among African American fathers of sons. Additionally, this study examines how identified coping strategies are related to fathers' parenting practices, generally and in the face of racial discrimination. Four hundred thirty-eight fathers ($M = 38.39$; $SD = 9.86$) with sons between the ages of 8 and 17 years of age ($M = 12.01$; $SD = 2.84$) participated in this investigation. Latent profile analyses identified 8 distinct coping profiles among African American fathers. Results also indicated that these coping profiles were associated with fathers' discrimination experiences and parenting practices. High coping fathers (i.e., higher levels across multiple coping dimensions) noted greater experiences with racial discrimination and also reported greater involvement and ethnic-racial socialization with their sons. Fathers with a more avoidant coping strategy indicated less engaged parenting with their sons. Highlighting intergenerational processes, findings have implications for African American fathers' and sons' coping assets and adaptation.

Introduction

Reflecting intersections of race and gender, research has noted the distinct social factors that indirectly and directly shape the development of African American boys and young men (APA Working Group on Boys and Men of Color, 2018; Barbarin, Murry, Tolan, & Graham, 2016). Numerous investigations have identified race-related and contextual risks that impact the wellbeing and health of African American boys across the lifespan, such as unaffirming and often hostile educational spaces, law enforcement hypervisibility and criminalization (Bryan, 2018; Carey, 2019; Graham, Taylor, & Hudley, 2015; Noguera, 2009; Rich, 2000; Rowley et al., 2014; Thorpe, Griffith, Bruce, & Brown, 2017). Beyond identification of risks (Ellis, Griffith, Allen, Thorpe Jr., & Bruce, 2015), scholars have articulated the need to also understand pathways to positive development and adaptation among African American boys and young men (Gaylord-Harden, Barbarin, Tolan, & Murry, 2018). One important, but understudied area of focus, is the contribution of *fathers* and *father-figures* to the positive development and adaptation of their sons. Investigations indicate that African

American fathers are keenly aware of larger contextual risks that their sons may face (Allen, 2016; Coles, 2009; Thomas & Blackmon, 2015). Further, African American fathers view their role as instrumental in helping their sons navigate racialized contexts, cope effectively and thrive (Coles, 2009; Guzzo, 2011; Thomas & Blackmon, 2015). However, few studies have fully captured the role of African American fathers' own coping strategies, as they shape parenting processes. The current investigation employs a profile-oriented methodological approach to identify coping strategies among African American fathers of sons. Additionally, this study examines how these coping strategies are related to fathers' parenting of their sons, generally and in the face of discrimination.

African American father-son relational dyads: Implications for boys' development

Although studies have noted parental contributions (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019), studies that examine father-specific contributions to African American boys' coping and adaptation remain

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underrepresented. Existing work in this area, however, demonstrates that higher quality father-son relationships, include greater warmth and involvement, promote adaptive coping among African American boys (Guzzo, 2011; Thomas & Blackmon, 2015). Several investigations suggest that the father-son relational context contributes to boys' developmental outcomes (Roberts-Douglass & Curtis-Boles, 2013; Wade, 1994). In particular, studies have indicated that paternal involvement and support have been associated with a number of positive outcomes, such as emotional adaptation (Dunbar, Perry, Cavanaugh, & Leerkes, 2015), academic engagement (Greif, Hrabowski, & Maton, 1998), psychological wellbeing (Bean, Barber, & Crane, 2006), and decreased externalizing behaviors (Caldwell et al., 2014). Also, work has emphasized fathers' contributions to racial and gender identity development as well as views about religiosity (Halgunseth, Jensen, Sakuma, & McHale, 2016; Roberts-Douglass & Curtis-Boles, 2013). Additionally, studies demonstrate that paternal support and monitoring reduce the likelihood of boys' engagement in risk behaviors (Bean et al., 2006; Caldwell et al., 2014; Coley & Medeiros, 2007; Cooper et al., 2019). Coley and Medeiros (2007) indicated that, when fathers were aware of risk for their sons, they increased their involvement. This study also found that this increased involvement was associated with a long-term reduction in risk for African American boys. Further, there is empirical support that fathers are more efficacious when parenting boys, have greater involvement with sons than daughters, and that fathers' parenting practices are more strongly associated with boys', in comparison to girls', outcomes (Bronte-Tinkew, Carrano, & Guzman, 2006; Cunningham, Mars, & Burns, 2012). Collectively, these studies highlight the ways in which African American fathers, residential and nonresidential, facilitate adaptation and positive development among their sons.

African American fathers' discrimination experiences and parenting

Numerous studies have found that parental stress, experienced by mothers, fathers and caregivers, adversely impacts parental engagement and involvement (Baker, 2014; Fagan, 2000; Murry, Brown, Brody, Cutrona, & Simons, 2001). In addition to general stressors, theoretical frameworks have highlighted the direct and indirect impacts of racism on parenting and family processes (Garcia-Coll et al., 1996; Murry, Butler-Barnes, Mayo-Gamble, & Inniss-Thompson, 2018; Peters & Massey, 1983). Supporting empirical investigations suggest that parental discrimination is associated with a number of parenting practices, including reduced warmth and involvement, as well as harsher parenting practices (Benner & Kim, 2009; Hagelskamp & Hughes, 2014; Murry et al., 2008). Much of this work has indicated that parental discrimination increases stress and reduces parents' available cognitive and emotional resources, which can lead to harsher parenting practices or disengagement. Though, research indicates that these associations may vary for fathers and mothers. For instance, Riina and McHale (2010) found that, in addition to African American fathers reporting more frequent discrimination than mothers, their discrimination experiences were related to greater warmth toward their adolescents, a relationship that did not exist for mothers. Similarly, Coles (2009) found that cultural racism, such as negative images about African American fathers, was related to beliefs about the importance of their involvement.

Additionally, studies indicate that discrimination experiences guide the discussions that parents have with their children about race, culture and inequity, often termed ethnic-racial socialization (Berkel et al., 2009; Hughes et al., 2006). Research suggests that these messages, spanning multiple dimensions, indirectly and directly reflect parents' awareness of the distinct social experiences of African American children (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Saleem et al., 2016). Saleem et al. (2016) found that parents' racial discrimination experiences were positively related to cultural socialization, discrimination awareness and preparation for sons, but not daughters. Studies including African

American fathers have demonstrated associations between racial discrimination and their ethnic socialization practices (Cooper et al., 2019; Cooper, Smalls-Glover, Metzger, & Griffin, 2015; Jones & Neblett, 2018; McNeil Smith, Reynolds, Fincham, & Beach, 2016). McNeil Smith et al. (2016) found that, as fathers perceived higher levels of couple racial discrimination, they were more likely to convey discrimination awareness and promotion of mistrust messages to their sons; however, this pattern was not found for daughters.

Research suggests that fathers' involvement and communications about race and culture are motivated by a desire to help their sons cope with and successfully navigate racialized encounters (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; Coard, Wallace, Stevenson, & Brotman, 2004). This objective may become increasingly salient as African American boys approach adolescence, a period when hypervisibility intensifies within larger societal, neighborhood and school contexts (APA Working Group on Boys and Men of Color, 2018; Bryan, 2018). Rooted in an awareness of this hypervisibility, African American fathers perceive that their sons' experiences will mirror that of their own (Allen, 2016). Yet, discrepant findings have emerged in the literature. While investigations suggest that racial stressors can lead to parental disengagement (Baker, 2014; Fagan, 2000), studies have found that fathers' discrimination experiences, at individual, cultural and structural levels, may motivate engagement and involvement (Coles, 2009; Cooper et al., 2015; Doyle, Magan, Cryer-Coupet, Goldston, & Estroff, 2016; McNeil Smith et al., 2016; Riina & McHale, 2010). There remains a need to identify factors that help to contextualize and explain fathers' race-related experiences in relation to their parenting practices.

Coping strategies among African American men and fathers

Studies have shown that African American men use a range of strategies to cope with economic, familial, and race-related stressors (Bowman, 1990; Coles, 2009; Ellis et al., 2015; Goodwill, Watkins, Johnson, & Allen, 2018; Hudson et al., 2016). To date, investigations have identified support-seeking, including emotional and instrumental support as well as religious coping as commonly utilized coping strategies among African American men (Chatters, Taylor, Jackson, & Lincoln, 2008; Watkins, Green, Rivers, & Rowell, 2006). Additional studies have found that African American men employ self-reliance as a stress coping strategy (Ellis et al., 2015; Goodwill et al., 2018) and investigations have noted the prevalence of avoidant coping, which has been associated with decreased wellbeing (Ellis et al., 2015; Kendrick, Anderson, & Moore, 2007). In relation to racial discrimination and associated stressors, studies suggest that African American men use a range of strategies to mitigate race-related stress impacts. For instance, work has noted that African American men use active coping methods, including cultural-coping behaviors (e.g., John Henryism), to assuage the psychosocial effects of discrimination (Matthews, Hammond, Cole-Lewis, Nuru-Jeter, & Melvin, 2013). Research also has shown that African American men employ cognitive restructuring (e.g., reframing) to strategize and navigate future race-related encounters (Szymanski, 2012). Additionally, investigations have found that discrimination is related to less adaptive coping strategies. Parker, Kinlock, Chisolm, Furr-Holden, & Thorpe (2016) observed that African American men who reported experiencing major discrimination events were more likely to report substance use than African American men who did not report discrimination.

Acknowledging the need to understand stress impacts within larger family systems, research has focused specifically on the coping behaviors and strategies of African American fathers (Bronte-Tinkew, Horowitz, & Carrano, 2010; Perry, Harmon, & Leeper, 2012). Much of this work demonstrates that African American fathers are exposed to a number of race-related stressors, often indicating cumulative impacts and exacerbating family and larger contextual stressors. Among a sample of low income African American fathers, over 50% reported at least one experience of racism in their everyday life (Bamishigbin et al.,

2017). Studies across several demographic cross-sections (low income; residential; nonresidential; adolescent) of African American fathers further demonstrate the quotidian nature of discrimination and how fathers and families cope with these transgressions (Bamishigbin et al., 2017).

Multiple investigations have found that African American fathers cope with race-related and general stressors through the use of planning, problem-solving and support-seeking (Bowman & Sanders, 1998; Coles, 2009; Hammond, Caldwell, Brooks, & Bell, 2011). Riina and McHale (2010) found that greater instrumentality (e.g., self-reliant problem-solving), a masculine gender-type trait, was associated with more positive relationship quality between African American fathers and their adolescents. However, within the context of discrimination, instrumental traits were associated with poorer relationship quality. Coles' (2009) qualitative investigation highlighted underlying processes, indicating that African American fathers' use of planning and problem solving were due to a lack of resource accessibility in combination with a desire to remain independent and feel competent in their roles as fathers. Underscoring this work, Bright & Williams (1996) suggested that fathers' navigation around issues of race, including discrimination and awareness of negative stereotypes about African American fathers, have implications for their parenting ideologies and enacted practices. However, it remains unclear how coping strategies are associated with fathers' parenting practices and whether these strategies buffer against less optimal parenting in the face of discrimination and race-related stress. In our investigation of African American fathers, we seek to clarify the coping and fathering literature by turning specific attention to the relationship among coping profiles, discrimination and two parenting dimensions, ethnic-racial socialization and involvement.

Theoretical framework and goals of the study

Extending existing studies, the current investigation examines how discrimination experiences shape African American fathers' parenting strategies for their sons, with specific interest in their involvement and ethnic-racial socialization practices. Further, research suggests that an intergenerational lens is particularly insightful for understanding how race-related experiences and coping shape the parenting practices of African American fathers, with implications for the promotion of coping assets in their sons. With that said, two primary theoretical perspectives guide our investigation—1) the integrative model for the study of stress in Black American families (Murry et al., 2018) and 2) the transactional model of stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Building upon ecological, integrative, and family stress frameworks (Garcia-Coll et al., 1996; Myers, 2009; Peters & Massey, 1983), the integrative model for the study of stress in Black American families underscores the role of race, sociocultural and structural factors in the daily lives of African American families (Murry et al., 2018). This model acknowledges that discrimination acts as stressor, which can subvert family wellbeing. Further, this model highlights how coping assets are associated with adaptation and wellbeing as well as mitigate the negative impacts of general and race-related stressors.

Additionally, this investigation is informed by the transactional model of stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), which outlines the dynamic processes between the individual and social context in shaping one's appraisal of internal and external demands. Further, this model delineates how coping behaviors and processes can assist in managing associated stress. Focusing on dispositional coping strategies, which emphasize general patterns of coping, this study explores associations with fathers' ethnic-racial socialization practices and involvement. A primary goal of this investigation is to examine the relationship between coping and parenting as well as explore whether the association between African American fathers' discrimination experiences and parenting varies by their coping strategies. Given that individuals employ multiple strategies, this study utilizes a profile-oriented approach

to identify coping patterns using five conceptually grounded coping dimensions (e.g., support-seeking; problem-focused; cognitive restructuring; avoidance, distraction).

Our investigation focuses on understanding the effects of racial stress and coping on parenting processes among African American fathers of sons. Specifically, the current study examines how African American fathers' discrimination experiences and coping strategies are related to father-son parenting practices. Recognizing the role of general and race-specific parenting processes, this investigation examines how African American fathers' discrimination experiences are related to ethnic-racial socialization practices and involvement (home and school). We submit that a more diverse coping skillset will be more adaptive for African American fathers and related to greater involvement and ethnic-racial socialization.

Method

Participants

Data for this study comes from the Representations of Fatherhood: Roles, Awareness, and Meaning (ReFRAME) study, which is based on a national sample of 835 African American fathers ($M = 38.39$; $SD = 9.86$). For this investigation, fathers with sons ($n = 486$) between the ages of 8 and 17 years of age ($M = 12.01$; $SD = 2.84$) were included in this investigation. Due to missing data on key variables, 48 fathers were excluded, resulting in a final sample of 438 fathers. Fathers represented all regions of the United States—1) Southeast (39%); 2) Northeast (23%); 3) Midwest (16%); and 4) Southwest/West (22%). Approximately 58.4% of the sample were currently married. Forty-two percent of fathers reported non-residential status with the identified target child. Eighty-nine percent of participants were biological fathers of the target child. Fathers reported a mean of 3.41 ($SD = 1.74$) biological children. Thirty-five percent of fathers had earned a high school education, 26% reported having an associate/technical degree, and 34% percent of fathers had obtained a college or advanced degree. Approximately 5% of fathers reported not receiving a high school diploma. Seventy-eight percent of fathers indicated working full-time. Sample descriptives and frequencies are shown in Table 1.

Procedure

After obtaining human subjects approval through the University's Internal Review Board (IRB), fathers were recruited via an online Qualtrics panel study. Before completing the survey, participants signed a web-based consent form and verified eligibility criteria (African American father; child between ages 8–17). Measures included father demographics (e.g., region, age, marital status, education level, residential status), parenting beliefs and involvement, race-related experiences, and psychosocial factors (e.g., coping; psychological wellbeing). For questions relating to specific parenting practices (e.g., involvement; socialization), participants were instructed to answer questions in relation to an identified target child, after completing a brief demographic questionnaire pertaining to the target child (e.g., age; gender; current living arrangements; biological status). Surveys took approximately 30–40 min to complete. Fathers were compensated after study completion.

Measures

Coping strategies

The BRIEF-COPE Inventory (Carver, 1997), which includes 14 subscales (28 items), measured fathers' coping behaviors. Participants were asked to respond on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = never to 4 = often) indicating frequency of each coping behavior used when experiencing a 'problem, concern, or stressor'. Although the BRIEF Cope

Table 1
Correlations, means (standard deviations) among study variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
1. Child Age	1.00																				
2. Father Age	0.41 ^d	1.00																			
3. Sexual Orientation	-0.07	-0.08	1.00																		
4. Work Status	-0.05	-0.11 ^b	0.07	1.00																	
5. Education Level	0.03	0.06	0.10 ^b	0.24 ^d	1.00																
6. Marital Status	-0.01	0.15 ^d	-0.01	0.09 ^a	0.23 ^d	1.00															
7. Residential Status	0.06	0.00	0.03	-0.11 ^b	-0.20 ^d	-0.56 ^d	1.00														
8. Biological Status	0.06	0.09 ^a	0.02	-0.03	-0.02	0.11 ^b	-0.13 ^c	1.00													
9. Support-Seeking	0.04	-0.00	0.04	0.02	0.15 ^c	0.03	-0.01	0.03	1.00												
10. Problem-focused	0.03	0.09 ^a	-0.07	0.02	0.03	0.08 ^a	0.02	0.04	0.25 ^d	1.00											
11. Avoidance	-0.11 ^b	-0.20 ^d	0.09 ^a	0.04	0.07	0.01	-0.08 ^a	0.01	0.26 ^d	-0.16 ^d	1.00										
12. Venting	0.03	-0.11 ^b	0.12 ^b	-0.00	-0.00	0.01	-0.07	0.03	0.25 ^d	0.06	0.52 ^d	1.00									
13. Work Distraction	-0.12 ^c	-0.21 ^d	0.02	0.03	-0.01	0.00	-0.03	0.09 ^a	0.35 ^d	0.20 ^d	0.24 ^d	0.20 ^d	1.00								
14. General Distraction	-0.03	-0.11 ^b	0.01	0.08 ^a	0.03	0.05	-0.06	0.03	0.37 ^d	0.20 ^d	0.28 ^d	0.26 ^d	0.38 ^a	1.00							
15. Cognitive Restruct	-0.03	-0.08 ^a	-0.02	0.03	0.11 ^b	0.08	-0.07	0.01	0.42 ^d	0.41 ^d	0.30 ^d	0.29 ^d	0.35 ^d	0.35 ^d	1.00						
16. Father Discrim	-0.06	-0.20 ^d	0.08	0.06	0.04	0.01	-0.07	0.00	0.15 ^c	-0.05	0.42 ^d	0.19 ^d	0.11 ^b	0.14 ^c	0.09 ^b	1.00					
17. Egalitarian	0.12 ^b	0.04	-0.03	0.01	0.05	0.11 ^b	-0.11 ^b	-0.01	0.26 ^d	0.23 ^d	0.03	0.11 ^b	0.15 ^c	0.11 ^b	0.28 ^d	0.07	1.00				
18. Discrim Awareness	0.15 ^c	0.03	-0.07	0.02	0.04	0.10 ^b	-0.11 ^b	0.10 ^b	0.20 ^d	0.17 ^d	0.22 ^d	0.13 ^c	0.19 ^d	0.19 ^d	0.22 ^d	0.32 ^d	0.42 ^d	1.00			
19. Cultural Pride	0.10 ^b	0.00	-0.02	-0.00	0.03	0.09 ^a	-0.07	0.04	0.24 ^d	0.37 ^d	-0.04	0.02	0.16 ^d	0.10 ^b	0.22 ^d	0.04	0.63 ^d	0.58 ^d	1.00		
20. School Involvement	-0.01	-0.02	0.01	0.10 ^b	0.10 ^b	0.18 ^d	-0.22 ^d	-0.07	0.20 ^d	0.19 ^d	0.02	0.01	0.05	0.10 ^b	0.19 ^d	0.15 ^c	0.36 ^d	0.23 ^d	0.32 ^d	1.00	
21. Home Involvement	-0.06	-0.06	-0.02	0.06	0.12 ^c	0.10 ^b	-0.20 ^d	-0.00	0.36 ^d	0.20 ^d	0.14 ^c	0.11 ^b	0.18 ^d	0.14 ^c	0.30 ^d	0.21 ^d	0.45 ^d	0.35 ^d	0.43 ^d	0.54 ^b	1.00
Mean	12.01	38.39	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.03	3.55	2.05	2.56	3.06	2.91	3.10	1.88	3.22	3.00	3.47	2.74	3.46
SD	2.84	9.86	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.61	0.50	0.80	1.03	0.85	0.83	0.51	1.43	0.77	0.89	0.77	0.79	0.80

Note Sexual orientation (1 = heterosexual; 2 = gay/bisexual/pansexual); work status (0 = not working; 1 = currently working; education level (1 = less than high school; 5 = Bachelors or greater); marital status (1 = single; 2 = married/cohabiting); residential status (1 = residential; 2 = non-residential); biological status (1 = biological; 2 = non-biological).

^a p < .10.
^b p < .05.
^c p < .01.
^d p < .001

Inventory has been used widely, investigations have sought to reduce the 14 subscales to a smaller number of higher order factors. Studies have suggested that a 2–3 coping dimensional structure does not adequately reflect the complexity of coping behaviors and that a broader factor structure of coping dimensions is more optimal (Doron, Trouillet, Maneveau, Neveu, & Ninot, 2014; Tolan, Gorman-Smith, Henry, Chung, & Hunt, 2002). Based upon existing coping studies (Ayers, Sandier, West, & Roosa, 1996; Gaylord-Harden, Gipson, Mance, & Grant, 2008), 5 conceptually-driven and empirically-supported coping constructs were examined in this investigation: 1) support-seeking (using emotional and instrumental support); $\alpha = 0.80$; 2) problem-focused (direct problem solving strategies to manage stress; $\alpha = 0.81$; 3) cognitive restructuring (cognitive efforts to reframe thinking; $\alpha = 0.68$; 4) avoidance (avoiding or attempts to stop thinking about a problem; $\alpha = 0.88$ and 5) distraction (physical release of emotions and distracting activities). Due to poor internal consistency of the distraction subscale ($\alpha = 0.52$), which has been observed in other studies using the Brief COPE, 3 separate items were used. Venting was represented by one item (e.g., “When I have a problem or concern, I say things to make my unpleasant feelings escape.”). Distraction was represented by two questions that assessed two domains: 1) general (“When I have a problem or concern, I do something to think about it less, such as going to movies, watching TV, reading, daydreaming, sleeping, or shopping.”) and 2) work-specific (“When I have a problem or concern, I turn to work or other activities to take my mind off things.”). Multiple investigations have utilized the Brief COPE with racially and culturally diverse samples of men (David & Knight, 2008; Iwamoto, Liao, & Liu, 2010).

Discrimination experiences

The Daily Life Experience subscale is part of the Racism and Life Experience scales developed by Harrell (1994). The DLE is a self-report measure that assesses the frequency and impact of experiencing 18 “microaggressions” due to race in the past year. For this investigation, an 11-item reduced scale evaluated how frequently (0 = never to 5 = once a week or more) participants experienced racial hassles, such as “being ignored, overlooked, or not given service (in a restaurant, store, etc.)”, “having ideas or opinions being minimized, ignored or devalued”, “being mistaken for someone who serves (i.e. janitor, bellboy, maid, “being insulted, called a name, or harassed”). Higher values indicate greater mean frequency of discriminatory experiences. Reliability for this scale was 0.95.

Home involvement

A 4-item scale assessed the frequency of fathers' home involvement behaviors. These items, which were evaluated on a 4-point scale (1 = never; 5 = everyday), reflected a range of activities that fathers may engage in with their preadolescent and adolescent sons. Scale items were: 1) “How often do you help your child with school assignments?”; 2) “How often you do you talk with your child about political and current events?”; 3) “How often do you talk about different jobs they can have when they grow up?”; and 4) “How often do you take your child to the library?” Reliability for the present investigation was 0.70. Higher mean values indicate greater home involvement.

School involvement

The frequency of fathers' involvement in school-related activities was measured using a 6-item scale ($\alpha = .85$). Involvement activities included: 1) attending school events; 2) meeting child's teacher; 3) going to parent-teacher conferences; 4) volunteered in child's classroom/at school; 5) went to a parent-teacher association (PTA)/parent-teacher organization (PTO) meeting; 6) talked informally with your child's teacher before or after school. Items were evaluated on a 4-point

scale (1 = never; 4 = many). Mean scores were computed and higher values indicate greater school involvement.

Ethnic-racial socialization

Fathers' self-reported ethnic-racial socialization practices were measured with items adapted from Lesane Brown, Scottham, Nguyen, and Sellers (2008). Three dimensions were the focus of this investigation: 1) cultural pride (3 items; $\alpha = 0.81$; e.g., “How often do you tell your child that they should be proud to be Black?”); 2) discrimination awareness (3 items; $\alpha = 0.80$; e.g., “How often do you tell your child that Blacks have to work twice as hard as Whites to get ahead?”); and 3) egalitarian views (4 items; $\alpha = 0.69$; e.g., “How often do you tell your child that they should have friends of all different races?”) Items were evaluated on a 4-point scale (1 = never; 4 = often). Higher mean scores indicate more frequent communication of each ethnic-racial socialization dimension. Prior studies have utilized subscales with African American fathers (Cooper et al., 2019).

Demographic/contextual variables

Because a number of investigations have found that father and child demographic factors are robustly related to socialization and involvement (e.g., Bronte-Tinkew et al., 2006; Mandara, Varner, & Richman, 2010), this study included multiple demographic and contextual variables in preliminary and descriptive analyses: 1) fathers' age; 2) education level (1 = less than high school degree or equivalent (i.e., G.E.D.); 5 = College degree or greater); 3) work status (0 = not currently employed; 1 = currently employed); 4) marital status (1 = single or separated; 2 = married or living together); 5) sexual orientation (1 = gay/bisexual/pansexual; 2 = heterosexual); and 6) biological status (1 = biological; 2 = non-biological).

Results

Preliminary analyses

Correlations, means and standard deviations for all variables are shown in Table 1. Overall, preliminary analyses indicated that levels of support-seeking ($M = 3.03$; $SD = 0.61$), problem-focused ($M = 3.55$; $SD = 0.50$), work distraction ($M = 3.06$; $SD = 0.85$), general distraction ($M = 2.91$; $SD = 0.83$), and cognitive restructuring ($M = 3.10$; $SD = 0.51$) coping were moderate to high. Among fathers in the sample, avoidance ($M = 2.05$; $SD = 0.80$), and venting ($M = 2.56$; $SD = 1.03$) coping were below the midpoint. Cultural pride ($M = 3.47$; $SD = 0.69$), discrimination awareness ($M = 3.00$; $SD = 0.89$) and egalitarian ($M = 3.22$; $SD = 0.77$) socialization messages were relatively high (above the scale mid-point). Means for home ($M = 3.46$; $SD = 0.80$) and school ($M = 2.74$; $SD = 0.79$) involvement were moderate. For fathers in this investigation, mean discrimination experiences were low to moderate ($M = 1.88$; $SD = 1.43$).

Bivariate analyses indicated associations among fathers' demographic characteristics, coping behaviors, discrimination experiences, and parenting (Table 1). Fathers who identified as gay/bisexual/pansexual reported greater venting coping ($r = 0.12$, $p < .05$). Education level and support-seeking coping were positively associated ($r = 0.15$, $p < .01$). Also, fathers with greater educational attainment reported more cognitive restructuring ($r = 0.11$, $p < .01$). Father age was negatively associated with avoidant ($r = -0.20$, $p < .001$), general distraction ($r = -0.11$, $p < .05$), venting ($r = -0.11$, $p < .05$) and work-specific distraction ($r = -0.21$, $p < .001$) coping behaviors. Fathers of older sons reported less avoidant ($r = -0.11$, $p < .05$) and fewer work-specific distraction ($r = -0.12$, $p < .01$).

Older fathers reported fewer discrimination experiences ($r = -0.20$, $p < .001$). Discrimination was related to greater support-seeking ($r = 0.15$, $p < .01$), avoidance ($r = 0.42$, $p < .001$), venting

($r = 0.19, p < .001$), work-specific ($r = 0.11, p < .05$) and general distraction ($r = 0.14, p < .01$) coping. Fathers' discrimination experiences were positively associated with discrimination awareness socialization ($r = 0.32, p < .001$), school ($r = 0.15, p < .01$) and home ($r = 0.21, p < .001$) involvement.

Child age was associated with greater egalitarian ($r = 0.12, p < .05$), discrimination awareness ($r = 0.15, p < .001$), and cultural pride ($r = 0.10, p < .05$) socialization. Also, married fathers reported greater egalitarian ($r = 0.11, p < .05$), discrimination awareness ($r = 0.10, p < .001$), cultural pride ($r = 0.09, p = .051$) socialization. Similarly, married fathers reported greater school ($r = 0.18, p < .001$), and home involvement ($r = 0.10, p < .05$). Non-biological fathers reported communicating more discrimination awareness socialization ($r = 0.10, p < .05$) than biological fathers. Fathers' education level was positively related to school ($r = 0.10, p < .03$) and home ($r = 0.12, p < .01$) involvement. Fathers who were currently employed reported greater school involvement ($r = 0.10, p < .05$).

Primary data analytic strategy

Using Mplus (Version 8.0; Muthén & Muthén, 2017), a latent profile analysis (LPA) was utilized to identify coping profiles. Five dimensions (support seeking; problem-focused; avoidance; cognitive restructuring; venting; distraction) were used to identify coping typologies among African American fathers of sons. The approach, which is an extension of the k-means technique, provides more formal, statistical, criteria for selecting an ideal number of clusters (Magidson & Vermunt, 2004). Studies have suggested that the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) is more optimal for determining the best fitting model and optimal number of profiles (Nylund, Asparouhov, & Muthén, 2007), with lower BIC scores (e.g., closer to 0) indicating a better model fit (Hagenaars & McCutcheon, 2002). Also, in conjunction with BIC values, entropy scores were used to determine the best fitting model. After identification of the best fitting profile solution, equality of means tests, using the DUESTEP command, were conducted to examine profile differences in continuous distal outcomes (e.g., discrimination; parenting). Additionally, a multigroup regression model was computed to examine whether the relationship between discrimination experiences and fathers' parenting practices varied by identified coping profiles. Regression models included key demographic covariates as well as independent variables. Missing data ranged from 0.21 to 5.5%.

Profile identification

Table 2 includes the fit statistics for each profile solution. As evidenced by the lowest BIC (8091.98) value, and highest entropy (0.84), the eight-class solution was the best fit to the data. The nine-cluster solution had a slightly lower entropy (0.84 vs. 0.83) and a higher BIC (8101.03). Thus, eight distinct profiles were identified as best fitting the data. Profile 1 was comprised of 21 fathers (4.8%), Profile 2 included 56 fathers (12.8%), Profile 3 was composed of 76 fathers (17.3%), Profile 4 (7.7%) included 34 fathers, Profile 5, which was the largest,

Table 2
Model fit indices for profile solutions.

	AIC	BIC	Entropy
2 Class solution	6610.42	6695.11	0.69
3 Class solution	6478.76	6594.24	0.84
4 Class solution	6374.72	6521.00	0.88
5 Class solution	6259.13	6436.20	0.82
6 Class solution	6215.54	6423.41	0.82
7 Class solution	6177.99	6416.65	0.84
8 Class solution	6140.43	6409.88	0.84
9 Class solution	6113.95	6414.20	0.86

Note: Bold indicates the most optimal model fit for profile solutions.

comprised 136 fathers (31%), Profile 6 included 38 (8.7%), Profile 7 was composed of 42 fathers (9.6%) and Profile 8 was comprised of 35 fathers (8.0%). To ensure that smaller profiles (less than 5%) were not an artifact of measurement error, they were evaluated in conjunction with theory and the average probabilities for likely profile membership. Average probabilities ranged from 83 to 94%: (Profile 1–90%; Profile 2–87%; Profile 3–91%; Profile 4–83%; Profile 5–86%; Profile 6–83%; Profile 7–84%; Profile 8–94%).

Standardized scores were used to interpret the pattern of each profile (See Table 3). Profile 1 was labeled *moderate avoidant/low active coping* ($n = 21$). This profile was characterized by moderate scores (i.e., less than 0.5 standard deviations about the mean) on avoidance and lower than average scores on support-seeking, problem-focused, venting, distraction, and cognitive restructuring dimensions. The second group, *low coping* ($n = 56$), was characterized by lower scores across all coping dimensions (support-seeking, problem-focused, avoidance, venting, distraction, cognitive restructuring). The third profile (*emotion-focused coping*, $n = 76$), was noted by the above average means on support-seeking, avoidance, venting, and distraction coping behaviors. Profile 4 (*problem-focused coping*, $n = 34$) was categorized by the higher frequency of problem-focused coping. Individuals in this profile also were below the mean in avoidance, work distraction and general distraction. The fifth profile, which was the largest (*support-seeking/ problem-focused coping*; $n = 136$), was characterized by above average scores on support-seeking and problem-focused coping dimensions. Also, this profile was noted by below average scores on avoidant and venting coping strategies. Profile 6, *problem-focused/low support-seeking coping* ($n = 38$), was comprised of fathers employing above average problem-focused coping behaviors. This profile was also characterized by the lowest scores on support-seeking coping. The seventh profile was labeled *active coping* ($n = 42$). This profile included fathers who were high in active coping strategies (support-seeking; problem-focused; venting; distraction, cognitive restructuring). Profile 8 (*high coping*; $n = 35$) was characterized by higher scores on all coping dimensions (support-seeking, problem-focused, avoidance, venting, distraction, cognitive restructuring).

Profile variation by demographic characteristics

Analyses indicated that profile membership varied by fathers' age ($F(28, 428) = 4.44, p < .001$) and educational level ($\chi^2(28, N = 430) = 56.72, p < .001$). Fathers in the emotion-focused profile were more likely to be younger in comparison to fathers in the problem-focused and support-seeking/problem-focused profiles. Fathers with a college degree or greater were underrepresented and fathers with a vocational/associate degree were overrepresented in the problem-focused/low support-seeking profile. Fathers with less than a high school education were more likely to be in the moderate avoidant/low active coping profile. However, there was no variation in profile membership based upon child age ($F(7, N = 430) = 0.881, ns$), or biological status ($\chi^2(7, N = 438) = 7.24, ns$), fathers' sexual orientation ($\chi^2(7, N = 438) = 5.61, ns$), region ($\chi^2(7, N = 438) = 21.90, ns$), work status ($\chi^2(7, N = 438) = 5.11, ns$), marital ($\chi^2(7, N = 438) = 7.77, ns$) and residential ($\chi^2(7, N = 438) = 11.00, ns$) statuses.

Profile variation by discrimination experiences

Wald equality of means tests revealed that profiles varied by fathers' discrimination experiences ($\chi^2(7) = 65.42, p < .001$). As shown in Table 4, results indicated that fathers in the emotion-focused profile reported more discrimination experiences than the moderate avoidant/low active, low, problem-focused, support-seeking/problem-focused, low support-seeking/problem-focused, and active coping profiles. High copers reported more discrimination than moderate avoidant/low active, low, problem-focused, support-seeking/problem-focused, problem-focused/low support-seeking, and active coping fathers.

Table 3
Coping standardized scores by profile.

	Profile 1	Profile 2	Profile 3	Profile 4	Profile 5	Profile 6	Profile 7	Profile 8	Significant profile comparisons
	Moderate avoidant/low active (n = 21)	Low (n = 56)	Emotion-focused (n = 76)	Problem-focused (n = 34)	Support-seeking/problem-focused (n = 136)	Low support-seeking/problem-focused (n = 38)	Active (n = 42)	High (n = 35)	
Support-seeking	-1.03	-0.39	0.10	-0.66	0.35	-1.69	0.84	1.15	1 < 2,3,4,5,7,8; 2 < 3,5,7,8; 3 > 4,6; 3 < 5,7,8; 4 < 5,7,8; 5 < 7,8; 6 < 1,2,3,4,5,7,8; 8 > 7,6,5,4,3,2,1
Problem-focused	-2.54	-1.01	-0.76	0.54	0.59	0.54	0.67	0.63	1 < 2,3,4,5,6,7,8; 2 < 3,4,5,6,7,8; 3 < 4,5,6,7,8
Avoidance	0.10	-0.43	1.07	-0.78	-0.68	-0.31	-0.05	1.98	1 > 2,4,5,6; 1 < 3,8; 2 < 3,7,8; 2 > 4,5; 3 > 4,5,6,7; 4 < 6,7,8; 5 < 6,7,8; 8 > 1,2,3,4,5,6,7
Venting	-0.27	-0.52	0.48	-0.50	-0.47	-0.06	0.87	1.18	1 < 3,7,8; 2 < 3,6,7,8; 3 > 4,5; 7 > 1,2,3,4,5,6; 8 > 1,2,3,4,5,6,7
Work distraction	-1.07	-0.35	0.13	-1.73	0.16	0.10	0.83	0.88	1 < 2,3,5,6,7,8; 2 < 3,5,6,7,8; 4 < 1,2,3,5,6,7,8; 7 > 1,2,3,4,5,6; 8 > 1,2,3,4,5,6
General distraction	-0.97	-0.56	0.27	-0.98	0.09	-0.28	0.73	0.92	1 < 3,5,6,7,8; 2 < 3,5,7,8; 3 > 4,6; 4 < 2,3,5,6,7,8; 7 > 1,2,3,4,5,6; 8 > 1,2,3,4,5,6
Cognitive restructuring	-1.43	-0.70	-0.03	-0.27	0.08	-0.31	0.84	1.28	1 < 2,3,4,5,6,7,8; 2 < 3,4,5,7,8; 7 > 1,2,3,4,5,6; 8 > 1,2,3,4,5,6,7

Note: Comparisons are significant at $p < .05$.

Table 4
Profile comparisons of study variables.

	Profile 1	Profile 2	Profile 3	Profile 4	Profile 5	Profile 6	Profile 7	Profile 8	Significant profile comparisons
	Moderate avoidant/low active (n = 21)	Low (n = 56)	Emotion-focused (n = 76)	Problem-focused (n = 34)	Support-seeking/problem-focused (n = 136)	Low support-seeking/problem-focused (n = 38)	Active (n = 42)	High (n = 35)	
Discrimination experiences	2.00 (0.23)	1.27 (0.17)	2.77 (0.18)	1.14 (0.21)	1.60 (0.14)	1.60 (0.24)	1.72 (0.32)	3.10 (0.35)	1 > 2; 1 < 3,4,8; 2 < 3,8; 3 > 4,5,6,7; 4 < 5; 8 > 1,2,5,6,7
Egalitarian socialization	2.24 (0.20)	3.09 (0.13)	3.16 (0.08)	3.21 (0.18)	3.33 (0.09)	3.11 (0.15)	3.52 (0.11)	3.47 (0.14)	1 < 2,3,4,5,6,7,8; 2 < 7,8; 7 > 2,3,6
Discrimination awareness socialization	2.27 (0.16)	2.61 (0.15)	3.21 (0.07)	2.78 (0.22)	2.98 (0.12)	3.09 (0.16)	3.12 (0.19)	3.57 (0.11)	1 < 3,5,6,7,8; 2 < 3,6,7,8; 8 > 1,2,3,4,5,6,7
Cultural pride socialization	2.22 (0.29)	3.31 (0.14)	3.26 (0.09)	3.67 (0.11)	3.62 (0.07)	3.54 (0.16)	3.75 (0.07)	3.77 (0.08)	1 < 2,3,4,5,6,7,8; 2 < 4,7,8; 3 < 4,5,7,8
School involvement	1.97 (0.21)	2.45 (0.12)	2.78 (0.10)	2.62 (0.14)	2.97 (0.07)	2.66 (0.17)	2.63 (0.16)	3.13 (0.14)	1 < 2,3,4,5,6,7,8; 2 < 3,5,8; 5 > 4,7; 8 > 1,2,4,6,7
Home involvement	2.73 (0.19)	3.09 (0.11)	3.50 (0.11)	3.37 (0.12)	3.67 (0.07)	3.05 (0.13)	3.52 (0.17)	4.21 (0.16)	1 < 2,3,4,5,7,8; 2 < 3,5,7,8; 4 < 5,8; 6 < 3,5,7,8; 8 > 1,2,3,4,5,6,7

Note: Comparisons are significant at $p < .05$.

Moderately avoidant/low active coping fathers reported less discrimination than emotion-focused, problem-focused, and high coping. In comparison to moderate avoidant/low active, emotion-focused, and high coping profiles, low coping fathers indicated fewer discrimination experiences.

Profile variation by parenting practices

Wald tests also revealed some variation across ethnic-racial socialization practices: egalitarian ($\chi^2(7) = 39.64, p < .001$), cultural pride ($\chi^2(7) = 55.35, p < .001$), and discrimination awareness ($\chi^2(7) = 63.68, p < .001$) messages. All comparisons, including means and standard deviations are presented in Table 3. Moderate avoidant/low active coping fathers reported communicating fewer egalitarian and cultural pride socialization messages than all other profiles. Active coping fathers were more likely to discuss egalitarian messages with their sons than low, emotion-focused, and problem-focused/support-seeking fathers. Emotion-focused coping fathers reported greater cultural pride socialization than problem-focused, support-seeking/problem-focused, active and high fathers. Low coping fathers communicated fewer cultural pride socialization with sons than problem-focused, active and high fathers.

Regarding discrimination awareness socialization, both moderate avoidant/low active coping and low coping fathers conveyed fewer messages in comparison to other coping profiles. High copers reported conveying more discrimination awareness socialization than the 7 other identified profiles. Low coping fathers reported fewer discrimination awareness messages than emotion-focused, problem-focused/low support-seeking, active and high coping fathers. Moderate avoidant/low active fathers reported less discrimination awareness socialization than emotion-focused, support-seeking/problem-focused, problem-focused/low support-seeking, active and high coping fathers.

Additionally, results indicated that profiles varied by levels of school ($\chi^2(7) = 39.74, p < .001$) and home involvement ($\chi^2(7) = 67.54, p < .001$). Moderate avoidant/low active coping fathers reported less school and home involvement than all other profiles. In comparison to several profiles (low, emotion-focused, problem-focused, support-seeking/problem-focused, problem-focused/low support-seeking, and active coping profiles), high copers reported greater school

and home involvement. Support-seeking/problem-focused fathers reported greater school involvement than six profiles (moderate avoidant/low active, low coping, emotion-focused, problem-focused, low support-seeking/problem-focused, active coping); though, support-seeking/problem-focused fathers did not differ in levels of school involvement from high coping fathers. Both moderate avoidance/low active and low coping profiles reported less home involvement than emotion-focused, problem-focused, problem-focused/low support seeking, active and high coping profiles.

Multiple group regression: fathers' discrimination and parenting practices

Multiple regression analyses, which controlled for fathers' work status, age, marital status, and child age, were conducted to examine associations with parenting indicators. Analyses revealed that fathers' experiences were related to discrimination awareness socialization ($\beta = 0.35, p < .001; R^2 = 0.11$), home ($\beta = 0.20, p < .001; R^2 = 0.08$) and school involvement ($\beta = 0.13, p < .01; R^2 = 0.06$). However, fathers' discrimination experiences were unrelated to egalitarian ($\beta = 0.08, ns$) and cultural pride ($\beta = 0.03, ns$) socialization. Multigroup regression analyses suggested that this association varied across coping profiles. For 3 profiles (moderate avoidant/low active ($\beta = 0.64, p < .01$); support-seeking/problem-focused ($\beta = 0.42, p < .01$); low support-seeking/problem-focused ($\beta = 0.52, p < .01$), discrimination was positively associated with discrimination awareness socialization. Additionally, for emotion-focused coping fathers, discrimination was associated with the communication of fewer egalitarian messages ($\beta = -0.29, p < .05$) and greater home involvement ($\beta = 0.63, p < .001$). Also, results indicated that, among support-seeking/problem-focused coping fathers, discrimination was associated with greater school involvement ($\beta = 0.19, p < .05$).

Discussion

Our investigation identified 8 distinct coping profiles among a sociodemographically diverse sample of African American fathers of sons, suggesting variation in the coping and adaptation of African American fathers. In comparison to prior studies, our analyses demonstrated important areas of conceptual overlap in coping patterns. The largest

identified profile (33% of fathers) was characterized by a combination of support-seeking and problem-focused coping. These individual dimensions have been commonly utilized among African American men (Coles, 2009; Hammond et al., 2011). Results suggest that coping strategies employing a mix of support-seeking and problem-focused were most common among our samples of African American fathers. Though no known studies have applied a profile-oriented approach to identify coping profiles among African American fathers, existing studies have identified similar profiles among African American and multiethnic samples (Aldridge & Roesch, 2008). Additionally, our study identified several other coping profiles (i.e., emotion-focused; low; active; problem-focused; high coping) were identified, each of which have been observed as key coping strategies among ethnic minority populations (e.g., Clark, 2004). Though, our results indicate that certain coping strategies may be less prevalent than were previously noted. For example, active and high coping fathers were each roughly 9% of our sample, which contrasts with studies suggesting that these coping strategies are more common. However, posterior probabilities for these profiles suggest that, although less common in our sample, they represent distinct coping strategies employed by African American fathers.

Results from suggested that coping profiles varied by African American fathers' levels of reported discrimination and parenting practices. For example, high coping fathers (i.e., higher than average coping across all indicators) were the highest in discrimination experiences. For men who experience higher levels of racial discrimination, a range of coping skills may be necessary to cope and adapt with discrimination. African American fathers' use of multiple strategies could potentially reflect their need to employ strategies for coping with race-related transgressions and the difficulties of finding strategies that effectively reduce the racial discrimination stress. Also, high coping fathers communicated the greatest frequency of discrimination awareness messages to their sons. This association could demonstrate how fathers' own awareness of discrimination, likely shaped by their own encounters, is an important context and catalyst for discussing discrimination with their sons. In fact, high coping fathers were among the most engaged fathers in both ethnic-racial socialization and involvement. Bolstered by existing studies (e.g., Coles, 2009; Lewis-Coles & Constantine, 2006), our study suggests that a diverse coping skillset could reflect fathers' appraisal of and adaptation to prior discriminatory encounters. Thus, given their own experiences and awareness, fathers may perceive that a critical parenting role is helping their sons develop skills to cope and navigate racialized contexts (Dunbar et al., 2015; Guzzo, 2011). Their utilization of general and race-specific parenting potentially reflects their own motivations to prepare their sons for the realities of their social experiences and interactions.

Additionally, emotion-focused coping fathers, which utilized avoidance, coupled with moderate levels of venting, and distraction, reported the second highest frequency in discrimination. Prior investigations have indicated a relationship between discrimination and emotion-focused coping behaviors (Seaton, Upton, Gilbert, & Volpe, 2014). Further, studies have suggested that emotion-focused coping is often employed when an individual perceives that the stressor cannot be altered (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). Thus, for some fathers, use of emotion-focused coping may be especially adaptive in their assessments of discrimination. However, we found that emotion-focused coping fathers were less likely to transmit cultural pride socialization messages to their sons than fathers utilizing problem-focused or high coping strategies (e.g., support-seeking/problem-focused; active; high). Analyses examining coping within the context of fathers' discrimination indicate that, for emotion-focused copers, greater frequency of discrimination resulted in fewer egalitarian socialization messages greater home involvement. These findings are particularly interesting and worthy of further investigation. However, studies focused on emotional restrictiveness, often examined in relation to masculinity role norms (Hammond, 2012), may help to contextualize our findings.

Our analyses revealed that the moderate avoidant/low active coping fathers indicated moderate levels of discrimination; but, in comparison to the other identified profiles, this group reported the lowest levels of ethnic-racial socialization and involvement. We found a similar pattern with low coping fathers. Despite similarities between these two profiles, results indicated that the moderate avoidant/low active coping group was the least engaged with their sons across the examined parenting dimensions. Existing studies utilizing profile-oriented methodologies (Aldridge & Roesch, 2008; Doron et al., 2014) have found that avoidant coping strategies are associated with poorer outcomes. However, studies have indicated that context and individual characteristics influence whether avoidant coping is adaptive or maladaptive (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Tolan & Grant, 2009). In particular, research has suggested that avoidant strategies have been associated with more positive outcomes when the stressor is perceived as uncontrollable (Compas, Connor-Smith, Saltzman, Thomsen, & Wadsworth, 2001). This appraisal process could help to support the differentiation between moderate avoidant/low active coping fathers and parental engagement with their sons, generally and within the context of their discrimination experiences. Also, previous studies have indicated that fathers' perceptions of reduced resource availability adversely impact coping and involvement (Coles, 2009). Given that our preliminary analyses revealed that fathers without a high school diploma were more likely to be represented in the moderate avoidant/low active coping profile group, our findings bolster existing studies suggesting the socially-embedded and transactional processes guiding fathers' coping and parenting.

Our analyses revealed some support that the relationship between fathers' discrimination experiences and parenting practices differed by African American fathers' coping strategies. For our moderate avoidant/low active coping fathers, discrimination experiences were associated with greater discrimination awareness socialization. However, when examining associations between the identified coping patterns, these fathers were among the lowest in reported ethnic-racial socialization and involvement. Similarly, in the context of discrimination, emotion-focused coping was related to fewer egalitarian messages, likely reflecting awareness of discrimination and assessments of the larger power structure. Though, these collective coping strategies appeared to motivate their involvement and responsivity to their sons at home. Also, within the context of discrimination, fathers using the conjoint strategies of support-seeking and problem-focused, reported greater school involvement. Among the other identified profiles, discrimination was unrelated to fathers' reported school involvement. Investigations suggest that African American fathers are particularly in tune to the school experiences of their sons, often noting the potential negative impact of these unsupportive contexts and the importance of their own visibility within these spaces (Coles, 2009; Cooper et al., 2020; Grantham & Henfield, 2011). Further studies with longitudinal data will help to better understand these relationships. For example, guiding mechanisms or moderators, such as changes in parenting efficacy or child characteristics (e.g., discrimination experiences) might lend insight into factors that shape fathers' attempts to cultivate adaptive coping among their sons.

Although this investigation provides evidence of distinct coping profiles of African American fathers as well as suggests links between coping strategies and fathers' interactions with their sons, it is not without limitations. First, some of the examined coping strategies were based upon 1-item measures, which may not have fully represented the examined construct. Also, although descriptive, the current investigation was not able to link fathers' coping behaviors and parenting practices to boys' direct outcomes (e.g., coping behaviors). Expanding work on the intergenerational transmission of coping among fathers and sons is an important direction for future studies, including how fathers coping strategies relate to boys coping and adaptation. Additionally, the use of cross-sectional and sole-reporter data serves as a study limitation. Prospective investigations would benefit from both

longitudinal and dyadic designs (e.g., Donato, Iafate, Bradbury, & Scabini, 2012), which take into consideration father and son reports of coping and parenting over time. Further, these models would be particularly helpful in understanding transactional coping processes among fathers and sons. Also, given the focus on discrimination, the inclusion of discrimination coping strategies would have further strengthened our investigation. Future studies should explore discrimination coping as well as include more culturally-centered coping dimensions (e.g., John Henryism).

African American fathers are keenly aware of risks that can negatively impact their sons' development and wellbeing. Their parenting strategies reflect a desire to promote positive development and adaptation among their sons. Addressing existing gaps, our investigation explored fathers' parenting strategies for their sons within the context of their discrimination experiences and coping. Extending existing studies (Caldwell et al., 2014; Fagan & Stevenson, 2002), this study has implications for intergenerational coping processes among African American fathers and sons and speaks to the continuing need for both father-adolescent and father-specific prevention and intervention.

Author statement

The research highlighted in this manuscript has not been published previously and is not under consideration at any other journal. Also, all authors have contributed to this manuscript in a meaningful way.

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