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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLKS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:

SELF-EFFICACY, GRIT, AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT

IN LOW-INCOME URBAN BLACK YOUTH

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN SOCIAL WORK

BY

AMZIE MOORE, II

CHICAGO, IL

MAY 2022

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Problem and Purpose

W. E. B. DuBois, one of the most influential scholars and intellectuals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, originally published a classic book in 1903, *The Souls of Black Folk*. DuBois opens his text describing his white colleagues' hesitancy to discuss black people being a problem in American life, and how they struggled to ask him how it feels to be seen as a problem. DuBois (2014) documented his sentiments and wrote, "At these I smile, or am interested, or reduce the boiling to a simmer, as the occasion may require. To the real question, how does it feel to be a problem? I answer seldom a word" (p. 4). It is these sentiments of DuBois that undergird the purpose of this study.

This study doesn't focus on the risks and deficits of urban black youth, nor does it explore the pathologies in African American urban communities. Instead, the primary aim of this study is to examine the effects of a cross-age peer mentoring program and its impact on developing components of resilience among disadvantaged African American youth in the face of multiple risk factors. This study has two aims. First, this dissertation will specifically investigate to what extent youth attendance in Saving Lives & Inspiring Youth (SLIY), a cross-age peer mentoring program, increases their self-efficacy and grit after participating for one year. This study will also develop a culturally relevant definition of self-efficacy and investigate to what extent SLIY contributes to youths' culturally relevant self-efficacy.

There are several good reasons why it is important to address the aims of this study through scientific inquiry. Since this study examines resilience in impoverished African American urban youth who grow up in communities afflicted with serious violence, disadvantage, and segregation, it is important to understand how some of these youth manage to be resilient, despite facing challenges that are unheard of for youth in privileged communities. It is equally important to understand how a school-based cross-age peer mentoring program contributes to components of resilience in this environment. The potential results of this inquiry could help social work practitioners, teachers, education administrators, and the larger scientific community to have an increased understanding of the positive effects that school-based cross-age peer mentoring programs have on increasing components of resilience among African American youth living in impoverished and violent urban communities.

Statement of the Problem

Poverty

Self-efficacy and grit have been shown to be powerful internal resources for African American youth, who live in high crime, racially segregated, and impoverished communities. This study will help to examine the effects of SLIY and its impact on increasing components of resilience among these disadvantaged youth living in highly stressed communities. Children living in poverty in the United States of America are a persistent social problem. The Children's Defense Fund (2019), the preeminent advocacy group against child poverty, issued a report revealing that 1 in 5 children in the United States live below the federal poverty line. That is, 12.8 million children live in poverty. Two-thirds of children of color live in poverty. Heartland Alliance, a leading anti-poverty organization, published a report documenting that 14.4 percent

of the residents of Illinois live below the federal poverty line, which in raw numbers is 1.8 million people who live in impoverished conditions (Terpstra & Rynell, 2016). The report also showed that 6.6 percent of the residents of Illinois live in extreme poverty, and 20.2 percent of all children live below the federal poverty line. Examining the poverty rate of children by race and ethnicity reveals that 43.2 percent of black children, 27.1 percent of Latino children, and 13.5 percent of Asian children in Illinois live below the federal poverty line (Terpstra & Rynell, 2016). The report also showed that the poverty rate in Chicago was 22 percent (Terpstra & Rynell, 2016).

Community Violence

In 2016, the city of Chicago witnessed a total of 762 homicides, which was more than the number of homicides in the cities of New York and Los Angeles combined (Helmore, 2017). The 762 homicides in 2016 represented a 58-percent increase from the previous year (Ford, 2017). Most of the homicide victims were blacks and teenagers. The teen years are crucial transition points for those youth at risk of being harmed by violent crime. Intervening in teenage years can indeed save lives, although most youth do not need to be saved from violence engagement but rather from terrorization and deprivations related to poverty. Most youth in the communities SLIY served are not perpetrators of violence. It appears that less than 4 percent of residents in high-crime communities carry out violence (Papachristos & Wildeman, 2014), although racism and classism cause people to assume more negative views about black youth in impoverished circumstances. In the same year, Chicago had 4,331 shooting victims, which was a 47 percent increase since 2015. Moreover, the murder rate in the city of Chicago in 2016 was 27.7 homicides per 100,000 city residents, which was a homicide rate not seen since the 1990s

(Sanburn & Johnson, 2017). Most of these violent crimes took place in a small number of neighborhoods of the city's south and west sides.

Saving Lives & Inspiring Youth occurs in three neighborhoods with violent crime rates among the highest in the city: Englewood and West Englewood, North Lawndale, and Bronzeville. The University of Chicago's Crime Lab (2017) published a report revealing that 90 percent of the homicides in Chicago were perpetrated with firearms, compared to 58 percent in New York City, 72 percent in Los Angeles, 80 percent in Houston, and 84 percent in Philadelphia. This report also documented that the city witnessed a 43-percent increase in non-fatal shootings, and that 80 percent of the homicide victims were African Americans, although they represented only one-third of the city's population. Whites represented only 5 percent of the homicide victims (Kapustin et al., 2017).

The crime statistics in Englewood are staggering. In 2020, during the height of a global pandemic, the Chicago Police Department (CPD) documented 48 murders, 196 shooting incidents, 57 criminal sexual assaults, and 357 aggravated battery complaints (Chicago Police Department, 2021). In 2017, during the study, CPD reported that there were 35 murders, 60 criminal sexual assaults, and 316 aggravated battery complaints in this neighborhood. In 2017 in Bronzeville (during the study) there were 24 documented murders, 56 criminal sexual assaults, and 159 aggravated battery complaints.

Effects of Community Violence

Researchers have found that all forms of exposure to community violence—witnessing, learning about it, or being victimized by it—have a traumatizing effect on children. For example, Michael Lynch (2003) reviewed the established scientific literature that examined the effects of

children's exposure to community violence, illustrating that such exposure is linked to hyperarousal, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, externalizing behaviors, and internalizing behaviors. Lynch's review (2003) also showed that resilience functioning among youth exposed to violence, especially resilience functioning promoted by parental support, school support, and peer support, assisted with adaptive functioning among youth exposed to community violence. Salzinger and colleagues' (2000) review of the literature is consistent with Lynch's, showing that children's and youth's exposure to community violence affects their internalizing behavior, externalizing behavior, and academic functioning. Researchers also found that children's exposure to violence can adversely impact their development and can contribute to increased bedwetting, separation anxiety, aggression, and depressive symptoms and decreased verbalization skills, ability to focus in school, and socialization skills (Margolin & Gordis, 2000). Fleckman and colleagues (2016) in later studies extended established findings regarding children's exposure to violence, finding that direct and indirect violence exposure is linked to externalizing behavior among children.

Effects of Poverty

It has been well established in the scientific literature that poverty has an adverse effect on children and adolescents. Brooks-Gunn and Duncan (1997) conducted a systematic review and found that children enduring poverty during their preschool years have lower school completion rates than students enduring poverty later in life. Early studies revealed that neighborhood poverty increased stress and conflict in African American families and decreased self-worth among African American male adolescents (Paschall & Hubbard, 1998). Research has shown that, compared to their middle and upper class counterparts, children living in poverty

experience more family disruptions and have less social support and less social capital, as well as parents who are more punitive and less responsive (Evans, 2004).

Exposure to poverty during early childhood negatively affects brain development among children at school age and in early adolescence (Luby et al., 2013). Mediated by chaos, childhood poverty negatively impacts adolescents' development of persistence toward accomplishing tasks (Fuller-Rowell et al., 2014). Moreover, researchers have revealed that family poverty, as well as neighborhood poverty to a lesser extent, adversely affects the mental, emotional, and behavioral health of children and youth (Yoshikawa et al., 2012). Researchers have also found that there is a link between child poverty and child development, school readiness, and low academic achievement (Engle & Black, 2008). When examining the direct effects of poverty, Engle and Black (2008) found that "poverty influences children's education and development by increasing risk factors and limiting protective factors and opportunities for stimulation and enrichment" (p.245). All of these findings lead to a conclusion that an environment of poverty adversely impacts African American youth's self-assessment of their self-efficacy and self-determination. Researchers have found that children from a lower social economic class are exposed to traumatic events longer, more frequently, and for more prolonged periods, and that this exposure in turn produces a stress response resulting from events that are frightening and threatening (Morsy & Rothstein, 2019). Studies have also revealed that impoverished and low-income backgrounds are related to poor child developmental outcomes, specifically cognitive developmental and educational outcomes (Chaudry & Wimer, 2016).

Resilience

While much is known about the adverse effects on disadvantaged youth of poverty and exposure to community violence, less is known about how aspects of resilience are developed in those contexts. For this study, the overarching framework and conceptualization of resilience is a person's ability to bounce back from hardship and adversity. This process is dynamic and can be influenced by environmental factors, external factors, and the individual's inborn capabilities (Garcia-Dia et al., 2013).

Three theories are salient in understanding resilience in disadvantaged youth of color, and have been adopted to guide inquiries. An aspect of resilience that is less known and studied among African American youth is self-efficacy. The theory of self-efficacy was developed by Albert Bandura (1997). Bandura described self-efficacy as a person's belief in his or her capacity to pursue and achieve set goals. Such beliefs in one's capacity influence what goals he or she tends to pursue, as well as his or her endurance in the face of obstacles and failure and ability to bounce back in the face of adversity.

Self-determination theory, which was developed empirically through the study of young adults' experiences of goal formation, pursuit, and fulfillment, is related to self-efficacy in the sense that it describes an inner experience of goal formation and attainment (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Self-determination theory in particular emphasizes that individual fulfillment arises from the experience that one can choose the goals to pursue and effectively pursue them. Goals most important for human happiness are grouped into three broad categories: autonomy, relatedness, and competence.

Grit is also an important theoretical construct to help with understanding resilience among impoverished and disadvantaged African American youth. Angela Duckworth (2016) described *grit* as a combination of passion and perseverance to achieve specific outcomes. While this theoretical framework has been utilized to study various groups, specifically specialized armed forces units, the conceptual framework has not been applied to study disadvantaged African American youth living in impoverished and high crime communities.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions of this study will help to expand our understanding of resilience by focusing on self-efficacy and grit as experienced and developed among impoverished African-American youth participating in the cross-age peer mentoring program SLIY. Rather than understanding self-efficacy as static over time, the research questions will allow for exploration of self-efficacy as malleable and context-dependent according to culture, age, stressors, and strengths (Bandura, 1997). The research questions of this study will also help with understanding grit as experienced by disadvantaged African American youth within this urban context. Furthermore, these research questions will also help with understanding to what extent after-school programs increase self-efficacy and grit among disadvantaged urban youth exposed to violence and living in impoverished communities. More understanding is needed about how self-efficacy and grit are modified through social services and relationships, specifically via a cross-age peer mentoring program. To fill the gap in the literature, this study will attempt to answer the following questions:

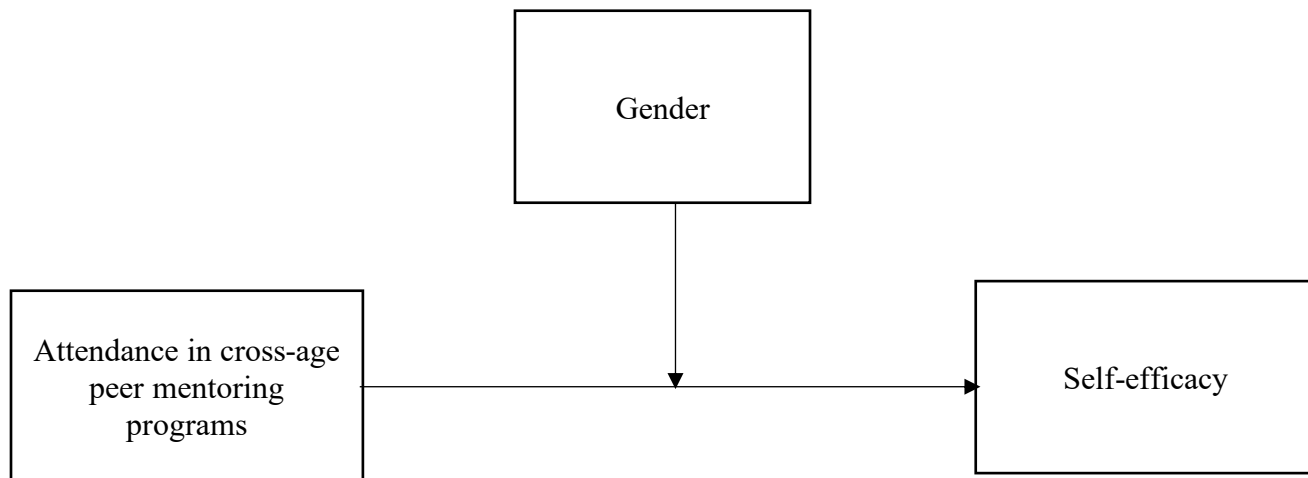


Figure 3. Conceptual diagram of a simple moderation model in which the effect of youth attendance on self-efficacy is dependent on gender.

H_{1,4}: Higher SLIY attendance among youth mentors will predict increases in their self-efficacy when moderated by age (see the conceptual diagram of this model, Figure 4).

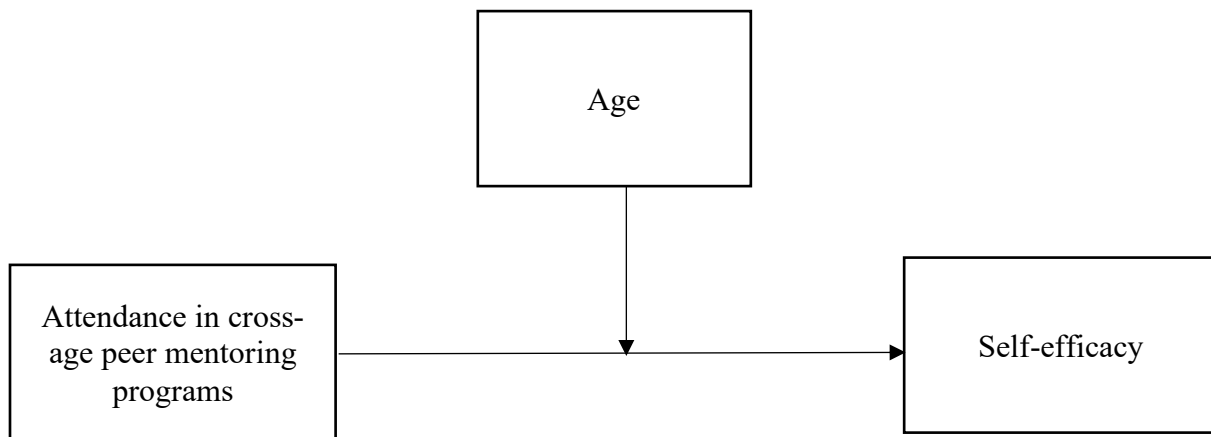


Figure 4. Conceptual diagram of a simple moderation model in which the effect of youth attendance on self-efficacy is dependent on age.

RQ2: Do African American youth mentors attending SLIY increase their grit?

H_{2,1}: Higher SLIY attendance among youth mentors will predict increases in their grit (see the conceptual diagram, Figure 5).



Figure 5. Conceptual diagram of youth attendance effects on grit.

H_{2.2}: Social support will function as a moderator of the impact of SLIY attendance on mentors' grit (see the conceptual diagram, Figure 6).

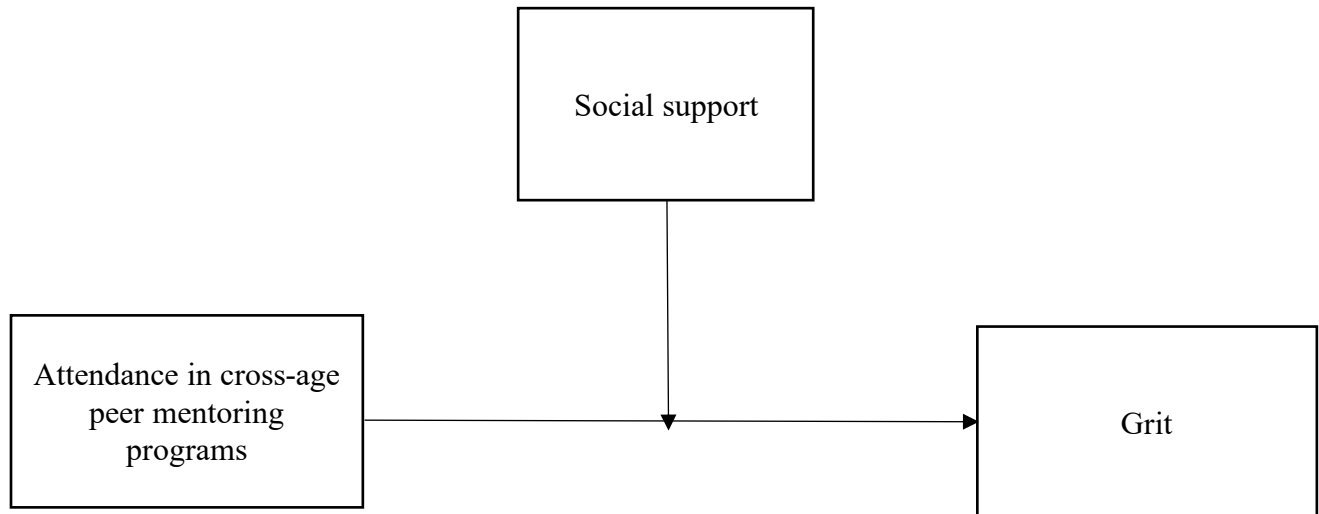


Figure 6. Conceptual diagram of a simple moderation model in which the effect of youth attendance on grit is dependent on social support.

H_{2.3}: Higher SLIY attendance among youth mentors will predict increases in their grit when moderated by gender (see the conceptual diagram, Figure 7).

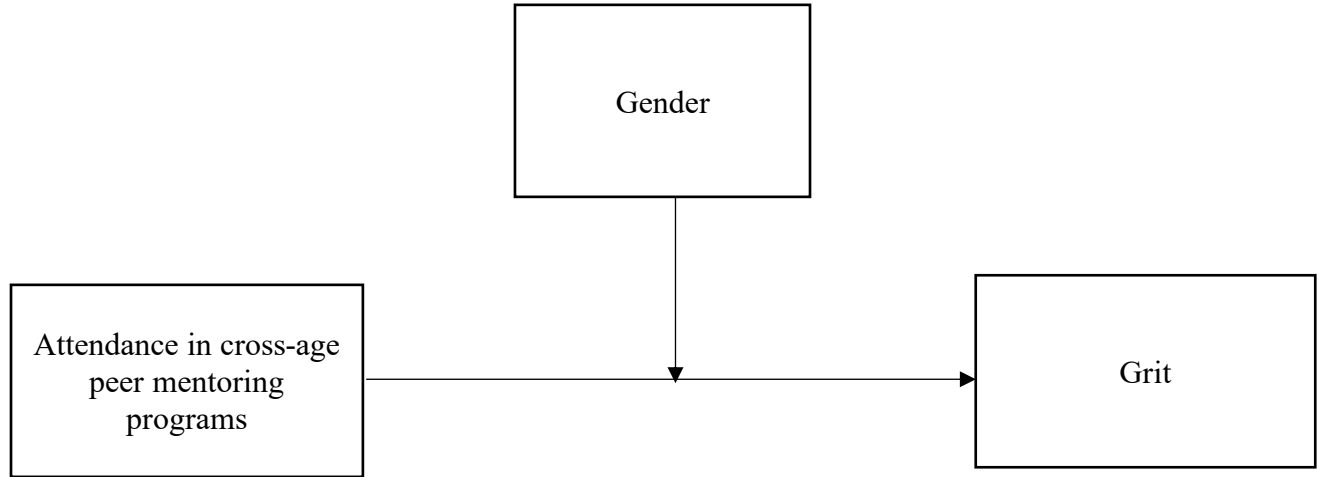


Figure 7. Conceptual diagram of a simple moderation model in which the effect of youth attendance on grit is dependent on gender.

H_{2.4}: Higher SLIY attendance among youth mentors will predict increases in their grit when moderated by age (see the conceptual diagram, Figure 8).

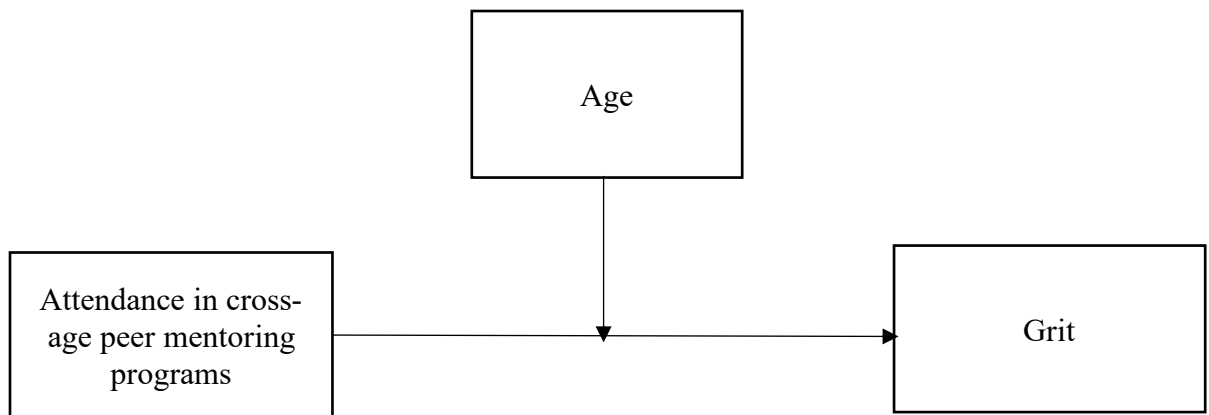


Figure 8. Conceptual diagram of a simple moderation model in which the effect of youth attendance on grit is dependent on age.

RQ3: Does SLIY build a culturally relevant form of self-efficacy?

RQ4: Do more traumatic stress symptoms reduce self-efficacy over time?

H_{4.1}: More traumatic stress symptoms will reduce self-efficacy over time. This hypothesis was tested in a post-hoc analysis (see the conceptual diagram, Figure 9).



Figure 9. Conceptual diagram of trauma effects on self-efficacy

RQ5: Do more traumatic stress symptoms reduce grit over time?

H_{5.1}: More traumatic stress symptoms will reduce grit over time. This hypothesis was tested in a post-hoc analysis (see the conceptual diagram, Figure 10).

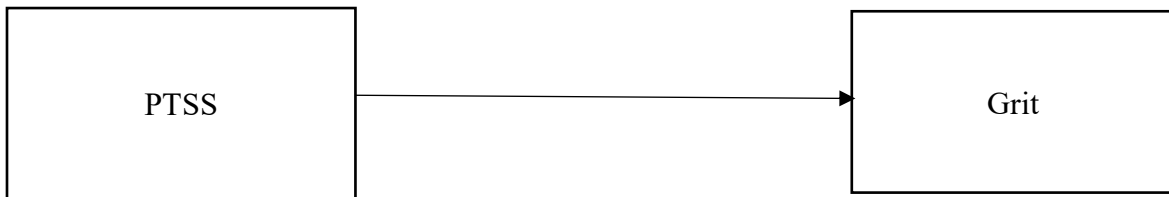


Figure 10. Conceptual diagram of trauma effects on grit

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Community Risks

Poverty

Chicago is a large Midwest city that has a population of 2.7 million people (U.S. Census, 2021). In the city of Chicago, 50.0 percent of the population is white, 29.6 percent is black or African American, and 28.8 percent is Latino. The median household income is \$58,247, and the per capita income is \$37,103. The poverty rate in the city of Chicago is above that national average, and recent U.S. census data revealed that 21.7 percent of the population in this city lives below the federal poverty line (U.S. Census, 2018). Poverty, in this instance, is defined based on the poverty guidelines established by the Department of Health and Human Services. These guidelines are a simplified version of the poverty thresholds calculated by the U.S. Census Bureau. Poverty guidelines are based on family income, family size, and adjusting price changes using the Consumer Price Index (Department of Health and Human Services, 2018). They also identify which families are eligible for programs designed to assist families that are experiencing economic deprivation. For example, a family of four with an annual income of \$25,100 or less is considered living below the federal poverty line and is eligible for programs that assist impoverished families.

Chicago is a tale of two cities. As a global city, Chicago is thriving and doing well within the global economy. The city has been able to attract major corporations, such as Motorola

Solutions, Beam Suntory, and GE Healthcare, which have contributed to the city's unemployment rate of 4.1 percent (Semuels, 2018). However, a large segment of the population of Chicago has not been able to take advantage of the city's economic growth as a global city. This is particularly true for African Americans. Two major historical phenomena have contributed to African Americans lacking access or inability to get ahead in the city of Chicago: segregation and the disappearance of blue-collar industrial jobs.

Crime

Violent crimes in Chicago present incredible risk for youth and adolescents in urban neighborhoods, particularly on the south and west sides of the city. When the intervention was implemented and the study was being carried out, violent crimes, specifically gun violence, increased dramatically in Chicago. The research for this study began in 2014. By 2016, Chicago had witnessed a 58-percent increase in homicides and a 43-percent increase in non-fatal shootings as compared to 2015. In 2016, 764 homicides took place in the city (University of Chicago Crime Lab, 2017). A larger share of the suspects of homicides in the city of Chicago were adolescents, which is different from what was observed in other cities in the United States. Reports also revealed that 90 percent of the homicides resulted from the use of a firearm. African Americans were disproportionately represented among the victims of homicide in the city of Chicago. Although African Americans represented only one-third of the population of the city, they represented 80 percent of the homicide victims (University of Chicago Crime Lab, 2017). Homicide victimization is particularly acute among African American men between the ages of 15 and 34 years of age. African American men made up half of the homicide victims, although they represented only 4 percent of the population of Chicago. The homicide rate for adolescents,

who were perpetrators of homicides, was much higher in Chicago than in other major American cities. In cities across the United States, 15 percent of those arrested for homicide were adolescents, compared to 25 percent in Chicago.

Police Brutality

Police brutality in Chicago is a very serious social problem, and African Americans have had to endure decades of suffering at the hands of the Chicago Police Department (CPD). Commander Jon Burge of the Chicago Police Department supervised the torture of black men for decades, which led to many of them being convicted of crimes they did not commit (Chicago Tribune Staff, 2018). A large majority of the convictions were overturned, and many falsely accused and imprisoned black men were exonerated of charges. Commander Burge was convicted of lying under oath about the torture, and the city of Chicago paid out 19.8 million dollars in reparations to the torture victims (Chicago Tribune Staff, 2018). However, it took decades for his trial to occur, and it took place only when the Chicago Torture Project appealed to the U.N., which in turn pressured the city of Chicago to move forward with the trial (Mogul & Ohri, 2016).

Police brutality persists in the city of Chicago, causing persistent terror and stress for African American residents, including youth. The Invisible Institute created the Citizen Police Data Project (2020), which collect data via the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) regarding CPD's interactions with the citizens of the city. These data demonstrated that there were 247,150 complaints filed against the CPD, of which 56,523 were filed regarding the use of force. Of all the allegations, only 7 percent were disciplined for their misconduct. Moreover, CPD used more force against black people in the city than against any other racial group, although white

Chicagoans resisted the police more (Arthur, 2019). This malfeasance by the CPD is widespread on the city's south and west sides, and many of the urban African American youth have to encounter this type of misbehavior by the CPD. The most visible and infamous example of this type of excessive force by Chicago police was the murder of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald, who was shot 16 times by convicted former police officer Jason Van Dyke on the city's west side. This one case of excessive police brutality cost the city 5 million dollars (Husain, 2019). The traumatic stress engendered by such brutality cannot be adequately compensated economically, but it affects every African American person.

Conceptual Frameworks

In addition to the theories of self-efficacy and grit, more conceptual frameworks were adopted to organize the thinking and guide the scientific inquiry for this dissertation and to broaden the context in which self-efficacy and grit are studied among African American youth living in impoverished urban communities. In particular, the concepts of "decent families" and "street families" (Anderson, 1999), and theories of resilience, self-determination, developmental assets, and positive youth development were adopted for this study.

The distinction between decent families and street families was developed from an ethnographic study that produced results illustrating that most families living in high-crime, high-poverty urban communities are from decent families (Anderson, 1999), and it is a reminder to avoid assuming that all youth living and going to school within contexts of poverty and community are violent. The "decent family" strengths are important components of resilience for youth that motivate them to make use of education and social supports to strive to exit poverty.

Resilience theory is the overarching theoretical framework for this study, in which the components of resilience, self-efficacy and grit are examined. Resilience theory informs the research questions with attempting to understand how African American urban youth, who face multiple risks factors in highly stressed communities, are able to adjust to adversity or to bounce back from traumatic events to achieve their goals. Self-determination theory is based on a set of assumptions that suggests that environmental, social, and cultural factors can support or undermine people's motivation and performance (Gagne & Deci, 2005). On their face, self-efficacy and grit do not consider environmental or social factors that impede or impact youths' motivation, confidence, or perseverance to achieve their goals. The developmental assets framework was adopted for this study because it focuses on those community and family resources available to youth to support their resilience. The aim of SLIY was to understand whether cross-age mentoring could function as such a developmental asset for youth in under-resourced communities, for example, can mentoring sessions that prevent high-risk behavior enhance resilience and prosocial behavior? (Benson et al., 2011). Finally, positive youth development is one of the main conceptual frameworks that drives cross-age peer mentoring programs. One of the core assumptions of this framework is that youth are agents and producers of their own development (Larson, 2006).

Decent Families and Street Families

Elijah Anderson (1999) conducted a classic ethnographic study that examined the life of inner-city residents living in high-crime and impoverished communities. In this study, Anderson presented two concepts that are instructive for this study: decent families (the majority) and street families. These concepts are useful with reference to organizing the thinking around

studying urban youth within a violent context so as to prevent making generalizations about the urban poor in general and urban poor youth in particular. Decent families subscribe to mainstream American values; they organize their lives around working to acquire material possessions, raising their children to be productive members of society, and instilling mainstream American values in their children.

Street families, by contrast, often do not show consideration for other people, have a superficial sense of family, and may love their children but have difficulty coping with the stress of parenting. Most importantly, street families abide by the code of the street. Anderson (1999) described the code of the street as a set of informal rules that govern interpersonal relationships, particularly as it relates to violence. Anderson further asserted that

the rules prescribe both proper comportment and the proper way to respond if challenged. They regulate the use of violence and so supply a rationale allowing those who are inclined to aggression to precipitate violent encounters in an approved way. The rules have been established and are enforced mainly by the street-oriented; but on the streets the distinction is often irrelevant (p. 33).

In other words, both decent and street families must navigate and abide by the code of the street or suffer severe consequences for not honoring the code. Moreover, the code of the street runs counter to the norms of mainstream American society. Despite the code of the street being a set of values that consciously opposes mainstream cultural norms, this code is very powerful and influential in these neighborhoods and dictates the behavior of community residents.

Nevertheless, Anderson (1999) argued that the majority of residents in urban impoverished communities are decent families. These decent families, however, must coexist with street families in these communities and find ways to adapt to the pathologies associated with the code of the street while also carrying out their values.

It will be seen that the great majority of the youth who signed up as mentors for SLIY were motivated by values reflective of “decent” families: commitment to bettering their communities by supporting children, seeking to strengthen academic and career skills to pursue positive life trajectories, and wanting to deepen positive support systems and peer relationships.

Elements of Resilience: Self-efficacy and Self-determination

The study of resilience represented a major paradigm shift in the field of psychology, as researchers shifted from focusing on risk factors that led to psychosocial problems to identifying and focusing on the strengths of individuals (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). Since the late 1980s, this concept has evolved in its meaning. Earlier conceptualizations of resilience described it as the ability to bounce back or to successfully cope with an adverse, harmful, or undesirable circumstance (Dyer & McGinnis, 1996; Earvolino-Ramirez, 2007), as well as protective factors that modify individuals’ reaction to hazardous environments that predisposes them to a maladaptive outcome (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). Resilience is the capacity to recover from misfortune, loss, or some other unfortunate situation and is highly dependent upon protective factors. Dyer and McGinnis (1996) defined protector factors as competencies that are required for resilience; these competencies are described as positive skills that individuals have access to, particularly within the family or interpersonal context. Some scholars have further argued that, when this concept is applied to adults, resilience is distinct from recovery. Recovery is a trajectory in which people’s normal way of functioning gives way to thresholds and sub-thresholds of psychopathology, such as depression, for periods of time and then gradually returns to normal functioning. On the other hand, resilience is the capacity to maintain stable psychological and physical health after exposure to a traumatic or disruptive event (Bonanno,

2004). Social scientists and scholars have also debated whether or not resilience is a trait, a process, or an outcome (Fletcher & Sakar, 2013). Some scholars have seen resilience as a personality trait among individuals, whereas others have seen resilience as a process with the capacity to change over time. Despite the variations in the way that resilience is conceptualized and operationalized, most scholars agree that there are two core concepts that are essential for defining resilience: adversity and positive adaptation. The earlier conceptions of resilience have expanded to include several components of resilience, such as rebounding, determination, social support, and self-efficacy (Garcia-Dia, 2013). Rebounding is described in the resilience literature as the capacity to bounce back after experiencing a life-changing event. Determination was described as the belief that one can overcome an obstacle he or she encounters. Social support has been defined as a positive relationship with at least one person who helps to facilitate resilience outcomes. Self-efficacy has been conceptualized as a belief in one's ability to overcome obstacles.

Developmental Assets Framework

The developmental assets framework, developed in 1990 and revised and updated in 1995, was intended to provide greater focus on the ingredients necessary for successful development of adolescents. This framework also helps with examining the role that the community plays in adolescent well-being (Benson et al., 2011). It was developed based on synthesized research that included all ingredients that demonstrated efficacy in the prevention of high-risk behavior, such as substance use, violence, and dropping out of school, as well as enhanced resilience and prosocial behavior among youth.

These assets have been divided into two categories: external assets and internal assets. Within the external assets category, developmental assets have been grouped into four domains: support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time. The internal assets category also consists of four domains: commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity. Support, for example, would consist of family support or support from a family that provides positive support or love. It also consists of a caring school environment—an environment that is caring and encouraging (Benson et al., 2011). The internal environment would include internal assets, such as commitment to learning, motivation to achieve, school engagement, or active engagement in the learning process. This framework has been used in organizing youth programming by major national organizations, such as the Boys and Girls Club and the Girl Scouts, and it is considered one of the most influential frameworks for understanding Positive Youth Development.

There is a dearth of studies exploring the link between self-efficacy theory and self-determination theory. Garrin (2014) connected self-efficacy theory, self-determination theory, and self-regulation theory as a construct for understanding their interconnectivity with the social change model of leadership. Heretofore, to my knowledge there has been no research conducted on the interconnectivity between self-efficacy theory and self-determination theory in the specific culture of disadvantaged African-American youth and how self-efficacy and self-determination can be modified through a relatively short-term intervention like cross-age mentoring.

Self-efficacy. Albert Bandura's (1997) formulation of the concept of self-efficacy set the stage for understanding essential aspects of human motivation. Bandura conceptualized self-

efficacy as a person's belief in his or her capacity to engage in actions toward goal achievement. This theory holds that a person's lack of belief in his or her ability to achieve goals will negatively impact the incentives to act toward achieving goals. Bandura (1997) further posited that belief in one's ability to achieve goals determines which goals to pursue and the amount of effort and time invested into achieving those goals. Self-efficacy is context dependent and is also associated with the acquisition of knowledge and skills development. This theory further states that goals or outcomes are associated with action or performance. Bandura wrote that "the outcomes that people anticipate depend largely on their judgments of how well they will be able to perform in given situations (p. 24)." Thus, actions are connected to how one perceives they can execute those actions or their confidence in executing those actions toward goal attainment.

Grit. Angela Duckworth (2016) described grit as the spirit of not giving up in the face of obstacles and challenges. Individuals with grit are usually highly accomplished, and they are examples of people who persevere to achieve their goals. Other important aspects of grit are resiliency, as well as the propensity for working hard. Grit also been described as showing up to perform the tasks at hand, and it is mutable not fixed. The theory of grit assumes that talent plus effort are the essential components of skills. Duckworth further posited that skills coupled with effort is what facilitates achievement. Grit is also an individual's commitment to achieve a specific outcome over a long period of time by exerting his or her efforts and skills towards a goal. In addition, an important component of grit is enthusiasm about the efforts toward goal achievement. That is, grit is passion for the work being done to achieve specific outcomes. Passion, according to Duckworth, is consistency toward a goal over time, as well as the ability to

narrowly focus on a goal or outcome for an extended period of time despite obstacles and setbacks.

Passion is described as possessing an ultimate goal that is connected to smaller goals, and these goals are stratified and placed in three categories: low-level goals, mid-level goals, and high-level goals (Duckworth, 2016). Low-level goals are a means to an end. The higher the goals are in the strata, the more abstract they become and the less they are connected to the day-to-day process of the ultimate overall achievement or goal. The top-level goal is the ultimate outcome that results from achieving the lower and mid-level goals. The ability to remain focused on the top-level goal, the most abstract of them all, is passion.

Duckworth (2016) also conducted quantitative and qualitative studies with the intent of understanding how grit grows over time. The results of her research demonstrated that four themes emerged among gritty people. People with grit that grows over time have interest in what they do. They also have the ability to practice, with the focus being the development of their skills. People with grit that grows also believe that their work has purpose and that it matters. Hope facilitates the growth of grit, which means that people can continue towards goal achievement despite difficult and challenging times. In short, people with grit that grows have interest in what they do, purpose for their work, ability to practice their craft, hope of goal achievement in the face of difficulty, and passion that propels them to keep in mind and pursue their most lofty goal. However, prior studies of grit have not been conducted with samples of low-income African American youth, a gap that this study fills.

Positive Youth Development. The theoretical framework of the SLIY program is positive youth development (PYD), which is a strengths-based approach. The PYD theoretical

framework assumes that youth are agents of their own development and producers of their own development (Larson, 2006). Positive youth development has implications for mentoring in particular. Mentors should avoid controlling or molding youth, but instead should “support and enable youth to control and motivate themselves” (Larson, 2006, p. 678). The PYD framework also assumes that all youth possess strengths and that psychological and behavior characteristics have the capacity to change among youth, which is also known as plasticity (Lerner et al., 2014).

Positive youth development is framed within the context of the 5 C’s: competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring (Lerner et al. 2014). Competence is defined as viewing one’s action from a positive perspective, particularly within the social, academic, cognitive, health, and vocational domains. Confidence, within the framework of PYD, is described as an intrinsic sense of self-worth and self-efficacy. Connection has been conceptualized as a positive relationship between people and institutions that is exemplified by exchanges between the youth and his or her peers, school, family, and community. Character is described as youths’ respect for social and cultural norms, and a sense of what is morally right and wrong. Caring is having the ability to sympathize and empathize with others. The PYD framework guides intervention and planning. Findings about how PYD elements relate to lower levels of conflict with the law over time and how SLIY has strengthened elements of PYD for participating youth are available elsewhere (Onyeka et al., in press).

Social Support. Social support is important because it is one way to frame the potential impact of the cross-age mentoring program (SLIY) for youth. It has been defined as a resource exchange between at least two people who serve as providers or recipients with a focus on enhancing the well-being of the recipients (Shumaker & Brownell, 1984) This standard

definition of social support has been criticized. Social scientists have expanded the concept to mean that social support is reciprocal for all involved in the exchange and that well-being is enhanced for everyone involved in the exchange (Shumaker & Brownwell, 1984). The implications for social support as a concept are the need to take into account the relationship between the actors and how this relationship influences social support. Shumaker and Brown argued that social support implies two perspectives, social support among strangers and participants' perception about social supports available to them. For instance, social support can happen between two strangers, such as a physician and patient, and does not necessarily have to exist within one's personal network. Also, perceptions of social support can be different, and sources of incongruence can stem from actors having different methods for helping and receiving care.

Positive social support could serve as protective factors for youth living in high-crime communities. Papachristos and Wilderman (2014) hypothesized that there is a strong association between youths' individual behavior and the risky behavior of their social networks. Their research showed the importance of social networks, particularly those networks described as co-offending networks. Papachristos and Wilderman's study provided evidence that youths victimized by homicide are highly likely to associate with co-offending networks. In other words, their study revealed that youth who are victims of homicide associate with networks who commit homicide. Their results also show that gun homicides occur within a network that is only 4 percent of the neighborhood's population, suggesting that offering nonviolent alternative positive social networks can be life saving for youth, as the youth themselves believed when they

named SLIY. Understanding the nature of social support and its relation to resilience is an important area of research, a gap that this dissertation contributes to fulfilling.

Self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is associated with a broad range of positive outcomes for youth, including high-risk youth. McMahon and colleagues (2013) conducted a longitudinal study exploring how exposure to community violence and cognitive and behavioral factors contributes to aggressive and prosocial behavior among African American urban youth. With reference to prosocial behavior, their research revealed that higher self-efficacy to peacefully resolve a conflict was related to lower aggression and concluded that strengthening self-efficacy among urban youth may reduce the negative effects of violence exposure.

A mixed-methods study was conducted examining the effects of a school-based psychoeducational intervention on ninth graders' academic self-efficacy in an urban setting (Perry et al., 2007). The quantitative results from this study revealed that there were no significant differences in academic self-efficacy among the youth between pre-intervention at time 1 and post-intervention at time 2. However, these qualitative results demonstrated that the academic skills among these youth were strengthened by the end of the intervention. Researchers have examined coping self-efficacy as a mediator of the relationship between depression and length of abstinence after substance abuse treatment among youth and adults (Ramo et al., 2010). The results showed that self-efficacy fully mediated the relationship between depression and relapse and that high levels of depression were significantly related to lower self-efficacy, which predicted less time to substance use. Hipolito-Delgado and Zion (2017) conducted a quasi-experimental study that explored the effectiveness of critical civic inquiry, an initiative designed to engage students in discussions about educational and inquiry-based learning, to determine

whether this program would increase students' voice, ethnic identity, and civic self-efficacy.

These researchers found that students who participated in the Critical Civic Inquiry Program had statistically significant increases in ethnic identity and civic self-efficacy when compared to the control group.

Researchers have examined components of resilience among youth in urban environments, specifically looking at factors that impact future aspirations and school self-efficacy (McCoy & Bowen, 2015). Results from this study demonstrated that youth who have parents who provide supportive relationships and who feel safe in their neighborhoods were positive regarding possible future success, and this positive view of future success was connected to strong school self-efficacy. Uwah and colleagues (2008) explored the association between perceptions of school belonging, educational aspirations, and academic self-efficacy among African American high school students, all of whom were male. The results of their study showed that a sense of school belonging was not positively associated with academic self-efficacy, but feeling encouraged to participate among the students (an aspect of a sense of school belonging) positively predicted academic self-efficacy. Researchers have studied academic self-efficacy and gender as predictors of internalizing and externalizing risk behaviors in adolescence (Rocchino et al., 2017). The results of this study showed that high levels of academic self-efficacy are related to lower levels of internalizing and externalizing risk among adolescents and that academic self-efficacy is a stronger predictor of internalizing and externalizing risk than gender.

Gushue and Whitson (2006) explored the influences of ethnic identity and parental and teacher support on decision self-efficacy and career outcome expectations among African

American high school students. The results of this study showed that there was a significant positive relationship between parental support and career decision self-efficacy. Their findings also revealed that teacher support was positively associated with career academic self-efficacy and career outcome expectations.

Career decisions with reference to the pursuit an engineering career were associated with studying mathematics and science among African American high school students (Austin, 2010). After utilizing a stepwise regression, the most significant predictor of career decision self-efficacy was math and science self-efficacy. In other words, confidence in the students' ability to understand and study math and science was a significant predictor of confidence in the decision to pursue a career in engineering.

Rollins and Valdez (2006) examined perceived racism and career self-efficacy among African American high school students. The findings from this study revealed that the African American high school students who experienced higher levels of perceived racism had higher levels of career self-efficacy. This study also revealed that African American girls had significantly higher levels of career decision-making self-efficacy and greater occupational tasks self-efficacy. It also found that ethnic identity is associated with career decision-making self-efficacy and higher career task self-efficacy.

Self-determination Theory. While self-efficacy focuses on an individual's expectation about his or her ability to accomplish a goal, another essential aspect of resilience can be termed self-determination: the fulfillment that arises from an individual's experience of being able to choose the goals to pursue (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Self-determination theory is an in-depth theory of human fulfillment, a framework that helps to explain what makes life satisfying for people.

Ryan and Deci (2000) posited that fulfillment is based on being able to choose the goals one can pursue, as well as the ability to reliably fulfill three types of goals: relatedness, autonomy, and competence.

Self-determination theory draws from psychodynamic and ecological theories, recognizing that social and cultural factors can support or undermine people's initiative, well-being, and performance. Based on some of the assumptions of cognitive evaluation theory, which posits that competence and autonomy are key factors contributing to intrinsic motivation, the core idea of self-determination theory focuses on the dissimilarity between autonomous motivation and controlled motivation. Self-determination falls on a continuum ranging from amotivated, or lacking in self-determination, to intrinsic motivation, or constantly internally motivated (Gagne & Deci, 2005). This theory further assumes that the satisfaction of psychological needs provides nourishment for intrinsic motivation and internalization, and "that the needs for competence and autonomy underlie intrinsic motivation—people need to feel competent and autonomous to maintain their intrinsic motivation"(Gagne & Deci, 2005): 336). Self-determination theory expands cognitive evaluation theory, positing that there is a third basic need for motivation, which is the need for relatedness. Ryan and Deci (2008) described relatedness as a feeling of being cared for and connected to others, and as a psychological need, relatedness is necessary for fostering intrinsic motivation. Research confirming the basic constructs suggest that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are universal psychological needs (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2008). Self-determination is an essential aspect of the ability to bounce back from adversity or resilience (Earvolino-Ramirez, 2007) and more fully elucidates components of self-efficacy.

Sparks and colleagues (2016) utilized self-determination theory as a framework for studying supportive teacher behavior and how this behavior fosters student relatedness in physical education. This study also examined students' perception of their teachers' relatedness and how it predicted their motivation in physical education. They found that students' need for relatedness was satisfied when they felt relatedness support from teachers, and this positively impacted intrinsic motivation. Wu, Li and Khoo (2016) conducted a study among Special Olympics volunteers in China, utilizing self-determination theory to explore the relationship among competence, intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and intentions to continue to volunteer. Their research showed that one's perceived competence predicted more intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction. Their study also showed that competence positively influenced intentions to continue to volunteer.

Mentoring Practice Models

Traditional Mentoring

Saving Lives & Inspiring Youth was a cross-age mentoring program, a relatively innovative mentoring intervention in which youth mentors provide mentoring to younger members of their own communities. In particular, this study focuses on the impact of cross-age mentoring programs on the mentors' self-efficacy and grit, again innovative in that most studies of mentoring examine the impact of the program on mentees.

In traditional mentoring programs, mentors are described as non-parental adults, or older youth who develop an emotional connection, offer guidance, and support to a younger person (DuBois & Karcher, 2014). While this definition captures the essence of mentoring, the implementation of mentoring is multi-level, including mentoring activities and social

interactions, significant interpersonal bonds, agencies and organizations that support mentoring as an intervention, and social policies that support mentoring.

Empirical evidence from a randomized control study suggests that academically at-risk youth who engage in school-based mentoring programs after school or during lunch as opposed to during school receive academic benefits from these programs (Schwartz, Rhodes, & Herrera, 2012). In a longitudinal cluster randomized trial, Nunez and colleagues (2013) examined the effectiveness of school-based mentoring on increased use of self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies, self-efficacy, perceived usefulness of SRL strategies, and academic achievement and found that the program was effective. Researchers conducted a randomized control trial evaluating a school-based adult mentoring program to determine if this program could positively impact school engagement among at-risk youth vulnerable to dropping out of school. Results showed that adult mentoring programs had significant and positive effects on students in the area of perceived teacher support, school belonging, decision making, and students entering the school discipline system (Holt et al., 2008).

A study of Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring explored the effects of the mentoring relationship on youth academic attitudes, self-esteem, misconduct, grades, and prosocial behavior. Results from a secondary analysis revealed that a high-quality mentoring relationship was related to improved relationships between students and teachers, as well as between students and parents. These improved relationships in turn were positively related to improved academic attitudes, self-esteem, and prosocial behavior (Chan et al, 2013).

Mentoring programs also positively impact attitudes towards school and in-school behavior. Converse and Craft (2009) examined the effects of school-based mentoring on at-risk

middle school students to determine whether it reduced office referrals and unexcused absences and improved attitudes about school. In a mixed-methods study, the results indicated that school-based mentoring significantly reduced office referrals and significantly improved attitudes about school.

There are, however, some reports of mentoring ineffectiveness with respect to academically related dependent variables. A systematic review and a meta-analysis were conducted, evaluating the impact of school-based mentoring on adolescents in the area of academic performance, attendance, attitudes, behavior, and self-esteem. The results showed that school-based mentoring did **not** improve academic achievement, attendance, behavior, or psychological outcomes (Wood & Mayo-Wilson, 2012).

In sum, review of the scientific literature illustrates that the results of traditional school-based mentoring are mixed. Some scholars theorized that the impact of mentoring depends strongly on the quality of the relationship between mentor and mentee. In a mixed-method study, Pryce and Keller (2011) found that interpersonal tone or interaction between adult mentors and their mentees is a significant factor with reference to the effectiveness of these programs.

Cross-Age Peer Mentoring. Previous research sets the stage for more in-depth investigation of how to make mentoring effective. Cross-age mentoring offers an option. Cross-age peer mentoring typically consists of high school students who mentor middle school and elementary school students within a school-based setting (Karcher, 2014). Cross-age peer mentoring positively affects mentors and mentees (Karcher, 2008). The mentor and mentee should meet at least 10 times, but meeting at least 20 times is ideal. The meeting between mentors and mentees should center around structured activities, but these structured activities

should not be designed to teach skills or to impart information. Instead, the primary objective of these structured activities is to foster close relationships “in which the mentee experiences empathy, praise, and attention from the mentor” (Karcher, 2014, p. 233). The development of a close relationship between mentor and mentee is what distinguishes cross-age peer mentoring programs from other mentoring programs. The undergirding framework of cross-age peer mentoring is positive youth development theory (Larson, 2006) in that the positive effects of these programs are thought to result from the impact of the positive social network on those aspects of youths’ motivation that are the focus of positive youth development (caring, connection, etc.) as noted previously (Smith, 2011).

Cross-age peer mentoring has a clear advantage over adult mentoring as a result of “enhanced learning and support for behavior change that results from perceived social support and psychological safety promoted by teens as mentors (Smith, 2011, p. 221).” There are other benefits, such as youths’ opportunity to build positive social networks in contexts where there are many negative social networks and to replace these negative social networks with positive ones (Papachristos & Wildeman, 2014). Unlike regular mentoring programs, which focus primarily on developing specific academic skills or life skills, cross-age peer mentoring emphasizes the mentoring relationship and developing specific areas among mentees such as self-esteem, identity, academic attitudes, and connectedness (Karcher, 2005). These programs are school-based, and the purpose of cross-age peer mentoring programs is to provide social support for the mentee, and occasionally academic support (Karcher, 2008). Advantages of cross-age mentoring are that mentoring sessions are held in familiar community settings, sustained mentor-mentee relationships are more achievable because youth come from the same

communities, mentor and mentee are more likely share a common culture, and, unlike mentoring by adult mentors, mentors and mentees interact more as peers (Besnoy and McDaniel, 2016). Thus, mentees benefit from positive peer pressure and building a positive social network.

Karcher (2005) conducted a study examining the effects of mentor attendance on mentees in cross-age peer mentoring programs utilizing a randomized control design. Results from this study showed that mentees in the intervention group had more connectedness to schools and parents when compared to mentees in the control school. This same study also revealed that mentors' attendance was associated with mentee's higher self-esteem, social skills, and self-management.

A randomized control trial was conducted to examine the effects of teenage peer mentors' attitudes on shaping mentees' outcomes (Karcher et al., 2010). Mentees who were academically disconnected were paired with mentors with positive attitudes. Cross-age mentoring positively impacted the mentees' relationship with teachers compared to the control group.

Karcher (2009) conducted a quasi-experimental study of the impact of serving as a cross-age mentor on mentors' academic connectedness, self-esteem, and family attachment. This study found that students participating as mentors reported gains in school connectedness and self-esteem compared to students in the control group.

Ikard (2001) conducted a randomized control trial exploring the impact of cross-age peer mentoring on high school students. This study found that students in the experimental group had higher moral reasoning scores compared to students in the control group. In sum, these studies point to the value of studying how cross-age mentoring impacts several variables related to

resilience, and specifically determining whether cross-age mentoring can positively shift youth's perception of their own ability to formulate and achieve their personal goals.

Summary of Rationale for This Study Based on Literature

The review of the literature and research have demonstrated that self-efficacy has been associated with several outcomes, such as reducing the negative effects of violence exposure (McMahon et al., 2013), as well as youth having more positive views about their future success (McCoy & Bowen, 2015). Moreover, individuals with more grit tend to accomplish their goals more often than people with less grit (Duckworth, 2016). These two components of resilience are essential and may be beneficial for black youth living in highly stressed communities. Prior research has also shown that cross-age peer mentoring programs have had positive effects on youth in various domains such as increased self-esteem and school connectedness (Karcher, 2009). However, less is known about the role of school-based cross-age peer mentoring programs developing self-efficacy and grit among disadvantaged African American youth residing and going to school in high-crime, high-poverty communities. This study will attempt to fill this gap in the scientific literature by evaluating SLIY.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Context: SLIY Cross Age Peer Mentoring Program

Saving Lives & Inspiring Youth is a cross-age peer mentoring program that recruits high school students from extremely disadvantaged neighborhoods in Chicago to mentor younger peers from the same neighborhoods for one year. It was funded by the Department of Justice, the Office of Justice Programs, and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. It was managed by Loyola University Chicago, Risk and Resilience Lab, with support provided by the Empowering Counseling Program and community partners. It began in 2014 and served the North Lawndale, Englewood, Bronzeville, and South Lawndale communities of Chicago. The objective of SLIY was to provide a space to facilitate positive youth development and to reduce negative outcomes associated with violence exposure among African American and Latino American youth from high-poverty urban communities. It also worked to provide a constructive space for youth to learn from each other on a relatively long-term basis and to take advantage of culturally relevant peer influences to assist with lower rates of youth violence and increase prosocial influences.

Quasi-experimental Design

A quasi-experimental intervention mixed-methods design was used to study how youth participation in a cross-age mentoring program (Savings Lives, Inspiring Youth) influenced self-efficacy and grit, as well to explore variables of gender, age, and social support as they might

interact with attendance to increase self-efficacy and grit. Data collection proceeded using a mixed-methods evaluation design (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018). This mixed-methods approach allows for using both quantitative and qualitative approaches to evaluate SLIY.

For purposes of inferential statistical analysis, self-efficacy was measured using the Generalized Self-Efficacy scale (Tipton & Worthington, 1984) and grit was measured using the Grit scale (Duckwork & Quinn, 2009). Social support, as a moderator, was measured using the social support measure (Dubow & Ulman, 1989). To deepen the understanding of self-efficacy and grit in this population and include youths' voices in the picture of self-efficacy and grit, these two concepts were also analyzed using data were gathered from several qualitative procedures to be described further below. The larger study, from which this dissertation study emerged, utilized a prospective cohort design, in which peer mentoring relationships in a school-based after-school program were monitored from its beginning to 9 to 12 months subsequent to the start of the program.

Recruitment and Site Selection

The staff of SLIY selected mentoring sites in targeted neighborhoods through collaboration with community organizations and Chicago Public Schools. First, community organizations in neighborhoods 1 and 2 were selected to assist with recruiting mentors and mentees, as well as to supervise mentoring sessions and to conduct community-based research (cohort 1). Next, community organizations were selected to assist with recruiting mentors and mentees in neighborhoods 3 and 4 (cohort 2). Students were recruited for the comparison groups from similar schools in the same neighborhoods. The community collaborators in the respective

organizations assisted with selecting high schools, elementary schools, and after-school programs and soliciting them to participate in the larger study.

After recruitment and agreements were completed, the first cohort of mentors received training, which consisted of learning about the process of mentoring. The same process was used with the second cohort, with mentoring sites were recruited and youth mentors trained in cross-age peer mentoring. The mentoring sites were located in schools, community centers, and after-school programs. Saving Lives & Inspiring Youth staff and the research team, along with community collaborators, organized one-hour mentoring sessions to take place once a week and an additional one-hour debriefing session to process and reflect on the mentoring sessions. The agreement was that the programs would take place for about one year. In concert with the participatory model, youth mentors co-designed mentoring activities and co-evaluated the program.

Intervention Procedures. Saving Lives & Inspiring Youth drew from Stand Up, Stand Out!, a program created by the Empowering Counseling Program at Loyola University Chicago in which youth mentored community children and, in program evaluations, prioritized mentoring over all other after-school program activities (Bulanda & Tyson McCrea, 2013). Professor Maryse Richards's Risk and Resilience Lab's Civic Engagement Curriculum was also a foundation for SLIY (Richards et al., 2015).

The staff of SLIY consisted of site directors, intervention coordinators, and research coordinators. All staff members of SLIY took the CITI training in research ethics, and each member had to receive background checks through the Chicago public schools. Staff were

responsible for supervising and conducting mentoring training, supervising mentoring relationships, and collecting quantitative and qualitative data. Clinical seminars were offered twice monthly for all staff to provide support and assist them in learning about group process, recognition and optimal responses to psychosocial crisis, trauma-focused theories, as well as to develop cultural sensitivity as needed.

Mentor Training and Matching

After mentors were recruited, they were trained for six hours. The training curriculum was fashioned after that used by national mentoring organizations and co-developed with youth mentors based on several principles: civic engagement curricula that were previously studied (Richards et al., 2016); the cross-age peer mentoring work carried out by Stand Up, Help Out! of the Empowering Counseling Program; trauma-focused and strengths-based practice models to promote youths' stress management and coping; and exercises to promote relatedness, positive communication, bonding, and positive racial identities. The overall aim of the curriculum was to enhance resilience and promote positive development among impoverished African American youth living in crime-saturated communities. The training covered topics such as defining mentoring, how to be an effective mentor, and how to communicate effectively with mentees. To help staff prepare mentors, they were asked questions about their life and relationships with caregivers and engaged in role plays to encourage positive and effective interactions during mentoring sessions. The mentors were also trained to identify signs of trauma and harm and the importance of confidentiality. The youth were trained about the process of informing staff immediately when trauma and harm were identified.

The mentors were asked to write letters to staff, to explain what they planned to get out of the program and what they needed help with, and to describe their goals. Upon successful completion of the training, youth mentors signed a contract committing to provide mentoring to their mentees for one year. To match mentors with mentees according to gender and interests and hobbies, a matching survey was distributed during training.

Mentoring Model

Loyola University Chicago's Risk and Resilience Lab, in partnership with its Empowering Counseling Program, designed, implemented, and evaluated SLIY. The program and research study were led by Dr. Maryse Richards (Department of Psychology) and Dr. Katherine Tyson McCrea (School of Social Work) of Loyola University Chicago. Sites were located at elementary and middle schools, as well as in organizations offering after-school programs. There were six program sites in three low-income African American communities that form the sample for this dissertation. The sites were established in locations that provided access to mentors and mentees. The mentors and mentees met once a week and engaged in program curricula co-designed by mentors with the interdisciplinary team of SLIY staff (curricula are available online at <https://savinglivesinspiringyouth.weebly.com>). After each mentoring session, the program included a one-hour debriefing session with mentors and staff only.

The staff of the program built partnerships with community organizations in an effort to recruit high school students as mentors. Mentors chosen for the program were recommended from school staff and community collaborators and interviewed by staff. Mentors received a multi-part training on relationship building, civic engagement, conflict resolution, and positive

youth development (curricula also available at the SLIY website). The strong participatory elements included mentors as co-researchers; youth co-designed mentoring curricula, co-edited the SLIY newsletter, and interviewed each other to evaluate the program, gave regular feedback about data collection procedures such as the debriefing forms. A small number of mentors also co-authored manuscripts, co-presented at conferences, and co-presented findings at community forums.

Mentoring Sessions

Mentoring sites from cohort 1 and cohort 2 functioned in the context of existing after-school programs or were originally developed as stand-alone programs. The mentoring sessions lasted for one hour, once a week, followed by one hour of debriefing with mentors. During the sessions, mentors and mentees engaged in a range of subjects that focused on developing skills, such as developing positive relationships and communication, while simultaneously using a trauma-informed approach in their interactions. Conflict resolution and effective communication were often the subject of focus in efforts to foster non-violent approaches to solving problems, including utilizing ways to express anger in a healthy manner during the mentors-only debriefing sessions

Sample Selection

The participant mentors in this study were adolescents who resided, went to school, and were recruited from three high-poverty, high-crime African American neighborhoods in Chicago, IL. (Saving Lives & Inspiring Youth also included Latinx youth from South Lawndale; this study focuses on the African American youth only). The mentors were a convenience sample

selected from the neighborhoods of North Lawndale, Englewood, and Bronzeville (the high-poverty areas of Bronzeville) based on referrals from school staff and community organization partners and self-referral in response to a flyer distributed at neighborhood schools. Some mentors were also recruited from nonprofit community organizations within these neighborhoods. Mentors and their parents signed consent forms prior to participating in the study in accordance with Loyola institutional review board and Chicago Public Schools Research Review Board requirements for informed consent.

The comparison group was recruited from volunteers from similar schools in the same communities in which the mentors resided who agreed to participate. Different schools were selected for mentors and comparison group youth in order to avoid contamination of program impact that could occur if mentors and comparison group youth attended the same school.

The poverty rates of youths' neighborhoods ranged from 28.1 to 42.2 percent (City of Chicago, 2011). Moreover, the per capita income was \$11,993 in Englewood, \$12,548 in North Lawndale, and \$22,056 in Bronzeville. The unemployment rate of these neighborhoods ranged from 11.5 to 21.3 percent, well above the national average. Participants resided in neighborhoods where residents did not complete high school at much higher rates than national averages. The percentage of residents not having high school diplomas is 19.4 percent in Bronzeville, 21.3 percent in Englewood, and 30.4 percent in North Lawndale, which suggests that large percentages of these residents did not have the human capital to successfully navigate the labor market. Many studies and reports document the difficulties neighborhood schools suffer in providing youth with the human capital to succeed in the labor market (Stovall, 2018).

Statistics from the city of Chicago (2012) also revealed that the participants of this study resided in communities with high crime rates. For instance, the number of homicides in North Lawndale was 46.7, 45.1 in Englewood, and 32.1 in Bronzeville. Statistics from the city of Chicago (2012) also revealed that the percentage of firearm-related crimes was 37.6 percent in North Lawndale, 25.8 percent in Bronzeville, and 44.9 percent in Englewood.

The mentee sample was selected from the three aforementioned neighborhoods in Chicago and from elementary schools and middle schools within those neighborhoods; mentees were recruited and consented following the same human subjects procedures.

The SLIY procedural manual that was utilized to assist with programing among the youth is available at savinglivesinspiringyouth.weebly.com. This manual, which described how the program was to be structured included a mentoring training manual and an activity manual.

The research coordinator took attendance at each mentoring session at each site. The attendance record was then entered into an Excel spreadsheet.

Data Collection Procedures

For the larger study, self-report surveys were distributed at different time points: survey data were collected at baseline (wave 1), six months after the start of the program (wave 2), nine to twelve months from start of the program (wave 3), and twenty-four months from the beginning of programming. Youth were given \$20 and \$30 gift cards as compensation for completing surveys. Parent packets were sent out to parents of mentees at wave 1, wave 1, and wave 4 to report demographic information.. Parents received \$10 or \$20 gifts cards as compensation for completing surveys.

Measures

The construct of self-efficacy was operationalized using the Generalized Self-Efficacy scale (GSE). This scale has 10 items such as “I am a very determined person”; “once I set my mind to a task, almost nothing can stop me”; and “I believe I would respect myself less if I gave up something I started.” The GSE scale was tested for construct validity, and construct validity was supported (Tipton & Worthington, 1984) within a population of college students. A test-retest reliability analysis was conducted with the population of this study to determine if this measure is reliable. At wave 1, $\alpha = .691$ for the Generalized Self-Efficacy scale and at wave 3, $\alpha = .812$.

The construct of grit was operationalized using the grit scale (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). This measure consists of eight items, such as “I finish whatever I begin” and “setbacks don’t discourage me.” This measure was tested for construct validity and was supported (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). A test-retest reliability analysis was conducted to determine if this measure was reliable. At wave 1, $\alpha = .688$ and at wave 3, $\alpha = .686$.

The construct of social support was operationalized using a social support measure (Dubow & Ullman, 1989). The original social support measure was revised to reduce the total number of items to which youth would be required to respond (following CPS RRB directives). Nine of the original items were eliminated and three rephrased. The scale that was implemented is included in the appendix. The three rephrased items were highly correlated with the original items. The revised social support scale has a total of fifteen items, such as “How often can you find someone to talk to when you are mad about something?” and “How often are your friends

there for you when you need or want them to be?" At wave 1, $\alpha = .900$ for the revised Social Support scale and at wave 3, $\alpha = .904$.

The construct of post-traumatic stress symptoms was measured using the items from the Youth Self Report (Achenbach, 1991), specifically 14 items from this measure that focuses on post-traumatic symptoms. A test-retest reliability analysis was conducted to determine if this measure was reliable. At wave 1, $\alpha = .807$ and at wave 3, $\alpha = .798$.

Informed Consent

Prior to data collection, youth under the age of 18 years were given parental consent forms and child assent forms to sign, which acknowledged their agreement to participate in the study and program. Prior to data collection, participants were informed that their identifying information would be kept confidential, anonymous, and private; responses given on the surveys would not be shared with adults or authority figures. It was explained to the participants that the information reported on the surveys would not be connected to their name. All participants were told that filling out surveys and participating in the study were voluntary, and that they could decline to participate in the study at any time without negative consequences. At data collection, all participants were assigned an identification number so that their identities could not be linked to the surveys. Surveys were kept in a locked file cabinet.

Qualitative Data Collection Procedures

Only the mentor sample ($N = 70$) completed qualitative data collection. The comparison group youth ($N = 52$) did not complete qualitative data collection procedures. Saving Lives & Inspiring Youth utilized several qualitative data collection protocols, such as peer-to-peer

interviews, ecomaps, mentors' entry letters, mentors' exit letters, exit interviews, focus groups, and field notes.

Elements of participatory action research were used in data collection, specifically including youth as interviewers in the peer-to-peer interviews, as co-leaders of focus groups, and as reviewers and modifiers of the mentor debriefing forms. The rationale for using this approach was to give youth the opportunity to experience the research process as partners, contributing to formulations of problems, data collection, data analyses, and presentation of findings (Fine, 2017). Participatory action research methods provide a research experience in which “community residents (community action researchers) and university-trained researchers (facilitators) collaborate in research that supports personal growth, group solidarity, and social action” (Schensul et al., 2008, p.102). This approach to qualitative data collection allows for this study to address two objectives: (1) to develop best practices and program design for youth from culturally diverse backgrounds and (2) to understand the impact of the program from the youths' perspectives.

This dissertation analyzed data collected via peer-to-peer interviews, focus groups, exit interviews, and field notes. All protocols are available in the appendix.

Peer-Led Program Evaluation Protocol

This protocol was co-designed by youth, drawing from a previous protocol used by the Empowering Counseling Program, which was also co-designed by youth. It was carried out as part of the termination process for mentors completing SLIY. This peer-led evaluation protocol (peer-to-peer interviews) was designed to provide mentors with an opportunity to evaluate the

intervention, as well as to provide useful feedback to the staff of SLIY. Mentors conducted peer-led interviews in pairs. In each pair, one mentor conducted interviews and one mentor was interviewed; then they reversed roles. They asked questions in semi-structured interviews. The peer-led interview protocol was administered between 9 to 12 months after the beginning of each program.

Field Notes

Field notes were used to collect qualitative data and utilized the techniques developed by Emerson and colleagues (2011). During each mentoring session, field notes were written to document the weekly attendance of mentors, mentees, and staff. They documented significant issues during mentoring sessions, quotes from mentors during the mentoring sessions, mentors' suggestions for future activities, and problems that arose within the mentoring sessions. They also documented the mentors' highs and lows for the week and their perceptions of the mentoring sessions.

Focus Group

Mentor focus groups were developed and designed to collect data in the last month at each of the mentoring sites. The objective of the focus groups was to provide mentors with an opportunity to discuss the impact of mentoring on them. Mentors were informed that they could speak freely and that their responses would be kept confidential. The mentee focus group was conducted simultaneously, but in a different room.

Exit Interviews

Exit interviews were conducted by SLIY staff at the end of the program, between 9 to 12 months after the start of the program. The objective of the interviews was to document the mentors' reflections about their participation in the program; their experiences in the program; and their experience with engagement with violence before, during, and at the end of the program. This interview protocol was structured by co-principal investigator Katherine Tyson McCrea, based on prior experience in participatory program evaluations.

Data Analysis Procedures

Statistical Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). All raw data from surveys were entered into SPSS and coded and assigned a variable name (Bannon, 2013). To analyze these data, a multiple regression analysis was utilized to test all hypotheses. SPSS was utilized to examine the correlation between variables under study, as well as to produce descriptive statistics to help with understanding the basic character of the data. Attendance data were documented and entered into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. Data

cleaning procedures were conducted by members of the Risk and Resilience Lab. Frequencies were run for all variables in the study, producing a frequency table to ensure that data were entered into SPSS accurately.

Qualitative Data Analysis

For the larger study, three coding manuals were developed utilizing grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), with several existing and relevant theories used to provide construct validity. The manuals were developed focusing on (1) risks at the micro, meso, and macro level; (2) theories of resilience, such as the theory of self-efficacy; and (3) program impact from the mentors' perspectives. In each of the manuals, themes emerged that captured risk, resilience, and program impact, which then were developed into axial codes. There were 12 to 16 axial codes for each manual. The field notes were coded first, and categories were developed as the foundation for coding the peer-to-peer interviews, exit interviews, and focus group data. The standard for inter-rater reliability for each manual was 90 percent or higher. This standard was a requirement prior to coding the entire qualitative data set.

As the first step of the coding process, open coding was performed on all qualitative data. This process provided a mechanism for labeling parts of the data and placing them in categories for further analysis (Khandkar, 2009). As mentioned, themes were organized into coding manuals; this dissertation study used codes developed from the resilience and program impact manuals to assist with the analyses. At least three raters took 15 percent of these data collected and worked to obtain an inter-rater reliability rate of at least 90 percent. The codes that emerged

from these raw data were entered into Dedoose, a cross-platform app designed to analyze qualitative and mixed method data, for analysis.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

There were 122 participants ($N = 122$) in this study, 70 who were mentors and 52 who were in the comparison group. All the participants were African American high school students. Participant attendance in the cross-age peer mentoring programs ranged from 1 to 45 sessions, with an attendance mean of 19.6 sessions and a standard deviation of 13.17. The median attendance was 20. In the sample, 66.4 percent of the participants were female and 33.6 were male. The participants' ages ranged from 14 to 20 years old, with a mean age of 16.79 years, and the standard deviation was 1.34. Within the sample, 18 percent of the participants reported that they were involved with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. At baseline, there were differences between the treatment group and comparison group. The treatment group reported significantly higher levels of self-efficacy than the comparison group.

Income was evaluated using a simple question about the youths' experience of the adequacy of their resources. Of the participants, 10.7 percent reported having more than enough income available, 45.9 percent reported having about the right amount of income, 31.1 percent reported having less than enough income, and 8.1 percent reported having much less than enough income. However, youth reports of the sufficiency of their income need to be taken with a tub

of salt. Although many reported they had sufficient means, mentors were seen to lack basic necessities such as food, adequate hygiene supplies, and clothing. Perhaps youth were habituated to poverty conditions (Sen, 1999) or saw not having enough as indicated not by their conditions, but by comparison with the homelessness they frequently saw around them. The per capita income of the neighborhoods in which the study took place is indicated in Figure 11.

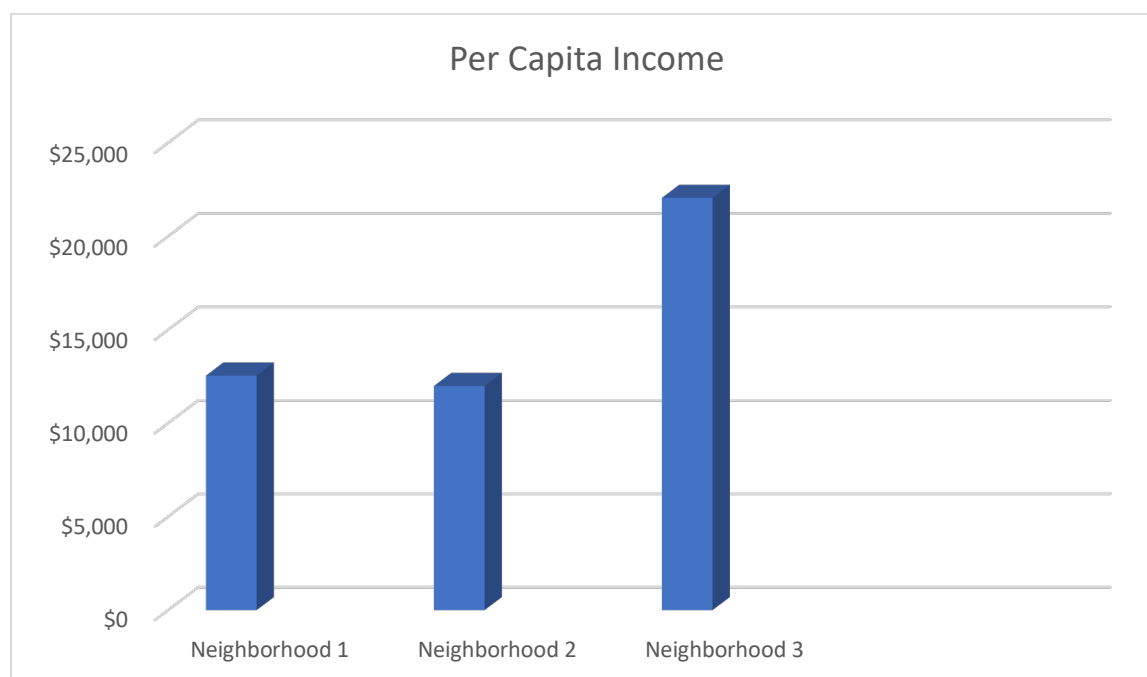


Figure 11. Per capital income of the neighborhood

The per capita income is well below what is required to live in Cook County, Illinois. According to the Economic Policy Institute (2018), a family of four living in Cook County needs \$85,638.00 to maintain a standard of living sufficient for basic necessities such as transport to health care, food, water, supplies, housing, and clothing.

For the purposes of qualitative data collection and analysis, only the mentor sample ($N = 70$) was used. The comparison group youth ($N = 52$) did not complete qualitative data collection procedures.

The hypotheses were tested with a process model multivariate analysis (Hayes, 2013) using SPSS. The process model used a simple moderation analysis to assess the interaction of attendance with social support, with gender and age predicting changes in self-efficacy and grit.

Cronbach's α scores range from 0 to 1, with 0.7 being a score that is generally viewed as an acceptable score for a measure to be considered reliable (Heale & Twycross, 2015). This means that at wave 1, the Cronbach α for both self-efficacy and grit fell just below the acceptable score for reliable measurement of self-efficacy in this population at baseline. However, the Cronbach's alpha score demonstrated that the measure was adequately reliable at wave 3. The Cronbach's α for the Social Support scale and Post Traumatic Stress scale were sufficient at waves 1 and 3.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis Results

The descriptive statistics indicated that participants in the intervention group had moderate levels of self-efficacy at wave 1 ($M = 5.21$, $SD = 0.85$) and at wave 3, the youth mentors had moderate levels of self-efficacy ($M = 5.37$, $SD = 0.99$). At wave 1, participants had moderate levels of grit ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 0.68$), and at wave 3, participants had moderate levels of grit ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.69$). Participants had low levels of traumatic stress ($M = 0.69$, $SD = 0.34$) at wave 3. At wave 3, participants had high levels of social support ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.90$). We measured social support at wave 3 given that some mentors were new to the program and had not developed social support at wave 1 (see Table 1).

The results of these analyses demonstrate that these young people entered SLIY with self-efficacy at the beginning of the program, and they experienced slight increases in their self-efficacy by the end of the program. This may explain why there were no statistically significant results, with reference to youth participation in SLIY predicting increases in self-efficacy (which will be explained later in this document). The youth also entered this program with average levels of grit and saw slight increases in grit over time. Moreover, by the end of the program, mentors had high levels of social support.

Correlations Between Variables Under Study

Self-efficacy and Grit. The Pearson correlation analysis revealed that there was a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy at wave 1 and grit at wave 1 ($r = .44^{**}, p < 0.01$), meaning that mentors with high self-efficacy at the beginning of the program also had high levels of grit at baseline. There was a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy at wave 1 and self-efficacy at wave 3 ($r = .47^{**}, p < 0.01$), illustrating that youth mentors with high self-efficacy at the beginning of the program also had high self-efficacy at the end. There was a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy at wave 1 and grit at wave 3 ($r = .47^{**}, p < 0.01$). The results illustrate that youth mentors' high self-efficacy at baseline was significantly associated with more grit at wave 3, indicating that youth with high self-efficacy at the beginning of the program also had high grit at the program's end. There was a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy at wave 1 and social support at wave 3 ($r = .54^{**}, p < 0.01$), demonstrating that mentors with high self-efficacy at the beginning of the program had high levels of social support at the end of program.

Trauma. The Pearson correlation analysis revealed that there was a statistically significant negative correlation between trauma and self-efficacy at wave 1 ($r = -.35^{**}$, $p < .001$). These results indicate that youth mentors with high levels of trauma had less self-efficacy at baseline, suggesting that it is important to consider interactions between trauma and self-efficacy. These results demonstrate that youth start working in the program with trauma, probably resulting from living in high-crime and high-poverty communities, and the trauma in these communities negatively impacts their confidence in executing actions to achieve goals.

Statistical Tests of Hypotheses

Research Question 1. A multiple linear regression analysis was run using SPSS version 24. For hypothesis 1.1, the model tested whether higher attendance in the SLIY cross-age peer mentoring programs predicted increases in self-efficacy at wave 3, controlling for self-efficacy at wave 1. The results showed that higher attendance was not a statistically significant predictor of more self-efficacy at wave 3 ($F(1,119) = 0.50$, $b = -0.005$, $p = .482$, $\Delta R^2 = .082$). Thus, the hypothesis could not be confirmed.

For hypothesis 1.2, a simple moderation analysis via Hayes process model 1 was employed to determine if the interaction of higher attendance among youth mentors with more social support predicted increases in their self-efficacy. These results showed that the interaction between attendance and social support did not predict self-efficacy. ($F(4, 117) = 3.4173$, $b = 0.0063$, $p = .4316$, $\Delta R^2 = .0049$). Thus, the hypothesis could not be confirmed.

For hypothesis 1.3, a simple moderation analysis was employed via Hayes process model 1 to examine the effects of higher attendance in cross-age peer mentoring programs on higher self-efficacy at wave 3, when moderated by gender and controlling for self-efficacy at wave 1.

The results showed no statistically significant interaction effects ($F(4, 117) = 2.1766, b = -0.0128, p = .4737, \Delta R^2 = .0053$). Thus, the hypothesis could not be confirmed.

However, the findings look quite different when other variables are included in testing the impact of attendance on self-efficacy and grit. The model tested hypothesis 1.4 by utilizing a simple moderation analysis via Hayes process model 1 to examine whether SLIY attendance predicted increases in self-efficacy at wave 3, when moderated by age and controlling for self-efficacy at wave 1. The results showed that age significantly interacted with attendance, predicting increases in self-efficacy at wave 3, such that higher attendance predicted increases in self-efficacy for younger mentors but not for older mentors. The R^2 increased due to the interaction ($F(4, 117) = 5.3720, b = -0.0116, p = .0218, \Delta R^2 = .1228$). Conditional effects were significant for younger mentors, but not for older mentors (Figure 1).

Research Question 2. For hypothesis 2.1, a multiple linear regression analysis was utilized to examine the effect of higher program attendance predicting increases in grit at wave 3, controlling for grit at wave 1. The results of the analysis fell short of statistical significance ($F(1,119) = 0.208, b = 0.002, p = .649, \Delta R^2 = .267$). Thus, the hypothesis could not be confirmed.

For hypothesis 2.2, a simple moderation analysis via Hayes process model 1 was employed to determine if higher attendance in SLIY predicted higher grit, when moderated by social support. Controlling for age, the results showed that the interaction effect was not significant ($F(4, 117) = 9.7624, b = 0.0030, p = .5430, \Delta R^2 = .0026$). Thus the hypothesis could not be confirmed.

For hypothesis 2.3, a simple moderation analysis via Hayes process model 1 was utilized to examine the effects of SLIY attendance on grit at wave 3, when moderated by gender and

controlling for grit at wave 1. The results show that the interaction effect was not a significant predictor of increased grit at wave 3 ($F(4,117) = 8.6387, b = 0.0028, p = .7537, \Delta R^2 = .0006$). Thus, the hypothesis could not be confirmed.

The model tested hypothesis 2.4 utilizing a simple moderation analysis via Hayes process model 1 to determine if higher attendance in SLIY predicted higher grit at wave 3, when moderated by age. Controlling for grit at wave 1, the results showed that age interacting with higher attendance in predicting increases in grit was trending at wave 3 ($F(4, 117) = 10.6334, b = -0.0048, p = .0759, \Delta R^2 = .0158$). There was a significant main effect of attendance that emerged in this analysis when all the other variables were included in the model, and the R^2 statistics increased due to the interaction. The conditional effects were not significant.

Research Question 4 (Post Hoc). For hypothesis 4.1, a simple moderation analysis via Hayes process model 1 was used to determine if more PTSS affect grit over time. Controlling for grit at wave one, the results show more PTSS among mentors significantly reduced their grit over time. ($F(4, 116) = 9.5528, b = -0.3926, p = .0454$).

Research Question 5 (Post Hoc). The model tested hypothesis 5.1 employing a regression analysis to examine the effects of more PTSS on the self-efficacy of the mentors over time. Controlling for self-efficacy at wave 1, the results demonstrated that more PTSS is a significant predictor of decreased self-efficacy over time. The model did not test for interaction effects [$F(4, 117) = -0.6821, p = .0329, b = -0.6821, \Delta R^2 = .1197$].

Youth mentors' SLIY attendance and how it improved their self-efficacy depended on their age. Younger mentors, particularly mentors between the ages of 14 and 15 years old, experienced more confidence and self-efficacy after spending a year in the program.

The findings also demonstrated that the more trauma these youth experienced, the less self-efficacy and grit they had by the end of the program. What this suggests is that persistent exposure to traumatic events was a much more powerful influence on self-efficacy and grit than frequent SLIY attendance. Moreover, in highly stressed communities, self-efficacy and grit are not dependent variables that can be improved with once-weekly attendance at cross-age mentoring sessions. Rather, the potential impact of the intervention on self-efficacy and grit of attendees was significantly complicated by age and traumatic stress. Traumatic stress symptoms eroded both self-efficacy and grit, and, as the constructs are measured quantitatively here, cannot be sufficiently mitigated through once-weekly relatively low-dosage preventive interventions.

The story from the qualitative data analysis differs, however, as will be seen below. Social support and collective efforts among the youth mentors in SLIY contributed to mentors' perceptions of individual and community goal achievement. Also, the qualitative analysis sheds light on measures currently utilized in this study, suggesting that measures may not capture what self-efficacy and grit meant to the youth. The role of their culture as a determinant of the conceptualizations of self-efficacy and grit sheds a different light on SLIY's effects on mentors' self-efficacy and grit (see Table 1).

Table 1. Correlation between variables under study

	Attendance	Age	Self- efficacy	Grit	Trauma	Self-efficacy (wave 3)	Grit (wave 3)	Social support
Attendance	1							
Age	-0.01	1						
Self-efficacy	-0.06	-0.04	1					
Grit	-0.02	-0.03	.44**	1				
Trauma	-0.01	-0.00	-.35**	-.24*	1			
Self-efficacy (wave 3)	-0.10	-0.16	.47**	.34**	-0.11	1		
Grit (wave 3)	-0.02	-0.15	.47**	.65**	.53**	.53**	1	
Social support	-0.07	0.35	.54**	.42**	.33**	.44**	.44**	1
<i>M</i>	18	17.14	5.21	3.46	0.69	5.37	3.57	3.26
<i>SD</i>	10.8	1.42	0.85	0.68	0.34	0.99	0.69	0.90

Table 2. Results of simple moderation analyses

Outcome	Independent/moderator variables	<i>b</i>	<i>p</i>	ΔR^2
Self-efficacy	Attendance/gender	-0.013	.474	.005
	Attendance/age	-0.012	*.022	.039
	Attendance/social support	0.006	.431	.005

* $p < .05$

Table 3. Results of simple moderation analyses

Outcome	Independent/moderator variables	<i>b</i>	<i>p</i>	ΔR^2
Grit	Attendance/gender	0.002	.7537	.000
	Attendance/age	-0.005	0.07	.015
	Attendance/social	0.003	.5430	.002
	Support			

Research Question 3.1: Culturally Relevant Self-efficacy According to SLIY

Mentors. Can we build a culturally-relevant definition of self-efficacy for impoverished African American youth in high-crime communities? To answer this question, qualitative data were collected via field notes, exit letters, focus groups, and peer-to-peer interviews. Field notes were taken by staff members of SLIY and formatted based on the structure organized by Emerson and colleagues (2011). The field notes documented the weekly attendance of mentees, mentors, and staff. They also documented the agenda for each session, important issues, and direct quotes from mentors during the debriefing session. Peer-to-peer interviews were a youth-led evaluation protocol, designed to assist youth mentors with the termination process upon completing their

work with SLIY. Another objective of the peer-to-peer interviews was to provide mentors with an opportunity to evaluate the intervention and to offer their feedback. Mentors were organized into pairs and alternated interviewing each other. They asked each other a series of questions regarding their experiences in the program. Mentors were also asked to write exit letters at the completion of the program. This qualitative method provided a mechanism to collect data via three specific questions:

1. Could you put in writing what you feel you have learned from this program?
2. Are there any skills you learned from this program that you can apply in your daily life?
3. Are there any problems you still would like to solve?

Exit interviews were also conducted by SLIY's staff between the ninth and twelfth months of programming. The objective of these interviews was to ask mentors to reflect on their feelings and thoughts about the termination of the program. The interviews were designed to understand the mentors' violence engagement before, during, and at the end of their time working in the program.

All interviews were transcribed. After transcription, a coding scheme was employed utilizing inductive and deductive approaches to coding. For the inductive approach, open coding was performed, and codes were developed based on the raw data. The deductive approach to coding resulted from the use of preexisting conceptual frameworks in the conceptual and scientific literature, such as self-efficacy, grit, and *Ubuntu*. After all inductive and deductive codes had been developed, the Resilience Coding Manual and the Services Reflections Coding Manual were developed. Among the codes in the resilience manual used for this study were *self-efficacy*, *grit*, and *Ubuntu*. Codes developed from the Services Reflection Manual used for this

study were *builds good character* and *enhances mentors' well-being*. The codes in these manuals were tested for inter-rater reliability. For each manual, three raters worked to reach inter-reliability; the reliability rates for both manuals were above 90 percent. Qualitative data were collected via entry letters written by youth, field notes, focus groups, peer-to-peer interviews, exit interviews, and exit letters. Relevant selections from the coding manuals are reproduced in Table 4.

Table 4. Resilience and services reflection codes

Resilience codes	Representative statements by youth
Self-efficacy	<p>“My long-term goal is to be a soccer player. To make that happen, I have to make little league.”</p> <p>“I don’t know what the problem is, but I’m going to fix it. He don’t [the mentee] listen. I don’t understand why. I know someone like him, so I got that.”</p>
Grit	<p>“This week and last week but today was better. For the last two weeks, I haven’t been talking to nobody. I haven’t been laughing, smiling, but crying. I was depressed. I am getting over it. I have been talking to a counselor and I like her. I am gonna keep talking to her. She’s real good.”</p>
Ubuntu	<p>“I want them to understand that I am here for them.”</p>

Table 4. Resilience and services reflection codes (continued)

Builds good character (the program’s impact on some aspect of the mentors’ character, such as contributing to the mentors’ leadership skills, impulse control, and patience)	<p>“This program is helping me become a leader.”</p> <p>“I have learned how to control my attitude.”</p> <p>“I have learned how to talk to people. I had to learn how to use self-control. This skill I learn here sometimes don’t apply out there. I learned how to bite my tongue and talk to people. I became more of a people’s person.”</p>
Enhanced mentors’ well-being	<p>“This was an opportunity to practice patience, something I have been working on.”</p>

All sources of data were uploaded and coded in Dedoose, which is a cross-platform app for analyzing qualitative and mixed method research with text, photos, audios, videos, and spreadsheet data. These data were also analyzed using Dedoose and thematic and content analyses were employed. In this instance, it is important to conceptualize culture and to discuss conceptual frameworks that assisted in helping to define culturally relevant.

Theoretical Bases for Construct Validity

Multiple theories and conceptual frameworks were used to provide a foundation for how resilience was conceptualized from the youths’ perspectives. These theoretical assumptions provided a foundation for the coding scheme and for an explicitly theory-based evaluation of the effectiveness of SLIY with regard to developing components of resilience. African American youths’ meaning-making within cultural contexts is comparable to that of some cultures in countries located in Southern and West Africa. For example, data indicated that African American youth observed in this program had worldviews that placed emphasis on their

individual goals, but their individual goals were inextricably linked to the well-being of their communities. Conceptual frameworks deriving from South Africa and Nigeria capture cultural norms that are similar to what was observed among the urban youth of this study, and the basic assumptions in these frameworks will help with defining cultural relevance. These concepts are Ubuntu and Omoluabi.

African cultures, in general, are consistent in that their foundation is communalism. Communalism is the development of cultural identity within the context of social relationships rather than being associated with individual proclivities (Mabouvula, 2011). Communalism is at the crux of Ubuntu, translated as, “I am because we are,” which derives from the Xhosa ethnic group of South Africa. This conceptual framework assumes that morality involves trust and each member is interdependent on other members of the group. This interdependence emerges in the form of sharing, caring, and exhibiting compassion. Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1997) defined Ubuntu as each member’s humanity being inextricably connected to that of everyone within the group. What makes a person a human being is belonging to the larger community. Ubuntu is a cultural context in which members within the group make themselves available to others, affirm other members in the group, feel elevated by the successes of their group members, and are not threatened by progress of others within the group.

Culture is conceptualized as a complex system of meaning that is shared and transferred socially and from generation to generation (Bell, 2011). Culture contributes to the development of individual and group realities by contributing to their worldview, preferences, and ideas about morality. It is a system of beliefs, norms, mores, and orientations, and it is shaped by internal and external dynamics and contexts. Culture is inextricably linked to resiliency among African

Americans, and consists of characteristics such as shared historical experiences, strong work ethic, individual and group academic achievement, respect for elders, wholistic thinking, and the embrace of religion.

Descriptions of Themes

To answer the first research question, qualitative data were collected via field notes, exit letters, exit interviews, focus groups, and peer-to-peer interviews. All sources of data were uploaded and coded in Dedoose. The coding team arrived at an inter-rater reliability rate of at least 90 percent for all coding manuals. These data were also analyzed using Dedoose and thematic analysis was employed, with content analysis for data from letters and peer-to-peer interviews addressing youths' community experiences (Miles et al., 2019).

In the following analysis, those themes that were robust in the sense of having been reflected by two different forms of qualitative data (triangulation) are presented first. The results showed that this cross-age peer mentoring program did build a culturally relevant form of self-efficacy. There was sufficient evidence in the qualitative data that suggested that, from the youths' perspectives, SLIY supported and developed their self-efficacy. The evidence suggests that self-efficacy, or executing actions in the face of challenges to reach a desired outcome (Bandura, 1997), was a collective action and not an individual action. Moreover, youths' confidence enhanced in the program was also a collective effort. Finally, the results from the qualitative analysis showed that youth in this program had a desire to give back to the community. Examples follow.

Mentors Want to Give Back to Their Community as a Personal Goal. A major theme that emerged from the data analysis is that the mentoring program gave the youth an opportunity

to give back to the community. Giving back to the community was an individual goal that had an impact on the larger community, but individual goals were part of a larger collective effort. The youth desired to make positive contributions to their communities and bring about positive change by way of collective action. The mentors persistently expressed their goals of community change and their resiliency, despite living in high-poverty and high-crime neighborhoods. This concept of giving back to the community was a major theme among the mentors. With reference to making a positive contribution to the neighborhood as a goal, one mentor stated in a peer-to-peer interview, “You’re giving back to the community because you are giving the kid a place to turn to and taking them off the streets.”

This youth understood the importance of making this contribution to the community by providing younger children a safe space to be and to ensuring that they were not on the streets of their dangerous neighborhoods. This theme of making life-saving contributions to the community is very evident, especially in its manifestation of providing a safe space for the mentee and saving them from potential danger within the context of this program.

In a focus group conducted among the mentors, for instance, another mentor stated, “I want to tell them about how we are not doing this for the money. We are doing this to save lives.” This youth clearly is suggesting that involvement in the program was not incentivized by money, but by a need to give back to the community in a way that reduced the life-threatening risks posed by poverty and violence, replacing those risks with safety. This mentor understood that the mentee’s life could be lost in the context of an urban environment that is saturated with criminality.

In an exit interview, another youth mentor made it clear that participation in the program was not arbitrary, but was to help his community by mentoring: “I didn’t come here just to come here. I came here to help.”

This cross-age peer mentoring program gave this youth a sense of purpose, as it relates to giving back and bringing positive community change. This youth mentor was very clear about his or her purpose, which was driven by a sense of giving back to the community and helping younger people. Although at first glance, this wanting to help was an individual goal, the goal of this youth mentor has implications for the larger group and is not just an individual achievement.

Another mentor responded to a peer-to-peer interview, acknowledging that the discussion of the community and what to do to resolve some of the problems plaguing the community was his or her favorite part of the program. This mentor said, “My favorite part of the program is talking about the community and what goes on in the community and what we could do to help.”

Although there were multiple aspects of this program that this mentor could have prioritized, discussing the community and how to make a positive contribution to the community by helping resolve some of the troublesome problems was preferred. It is also important to note that this mentor saw helping the community not as an individual effort, but as a community effort and the community effort was part of the mentor’s individual goal. Notice the collective language, not “I” but what “can we do to help?” Moreover, although the peer-to-peer interviews are designed to ask individuals questions, this youth is speaking as a person whose identity is committed to the well-being of the community, a representative of the collective group with responsibilities for community welfare.

Another mentor, speaking for the collective, saw the cross-age peer mentoring program as a way to make positive change in the community: “I do feel like this [the mentoring program] can change a lot of neighborhoods but we all have to play a role in it and not be afraid.” This mentor stated that positive community change was an achievable goal, and if they executed the appropriate action as a collective, this outcome was achievable.

Mentors Give Back to the Community Focusing on Efforts to Reduce Community Violence. Another theme that emerged from the analysis that demonstrated the interconnection between individual and community goals was the mentors’ interest in giving back to the community, specifically by assisting with violence reduction in their neighborhoods as a goal. In a peer-to-peer interview, one mentor spoke about working the mentees to help with the effort: “I think it [the cross-age peer mentoring program] would help them [mentees] see things for what they really are and like and that there is hope . . . to decrease violence in our community.”

This is another example of a youth mentor experiencing a commitment to working as a collective to reduce violence in their communities. Effort on behalf of the community is experienced as an achievable personal goal, sufficiently powerful to motivate a year-long commitment. The mentor said, “I would like help with violence going on; help make it die down a little.” Although this youth mentor was speaking of reducing violence as an individual goal, s/he wanted to make this positive contribution and change to the community by assisting others to achieve this outcome. In the field notes, one of the staff members of SLIY recorded a youth mentor, who stated, “We need to do something about the violence.”

The results from the qualitative analyses shows that this collective effort toward achieving a goal, specifically to reduce community violence, save youths’ lives, and improve

conditions in the community, was a prevailing theme. This theme of collective action to achieve the goal of positive community change, stated by several mentors as a personal goal, emerged in four different sources of qualitative data, including peer-to-peer interviews, focus groups, exit interviews, and field notes, thus making this a very robust finding of this study.

Relationships in SLIY Experienced as Social Bonds So Strong They Were Akin to Family. Another major theme that emerged from the qualitative data was a depth of shared identity that youth expressed as being as close and committed as a family. The bonding processes and sense of communalism between the youth mentors and their peers were also described as an extended family relationship. This theme was also seen across two sources of qualitative data, the peer-to-peer interviews and the field notes, thus making it a robust finding resulting from the triangulation of these data. From the peer-to-peer interviews, for example, one of the youth mentors stated, when referring to other youth mentors, “The peers were my family. They’re fam. Gang gang.” In another peer-to-peer interview, a youth mentor said this about the mentoring program:

Feeling like I have a family and I have somewhere to go myself. I feel like this place has made me feel at home and there is more to live for, more to look forward to, you know? Happiness is not too far away.

In a peer-to-peer interview, a mentor who was asked what she liked about the mentoring program in a peer-to-peer interview said, “Mostly everything. Becoming a leader, a big sister, and someone they look up to.” This mentor did not just state that she was looking to be a role model, but saw herself playing the role of big sister or an extended family member.

The theme of youth mentors viewing each other and their mentees as family was captured in the field notes taken by the staff running the mentoring program. one youth mentor stated, “Got to

see everywhere [everyone] here. I missed my babies.” Although this mentor was not very much older than her mentees, she viewed herself as their caretaker.

Another youth mentor was recording in a field note discussing the importance of making changes to be a good example for the mentees. In efforts to make the change, she didn’t describe herself as changing to be a good friend, but as making changes to be a positive example more akin to a family member. She said, “I have [to] change to be a big sister to a little kid.” In a field note, another mentor described the relationship between the participants in the program: “[We are] like a family.”

In one of the field notes taken by staff of SLIY, yet another mentor described how her mentee saw her, and aptly pointed out that the mentee viewed her as a family member “They took me as a big sister. I’m still here for them. I mean do what I got to do to see them.”

The results from the qualitative data also show that this program produced positive social bonding between the mentors and mentees, a theme that held up across multiple sources of qualitative data.

The following major themes emerged from analysis for qualitative research question 3.1:

- Mentors wanted to give back to their community as a personal goal.
- There was an interconnection between individual goals of mentors and community goals.
- Mentors giving back to the community focused on efforts to reduce community violence.
- Relationships in SLIY were experienced as social bonds so strong that participants were akin to family.

Research Question 3.2: Youths' Perspectives on the Impact of SLIY on Their Self-efficacy. From the youth's perspective, does SLIY improve their culturally relevant form of self-efficacy? This question focuses specifically on whether and how SLIY enhanced the mentors' self-efficacy, compared to question 3.1, which addresses how youth define self-efficacy. These questions were answered utilizing qualitative data collected via field notes, focus groups, and peer-to-peer interviews. Data were uploaded and coded in Dedoose. These data were also analyzed in Dedoose using thematic analysis. Youths' comments about how SLIY was impacting their self-efficacy were compiled into specific themes as described below.

The key components of program impact on youths' culturally relevant form of self-efficacy were self-confidence acquired through mentoring, affirmation through the ability to accomplish one's goals, recognition of one's accomplishments, and mutual goal setting that affirmed collective identity. The impact of SLIY on youths' culturally relevant form of self-efficacy was strongly associated with goal development. The focus on goals was generated by the mentors' own themes. It may have been somewhat influenced by questions on the mentor debriefing forms, which asked mentors to describe the goals they set with their mentees and progress towards accomplishing the goals. The major themes that emerged from the analyses of these data were the following:

- Self-confidence affirmed by the group experience and by being a mentor.
- Group affirmation of one's ability to accomplish one's goals.
- Affirmation of collectivist identity and goals through mutual goal development.

Each heading below reflects one of the themes relevant to self-efficacy and grit from the coding manuals.

Being a Mentor Instilled Self-confidence. In a peer-to-peer interview, a youth mentor discussed how SLIY improved her culturally-relevant form of self-efficacy:

I learned confidence [as a participant in the program] because I had my own mentee and I'm usually shy when it comes to new people. But during this program, I learned that sometimes you just have to go for it.

This youth mentor clearly illustrated that her confidence was increased as a result of participating in the program. This confidence, moreover, was not a result of individual efforts alone, but it was confidence within the context of collective action and interaction with her mentee. The mentor specifically stated that confidence was a result of having her "own" mentee, and that this broke her out of being shy; to have confidence toward goal achievement, "sometimes you have to just go for it."

Being Affirmed in One's Ability to Accomplish One's Goals. Within the context of the mentoring program and being encouraged by collective support, a youth mentor in another peer-to-peer interview stated that the program had an impact with reference to increasing this culturally relevant form of self-efficacy and the capacity to achieve goals: "Yea, my capabilities [have improved resulting from being in the program]. The limits on myself is removed. I know I can do more." This mentor stated that her/his capacity to moving forward and achieving their goals had improved as a result of being in the program. It was also clear that the youth mentor had placed limits on herself/himself, with reference to the ability to move forward toward achieving goals. But, SLIY had impacted her/his self-efficacy within the context of peers, mentees, and staff. That capacity, in other words, increased within the context of collective support.

Affirmation of Collectivist Identity and Goals Through Mutual Goal Development.

Youths' self-confidence was affirmed by the group experience and by being a mentor. A mentor stated in a peer-to-peer interview that SLIY and her collective associations with her peers and the mentees impacted her self-efficacy: "Me and my peers...we're all feminine and understand each other. We have one common goal. And above all that, they are great. I could not ask for anyone better." Here is a clear example of one's goal as a collective effort, which reflects the collectivist cultures of the youth, in other words, an essential component of meaning making within their culture.

Group Affirmation of One's Ability to Accomplish One's Goals. In the field notes, staff at one of the mentoring sites observed a youth mentor, who stated: "I am here to help them not just with their attitude and stuff, but with their work. I ain't here just for y'all money." This youth mentor clearly demonstrated that the program provided a context in which she could work collectively with the mentee, to help set and achieve the goals of the mentee.

Staff also recorded in the field notes collective efforts by a mentor and mentee to execute a plan to achieve the mentee's goals. For example,

[The mentor] worked with a new mentee. She helped her mentee figure out his plan on how he will obtain his goal. She also supported her mentee. But also gave ideas on his long term and short-term goals.

The mentor's goal, in this instance, was to help the mentee figure out a plan or a strategy to achieve short- and long-term goals. This observation is an example of a culturally relevant form of self-efficacy. The goal setting of the mentee in this observation was not an individual effort, but rather a collective effort with support from the mentor within the context of the peer mentoring program.

Additional field notes by staff made similar observations regarding collective efforts to help a mentee to achieve her goal. For example, one mentor was observed stating “I helped her [the mentee] decide her long-term goal.” This was a collaborative effort, given that the mentor and mentee worked together to figure out the nature of the mentee’s long-term goal. The effort to help the mentee achieve his goal was inextricably linked to the mentor’s goal, which was assisting the mentee.

Another field note recorded an observation of a mentor and mentee in a collective effort to assist the mentee in setting long- and short-term goals. The mentor said, “I worked on goals with my mentee. Her short-term goals are to get all A’s and become a doctor.” A similar field note documented how goal achievement can be interdependent, and in some instances, the mentee plays a role in helping the mentor to achieve goals: “Sometimes they [the mentees] can help you achieve your goal.” This is an example of the bidirectional impact of cross-age peer mentoring programs. This mentor clearly articulated the impact that the mentee had on him, with reference to achieving his goals. It was collective, but perhaps in an indirect way.

The themes from these analyses have contributed to the development of a culturally relevant-form of self-efficacy that is specific to African American youth living in highly stressed urban communities. Key components of the theory of self-efficacy, such as engaging in actions to achieve goals, as well as confidence to achieve specific outcomes, speaks to individual efforts. The term *self-efficacy* speaks to a focus on the self, which clearly suggests how confidence to achieve outcomes is conceptualized and measured.

Based on these components of self-efficacy, our data analyses certainly illustrated that self-efficacy was evident among these youth mentors. However, as the themes revealed, this type

of self-efficacy was quite different from Bandura's notions of self-efficacy. For example, the pursuit of goals was not exclusively for the enhancement of individual mentors (experienced as oneself, for instance). Instead, the goals of individual mentors were linked to the enhancement of the community. Goal development, as well as increasing confidence among the mentors, was a collective effort. In essence, the primacy of individualism was **not** associated with goal development and confidence among this sample. Unlike Bandura's concept of self-efficacy, which focuses on the individual's confidence to achieve specific goals as primate, these youth mentors exhibited a form of self-efficacy in which confidence to engage in actions to achieve goals and outcomes was collective. It is the collectivism associated with the confidence required to achieve individual goals that captures an essential aspect of these youths' culture and how self-efficacy is developed in their culture.

Research Question 3.3: Grit. Research question 3 asked to what extent do African American youth attending SLIY improve their grit? This research question was answered using qualitative data collected via field notes and peer-to-peer interviews. These data were uploaded and coded in Dedoose prior to thematic and content analysis. As was noted above, the statistical analysis of SLIY's impact on mentor grit, as measured by the standardized scale, was not statistically significant. However, utilizing an inductive approach and applying the conceptual framework of grit to analyze these data provides clear evidence that grit was observed among the youth mentors and that SLIY positively impacted youths' grit.

Angela Duckworth (2016) defined grit as perseverance and passion toward achieving outcomes or goals. Passion was conceptualized as working towards a goal or outcome with the "the idea of consistency over time" (Duckworth, 2016, p.55). Although these youth never

mentioned the word *grit* in any of the sources of qualitative data, the context of these mentors' lives and their persistence with regard to working as a mentor in SLIY demonstrated their grit.

For example, many of the mentors working in SLIY had significant challenges in their families and communities. These obstacles were captured in the qualitative data, specifically data coded as risk factors. A major theme that emerged in these data involved concerns about poverty. Many of the mentors had concerns regarding their lack of financial resources. In a field note, a staff of SLIY observed a mentor stating "I am currently homeless." In another observation recorded in the field notes a mentor said, "I didn't have a way to get here. I literally went on the green-line and waited for someone to tap on me." This quote demonstrates that youth mentors often did not have access to reliable transportation nor did they have the financial resources to take advantage of public transportation. Despite this obstacle, youth mentors, like the one quoted above, persisted and remained committed to SLIY. During a debriefing session, staff observed in field notes,

Many of mentors expressed how hungry they were throughout the session. The popcorn we bought was not to placate their hunger. And, as a result, there was low focus and low energy.

This experience led to the staff of SLIY to start bringing sandwiches for the youth at this site. During a debriefing session, field notes documented a mentor saying, "my low is I'm still hungry. I haven't eaten anything all day because there was nothing at my house." Despite the clear lack of access to food, this mentor continued to come to SLIY to mentor younger people, demonstrating consistency, persistence, and commitment.

Another theme that emerged as a risk factor for the mentors in our program involved concerns about and exposure to physical violence in their neighborhood. In a peer-to-peer

interview, a mentor said, “They always shooting and gang banging. Violence is at an all-time high.” Another mentor in a peer-to-peer interview said, “Everybody is shooting on the block.” A third mentor worried that “everyday they shoot.” Other mentors reported that someone was “shooting in front of my window at midnight” and that “violence is everywhere, anywhere, anytime—things just happened.” In additional interviews, mentors said, “I witnessed three shootings which resulted in death,” “I saw a girl got shot,” and “[I] witnessed someone get shot in front of me—I almost got shot myself.”

Despite the many challenges these young people faced in their community, the mentors set individual goals connected to improving their neighborhoods. A source of qualitative data collected at baseline illustrated this point. Prior to beginning the program, youth interested in becoming mentors were asked to write letters prompted by the following questions:

- Please tell us about you.
- What would you like to get out of the program?
- What is it like for you now in your family?
- Is there anything you would like help with?

After conducting thematic and content analyses, three major themes emerged: (1) they sought assistance with achieving their personal goals (65%), (2) they wanted to help others (60.9%), and (3) they wanted to help themselves (56.3%). (Percentages do not add up to 100 percent because some mentors stated more than one goal.)

Even while facing challenges and obstacles in their respective communities, mentors overcame the frustrations and sought to help their communities overcome challenges. They clearly possessed grit and were passionate, as defined by Duckworth (2016), regarding achieving

goals of helping others. For instance, there is evidence from focus group data that a mentor had passion for the work of mentoring:

I think I broke that [mentee resistance], and after one week, we were close. I didn't know how she felt about me til the next week . . . and she open up. And I was happy. I strived to be the best mentor I could be.

This mentor was passionate at the beginning of the program about establishing a good relationship with her mentee, and she was persistent with breaking down the barriers that would prevent that relationship from taking place, which was her ultimate goal. The mentor explicitly stated as a goal that she wanted to be the best mentor she could be and persisted for one year to achieve her goal. In this statement of being the best mentor possible, the mentor was implicitly stating two goals; accomplishing self-development for herself and assisting the mentee in achieving her goal.

Passion akin to what Duckworth describes was evident toward achieving goals, as expressed at the end of the mentoring program twelve months later. In a peer-to-peer interview at one of the research sites, a mentor exhibited perseverance, or grit, with reference to building a relationship with the mentee and working within the program: "Um, there is nothing that I did not enjoy about it [the program]. I mean we go through differences. But, we always own up as mentees and mentors and work it out." This mentor expressed that he enjoyed the mentoring program and working with the mentee, but that the work was not without its challenges. However, over the course of one year, he illustrated in the above statement that he and his mentee were able to persevere and to achieve the goals set within the mentoring session.

During another peer-to-peer interview, a mentor exhibited perseverance and commitment to working as a mentor and achieving the goals set within the mentoring program, her personal goals, and the goals of her mentee:

During the program, I had a issue going on myself. But, I was still coming to work [the mentoring program]. I feel like coming here they always made me feel like I could come here and I realized that I'm strong even though I got stuff going on every day.

This mentor overcame the obstacle that presented itself to her—she had grit and the program played a significant role in helping to develop it further. Although the mentor never stated the word *grit*, she illustrated perseverance in the face of personal challenges to continue doing the work of mentoring by helping to achieve her own personal goals, the goals of her mentee, and the goal of SLIY. In another peer-to-peer interview, a mentor expressed that the program was good, but that there were challenges from time to time. She further stated that she and her mentee had to persevere and persist to overcome those challenges and to continue the work of mentoring. In the interview, she stated, “Yes, I feel everyone worked well together. I feel like we had a few bumps in the road. But, we got back on top.” The bumps in the road the mentor was referring to were the challenges over the course of their time in the mentoring program that had to be overcome to “get back on top.”

Again, in a peer-to-peer interview, another mentor clearly illustrated that he possessed grit. He was able to persist and persevere in the face of obstacles to achieve the goals of the program and his goals and to help the mentee achieve his goals. This mentor said,

There were a couple of problems with the team. But, it was drama-based. I mean we got over it. I mean as peers to each other. We're going to have to work through it because this was work environment so all of the drama and outside feeling got put aside.

These quotes illustrate that the mentors had to persist in the face of challenges, but they were able to have enough passion for the program in the face of challenges to put aside their differences and work together to achieve goals.

In another peer-to-peer interview, a mentor exemplified core components of grit, which are persistence and the ability to not give up on the pursuit of long-term goals (Duckworth, 2016): “It makes you look at how far you’ve come and we all have come a long way and the fact that we have not given up on this program shows that we can contribute to anything, as long as we put our mind to it.” This quote reflected in the Grit scale and specifically with two of its items (Duckworth, 2016): “I finish whatever I begin” and “I am diligent. I never give up” (Duckworth, 2016, p. 54). Grit is what allows mentors to stick with this mentoring program, to contribute to the mentoring program, and to add value to the life of the mentees. Mentors faced substantial challenges in their neighborhoods. Some mentors stopped coming to the program due to lack of financial resources or issues associated with being in poverty. Also, gun violence was persistent during the time of this study, and it was a deterrent for many of the mentors. However, the young people continued to demonstrate that they possessed grit in the face of these profound social and interpersonal challenges.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Overview

The aim of this study was to investigate whether high attendance in SLIY's cross-age mentoring sessions would increase mentors' self-efficacy and grit. Previous studies showed that cross-age peer mentoring programs have a significant impact on the positive development of youth mentors (Sinclair & Larson, 2018). Cross-age peer mentoring has not been applied to impoverished and marginalized African American youth living in crime-saturated urban communities. Although the existing research has revealed that cross-age peer mentoring programs increase academic connectedness and self-esteem (Karcher, 2009) and leadership skills (Bensnoy & McDaniel, 2016), the findings from this study add to our understanding of the effectiveness of this intervention on youths' grit and self-efficacy in the context of their culture and coexisting variables of age and trauma.

The results of the regression analysis showed that high attendance in the mentoring program alone did not increase the youths' self-efficacy and grit. After there were no significant main effects of more frequent program attendance on self-efficacy and grit, six simple moderation models were developed with gender, social support, and age as moderators. These moderators were added to the model to examine the interaction effects of high attendance on self-efficacy and grit. With gender added to the model, the

interaction effect was not a significant predictor of increased self-efficacy and grit. Also, when social support was added to the model, the interaction effect was not a significant predictor of increased self-efficacy and grit. Social support moderating high attendance predicting increases in self-efficacy and grit was not statistically significant. Results from the analyses also demonstrated that frequent program attendance had a trending increase in grit among younger mentors. The conditional effects were not significant. However, when age interacted with frequent SLIY attendance, this interaction was a significant predictor of self-efficacy among younger mentors. This finding helps us to understand that, when combined with age, dosage or frequent attendance at cross-age peer mentoring programs positively impacts the self-efficacy of younger mentors. Some implications of this finding will be discussed further below.

Trauma and Program Impact

Two post-hoc analyses were conducted to examine the effects of trauma on the youth mentors' self-efficacy and grit. These analyses were conducted because Chicago's south and west side experienced a hike in gun violence and homicides during the operation of SLIY. This rash of violence was a major concern, to the point where the federal government was threatening to intervene. Program staff witnessed how rampant this gun violence was and how it was to the youth in our program, and the analyses were conducted to determine the effects of trauma.

The results showed that the more youth mentors experienced trauma in the program, the more their self-efficacy decreased over time. They also showed that the more youth mentors experienced posttraumatic stress symptoms while participating in the program, the more their grit decreased over time. What this demonstrates is that trauma has a greater effect on youth

mentors' grit and self-efficacy than the positive effect of a cross-age peer mentoring program with a relatively low dosage (mean attendance for SLIY was 20 sessions; mean attendance for Karcher's programs was 48 sessions). These findings make sense given the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma. Trauma is a broad range of harmful experiences, which includes hurtful experiences that involve sexual, physical, mental, and emotional adverse encounters that negatively impact aspects of our being (Whitfield, 1998). When children experience trauma or ACEs, and these experiences are denied or invalidated, or these children lack support with expressing the pain of the trauma, the child could develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD; Whitfield, 1998).

The findings from this dissertation are consistent with results from previous studies. Researchers conducted a study that showed that sexual abuse among adolescents was negatively associated with self-efficacy (Cristobal et al., 2018). There is one earlier study (Ferren, 1999) that found that PTSD was not associated with decreased perceived self-efficacy among adolescents, but this study used a different sample than the highly stressed youth served by SLIY. Few studies examined the impact of trauma on the grit of youth in general, and this was also true of urban youth.

The Meaning of Age for Youth in Impoverished Communities

As was noted above, age interacted with attendance in predicting increased self-efficacy among younger mentors. Younger mentors were freshmen and sophomores in high school, transitioning from middle school to high school. Given that these young people were transitioning to a new environment, youth mentors might have felt less confident about engaging

in actions to achieve goals or have had less belief in their capacity to execute courses of action necessary to achieve desired outcomes. Saving Lives & Inspiring Youth increased their confidence through the multiple levels of support (staff-mentor, mentor-mentor, mentor-mentee). This has to be considered as a plausible explanation given that the theory of self-efficacy assumes that human agency is interdependent within a causal structure in which cognitive and biological events, behavior, and environmental factors interact as determinants with bidirectional effects (Bandura, 1997).

Self-efficacy, Grit, and Relationships with Trauma and Social Support

Correlation analysis revealed that mentors with high levels of self-efficacy at the beginning of the program also had high levels of grit at the beginning of the program. The fact that these mentors were highly confident that they would achieve their goals with passion and perseverance at the beginning of the program could explain why higher attendance at the program did not increase their self-efficacy or grit. These prosocial youth came into the mentoring program with confidence, determination, and passion to execute actions required to achieve their goals. They actualized this in part by working with their mentees for one year.

Furthermore, correlation analyses demonstrated that youth mentors who experienced high levels of trauma at the beginning of their participation in SLIY also had low levels of self-efficacy. Despite their trauma, in the qualitative data youth mentors said that the program increased their self-efficacy. However, this increased self-efficacy can be better understood as a collective effort. This observation illustrated that the youth mentors' capacity to execute an action required to achieve their goals and their belief in their ability to achieve a desired outcome

required social support, as the qualitative analyses revealed. The collective effort or social support speaks to the role of culture in developing self-efficacy.

The results of these analyses should not be surprising among these prosocial youth. Research has established that high levels of self-efficacy among prosocial adolescents are positively associated with their abilities to solve problems (De Caroli & Sagone, 2013). A majority (60.9 percent) of the mentors who came to the program were interested in helping to solve community problems, based on a thematic analysis of entry letters written by the mentors at the beginning of the program. Therefore, it is not surprising that they had high self-efficacy, expressed in this community-focused, caring way. Results of the correlation analysis also revealed that mentors with high levels self-efficacy at the beginning of the program continued to have self-efficacy at the end of the program. Moreover, mentors with high self-efficacy at the beginning of the program had high grit when the program ended. Finally, mentors with high levels of self-efficacy at the beginning of the program had more social support at the end of the program, underscoring the importance of self-efficacy for making use of opportunities for social support.

As mentioned above, the correlation analysis revealed that youth mentors who had experienced high levels of trauma at the beginning of the program also had low levels of self-efficacy. An explanation for these results is that many of these young people, as mentioned previously in this study, lived in communities and neighborhoods that had experienced the effects of structural violence (such as economic marginality and poverty) as well as systemic racial segregation via public policies such as redlining.

As occurs in highly stressed low-income communities around the world, racial segregation and poverty are associated with high community violence, which further traumatizes inhabitants. This is particularly striking, given that the trend data show that there was an increase in homicide rates in the United States from 2014 to 2017, after a decrease in homicides between 2007 and 2014 (Curtin & Heron, 2019). Violence exposure demonstrates marked variation across different racial groups. For example, in 2017, the rate of death by homicide among African American teens was 58.9 per 100,00, which is 16 times higher than the rate among non-Hispanic white teen males (Curtin & Heron, 2019).

The fact the youth have been traumatized should factor into decisions about program planning. The primary need of the prosocial youth in this sample, the majority of whom were not violence engaged, is **not** to prevent violence engagement, but rather to treat traumatic stress. Further, to develop an approach for developing self-efficacy (with all its implications for academic and personal success) that is culturally relevant requires paying attention to remedying the negative impact of trauma on self-efficacy.

The Meanings of Grit from Youths' Perspectives

The findings resulting from the research question examining the impact of SLIY on the youth mentors' grit need to be understood within a framework including how measures of grit were developed. Measures of grit were developed from samples of college students at the United States Military Academy (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009), in which the current population of university students was unlikely to include enough low-income African American youth to contribute substantially to the measures' formulation. In fact, the application process to this

prestigious institution of higher learning begins in grade 11, and successful candidates for admissions usually must secure nominations from members of the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Senate, or the vice president of the United States (Duckworth, 2016). Students with such a distinguished network likely do not hail from impoverished urban ghettos. The fact that the grit scale was validated in this population of mostly white and privileged students might explain its limitations for measuring grit in a population of impoverished urban black youth. The problem with validating a scale is the assumption that findings from one location among a small and unique population are universal and can become an acceptable foundation for theoretical generalizations (Danziger, 2007). Perhaps this can explain the lack of significant quantitative findings from this study, specifically in terms of examining youth attendance at SLIY predicting enhanced grit among the mentors.

However, findings from the qualitative analysis demonstrate that youth did possess and develop grit. In fact, the results from the qualitative data analyses contribute to a formulation of grit that is more applicable to the population of low-income African American youth. There were two primary themes related to self-efficacy and grit that emerged from the qualitative analysis. The first, passion for achieving the goals of the mentoring program is the idea of working consistently over time to achieve an outcome (Duckworth, 2016). The second element of grit is perseverance. Youth participating in SLIY demonstrably persevered to achieve the goals of the program. As one mentor stated in a peer-to-peer interview, “During the program, I had an issue going on myself, But I was still coming to work [the mentoring program]. I feel like I could come here and I realized that I’m strong even though I got stuff going on everyday.” This mentor

clearly credited the program with assisting her in getting a deeper understanding the internal strength she possessed, which contributed to her continuously coming to the program and providing mentoring to her mentee. She was passionate about her mentoring work despite challenges in her own life. The fact that these young people reported passion and perseverance to carry out their mentoring work demonstrated their resilience and grit.

This consistent work of these youth mentors was done in the face of multiple risks. Among the risks that these mentors faced daily were multiple forms of violence exposure. In addition to exposure to community violence, these young people lived, went to school, and provided mentoring to younger children in communities that experienced structural violence. Structural violence is defined as structural inequities that systematically prevent some people from fulfilling their basic human needs and foster avoidable “disparities between potential ability to fulfill basic needs and the actual fulfillment” (Ho, 2007). Moreover, many of these youth mentors stated that authorities such as police, who were supposed to support them, were actually inflicting violence on them (Moore et al., 2017; see also Futterman et al., 2016). Many of these communities experienced what Loic Wacquant (2008) called “violence from above,” which includes mass unemployment, relegation to decaying neighborhoods, and heightened stigmatization, as well as the negative effects of mass incarceration (Alexander, 2010) .

Despite these challenges, mentors had passion and persevered to achieve the goals of SLIY. They demonstrated consistency with reference to achieving this goal. This theme emerged in qualitative data (field notes, peer-to-peer interviews, and exit interviews), but was not captured by the standardized scale data. Perseverance toward goal achievement was also a theme that

emerged, but it emerged only from the qualitative data. The fact that the qualitative data were able to capture aspects of self-efficacy and grit in SLIY youth speaks to the importance of mixed-methods research with this population to prevent losing sight of intervention impact on culturally specific variables.

The Impact of Poverty on Findings About Grit and Self-efficacy

The youth were persistently preoccupied and concerned about poverty, a theme that emerged from the analysis. This concern was legitimate given the adverse effects that poverty was having on them. Many of the youth had difficulty focusing in some mentoring sessions due to severe hunger; often the staff of SLIY had to provide food to them in an effort to help them do their work.

There are several structural mechanisms that were historically the source of the concentrated poverty in the neighborhoods in which this study was conducted. These neighborhoods saw increased poverty over the past five decades resulting from deindustrialization and joblessness (Wilson, 1987, 1996), residential segregation resulting from racist housing policies (Massey & Denton, 1993), and the out-migration of middle-class black families (Wilson, 1987). The communities in which this study was carried out also experienced severe disinvestment, which contributes to pervasive poverty and urban blight. These communities reflect a larger trend in the United States. In the United States, the proportion of children living in poverty is higher than that of adults (Madrack, 2020). By some accounts, 13 million children live in poverty and 6 million live in deep or extreme poverty. In addition to these structural factors that have contributed to increased concentrated poverty, these

neighborhoods have also experienced state abandonment and de-proletarianization, or an outright denial of wage-earning activities and labor market exclusion (Wacquant, 2008). The inability of adults in these communities to have access to good jobs ultimately impacted their ability to financially support their children, thus making children vulnerable to poverty and economic deprivation.

Poverty among children, as mentioned at the beginning of this study, has multiple negative effects. Among the negative effects, hunger is persistent among impoverished youth. Madrick (2020) wrote that “hunger is the first and most persistent experience of poverty for children in America. There is severe starvation and indeed death in America, notably in the Deep South, as recent as the late 1960s” (p. 21). In addition to hunger, poverty is linked to increased neurological damage, which combined with substandard education in highly under-resourced public schools in low-income communities (Madrick, 2020), impairs youths’ ability to acquire skills to be competitive in the U.S. workforce today. Studies indicated that even high-achieving youth from Chicago’s poor communities can lag significantly behind privileged peers academically (cited in McCrea et al., 2019).

Despite suffering from inadequate food and receiving inadequate education from under-resourced public schools, youth continued to work and give back to their community. The theme that emerged often was passion toward achieving goals. This is a distinctive form of grit that needs to be better conceptualized and recognized scientifically.

Psychological Impacts of Poverty and Findings About Grit and Self-efficacy

Urban poverty is directly associated with the vast and rising economic inequality in the United States. Inequality is not just an economic phenomenon, but it is also a psychological one. Inequality adversely impacts the way poor people feel about themselves and others. Depression is much more common among persons in poverty, linked to their feeling “less than,” coming to believe that it is impossible to accomplish their life goals, and experiencing a sense of exclusion and lack of self-worth due to the inability to live up to the wider society’s established norms (Payne, 2017).

This notion of structures impacting certain groups’ cognition and disposition is not new. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1980) discussed the concept of *habitus*. He defined habitus as structures that produce actions, that impact mental habits, and that serve a habit-forming function. These structures set parameters and boundaries of what is possible or less likely for specific groups in a society. In a society that is socially stratified, the group’s position within the social strata and the socialization within that stratified world impact the group’s disposition or their inherent quality of mind and character. These external structures are internalized, and these structures produce limitations on the actions of those living within the structure (Swartz, 1997).

Moreover, according to Swartz,

Habitus tends to shape individual action so that existing opportunity structures are perpetuated. Chances of success or failure are internalized and then transformed into individual aspirations or expectation; these in turn are externalized in action that tends to reproduce the objective structure of life chances (p. 103).

The reduced impact of SLIY on older youths’ self-efficacy as measured by the self-efficacy instrument may be explained by the qualitative observations that youth in SLIY seem to

have become increasingly aware, as they grew older, that the ladder of social mobility is broken and rarely offers them an opportunity to advance upward in their city and in their country. The youth mentors in this study lived under very oppressive structures that set parameters and boundaries for them. The oppressive structures in which these young people lived certainly impacted some of the young people's aspirations and expectations in a negative way.

Despite these young peoples' awareness of living in an oppressed neighborhood that caused them to be deeply worried about reduced career opportunities and shortened life expectancy, and their awareness of the racism and classism that prevented them from advancing, they exhibited grit by persevering and being persistent as mentors. They worked hard to give back to their communities, and their individual goals were inextricably linked to community improvement. The majority persisted in achieving their goals despite their conditions.

Racism and Findings About Grit and Self-efficacy

Racism clearly plays a role in how black children and white children experience poverty. Black children are disproportionately more impoverished than white children (Madrick, 2020). Although the Hispanic community has the highest number of children living in poverty, the percentage of Hispanic children living below the federal poverty line is lower than the percentage of African-American children in poverty. Poverty began to be racialized in the late 1960s, and black families and children became the face of poverty by way of the mass media (Gilens, 2003). Moreover, being in this impoverished state caused black families and children to be unfairly perceived as lazy and dependent on social programs (Murray, 1984), and this perception of urban blacks persisted until the mid 1990s.

The disproportionate impact of poverty on urban black youth in the communities in which this study was conducted was obvious. These youth lived in communities that were deprived of access to resources resulting from a history of residential segregation and redlining (Rothstein, 2017). Their social and economic positions are largely a result of historical and current racism in the city (Coats, 2014). Bourdieu's (1980) concept of habitus provides a framework for understanding the cumulative effects of historical racism and its impact on the current conditions of the community in which the study was carried out and the participants in the study. Bourdieu wrote,

The habitus—embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history—is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product. As such, it is what gives practices their autonomy with respect to external determinations of the immediate present (p. 56).

These urban African American neighborhoods have been negatively impacted by racist exclusionary rules and public policies. Historical racist rules, such as laws during slavery, Jim Crow laws, and redlining, were deliberately designed to blockade mainstream American society from African Americans (Flynn et al., 2017). Historic structural racism, or systemic discrimination, is a significant contributor to the current racial inequalities in the United States.

The extreme marginalization of the neighborhoods in which these young people lived and went to school—the intersection of economic inequality and structural racism—must be taken into account when assessing these young people's grit, particularly when looking at life chances and outcomes of black people and other people of color. Flynn and colleagues (2017) noted that these racist social practices prevented African Americans from having access to resources, opportunities, and power, thus contributing to racialized poverty, economic deprivation, and the

creation of urban ghettos that lack the necessary resources. Despite these enormous systemic impediments to advancing in American life, and the enormous challenges these neighborhoods have faced historically and currently, these youth mentors continued to return to SLIY and contributed to improving their community. This reconceptualization of grit and self-efficacy is essential for social sciences to adequately comprehend the nature of these constructs in low-income African-American youth.

Grit, Self-efficacy, and the African Heritage

One of the aims of this study was to determine whether the qualitative data from SLIY would yield a culturally relevant definition of self-efficacy. The results from the qualitative data analysis demonstrated that this peer mentoring program created the context for a culturally relevant form of self-efficacy to be developed among the mentors.

This finding adds to the conceptual literature and expands the conceptualization of self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as the confidence to execute an action to achieve a goal. There was evidence from the quantitative analysis that mentors' self-efficacy, as defined by Bandura, increased resulting from high attendance in the program. Those results do not capture the role of culture and its impact on the development of self-efficacy. However, self-efficacy and its development are an individual act from Bandura's perspective.

This study demonstrated that the development of self-efficacy among African American youth in urban and impoverished communities is developed as a result of collective efforts. This collective effort is a result of the culture of African American youth and how that culture influences meaning making. Collectivism being at the core of meaning making among urban

black youth is consistent with some of the norms and folkways of traditional and indigenous African cultures.

For example, in South Africa, Ubuntu is a concept that examines human relationships within the context of collectivism. *Ubuntu* is a word and concept that derives from the Xhosa people of South Africa. The etymological origin of the word *Ubuntu* derives from the proverbial expression *ubuntu ungamntu ngabanye abantu* (each individual's humanity is ideally expressed in relationship with others or the person depends on other people to be a person) (Battle, 2009, p. 39). Ubuntu is a concept that assumes that human beings belong to a network of delicate relationships that are interdependent. In essence, this concept describes human beings as having to rely on others to exist. Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1999) asserted that Ubuntu is the essence of the African *Weltanschauung*:

A person with ubuntu is open and available to others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are (p.31).

This is not to suggest that SLIY youth retained some cultural traditions from South Africa, especially given that most African Americans' ancestors derive from west Africa (Eltis, 2001). Rather, many African cultures have values similar to Ubuntu, as will be further described below. Although Ubuntu is known to have derived from South Africa among the Xhosa people, the principles of this concept are present in several sub-Saharan African cultures (Eze, 2008). The youths' collective process of meaning making is very similar to what is observed in African cultures. That is, worldviews and perspectives are developed within a collective context of

interdependence. Ubuntu is a conceptual framework that was applied to interpret the themes and findings that emerged from the qualitative analysis.

Omoluabi is also a philosophical and conceptual framework that was applied to interpret themes that emerged to strengthen the conceptualization of this culturally relevant form of self-efficacy. The concept of Omoluabi derives from Nigeria, West Africa, and is considered a noun and verb in the Yoruba language (Adeniji-Neil, 2011). Omoluabi (as noun) is a person who possesses a strong work ethic, gives back to the community, respects others, and is self-actualized. The construct of omoluabi as an ideal person assumes that individuals are obligated to give back to the community and must have integrity to be considered a person. An omoluabi's action and deeds should be positively linked to the community, and he or she works hard to ensure harmony exist within relationships in the community (Adeniji-Neil, 2011). The young mentors' devotion to their mentees reflects this value of an Omoluabi. They frequently commented that their goal was to give to the mentees supports they themselves did not have. They sought to use their care and compassion to compensate for the deprivations in their social worlds, and to build up in the mentees capacities that mentors knew they would need in the future. Their generosity and compassion reflect the key elements of Omoluabi.

An overarching philosophical concept and a larger framework that captures Ubuntu and Omoluabi is African communitarianism. African communitarianism is a framework that promotes the primacy of community within the context of social relations among people (Wagid, 2014). Although there are major philosophical debates about this concept, African communitarianism does not discount the importance of individualism. However, it assumes that

human beings are inclined to cultivate community and to share goods. African communitarianism situates the individual and the community within a dialogic relationship with one another and assumes that the individual is inextricably linked to the community (Eze, 2008). It is a philosophical concept that advances the notion that communalism is the essence of African cultures, places emphasis on community cooperation and collective well-being, and shuns excessive individualism. In Ghana, West Africa, among the Akan people, African communitarianism assumes that an individual is only considered a person when he or she engages in action that promotes the well-being of the community (Majeed, 2017). The essence of Akan culture is that the person functions and exists within the context of the community, and personhood is inextricably linked to the community. There is also the belief that an individual is not moral if he or she does not promote what is in the best interest of the community. African communitarianism is the idea that human relations are interdependent and are a significant part of human nature. The Luo ethnic group of Kenya, East Africa, believes that human beings should sacrifice for each other. Describing the philosophy among the Luo people, Masolo (2006) wrote, “the promotion of human well-being is a collaborative and reciprocal endeavor where those more able in some domains are to assist those less able” (p. 494).

The cultural proclivities among these urban youth resemble cultural inclinations of several African cultures throughout the continent of Africa, as previously mentioned. The results of the qualitative analysis revealed four major themes:

1. Mentors wanted to give back to their community as a personal goal.
2. Individual goals of mentors were interconnected with the welfare of their communities.

3. Mentors sought to reduce community violence and strengthen mentees' well-being, which they regarded as interconnected aims.
4. Mentors valued strong social bonds/sense of family, which influenced even how they understood their mentoring groups ("we are a family").

These themes reflect characteristics of African communitarianism, the idea that "I am because we are." This notion undergirded the individual goals of mentors. That is, the mentors' individual goals were inextricably linked to the advancement of their communities.

This is in contrast to the essence of Western culture, specifically mainstream culture in the United States, which is very individualistic, promotes competition, and can devalue giving to one's community if it entails any self-sacrifice. Persons' dependency on a collective is often denigrated as a weakness rather than understood as an essential element in all humans' development to which communities must respond for the collective good. In addition to being competitive, individualism in the United States is promoted as placing value on being self-reliant, hedonistic, and emotionally distant from in-groups (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998).

This Western U.S. notion of self or the individual is obvious when self-efficacy is operationalized via existing standardized scales. The results of the quantitative analysis of this study, which examined the main effects of more attendance increasing self-efficacy were not significant. However, the results of the qualitative analysis revealed outcomes that were quite different. Perhaps the quantitative findings were not significant because self-efficacy was measured in purely individualistic rather than collective terms. For example, when the items of the Generalized Self-Efficacy scale (Tipton & Worthington, 1984) are examined, self-efficacy is

measured by rating statements such as “I am a very determined person” or “I can succeed in any task to which I set my mind to.” However, the results from the qualitative data showed that the accomplishment of achieving tasks was collective. For example, consistent with Archbishop Tutu’s description of being open and available to others as a component of Ubuntu, themes of interpersonal availability, generosity, and a sense of “we succeed at our goals” and “we are a very determined people” would better reflect the SLIY young peoples’ worldviews, as they are manifested in the qualitative data.

Limitations

This study occurred in the context of a quasi-experimental mixed-methods design with an aim of understanding the impact of cross-age mentoring on variables related to youths’ resilience and violence engagement. Few studies that are similar have been carried out before.

Randomization was not feasible for many reasons. A salient reason was that, in this highly under-resourced context, youth allocated to a control group from the same school could become hostile toward youth allocated to the intervention group, a highly undesirable artifact of the research method. Even so, much was learned about the impact of cross-age mentoring on resilience and risk for violence engagement (Richards and Tyson McCrea, 2019) that cannot be summarized in this dissertation.

Due to attrition (less than that which occurs in most other after-school programs) the sample size for this study was relatively small. The use of a mixed-methods design sought to compensate for sample size limitations by intensive analysis and triangulation of multiple forms of qualitative data collection and coding. The smaller sample size allowed for more intensive

focus on participating youth. Further, involving youth as co-researchers enhanced the ecological validity of findings.

The study's aim of focusing on low-income youth of color in urban environments means that findings should not be generalized to other populations. However, in this regard, the finding that culturally relevant constructs can differ and yield different results by comparison with standardized measures derived from populations divergent from those being studied suggests that it is wise for researchers to be exceedingly careful about applying instruments developed with one group to measure constructs from a very different population.

In retrospect, it might have been helpful to have a more nuanced understanding of variables specific to the structural violence youth were experiencing. For example, deeper investigation of the obstacles posed by hunger and terrorization by police and community violence might have shed more light on the traumas that were found to undermine self-efficacy and grit.

Moreover, SLIY had to rely on family style mentoring, which impeded the ability to track mentor/mentee pairs. This limited our ability to study in depth what was occurring in the dyad, although it did contribute to practice models for implementing cross-age mentoring with highly stressed youth.

Finally, the majority of the participants were African American, female, and low-income. Results should be generalized with caution to other populations.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The findings from this study shed light on the value of peer-mentoring programs for increasing culturally relevant forms of self-efficacy and grit of at-risk urban youth in highly stressed communities. The positive networks developed in this program significantly contributed to the increased confidence of youth mentors in their ability to achieve their individual and collective goals. Moreover, the qualitative findings added to the existing conceptual literature, with reference to understanding that the development of self-efficacy by way of this cross-age peer mentoring program can be culturally relevant. This finding adds to the conceptual literature on self-efficacy, expanding the meaning of Albert Bandura's original construct to include Afrocentric concepts related to Ubuntu and Omoluabi.

The findings from this study also have implications for the design of cross-age peer mentoring programs. The results from the quantitative analysis demonstrated that program designers should carefully consider age, as older mentors needed more supports for their self-efficacy and grit as they grew up and perceived the obstacles facing them in striving to exit poverty. Because trauma eroded self-efficacy, program designers should also consider offering a higher dosage than once weekly when youth are traumatized by structural violence. Program and intervention designers also need to consider the importance of caring supports for traumatic stress.

Recommendations for Researchers

More research is needed with regard to scale development. Hypotheses tested in this study yielded only one significant finding, notwithstanding the significant findings from the post-hoc analyses. Moreover, the qualitative findings revealed that attending and participating in SLIY increased a culturally relevant form of self-efficacy. Research across populations of low-income African American youth would be facilitated by developing standardized scales with items that capture culturally relevant constructs, especially youths' collective orientation and determination to overcome significant obstacles as components of resilience.

Researchers should rethink the constructs of grit and self-efficacy and develop standardized scales for measuring these constructs that have been tested for construct validity in high-crime, high-poverty communities of color. Researchers should also take into account the culture of these populations when developing these scales so that these constructs are measured more accurately. Moreover, given that these youth lived and went to schools in neighborhoods that have experienced systemic racism, oppression, economic exploitation, and labor market exclusion, it is recommended that a community-based participatory action approach should be employed to assist with scale development, thereby ensuring that cultural relevance is accurately captured, for example, by understanding how the youth view self-efficacy and grit.

Given that the qualitative data contribute to developing constructs of self-efficacy and grit that are relevant to the collectivist culture of marginalized urban African American youth, further Afrocentric conceptual frameworks could be developed utilizing analytical generalization (Yin, 2013). This method uses case studies in which data analysis extracts ideas to revise previous constructs or develop new ones. The ideas and findings from this method could be

applied in new situations, and the ideas and concepts that emerge from the analysis could be generalized. Moreover, the ideas and concepts that emerged from the analysis could serve as the foundation for culturally relevant conceptual and theoretical frameworks, especially with regard to underrepresented cultures.

Recommendations for Policy Makers

Policy makers should continue to support social policies that will increase funding to support more after-school programs. There is a real need for these programs, given the demand for the services these programs offer and the shortage of such programs in low-income urban communities of color. According to Afterschool Alliance (2020), one in five children in the United States is unsupervised between the hours of 2 pm and 6 pm, which is the peak time for juvenile crime. Moreover, 19 million children in the United States are waiting to get into after-school programs, with those in low-income communities being the least served of all (Deschenes et al., 2010). Research has shown that these programs have had positive effects on children that participate in them, including improved homework completion, improved behavior in class, and improved grades in math and reading (Afterschool Alliance, 2020). In addition, researchers have shown that cross-age peer mentoring programs have had positive effects on social connectedness and school engagement for mentors and mentees (Karcher, 2014), which makes it different from other after-school programs. Cross-age peer mentoring programs' fundamental objective is to build positive relationships, which is important in neighborhoods with disorganized gangs known as cliques that provide youth living in high-crime, high-poverty communities opportunities to develop negative and counterproductive relationships. The investment in these programs promises to produce social benefits that far outweigh the social costs.

Recommendations for Practitioners

Cross-age mentoring has considerable promise for social workers practicing in highly stressed contexts. Such programs make it possible to develop positive social networks that can compete with the negative social networks that are the primary contexts within which violence engagement occurs (Papachristos et al., 2012). In addition, cross-age peer mentoring taps into cultural values that are important to African American youth, potentially increasing their engagement and benefit from after-school and summer programs. Finally, it is important to include counseling as a component of cross-age peer mentoring after-school and summer programs. The counseling component can enable youth to address traumatic stress, as well as provide support for surmounting the many obstacles posed by poverty. Practitioners should continue to utilize best practices, which include parental involvement, use of structured activities, and ongoing staff training and support (Karcher, 2014). Moreover, given the risk factors facing youth living in high-crime, high-poverty neighborhoods, practitioners should ensure that additional resources are available, such as transportation, food and hygiene products, and trauma-focused counseling, to enable programs to run effectively.

APPENDIX A
QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDES

Final Focus Group Interview Protocol for Mentors

Purposes

- To facilitate group discussion to mourn loss and support each other
- To elicit more data about program impact

State the ID numbers of the participants very clearly into the tape recorder, as well as your name and the date.

1. What changes have you noticed about yourself since the program started?
2. What have you learned about life from your experience as a mentor?
3. Do you think your mentee(s) have changed/grown from being apart of this program? If yes, how? If no, do you have a sense of what has happened that made change difficult?
4. Will you apply the skills you've learned here in other avenues in your life? If yes, how? If no, I wonder why not?
5. What's the biggest lesson you've learned—or the best takeaway?
6. What reasons would you give funders to keep this program going?
7. If you imagine yourself not coming here any more, what kinds of feelings do you experience? What will you miss?
8. As the program ends, everyone can keep in touch via our Facebook page and website. What other kinds of support would you like to have after this program ends?

Each person takes a piece of paper and writes her/his name on top of it. Then they pass the paper around and others write something unique and positive about the person whose name is on the paper. Then each person is given her/his paper.

Individual Exit Interview for Mentors

Purposes: (1) Plan social supports for program ending & (2) Gather data about violence engagement

ID _____ Site _____ Date _____ Interviewer name _____

Instructions: State the ID number of the person very clearly into the tape recorder, as well as your name and the date. If the parents of the interviewee did not agree that their child could be tape recorded, please take notes on the interviewee's responses on your laptop. Take notes on this form.

I am going to ask you some questions about what to do after the mentoring program ends so that you feel you have the resources you need to get through things that might be tough in the future. I am also going to ask you about times when you may have felt more aggressive towards others.

What we talk about here is completely confidential unless you let me know that you are being physically hurt or you plan to physically hurt someone else or yourself, in which case I may have to tell someone."

Social Supports (3 minutes max):

1. "How are you feeling about this program ending?" [positive and negative]
2. Review the final eco-map together and give person the list of community resources.
3. "As you think about your relationships now, what kinds of support do you feel you need going forward? Support means people you can go to for help with finances, school, emotions, friendships, and other things. Are there any people who you can reach out to for support that are listed in your ecomap? Any that are not listed on the eco-map? What future situations do you think will be difficult for you? Let's think about how you can get the help you need."

Violence/Aggression Perpetration (3 minutes max):

During the year before this program started (what was your grade in school? How old are you? —to help them remember):

These next questions are about times when you may have been more violent or aggressive than usual. It is understandable to feel this sometimes; we just want to get a better sense of what that looks like for you.

1. Did you hurt anyone physically (by hitting, pushing, using a weapon, etc.) during the year before the mentoring program started? 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more
 If so – about how many times (circle answer)?
 If time permits and there are multiple times, interviewer can ask about each event.
2. Did you join a gang? Y / N
 If yes, how many times did you engage in violence as a part of that gang?
0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more

**Repeat “In the year before this program started” if necessary.

3. Did you take something that did not belong to you? 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more
4. Did you have a desire to hurt someone or take revenge physically?
0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more
5. Have you ever been involved in dating or relationship violence?
 If yes, were you the victim or the perpetrator?

 If you were the perpetrator, in the year before the program started, how many times did you do something physically to your partner (girlfriend, boyfriend, other) that they didn’t want you to do? 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more
6. Did you carry a weapon? 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more

These next questions are about times when you may have been more violent or aggressive than usual **since starting the mentoring program** (When did you start? Help them to remember the time.) Again, it is understandable to feel this way sometimes; we just want to get a better sense of what that looks like for you.

1. Did you hurt anyone physically (by hitting, pushing, using a weapon, etc.) during the year before the mentoring program started?
 If so, about how many times (circle answer)? 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more
 If time permits and there are multiple times, interviewer can ask about each event.

2. Did you join a gang? Y / N
 If yes, how many times did you engage in violence as a part of that gang?
 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more

Repeat “In the year before this program started” if necessary.

3. Did you take something that did not belong to you? 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more
4. Did you have a desire to hurt someone or take revenge physically?
 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more
5. Have you ever been involved in dating or relationship violence?
 If yes, were you the victim or the perpetrator?
- If you were the perpetrator, in the year before the program started, how many times did you do something physically to your partner (girlfriend, boyfriend, other) that they didn’t want you to do? 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more
6. Did you carry a weapon? 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more
7. Do you think being in this program has affected the choices you made about being violent or aggressive? 0 – no, 1 – a little, 2 – some, 3 – a lot
 If yes, how?
 If no, why not?

*****If there are concerns about the person being violent, e.g., if they answer that they have been since being involved in the program, we need to follow up with them and get them help*****

Peer-Led Program Evaluation Protocol

Date: _____

ID (of person being interviewed) _____

ID (of person interviewing) _____

Gender: ___ male: ___ female: ___ other ___

Grade: _____ Age _____

School: _____

TEENS WORK IN SAME-GENDER-IDENTIFIED PAIRS AND INTERVIEW EACH OTHER, USING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONNAIRE. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS THAT YOU FIND UNCOMFORTABLE.

About the Program

1. How would you describe this program to someone?
2. Why did you decide to join this program?
3. Why did you decide to keep coming to it?
4. Can you talk some about your favorite part of the program?
5. Can you talk some about a part of the program you did not enjoy?
6. We would like feedback on each part of the program.
 - a. What did you enjoy or think went well when you worked with your mentee(s)?
 - b. What would you change about the mentoring program?
7. Do you feel you learned anything from this program?
 - If yes, what?
 - If no, why do you think you didn't learn anything?
8. Did you learn anything about yourself (or your capabilities) from this program? Can you give examples?

9. Give feedback to the instructors: Let them know what they are doing well and what they need to work on.

Instructor 1 (will be named in actual interview)

Instructor 2 (will be named in actual interview)

Instructor 3 (will be named in actual interview)

10. Do you feel the instructors have helped you personally? If so, how?
11. Can you talk some about you and your peers?
- Did everyone work together?
 - Were there ever any problems with the team?
 - Have the issues been resolved? If so, how?
12. Did you feel like you were able to make decisions and contributed in the activities you participated in? Can you give some examples?
13. Did you have any opportunities to be a leader in the program? Talk some about what that was like for you.
14. On a scale of 1-10, *where 1 means you were not interested at all* and *10 means you were always involved in the program*, how interested would you say you were in this program?
- 1 _____ 5 _____ 10
- Why did you give yourself that rating?
 - Were there any challenges to you attending sessions? If so, what were they?
15. Why do you think that some mentors did not attend sessions regularly or left the program?
16. Has this mentoring program influenced other parts of your life? If so, how?
17. As we plan for the next program, What would you like to do in the next program? Do you have any Ideas for documentary topics? What Other activities would you like to see? What would you like to learn?
18. Talk about our program website:
- What did you like about the website idea and the opportunity to create and share your own work?

- b. Has contributing to the website given you more impact?
 - i. If yes, how so?
 - ii. If no, how could it be more impact-full for you?
- c. Do you think that the website can help to empower your peers in the program? Why or why not?
- d. Do you feel like your submissions on the website can help your community (neighborhood) and other community (neighborhoods)?
 - i. If so, how do you think it can help them?
 - ii. If not, why not?

Community Concerns

WE WANT TO REMIND YOU AGAIN THAT YOU DO NOT HAVE TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS THAT YOU FIND UNCOMFORTABLE.

Interviewees can talk through answers in words rather than writing, or they can write, whatever they prefer.

Please ensure that they rate the scales on this paper and that you return the scale to the Research Coordinator. Thank you!

Rate your views about each statement on a scale ranging from 1-7.

- 1: Feeling very safe/secure
- 2: Feeling somewhat safe/secure
- 3: Feeling a little safe/secure
- 4: Feeling neither safe nor fearful
- 5: Feeling a little fearful
- 6: Feeling somewhat fearful
- 7: Feeling very fearful

In your neighborhood, how safe/secure or fearful do you feel with regard to:

1. The presence of police officers or the potential of police interaction?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7
 very safe/secure very fearful

- 1a. Describe a memorable interaction with police officers that you have had.

2. The presence of cliques/gangs or the possibility of being involved in clique/gang-related incidents?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7
 very safe/secure very fearful

- 2a. Describe a memorable interaction with a clique or gang-related event that you were involved in.

3. The presence of or interaction with adults who have some authority over you?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7
 very safe/secure very fearful

- 3a. Describe a memorable event with an unrelated adult that captures your feelings.

Who is this person?

Circle one: coach, teacher, security guard, social worker, caseworker, pastor, youth group leader, neighbor

Or someone else (please say whom) _____

Rate your views about each statement on a scale ranging from 4–7:

- 4: Feeling no fear/worry
 5: Feeling a little fearful/worried
 6: Feeling somewhat fearful/worried
 7: Feeling very fearful/worried

4. The possibility of being involved sexual activity you didn't want or were unsure you wanted?

4-----5-----6-----7
 no fear/worry very fearful/worried

- 4a. Describe a time you were involved) sexual activity you didn't want or were unsure you wanted.

5. The possibility that you will witness violence at your school

4-----5-----6-----7
 no fear/worry very fearful/worried

- 5a. Describe a time you witnessed violence at your school.

6. The possibility that you will witness violence in your community (neighborhood)?

4-----5-----6-----7

no fear/worry very fearful/worried

- 6a. Can you describe a time you witnessed violence in your community (neighborhood)?

7. The possibility that you will be the a victim of violence at your school?

4-----5-----6-----7

no fear/worry very fearful/worried

- 7a. Can you describe a time you were a victim of a crime at your school?

8. The possibility that you will be the victim of violence in your community (neighborhood)?

4-----5-----6-----7

no fear/worry very fearful/worried

- 8a. Can you describe a time you were the victim of a crime in your community?

9. Who do you think commits the most violence in your community (neighborhood) (please rank with 1 being most, 4 being least):

_____ Adults not related to you (such as neighbors)

_____ Adults in positions of public trust (police, school staff, etc.)

_____ Other young people

_____ Adults related to you or living with you in your home

10. How do you think our cross-age mentoring programs can best help youth with the violence they experience?

11. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about before we end this interview?

Thank you for your time!

APPENDIX B
QUALITATIVE CODING MANUALS

Resilience Coding Manual

“Saving Lives, Inspiring Youth” Mentoring Program

Instructions: Please code all qualitative data using the specific sub-code that is listed under the general higher-level theme (which is highlighted in **yellow**), when applicable. If no sub-code can be identified, only the general theme is applied. All themes and sub-codes are listed in the codebook on Dedoose under the title “Resilience.”

Notes: Within one sentence there can be multiple chunks that should be coded separately. For example, if the youth says, “My uncle died and my brother was killed in a gang fight,” “my uncle died” and “my brother was killed in a gang fight” would be two separate codes with different meaning. Additionally, an entire elaboration of a statement that pertains to a code can constitute one chunk of meaning.

1) PURSUIT OF CONSTRUCTIVE ACADEMIC GOALS

Notes:

Does NOT include specific mention of overcoming obstacles. Does include accomplishments that are on the path towards accomplishing future goals such as scholarship to go to college, getting a good grade in class, etc.

Examples:

- Mentee: “Did well on test”
- Mentor: “My high is I didn’t have any detentions. Low is we took the practice SAT today, and I don’t feel good about it.”
- Mentor: “My high is that I made up all my homework after missing school.”
- Mentor: “I brought my grades up. I do not have a low.”
- Mentor: “My high is that I’ve been going to college fairs, I’ve got a job interview tomorrow. And I got a college scholarship on the table.”
- Mentor: “My high is that I got a scholarship, I’m the only student to get the Comcast scholarship. I joined the basketball team. My layups are out of control.”

- Mentor: "I've been going to college fairs for the last two weeks. I've been admitted on sight and some school gave me a scholarship and I will be sponsored for a college tour. I'm looking at Miami Florida and Northwestern. I'm happy for that."
- Mentor: "My high is that I have a poetry slam at Columbia college at 6 for a scholarship."
- Mentor: "My high is I brought my D in my English class up to a B."
- Mentor: "I'm passing every class and I got perfect attendance."

2) FUTURE EXPECTATIONS AND HOPE

Notes:

- *Youth reports that s/he/they feel hopeful or positive regarding their future expectations.*

Examples:

- Mentor: "Be a better person. Make my mentee a better person."
- Mentor: "Actually getting mentee to engage more and get a better understanding of him."
- Mentor: "He need a lot more time than the other kids to get the work done; it's a process for him; he knows how to do it but I gotta keep reminding him what the focus is; I can guide him thru it; let him know it's okay to not know everything; it's okay to make mistakes; I can work on it with him."

3) ABILITY TO RESOLVE CONFLICT CONSTRUCTIVELY AND WITHOUT VIOLENCE: BELIEFS ABOUT AGGRESSION AND ALTERNATIVES; CHOOSING NOT USE VIOLENCE

Notes:

Mentors/mentees have to specifically talk about interpersonal conflict that they are resolving without aggression or violence. This could be either inside or outside of the program.

Sub-codes:

- Taking the high road/ being a bigger person (verbal expression)
- Showing forgiveness
- Use distraction
- Intentionally choosing not to use violence (this is explicitly stated by the mentor/mentee)
- Using communication skills to resolve conflict/ peer mediation

Examples:

- "Takes into consideration others' situation."
- "It's easier for me to take other's situations into consideration when I think about what it took for them to come to me."
- "Mentee was trying to argue, though, I told her she shouldn't try to make others feel bad."

- Mentor: “I was bullied before; stand up for yourself journal it when it happens, so you can have evidence and tell adults, so no one can tell any lies. Kill ‘em with kindness. A conflict with conflict never ends. You don’t always have to fight them.”
- Mentor: “Your life can change for better or worse in an instant. Be the bigger person.”

4) COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIP ABILITIES THAT ARE VALUE-BASED

Sub-codes:

- Respect
- Good communication
- Loyalty
- Importance of developing relationships
- Patience
- Positive attitude

Examples:

- “We chose dependability. We need to trust each other so we can depend on each other.”
- “We chose respect because you need to respect yourself to respect others.”
- “I said confidence. Because, when stuff happens you need confidence and help to stay strong.”
- “Honesty, because when you need help from the police they gon’ help you.”
- “Reliability. We want our mentees to rely on us.”
- Mentor: “I guess like, my experience with respect is the first time I went to a meeting. When I started speaking, everyone else stopped speaking. I was surprised because I’m used to people talking over me, and that was one of the first times I felt respected.”
- Mentor: “For me I think it is like, getting what you give pretty much.”
- Mentor: “One thing I think about respect is, we have a teacher in our school named Sgt. Howard, and he gets a lot of respect, because he gives us respect, more than other teachers, because they’re not the same.”
- Mentor: “To me, respect is like a two-way thing. You have to still respect some people even if you don’t get that respect, like your elders in your family.”
- Mentor: “How respect works for me is that if they respect me, I will respect them. It’s pretty simple. A time I’ve been shown respect is with Edwin. He respected me when I came here so I respected him.”
- Mentor: “For me it’s kind of like what Mentor said. Like if you were friends with someone and now maybe you aren’t, you still don’t talk bad about them, and you check in with them every once in a while.”

- Mentor: "We learned that good communication is important and you can't walk out on your team."

5) POSITIVE RACIAL IDENTITY

Notes:

How youth see themselves while understanding how they are seen by others—Sandra Smith, U.C. Berkeley. This may also be connected to exposure to violence/ exposure to stress.

Examples:

- "I am thankful for my skin color, I didn't use to be."
- It's important for us to know about our identity or aspects of it because . . .
- "To know who you are "so no one can change you "so others can recognize you" "know where you came from"

6) SELF-EFFICACY

Notes:

A person's belief in his/her capacity to execute a plan and achieve goals. Bandura (1997) conceptualizes self-efficacy as a person's belief in his or her capacity to pursue and achieve set goals. Belief in that capacity impacts what goals a person will pursue or abandon, and how he or she will endure in the face of obstacles to achieve goals, as well as how he or she bounces back from adversity to pursue goals. Emphasis on belief in him/herself, self-confidence.

- *Any reference to particular goals and carrying them out is self-determination.*
- *A chunk may be coded as both self-efficacy and self-determination.*
- *Any reference to overcoming obstacles goes with grit.*

Examples:

- "Believing in your capacity to achieve—this was a goal I set for myself (self-determination)—it makes me stronger every time I show up—it makes me proud of myself because this is something I am doing for me." (the proud of myself part would be coded as self-efficacy).
- "I improved my attitude. I am better today than I was yesterday. I feel like I work with kids better now. I don't get to see my brother a lot but when I do, it's better now. We're 9 years apart. It helped me with him, I know how kids think."
- Mentor: "Last year of school. I'm thinking about going to the National Guard. In the year following that, I want to go to college and major in music."

7) SELF-DETERMINATION

Notes:

Youth report that they are able to choose goals, have autonomy, and be competent. Believing in your ability to do something (intrinsic). Has to do with choice; the choice can be supported or restricted by your situation/ context. Do you have the freedom to make a choice or freedom to achieve a goal? Do your environments support or thwart your ability to achieve? Do you have other people to help you? External conflicts impact your ability to achieve your goals. Can use outside forces, like schools, to determine where determination comes from (self vs. external determination or motivation).

Self-determination theory assumes that social and cultural forces either support or thwart a person's sense of motivation and well-being and how well an individual performs. This theory further assumes that environmental forces that support an individual's autonomy, relatedness, and competency contribute to her or his self-determination or volitional motivation (Deci et al., 2012). Self-determination entails the ability to choose goals, specifically the goals of autonomy, relatedness, and competence.

- *Does not include overcoming obstacles, which should be coded as grit.*

Sub-codes:

- Autonomy
- Competence
- Believing that one can choose one's own goals
- Believing one can achieve one's own goals/ motivation
- Putting effort into trying to achieve one's goals

Examples:

- "Be mindful of what's around and who's around you."
- "If you got a problem, we can solve it. Don't keep it inside."
- "If you got a problem with your grades, we can help you."
- "No play fighting."
- "Don't involve yourself in somebody else's conversation because it escalates."
- "Fill out forms truthfully."
- "Don't touch the teacher's property."
- "If you don't miss a day for a month, 5 dollars."
- "If the mentees behave for a month straight, they are rewarded with a pizza party."
- "The mentors then began to brainstorm on activities that the program could possibly implement."
- Mentor: "A detective, a criminal justice detective. I like to figure out stuff; I like to solve problems"

8) PERCEPTION OF OPPORTUNITY AND ABILITY TO MAKE USE OF IT

Notes:

Youth report perception of opportunities made available to them.

Examples:

- "For highs, the "Posse" foundation pay for your whole education. All together there was like 400 kids. When I went, they didn't have my school on the roster. 400 kids and I was thinking like, my confidence wasn't there, and I was just told I am going to the second stage, a one-on-one interview. I'm about to go to college and not pay for it."
- Mentor: "High: Landed two jobs, one of which is an advanced internship."
- Mentor: "Low: Missing the opportunity to make up work that might affect my grade."
- Mentor: "This was an opportunity to practice patience, something I've been working on."

9) UBUNTU (I AM BECAUSE WE ARE)**Notes:**

Ubuntu is an African philosophy deriving from South Africa. A person with Ubuntu is described as anyone who is open and available to others, affirming of others, and understands that he or she is part of a greater whole. A person who has Ubuntu also understands that to humiliate or diminish other to oppress or torture others is to diminish himself or herself. Youth make specific statements about the value or goal of supporting the community, helping others

Ubuntu stresses connectedness, Afrocentric value that emphasizes that collective experience contributes to well-being. Collective effort is what contributes to a person doing well (this cultural piece is how we can start thinking about resilience).

Examples may include mentoring someone younger, which creates a common ground or talking with my mentor about what's stressing me out and they will give me good advice.

Examples:

- Mentor: "[I've] got to get them to do things together," "get them to be friends."
- Mentor: High/today: "I think I feel like I really helped them out today" [mentees talked about gangs in their school, "made it seem as scary as possible to them," talked about family members in gangs and jail and "they said they don't want no part of that."]
- Mentor: "my mom, my auntie, brother, sister, grandma; if I think I can't do something, they'll help me go back and do it."

10) LEADERSHIP**Sub-code:**

- Mentor acts as a role model to peers or mentees

Examples:

- “Some of the mentors expressed a desire to work as teacher assistants, and thought that today’s session was good practice and training for them. . . . They explained that having the mentees respond to them in such a positive way boosted their confidence.”
- Mentor: “I have a set up. Mentors and mentees play a little a game/quiz as soon as they arrive and settle in at the program. Something like a small trivia game, possibly on what the mentees are learning in class. Reward them with some candy/food” (5–10 minutes max). Mentors and mentees do “the handout stuff” given by the program (20–25 minutes) and then mentors and mentees split up and talk about how they have been doing and discuss the handouts .
- Three mentors want to work on papers with the lab. When staff asked the mentors what topic they would like to discuss (with mentees) to improve the community, mentors suggested Liter, and gang and gun violence and how to reduce it.
- Mentor: Wants to know her mentee, so she can look up to her.
- Mentor: “I learned that somebody can never be too young to lead them.”
- Mentor: “We’re here for a specific reason and we need to teach them what’s right and wrong.”
- Mentor: “High student council I got to talk to principal about issues”

11) CONTRIBUTE TO POSITIVE COMMUNITY CHANGE**Notes:**

Being able to make positive change in one’s community by responding to obstacles of poverty with active change rather than passive victimhood. They can be active in creating in their environment—perceiving all the negative obstacles related to autonomy, they have an identity that is not just a victim of the environment. This refers to contributing to the community outside the mentoring group.

Examples:

- “I think it’s good they’re standing up for their rights.” “I think it’s good for teachers to be fighting for their pay.” “They deserve to fight for what they need.”
- “I do believe community involvement can help. . . .We need to show we can change . . . we need to be the change. . . there is no stopping us. . . you have to make sure you are in the right group.
- “You never know how much of a change you are to that person. . . . Even by saying good morning you make the person feel you are a part of something. I do feel like this can change a lot of our neighborhood but we have to play a role in it and not be afraid.”

- “My favorite part is talking about the community and what goes on in the community and what we can do to help.”
- "So, Chicago reached 704 homicides. Every 20 minutes, somebody dies from an overdose. With that being said, all the negatives happening, this is a way of having positive reinforcement. When you give good to the community, you get good back. If I didn't have people to look up to, I wouldn't be safe."
- “I think I feel like I really helped them out today. Mentees talked about gangs in their school. I made it seem as scary as possible to them and talked about family members in gangs and jail; they said they don't want no part of that.”

12) TAKING THE HIGH ROAD IN RESPONSE TO AN UNJUST EXPERIENCE RELATED TO AN INSTITUTION OR SOCIETAL SITUATION

Notes:

Here, the unjust experience refers to a power difference, not a conflict between peers (which would be coded 3). Code must include persistence toward a goal.

Examples:

- “Seeking support for positive coping in response to high stress and violence—Experience at Herzl—Young man whose brother was shot four times (gang retaliation) decided to stay in the mentoring program for the support. Even though he was paid bus fare, he stayed for the support. He could have wanted to retaliate but he chose a positive alternative instead through our program.”
- Mentor: "My low is that I am trying to get myself back together because my friend got killed on Saturday"
- Mentor: "I was a foster kid til my sophomore year and joined a program. They pay half my rent, help pay for Prom, and will help me with college. I have to work so hard, though. I'm gonna talk about staying positive and having a positive mindset because it will keep you happy and give you higher energy.”
- "My takeaway was probably keeping a positive outlook on everything, and I don't know, keeping a positive mind even if it's something I can't get through."
- Asked the mentors how do they respond to being confronted by the police and would they change anything?

13) COLLECTIVE REFLECTION ON OPPRESSION AS A BASE FOR RESILIENCE

Notes:

Group reflection or perception that the cause of one's negativity toward oneself or others of one's racial group is not true but is absorbed from environmental sources (Freire for construct

validity). *Collective resilience refers to the “We Shall Overcome” mentality versus the implicit and explicit negative biases African Americans have for themselves and members of their group. One example of oppression is pervasive discrimination and the negative impact of internalizing racism on how African Americans feel about each other.*

Examples:

- “As ignorant, slow, lower level, jailbird, low class criminals.”
- “People beneath them. That we can’t amount to anything they can do. Young black people that graduate from the best colleges are still not equal.”
- Mentor: The way you do things matters. They tryna keep up in our place” (slavery was brought up here). They reminding us of what they can do to us (e.g., control; hierarchy). They don’t want us blacks to rise up.”
- Mentor: More opportunities now for us blacks but we not living as that; we still living like there’s none.”

14) GRIT

Notes:

Grit is the combined power of passion and perseverance toward achieving goals, as well as exemplifying resilience and a strong work ethic to achieve those goals. Grit is also the ability to start a goal and complete tasks necessary to achieve it (Duckworth, 2016). The youth must specifically describe overcoming an obstacle. Success is not necessary, but effort is needed. This may also refer to an internal obstacle.

Examples:

- “I learned how to control my anger with certain things and communicate with others better and stop being shy and being able to speak to a large group set of kids.”
- Mentor Low: “hard to engage because of mentee’s disability, hard to keep him focused and pinpoint what he likes, hard to understand him and keep him focused. This was an opportunity to practice patience “something I’ve been working on.”
- Mentor is coming despite irritation in his eye—people feeling they should come. Mentor was supposed to go to the game today, [but] gave it up to come here. Good one for grit.
- Mentor: “My dad died. . . \at this point, I was like who cares but when you leave your past behind . . . ,
- You can move on and not take it for granted. When my dad died, I didn’t have to do nothing for nobody. . . . He wanted me to go to college and I got a job starting Monday and I’m starting college in the fall.”
- Mentor: “My high is I finally came back after some weeks. . . it’s been 2–3 weeks. My low is I’m still hungry, I haven’t eaten anything all day because there wasn’t nothing at

my house. I didn't have a way to get here. I literally went on the green line and waited for someone to tap me on."

- "Got a lot of stuff going on. Low I been up for 8 days and missed a whole week of school; got out Friday it was really hard for me. High, seeing my mentee was cool today. I'm here. Even though I'm dealing with these cases, I'm here."
- "My high is being here. My low is just finding a job right now. I'm working really hard right now."

15) SOCIAL SUPPORT

Notes:

Social support is the act of putting oneself in a position to be a positive resource for a peer or someone they know within their age group. Social bond theory assumes that weak social bonds contributes to delinquent or antisocial behavior. Stronger bonds reduce delinquent behavior.

Examples:

- "I take pride in being that person that people come to when they need help dealing with their situation and feeling."
- "Most mentors expressed feeling very satisfied with their first mentoring experience and with their mentee. They expressed excitement about getting to know their mentees better and doing more activities together. . . . All mentors expressed a desire to spend more time during the week with their mentee."
- "The mentees really listened to the mentors as they gave instructions for the game."
- "Mentor shared a story about a young girl at her school who is emotionally and physically abused by her peers. She expressed her genuine concern for the girl and said she tries to say hi to her every now and then. Mentor exudes confidence and leadership."
- "Be a better person. Make my mentee a better person."
- "My favorite part of the program is when we got to spend time with our mentees...talk about something new; piece of advice that your mentee can give you or you can give your mentee" (peer-to peer interview)."
- "As mentors, we are a team. So let's think about ways to support each other."

Program Impact Coding Manual

“Saving Lives, Inspiring Youth” Mentoring Program

Instructions: Please code all qualitative data using the specific sub-code that is listed under the general higher-level theme (which is highlighted in **yellow**), when applicable. If no sub-code can be identified, only the general theme is applied. All themes and sub-codes are listed in the codebook on Dedoose under the title “Program Impact.”

Notes: Exit interviews and peer to peer—community concerns data have their own unique codes applied to specific themes and sub-codes for specific questions asked by interviewers. These codes are highlighted in **blue** and **green**, respectively. When these specific questions are not being answered by a participant, the general risk codes are applied instead.

Within one sentence there can be multiple chunks that should be coded separately. For example, if a youth says, “My uncle died and my brother was killed in a gang fight,” “my uncle died” and “my brother was killed in a gang fight” would be two separate codes with different meaning. Additionally, an entire elaboration of a statement that pertains to a code can constitute one chunk of meaning.

Program Impact Specific Details: This coding manual consists of three broad overarching categories:

1. What did the program do?
2. What did the mentors say in reflecting about the program and what impact did the program have on mentors?
3. What kind of impact did the program have on mentees?

These codes are based on field notes taken at each mentoring session across sites.

SECTION 1: WHAT DID THE PROGRAM DO?

Notes:

This section will include codes that speak to activities that mentors and mentees participated in, such as activities to strengthen mentor mentee bond or conflict resolution (example would be peace circles).

A) ACTIVITIES WITH MENTORS AND MENTEES TOGETHER

Sub-codes:

- Icebreakers and trust-building exercises
- Building positive racial identity
- Helping with stress of recent community violence

- Relaxation and other self-calming stress management exercises
- Fun and games
- Focus groups and other research activities, including training
- Specific communication skills development
- Future planning, career and academic support discussions

B) ACTIVITIES IN MENTOR DEBRIEFING SESSIONS ONLY

Sub-codes:

- Developing mentor empathy and communication with mentee
- Building positive racial identity
- Helping with stress of recent community violence
- Relaxation and other self-calming stress management exercises
- Fun and games
- Focus groups and other research activities, including training
- Specific communication skills development
- Future planning, career and academic support discussions

SECTION 2: WHAT DID THE MENTORS SAY, AS A REFLECTION ON THE PROGRAM?

Notes:

Codes in this section will speak to the mentors and mentees reflection on the program. What were their perspectives of the program, both bad and good? This section can also include codes that speak to the impact the program had on the mentors, from the youths' perspectives.

1) PROGRAM BUILDS GOOD CHARACTER

Notes:

This code speaks to the program impacting some aspect of the mentor's character, such as contributing to the mentor's leadership skills, self-efficacy, grit, impulse control, or patience or enhancing their ability to work with others, for example.

Sub-codes:

- Leadership, being a role model:
 "This program is helping me to become a good leader."
 "I have learned how to be a role model."
 "Being a leader in the program really was a fun thing because I was taking charge and taking over and really participating"
- Patience:
 "This was an opportunity to practice patience, something I have been working on."
- Impulse control/anger management/responding to conflict with kindness rather than retaliation:

“I have learned how to control my attitude.”

“This program, it really taught me to get to know the other side of kids. This side that’s not irritating.”

“I had to learn how to talk to people. I had to learn how to use self-control. This skill I learn here sometimes don’t apply out there. I learn how to bite my tongue and talk to people. I became more of a people’s person.”

“Kill em with kindness. A conflict with a conflict never ends. You don’t always have to fight them.”

“One of the mentees was cursing, and I didn’t like it (previous chunk gets coded under mentee behavior mentor doesn’t like; following gets coded as anger management). I had to bite my tongue. I couldn’t say what I wanted to say because I wanted to curse back.”

- Showing mutual respect, collaboration, and how to support and encourage others:

“In order to get respect, you have to give respect.”

“I have learned how to work with others”

“Positive encouragement makes mentees be more involved.”

- Hope, as a result of being in the program:

Notes: Hope is a conceptual framework that was developed by C. R. Snyder (1994). It has three primary features: defining goals, defining realistic pathways to goal attainment, and ability to persist in pathways to attain goals.

“I have learned how to be creative and follow my dreams.”

- Grit, as a result of being in the program:

Notes: Grit is a conceptual framework developed by Angela Duckworth (2016). Grit is defined as the combination of passion and perseverance toward achieving goals. It entails some sacrifice in persevering towards goal attainment. Do not code anger management examples here, but rather in impulse control/anger management/responding to conflict with kindness rather than retaliation. We can also use those as examples of grit in the analysis

“I was supposed to go to a game today, but gave it up to come here.”

- Listening to others, being reflective before acting:

“I’ve learn how to be a little more serious and step back and watch a little more, seeing what is going on around me before I act.”

“I would always say something before a person finishes their story, but here I would always have to listen to my mentee before I could actually talk and tell them how I felt about the situation.”

- Building positive racial identity

“I am thankful for my skin color; I didn’t use to be. And I am thankful for my self-esteem, because it has grown tremendously.”

- Fulfillment, pride in mentee progress
“This session is great. (Mentee) has made a huge improvement. I’m a very proud mentor.”
- Satisfaction specifically with being co-evaluators, co-researchers.

2) CRITIQUES OF THE PROGRAM BY MENTORS

Sub-codes:

- Program content: "Feels like school," not enough fun, boring
“There are not enough outdoor activities—feels like school.”
“Mentees were bored with the activity.”
- Program structure: Need for more focused planning
“I don’t think they’ll (mentees) will come back when the summer starts. The activities aren’t focused. You have to give them a reason to come back.”
- Need more of this program: Wanting more of the same!
“An added day.” (As opposed to once a week) “and more group activities.”
- Timing/duration: Scheduling doesn't work for youth
“I don’t get how you doing this at 10am. Some of us will be at summer school.”

3) PROGRAM ENHANCED MENTOR WELL-BEING

Sub-codes:

- Being with mentees is a "high" (including in highs and lows, but other comments as well): Mentor specifically mentions being with the mentees is the high.
“The good thing that happened this week is meeting the mentees.”
High of the day: “My whole day from this morning to seeing the mentees.”
“Me and (mentee) was over here laughing, bonding.”
“I bonded with a different mentee even though she wasn’t mine.”
“They (mentees) were so excited to see us. Their eyes lit up.”
Mentee is open and listening and sharing—depth of intimate connection: The session was good today, and I think (mentee) really likes me and is comfortable with me. She was not shy and let me talk to her.”
“I had so much fun doing the activity with my mentee. Her hug was so special to me.”

- Being at the program in general is a high, brings happiness and gratitude (they are not discussing the mentees; the statement is about the program in general)
:
“Being at the mentoring program (this was associated with being asked what were the mentors highs and lows).”
“My high is coming here.”
“I am here and you all brighten my day a little bit when it was getting gloomy.”
“I am thankful for my family and you all.”

4) SOCIAL SUPPORT WHEN FACING LOSS/DISAPPOINTMENT

Sub-codes:

- Support from Instructor
In the context of the death of a mentor’s father, “staff checked on him after session to see how he was doing and to remind him that he could come to us if he needed help.”
- Support from other Mentors

5) MENTOR EXPRESSES UNHAPPINESS ABOUT SOME INCIDENT IN RELATIONSHIP WITH MENTEE

Note: If mentee behavior is mentioned specifically, it should also be coded under the mentee section below

Sub-codes:

- Mentor distress about mentee's expression of anger
“One of the mentees were cursing, and I didn’t like it.”
- Mentor distress about mentee being withdrawn or noncommunicative

**The following section is to be used IN ADDITION TO THOSE ABOVE
for Peer to Peer Interviews**

6) EXPRESSES SATISFACTION/GRATIFICATION ABOUT PROGRAM PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO BE AGENTS OF CHANGE

Sub-codes:

- Individual Level
Notes: Indicate proactive intentions for giving back (helper principle).
“I feel like I’m making a difference”
- Community Level
Notes: Indicate some motivation to change
“I’m motivated to make change in my community”

The following section is to be used IN ADDITION TO THOSE ABOVE for Exit Interviews

7) **REFLECTION ABOUT THE PROGRAM ENDING**

Sub-codes:

- Negative Emotion (e.g., sadness, frustration)
 “I’m sad that it’s over!”
 “We always shorted for what we need!”
- Wish we had more time (explicitly)
 “I wish that we had more”
 “I wish the program lasted longer”
 “I wish that we could continue”
- We did a good job/Not regretful

8) **CODER’S IMPRESSION OF THE PROGRAM’S IMPACT ON CHOICES MENTOR MADE.**

Notes: This reflects coder’s judgment about the kind of impact SLIY did or did not have, having read the entire exit interview and considering all the material available in it. Does not require specific behavioral data, attitudinal change counts too.

Sub-codes:

- **Positive Impact:** It seems the mentor’s attitudes and/or choices changed in a positive direction during the time the program was in operation
 - Mentor specifically attributes change to program
 - No specific attribution of change to program
- **Negative Impact:** There are indications in the exit interview that the mentor’s attitude or behavior changed in a negative direction (e.g. mentor had not been stealing before, but started to, etc.)
 - Mentor specifically attributes change to program
 - No specific attribution of change to program
- **No Evident Impact**

SECTION 3: THE IMPACT OF THE PROGRAM ON MENTEES

Notes:

These codes focus specifically on what the program does for the mentee. The quoted content from mentor needs to reflect the process of program delivery.

1) PROGRAM BUILDS GOOD CHARACTER.

Notes: This code speaks to the program impacting some aspect of the mentees' character, such as contributing to the mentees' leadership skills, self-efficacy, grit, impulse control, patience, or enhancing their ability to work with others, for example.

Sub-codes

- Leadership, being a role model
- Patience

"I learn patience, how to control my anger, and how to be passive. I learned to walk away. I been in less trouble."

- Impulse Control/Anger Management/Responding to conflict with kindness rather than retaliation

"People like to mess with you, and one time someone's was messing with me, and he was gonna do it the next day, then we started fighting. He was messing with me. I told him to stop. The program made me feel better. I wont be like how I was before. If that situation came up again, I would calm down and not fight."

"It [mentoring program] helps me get stuff off my chest. Peoples these days don't stop till you put your hands on them. It helps me get that off my chest; sometimes the person comes to school and you get in fights. Before I came here, I had an attitude, but not since coming here.

"I learned patience, how to control my anger, and how to be passive. I learned to walk away. I been in less trouble."

- Showing mutual respect, collaboration, how to support and encourage others
"My mentee is respectful. She was talking about her Thanksgiving Break. Today was a fun day."

- Hope, as a result of being in the program

Notes: Hope is a conceptual framework that was developed by C. R. Snyder (1994). It has three primary features: defining goals, defining realistic pathways to goal attainment, and ability to persist in pathways to attain goals

- Grit, as a result of being in the program

Notes: Grit is a conceptual framework developed by Angela Duckworth (2009). Grit is defined as the combination of passion and perseverance toward achieving goals. It entails some sacrifice in persevering towards goal attainment. Do not code anger management examples here, but rather in impulse control/anger

management/responding to conflict with kindness rather than retaliation. We can also use those as examples of grit in the analysis.

- Listening to others, being reflective before acting
- Building positive racial identity

2) **CRITIQUES OF THE PROGRAM BY MENTEES**

Sub-codes:

- Wish for some kind of alternative content (e.g., “too much like school”)
When discussing the program: "Like a prize and raffle every week."
- Wish for more time
"Is it possible for the program to go after the break?"
When discussing the program: "Like a prize and raffle every week, we only come in every Monday. I would like more days too, like Monday thru Friday."

3) **MENTEES COMMUNICATE PROGRAM ENHANCED STRONG SOCIAL BONDS BETWEEN MENTORS AND MENTEES**

When asking the mentor what was their high in debriefing: "Mentee says she's going to miss me."

4) **SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR MENTEES**

5) **DIFFICULTY DEVELOPING SOCIAL BONDS BETWEEN MENTORS AND MENTEES** (the function of these codes is to understand the challenges the mentees presented)

Note: If mentor expresses distress about the mentee's behavior, the chunk is also coded in the section above, CODE 5, Mentor distress about mentee behavior

Sub-codes:

- Mentee expresses anger
"One of the mentees were cursing, and I didn't like it."
"[My] mentee was talking rude to me."
When asking a mentor the highs and lows: "We have to change my mentee. She is so disrespectful. She was cursing to the students and being mean. I was telling her to be nice. I liked the activity, but she was being too busy. My interactions with her weren't always like this. I asked her if something happened during the day, but she said she had a fun day. She was talking about 3018 (other mentee). She was also asking personal things

like if I have a boyfriend. (Staff member addresses this and said not to talk about these things with the mentees. Set an example and say "I'm too young for that.")

When asking a mentor about the highs and lows of the week: "One minute they [mentees] were happy; the next they were sad. [The mentee] can't stay still; he is everywhere. [The mentee] has an anger problem. You say the slightest thing, and he gets mad."

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VITA

Amzie Moore II received his bachelor's degree from Hampton University, his master's degree from University of Chicago and completed his doctoral studies at Loyola University of Chicago. Amzie is currently an Assistant Professor of Social Work at Chicago State University. He teaches courses on social welfare policy, research methods, basic statistics, field practice, and not-for-profit management. As Assistant Professor, he has also supervised 10 theses for students earning their Master's degree in Social Work, and currently supervising 13 theses, in which students tasked with conducting research to answer an evidence-based research question. He has won three teaching awards, which include Outstanding Professor Award from U.S. Congressman Danny Davis. Amzie has also been a Research Associate in the Risk and Resilience Lab at Loyola University Chicago. The Lab received funding from the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to evaluate a cross-age peer mentoring program, "Saving Lives and Inspiring Youth" (SLIY). This funding allowed us to conduct a quasi-experimental longitudinal study, in which Dr. Moore served as a site director for the North Lawndale research site. As a researcher in the Risk and Resilience Lab, he was responsible for managing the coding of most of the qualitative data collected over a four-year period and developing three different comprehensive coding manuals that focused on risk, resilience and youths' reflections about the program captured in these data and the impact of the mentoring program. Currently, in addition to his role as Assistant Professor at Chicago State University, Dr. Moore also is a Consultant for Research and Strategy for the Empowering Counseling Program of Loyola University of

Chicago. In this role, he co-designs research strategies and methods for funded projects, with emphasis on culturally relevant qualitative analysis, human capital development via youth participatory co-researcher roles, community engagement strategies, integration of research findings with strategies for policy change, and co-authoring research publications. Dr. Moore has co-authored three publications and has presented numerous papers at peer-reviewed regional, national and international conferences. As part of securing additional funding, Dr. Moore has co-authored five grant proposals, submitted to the Department of Health and Human Services (\$5 million), Centers for Disease Control (\$2 million), Spencer Community Partners (\$400,000), W.T. Grant Foundation (\$600,000), and the National Science Foundation (\$999,000).