Artistically Reshaping Trauma: An Exploration of Radical Healing in the Lived Experiences and Art of Marginalized Youth

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ARTISTICALLY RESHAPING TRAUMA: AN EXPLORATION OF RADICAL HEALING IN THE LIVED EXPERIENCES AND ART OF MARGINALIZED YOUTH

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science
Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management

by
Anitra R. Alexander
August 2021

Accepted by:
Harrison Pinckney, Committee Chair
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Edmond Bowers
ABSTRACT

Consumption and circulation of police brutality and the death of persons in the marginalized community present major concerns for the psychological well-being and development of marginalized youth. Contemporary events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have increased both negative media attention and instances of oppression towards AAPI communities. Not all adolescents are directly exposed to traumatic race-related events online; however, many are likely experiencing the direct effects of such incidents. Despite exposure and effects of these events, marginalized adolescents still demonstrate indicators of healthy coping. Indicators of healthy coping present the need to shift research from negative psychological outcomes to healing centered approaches to discover effective interventions for marginalized youth populations.

This study explored the radical healing process in the lived experiences and art of marginalized youth participants in the A.R.T. + Circles program. A phenomenological case study methodology was employed for this study to provide a firmer, in-depth understanding of how participants experienced race-related experiences. Participant’s radical healing processes were explored using observations, in-depth interviews, and participant created art.

The study found that radical healing was reflected in the lived experiences of adolescents in the A.R.T.+ Circles program through Culture, Agency, Relationships, Meaning, Achievements, and Spiritual development; however, certain lived experiences may inhibit components from being operationalized. Additionally, the study show that communal dialogue, education, and a liberating space were ways that adolescents process
race-related experiences and were beneficial features of the A.R.T.+ Circles program. Findings from this study are important in helping practitioners find more effective pathways to positive youth development for marginalized communities. Future research is encouraged to further unpack the ways radical healing is operationalized in the lived experiences of marginalized youth.
DEDICATION

To the students of the A.R.T.+ Circles program and to my younger self. Your voice, your experiences, your life matters.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**God.** I first must give all praises, honor, and glory to God for this opportunity. I am in awe of the ways God continues to work in my life and I would not have made it to this point without Him.

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Fight for freedom: a meditation
-after the pandemic protests of 2020

Who is holding the signs
for whom the signs are fighting for?
Standing up for what we believe is right –
hope, equality, justice.

We are modern abolitionists, the voice
for equity, fighting for equality
together bravely we forge power.

Let us stand in solidarity and march for:
the power of women, a livable wage,
humanity at the US border, Breonna,
George Floyd and even Matthew Shepard.

Yes, there is still adversity and ugliness in America
Yet we pray to remember how beautiful it is –
its array of vibrant colors and the dream of
her hungry people fighting for a better life
and her children deserving of opportunity.

There is still possibility for change – you see
even in poverty there is beauty, a simple
gratitude in living life in how it is given,
holding onto each other happy though
mucking through dirt navigating tough terrain.

Let people come together with pride
and collaborate to create change.
Let grace warm their souls
for they are the ones holding the signs
for those we will continue to fight for.

—Vera Gomez
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The deaths and brutality against marginalized populations have become highly publicized from the broadcasting of trials, release of police body camera footage, and cell phone recordings disseminated on social media platforms. The circulation and consumption of such brutality can be traumatic and presents a major concern for members of the public who use social media platforms (Noble, 2018). Repeated imagery of brutality can have major consequences for the psychological well-being and development of marginalized youth and has presented the need for scholars to consider the impact of traumatic race-related experiences on these populations (Jones & Neblett, 2017). A 2018 study of 743 adolescents showed 95% of participants reported having access to a smartphone and 45% reported using the internet almost constantly (Anderson & Jinjing, 2018). Such use of smartphones, sharing, and social media platform activity allow for boundless exposure to police brutality, death, and other traumatic race-related experiences (Tynes et al., 2019). Recent research conducted by Tynes et al. (2019) shows exposure to traumatic race-related events online, such as police brutality, is related to both increased post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms in Black adolescents and depressive symptoms in Latinx adolescents. Given the amount of time adolescents spend online, marginalized adolescents may be at heightened risk for the potential effects of these experiences (Tynes et al., 2019). Previous studies also suggest exposure to race-related events, such as recent immigration actions and Texas border media coverage, can
cause increased psychological distress specifically, for Latinx populations (Roche et al., 2018).

Although adolescents may not be directly impacted by such events, the historical context of racism in United States may contribute to the cause of what Bor et al. (2018) describes as the “spillover effect” (p. 303); that is, adolescents may experience the negative psychological effects of an event they are indirectly exposed to. Racism is the advantage and disadvantage a person experiences based on race (Heard-Garris et al., 2018) and is institutionally embedded within society and organizations as a normal practice. Racism involves prejudice attitudes, discriminatory treatment, systemic barriers, and internalized oppression (Heard-Garris et al., 2018) and often manifests in actions such as police brutality, injustice in the criminal system, and violence towards marginalized communities. (Jones & Neblett, 2017). Systemic racism has typically benefited white Americans while harming members of marginalized populations, notably Black and Indigenous groups (Jones & Neblett, 2017). The COVID-19 pandemic has drawn direct attention to Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) populations due to the alleged origins of COVID and harmful rhetoric made highly publicized by politicians. As a result, AAPI populations have been subjected to increased discrimination including verbal harassment, shunning, physical assault, online harassments, and civil rights violations according to a national report (Jeung et al., 2021). Based on this report, youth ages 0 to 17 years old accounted for 11% of the incidents reported (Jeung et al., 2021). Further, research has shown exposure to racism, whether real or perceived, can result in race-based traumatic stress; this is known as vicarious racism (Heard-Garris et al., 2018).
Despite race based traumatic exposure and effects of these occurrences, marginalized youth can still be seen experiencing joy and self-expression through creating dances on TikTok, a social media platform focused on short videos (Kennedy, 2020), or demonstrating their courage and strength by organizing and leading local protests in their communities (Anyiwo et al., 2020). Marginalized youth still exhibit signs of hope and optimism through their words and social media posts as they work to encourage and rally others together (Anyiwo et al., 2020). The focus of research in psychology and related disciplines have traditionally focused on the distressing and severe psychological or physical outcomes that result from traumatic experiences (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). The indicators of healthy coping marginalized youth demonstrate, despite their exposure to racism and discrimination, present the need to shift research from negative psychological outcomes to healing centered approaches to discover effective interventions and pathways to positive development for these populations (Meyerson et al., 2011).

**Literature Overview**

Adolescent years are marked by rapid biological, cognitive, and psychosocial development beginning with puberty and extending into the transition to adulthood. Poverty and exposure to violence and racism are some of the greatest risk factors that impact the healthy development of marginalized adolescents (Pinckney et al., 2011). These risk factors can often lead to trauma, a psychological condition that manifests in individuals who are wounded at a physical or psychological level (Schimmenti, 2018). Exposure to traumatic events have been shown to increase the risk of psychopathology,
mental or behavioral disorder, especially when exposure occurs during youth (Schalinski et al., 2016). The focus of research in psychology and related disciplines have traditionally focused on the distressing and severe psychological or physical outcomes that result from traumatic experiences (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). However, Scholars have argued the need to shift research from negative outcomes to growth in adversity to discover effective pathways to positive development for marginalized youth (Meyerson et al., 2011).

**Posttraumatic Growth.** Tedeschi & Calhoun (2004) define posttraumatic growth as “positive psychological change experienced as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life circumstances (p. 1).” Posttraumatic growth is said to go beyond acceptance or survival but is an experience of development that signifies transformation in five domains of growth: *personal strength, close relationships, greater appreciation for life, new possibilities, and spiritual development*. Despite assumptions that traumas often result in disorder, research on posttraumatic growth show that continuing personal distress and growth often coexist. Posttraumatic growth is an aspect of psychological responses to traumatic life experiences that is becoming well-documented (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004) and a positive indicator of recovery and healthy coping (Chowdhury, 2020); however, research with children and adolescents needs to be expanded to further understand the posttraumatic growth process in these developmental stages (Milam, Ritt-Olsen, & Unger, 2001; Meyerson et al., 2011).

**Social Justice Youth Development.** Positive youth development (PYD) is an asset-based approach that uses supportive environments and community connections to
promote the healthy development of youth (Bradshaw et al., 2008). The positive youth development framework has been adopted by many youth-serving organizations to supplement their programs in developing healthy, productive, and engaged adolescents. Marginalized adolescents, however, face unique challenges, such as poverty, discrimination, and police violence, that are critical in their development (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Social Justice Youth Development is an approach focused on the equitable access and opportunities for all youth by reducing or eliminating disparities in systems that hinders youth development (Outley et al., 2018). The Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD) framework is adapted from positive youth development and focuses on the relationship between critical consciousness, which includes self-awareness, social awareness, and global awareness, and social action. The framework operates through five principles: analyzing power in social relationships, making identity central, promoting systemic change, embracing youth culture, and encouraging collective action (Ginwright & James, 2002). The relationship between critical consciousness and social action helps to promote youth empowerment and healing for marginalized youth.

**Radical Healing.** Healing occurs when marginalized adolescents gain critical consciousness about their oppression and actively seek ways to resist the associated trauma (French et al., 2020). *Radical Healing* is a process that builds the capacity of adolescents to act on their oppressive environments in a way that contributes to individual well-being, community health, and broader social justice (Ginwright, 2010). The radical healing framework consists of 5 components: *Culture, Agency, Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement*, often referred to as CARMA. When CARMA is
operationalized within youth programming, healing and wellness outcomes may be experienced on an individual, social, and community level (Ginwright, 2016).

**Art, Healing, & Youth Voice.** Art has been recognized as essential to helping understand the human experience and generates empathy through gained insight into diverse perspectives and experiences (Goessling, 2020). Art making has the ability to improve social, mental, emotional function, and increase well-being and is often used as a form of therapy (Rowe et al., 2017). The arts have historically served as a critical pedagogical space where marginalized groups expressions of resistance have emerged to denounce racism and white supremacy (Marsh, 2016). Art forms, such as storytelling, help to facilitate community healing, resistance, and voice for young people.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of how marginalized youth process traumatic race-related experiences using a healing centered approach. A healing centered approach considers culture, spirituality, civic action, and collective healing while viewing those who have experienced trauma as agents of their own well-being rather than victims of traumatic events (Ginwright, 2018). The study explored the radical healing process in the lived experiences and art of marginalized youth participants in the A.R.T. + Circles program. The research questions explored during this study were:

- **Q1:** How do marginalized youth in the A.R.T. + Circles program process traumatic race-related experiences to experience radical healing?
- **Q2:** What components of radical healing are reflected in the experiences of marginalized youth in the A.R.T. + Circles program?
Q3: What features of the A.R.T. + Circles program were most beneficial to marginalized youth in promoting radical healing?

Study Design

A phenomenological case study design was chosen for this study to develop an in-depth understanding of what the participants experienced and how they experienced it (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The study was conducted with seven participants of the Artistically Reshaping Trauma (A.R.T.) + Circles’ pilot program developed for Momentum Bike Clubs, a nonprofit organization in Greenville, SC. A.R.T.+ Circles is an eight-week group mentoring program designed to build community and support specifically for marginalized adolescents as they process racial trauma, exercise their voice, and increase their understanding of their capacity to create social change. A.R.T.+ Circles hosted a total of 20 high school students (grades 9th – 12th) over the span of the semester that identified as Black, Indigenous, or Persons of Color. Qualitative data were collected for this study and consisted of participant observation, in-depth interviews, and participant created artwork. The interviews were recorded and transcribed via Zoom and coded using both within-case and cross-case analysis. Thick description, triangulation, and member checks were strategies used to establish trustworthiness of the data.

Study Model

A conceptual framework integrating the psychological principles of Posttraumatic Growth and the components of the Radical Healing framework was used to understand how marginalized youth process traumatic race-related experiences using a healing centered approach (Figure 1). This framework recognizes the impact of oppression as a
source of trauma and addressed the need for scholars to consider both the cultural and racial contexts of trauma, healing, and positive youth development.

Figure 1.

*Posttraumatic Growth & Radical Healing Integrated Model*

**Delimitations**

The A.R.T.+ Circles program was a collaboration between Momentum Bike Clubs and the study of Race, Ethnicity, Youth, and Social Equity (REYSE) Collaboratory of Clemson University with the intention of developing and implementing a youth and
arts-based social justice curriculum. As a graduate student researcher with REYSE, I both
developed and participated in the A.R.T.+ Circles program as a mentor. For this study, partici-
pants were delimited to high school students who actively participated in the A.R.T.+ Circles program throughout the Spring 2021 semester. Participants were intentionally selected to maximize diversity relevant to the research questions. Written consent and verbal assent were obtained for all participants. Participants were informed their participation was voluntary throughout the program and interview process.

To situate the research findings in context, it is important to note the limitations of this study. First, this study focused on the experiences and stories of a small group of marginalized, high school adolescents within the A.R.T.+ Circles program of Momentum Bike Clubs (MBC). MBC is an organization that uses cycling as one of many mediums for positive youth development; therefore, findings of this study cannot be generalized to all youth. Additionally, all marginalized persons experience racism, discrimination, and healing differently; this includes within group and across group differences. Second, COVID served as a limitation in this study. Due to social distancing guidelines, all interviews and participant observations were conducted via Zoom. This data collection method may have limited participation observation that may have occurred in in-person interactions. Finally, time and availability were limitations in this study. Participants of the study managed several obligations during the extend of the program and interview process, including school, jobs, and other activities. Due to time constraints, I was unable to conduct follow up interviews with some participants.
Definitions

1. **Youth** – individuals under 25 years of age
2. **Adolescents** – individuals between ages 14-18
3. **Marginalized** – persons of color who experiences socioeconomic and racial/ethnic marginalization, discrimination, and social exclusion (Kashima et al., 2003)
4. **Posttraumatic Growth (PTG)** – the positive change or transformation experienced as a result of the struggle with trauma (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004)
5. **Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD)** – An approach focused on the of equitable access and opportunities for all youth by reducing or eliminating disparities in systems that hinders youth development (Outley et al., 2018)
6. **Radical Healing** – when marginalized youth gain critical consciousness about their oppression and actively seek ways to resist the associated trauma (French et al., 2020)

Organization of Thesis

This thesis will be presented in a traditional format consisting of five chapters. In the first chapter, I presented a short overview of the ways minoritized adolescents are being impacted by traumatic race-related experiences and the thesis objective. Chapter two consists of a review of literature which includes risk factors of positive youth development for marginalized adolescents, empirical evidence that highlights gaps in PTG literature, and an exploration of culturally relevant frameworks that center marginalized youth development and healing. This chapter concludes with a conceptual
framework used to frame this study. The third chapter outlines the study methodology including study design, data collection procedures, participants, and analysis of the data.

Chapter four presents the findings from the study organized by case. Finally, chapter five includes the study conclusions and recommendations for future semesters of the A.R.T.+ Circles program and research.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Adolescent years are marked by rapid biological, cognitive, and psychosocial development beginning with puberty and extending into the transition to adulthood. Psychosocial development includes complex tasks such as the attainment of cognitive maturity, development of morals and values, and establishment of identity (Sturdevant & Spear, 2002). Development of emotional and social competence are also tasks experienced during adolescent years. Emotional competence refers to the ability to manage emotions, while social competence is the ability to relate effectively with others (Sanders, 2013). During these tasks, adolescents can identify and label their feelings and the feelings of others (Sanders, 2013). Cognitively, adolescents’ transition from styles of concrete, operational thought to formal, operational thought (Sturdevant & Spear, 2002). Concrete operations involve adolescent’s ability to think logically – in tangible ways, whereas formal operations are characterized by hypothetical and abstract thought (Sturdevant & Spear, 2002). The transition from concrete to abstract thinking is imperative as abstract thinkers have the capacity to achieve complex problem solving and decision making and may understand complex messages (Sturdevant & Spear, 2002); while adolescents who remain in concrete thinking largely focus on physically present or real objects, which can lead to frustration as they undergo life transitions (Sanders, 2013). In moral development, adolescents begin internalizing personal values and ethics. There are three levels of moral reasoning: preconventional, conventional, and post conventional. Sturdevant & Spear (2002) state, “preconventional reasoning recognizes
punishments and rewards as external behavioral controls, conventional reasoning emphasizes societal standards, and postconventional reasoning reflects personal standards and universal ethical principles” (p.S30). Learning through experience is said to be vital in postconventional reasoning, suggesting this phase of morality is likely to occur before adulthood (Sturdevant & Spear, 2002). Identity development is a central task in adolescent development, this refers to the one’s sense of self. Sanders (2013) notes identity can be divided into two areas: self-concept and self-esteem (p. 355). Sanders (2013) states:

Self-concept refers to an adolescent’s perception of self— one’s talents, goals, and life experiences. It can also relate to identity as part of ethnic, religious, and sexual identity groups. Self-esteem relates to how one evaluates self- worth (p. 355).

Successful identity development is significantly dependent upon interaction with an adolescent’s environment, including their home, school, and community (Sturdevant & Spear, 2002). In search of identity, adolescents may attempt to discover who they are by exploring different lifestyles; at this stage, adolescents need healthy role models who create space for them to take measured risks (Sturdevant & Spear, 2002). Role models are often sought in their families, schools, churches, and communities. Sturdevant & Spear (2002) argue, “areas of achievement and competence exist where risk taking can occur with a safety net of adult involvement and concern” (p. S31); areas in which feelings of self-competence can occur include academics, athletics, and the arts. The pace of cognitive and psychosocial growth in specific areas is unique to each individual
adolescent (Sturdevant & Spear, 2002); however, there are distinctive challenges and risks marginalized adolescents are exposed to that can inhibit and disrupt healthy development.

**Marginalized Youth Developmental Risk Factors.** Poverty and exposure to violence and racism are some of the greatest risk factors that impact the healthy development of marginalized adolescents (Pinckney et al., 2011). Poverty is associated with stressors that negatively impact the health, academic achievement, social, and psychological functioning of adolescents (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). According to the American Psychological Association, of the 34 million people who identify as African American, 22% live in poverty (APA, 2016) These individuals have a higher risk for mental health illness due to an overrepresentation in homeless populations, people who are incarcerated, children in foster care and child welfare systems, and victims of serious violent crime (APA, 2016). Hispanics are an overrepresented group among the population in poverty; in 2017, Hispanics made up approximately 18.3% of the population but accounted for 27.2% of the population in poverty (Edwards, 2019). While non-Hispanic Whites represent the largest single group of Americans living in poverty, marginalized groups are overrepresented; these groups include African Americans, American Indian and Alaskan Native, Hispanic, and Asian and Pacific Islander (APA, 2009). Disparities in poverty rates amongst marginalized populations exists, with 38.2 percent of Black youth, 32.3 percent of Hispanic youth, and 13 percent for Asian youth reported in 2009 (APA, 2009). Poverty in childhood is associated with lower school achievement; worse cognitive, behavioral, and attention-related outcomes; higher rates of
delinquency, depressive and anxiety disorders; and higher rates of almost every psychiatric disorder in adulthood (Simon et al., 2018). Black, Hispanic/Latino, and Indigenous adolescents often live and develop in these high-risk environments characterized by systemic, structural barriers to individual effort and success; these barriers include interactions between family, neighborhood, and school contexts in addition to larger social, political, and economic forces within society (McLoyd, 1998). Youth in high-risk environments often lack social resources, caring adult relationships, and involvement in extracurricular activities that help to facilitate positive youth outcomes (Swanson et al., 2003). Despite adverse living conditions, minority youth may still exhibit resilience, success, and competence; however, these instances often go unrecognized, denying young people a sense of success and accomplishments (Swanson et al., 2003).

Racial identity is critical to the development of marginalized adolescents and is a central task of identity development in adolescence. Ethnic-racial identity refers to the beliefs and attitudes young people have towards their ethnic-racial groups and the overall process of how these beliefs and attitudes form (Umana-Taylor et al., 2014). In adolescent years, young people begin assessing their feelings about themselves, others, and society in the context of their families, schools, and communities (Flanagan, 2020). Additionally, they begin developing a sense of importance to advance their community within these contexts. Recent studies highlight the association between ethnic-racial identity and civic beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Bañales et al., 2020). Bañales et al. (2020) showed Black and Latinx adolescents who demonstrate increases in
ethnic-racial identity resolutions also have greater civic beliefs. Bañales et al. (2020) argue, “These results suggest that adolescents who have an increasingly clear sense of their ethnic-racial selves may have greater access to cognitive and socioemotional resources that promote their development of beliefs on the need to advance the well-being of their communities” (p. 2495). This development of a clear and positive sense of self in relation to one’s ethnic group is a normative part of development for Black and Latinx adolescents (Bañales, 2020 and occurs by engaging in processes that allow them to explore and understand the importance of group membership in their lives. Exploration of ethnic-racial identity begins as adolescents are exposed to information about their racial group through talking with others and participating in activities that highlight their race (Syed et al., 2013). During exploration, youth learn about their racial group’s experiences in different contexts, including school, home, and the broader society, and may reflect or act on issues their racial group faces within these contexts (Rivas-Drake & Umana-Taylor, 2019).

The youth development process can be a challenging task for marginalized adolescents who confront violence and racism in school, their communities, and places of employment. Garbarino (1997) discusses how structural racism, violence, abuse, and other social toxins impact the growth and development of young people. Equivalent to physical toxins, Garbarino (1997) argues that social toxins can reach dangerous levels and severely impact the healthy development of adolescents. Black youth who live in poor communities are often the most vulnerable to the presence of social toxins (Ginwright, 2006). Depression, anger, hopelessness, and pain are side effects Black youth
often experience when exposed to high levels of social toxicity. Latinx adolescents experience heightened fear and anxiety due to immigration policies that are perceived as racist and unjust (Wray-Lake et al., 2018). A study conducted by Wray-Lake et al. (2018) documented Latinx adolescent’s responses to President Donald Trump’s approach to immigrant-related policies. A reported 47% of Latinx adolescents in the study expressed negatively valenced emotions (Wray-Lake et al., 2018). Fear and anxiety relative to immigration represented 52% of reported negatively valenced emotions; other emotions included anger, contempt, and disgust towards immigration policies and deportation promises (Wray-Lake et al., 2018). Heightened fear and anxiety were related to personal fears of deportation for oneself or immediate family members (Wray-Lake et al., 2018). Although AAPI adolescents experience lower rates of substance abuse, status dropout, and social toxins compared to other racial-ethnic peer groups (Hong et al., 2011; Sickmund & Puzzanchera, 2014), they face diverse risks from acculturative stress, identity conflict, and intergenerational tension (Rogers-Sirin et al., 2014).

**Trauma and Adolescent Development.** Trauma refers to a psychological condition that manifests in individuals who are wounded at a physical or psychological level (Schimmenti, 2018). This condition occurs as a result of distressing experiences that Schimmenti (2018) argue, “affect the psychological processes of an individual at multiple levels of functioning, fostering significant alterations in self-concept, relationship patterns, and belief systems” (p. 535). Reported exposure to traumatic events have been shown to increase the risk of psychopathology, mental or behavioral disorder, especially when exposure occurs during youth (Schalinski et al., 2016). Increased vulnerability for
individuals exposed to traumatic experiences during adolescence is likely due to having reduced resources to process events on cognitive and affective levels (Van Dijke et al., 2011). Inability to regulate or process such emotional and cognitive arousal may subject youth to adopting unhealthy forms of coping and negatively impact developmental tasks (Becker et al., 2003). Impacts to developmental tasks can range from behavioral and emotional consequences, such as developing avoidance, reexperiences, and trauma-specific depression or anxiety; cognitive functioning consequences, such as denial and avoidant thought, ongoing psychic numbing, and debilitation or inhibiting of decision-making abilities; and identity development consequences, such as impairment to sense of competence and self-esteem, sense of grievance or seeking revenge, and the development of a victim identity (Becker et al., 2003). The focus of research in psychology and related disciplines have traditionally focused on the distressing and severe psychological or physical outcomes that result from traumatic experiences (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Scholars have argued the need to shift research from negative outcomes to growth in adversity in hopes of discovering effective interventions and pathways to positive development for marginalized youth (Meyerson et al., 2011).

**Posttraumatic Growth**

Posttraumatic growth (PTG) is described as the positive change or transformation experienced as a result of the struggle with trauma and was coined by Richard G Tedeschi and Lawrence Calhoun in the mid-90s. The understanding of the potentially transformative power of suffering is evident in early ideas and writings of ancient Hebrews, Greeks, and Christians as well as in Hindu and Islam teachings (Tedeschi &
Posttraumatic growth is said to go beyond acceptance or survival but is an experience of development that signifies transformation, which differentiates PTG from resilience. While experiencing a traumatic event may promote resiliency in some individuals, a resilient person may not necessarily have been exposed to trauma or suffering (Chowdhury, 2020). Tedeschi & Calhoun argue, “Posttraumatic growth is not simply a return to baseline – it is an experience of improvement that for some persons is deeply profound” (p. 4).

The process of PTG begins by the occurrence of what Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) describes as “a major life crisis that severely challenges and perhaps shatters the individual’s understanding of the world and their place in it” (p. 12). This life crisis results in stress and overwhelming emotions that elicits the need of the individual to engage in coping mechanisms. In addition, “intense cognitive processing” of the traumatic event must also occur, as this is essential in the process of PTG (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). The social system of an individual also plays a central role in the process of PTG, specifically through the facilitation of growth schemas and empathetic acceptance of self-disclosures relative to the major life crises and growth-related schemas (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). The Model of Life Crisis and Personal Growth displayed in Figure 2. illustrates the importance of personal and environmental factors in supporting the coping process (Schaefer and Moos, 1992) as it leads to PTG.
Figure 2.

Posttraumatic Growth (PTG) Model of Life Crisis (Chowdhury, 2020)

The Model Of Life Crisis

The positive transformation of PTG can occur in one or more of the five domains of growth: **Personal Strength, Close Relationships, Greater Appreciation for Life, New Possibilities, and Spiritual Development** (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). **Personal Strength** demonstrates an individual’s ability to better handle challenges, increased wisdom and maturity, and an increased sense of capacity to survive or conquer circumstances.

Individuals may report a greater sense of self-reliance and a discovery of being stronger than one thought. **Close Relationships** refer to strengthened social ties, the sense of belonging or unity an individual feels with others. In support groups, individuals may
demonstrate more comfortability with vulnerability and intimacy. *Greater Appreciation for Life* refers to ways individuals demonstrate an increased sense of compassion for others’ suffering. Experiencing a traumatic event make create a changed sense of priorities about what is important in one’s life and greater gratitude, hope, and value of their own life. *New Possibilities* allow for the individual to accomplish goals that would have otherwise been delayed. The impacted individual is more likely to change things that need to be changed and can recognize the availability of new opportunities. From this domain, signs of resilience and openness to new ways of living will emerge. *Spiritual Development* refers to the development of a deeper sense of spirituality an individual experiences after traumatic life event. The individual’s life beliefs and philosophies may be readjusted or revised altogether to be fully developed and meaningful. Continued research on PTG is finding that continuing personal distress and growth often coexist given that distress is said to initiate the process and, perhaps, maintain growth (Tedeschi, Calhoun, & Cann, 2007).

Scholars have questioned the universal applicability of the PTG model to diverse groups (Splevins et al., 2010). Splevins et al. (2010) argue that the theoretical conceptualization of PTG in Western culture warrants investigation to account for any culturally biased assumptions that may have influenced the development of the model. Splevins et al. (2010) state, such influence runs the risk of engaging in culturally insensitive research and practice, arguing that “interventions aiming to facilitate benefits for ethnically diverse clients may be developed on the basis of evidence that is not culturally appropriate” (p. 260). Although evidence for posttraumatic growth has been
supported by empirical research across cultures (Ho et al., 2004; Peltzer, 2000; Dirik & Karanci, 2008; etc), evidence was gathered nomothetically and quantitatively, derived exclusively from the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (Spelvins et al., 2010). The scale was generated utilizing literature review of studies reporting positive changes and validated on an American population (ages 17-15) who experienced a range of traumas including bereavement, injury-producing accidents, separation or divorce of parents, relationship break-up, criminal victimization, academic programs, and unwanted pregnancy. Spelvins et al. (2010) state, “it is worth noting that none of the sample members had experienced traumas such as human rights violations, war, or witnessing of such acts” (p. 266). Additionally, research with children and adolescents needs to be expanded to further understand the posttraumatic growth process in developmental stages (Milam et al., 2004; Meyerson et al., 2011). Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) argue that PTG may be more applicable to younger people and more reports of growth are expected as youth may be more open to learning and change (p. 4). Meyerson et al. (2011) argue that research on youth, PTG, and environmental factors would be strengthened with improved assessment by combining standardized questionnaire assessments with interview, play, storytelling, and drawing methods (p. 959).

**Positive Youth Development**

Positive youth development (PYD) can be described as an asset-based approach that uses supportive environments and community connections to promote the healthy development of youth (Bradshaw et al., 2008). PYD is an interdisciplinary field of research, encompassing a variety of fields including child and adolescent developmental
psychology, public health, social work, and education (Benson et al., 2007, p.894).

Current models of youth development focus on youth assets. To facilitate positive youth development, eight key contextual features should be present in youth programming: physical and psychological safety; supportive relationships; opportunities to belong; support for efficacy and mattering; positive social norms; opportunities for skill-building; appropriate structure; and integration of family, school, and community efforts (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003) state that when community-based programs implement developmental programming focused on strengths of youth, positive development can be promoted through the Five C’s of PYD: competence, confidence, character, connection, and caring. Competence refers to one’s positive view of their actions in specific areas including social, academic, cognitive, and vocational (Lerner et al., 2005). Confidence includes concepts of self-worth, self-efficacy, and global self-regard. Character encompasses one’s sense of right and wrong and respect for societal and cultural rules. Connection refers to the positive, bidirectional bonds between the individual and family, friends, and community. Caring and compassion, as a single concept, represent a sense of sympathy and empathy for others. According to Lerner (2004), the development of the five C’s is likely to occur in community-based programs that involve positive adult-youth relationships, youth skill building activities, and youth-led, community-based activities. In addition, the presence of the five C’s is likely to result in the emergence of a sixth C, contribution. The presence of positive youth development is said to result in the positive contribution of youth to self, family, community, and the broader society (Lerner, 2004). Positive youth development research
informs practitioners about the impact social conditions can have on adolescents, and youth development programming seeks to improve choices adolescents make within these contexts; however, Johnston-Goodstar and Sethi (2013) argue that PYD “does little to positively engage them in an analysis of these conditions or collective action to change them” (p. 66).

The positive youth development framework has been adopted by many youth-serving organizations to supplement their programs in developing healthy, productive, and engaged adolescents. However, these models assume that developing adolescents will be sufficient, rather than acting to change the oppressive environments they live in (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Ginwright & Cammarota (2002) argue that focusing on youth assets risks dismissing important social, economic, and political factors that influence marginalized adolescents. Choices that adolescents make are impacted by the relationships between their peers, family, school, and work, in addition to the political and economic resources available to them (Cohen et al., 1997). Poverty, discrimination, drugs, police violence, and the burden of financially supporting their families to help raise siblings are debilitating factors that urban adolescents in low-income communities’ encounter. These realities are unique challenges and are critical in their development (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Discussing these realities are important for adolescents who struggle with issues of oppression that are supported by unjust economic policies (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). The correlation between one’s race and ethnic background with access to resources and experience with institutional discrimination impacts how adolescents experience “positive” youth development (Williams & Deutsch,
A PYD approach to youth development suggests that all adolescents have the capacity to thrive, despite their race or background (Lerner et al., 2003); however, more attention on the role of race and ethnicity and its associated realities regarding systemic oppressive environments in youth development programs is needed.

Recent research builds on existing PYD research to present new models and directions for the positive youth development of marginalized youth. Clonan-Roy et al. (2016) presents a feminist theoretical model of adolescent development, specifically for girls of color. The model was adapted using the existing PYD model developed by Lerner et al. (2005) and a research study that assessed characteristics of positive youth development among urban girls using the PYD framework (Clonan-Roy et al., 2016). When asked about characteristics that contributed to doing well, participant responses aligned with PYD competencies; however, additional characteristics outside of the existing PYD framework emerged amongst Latina and African American girls (Clonan-Roy et al., 2016). Based on these findings, Clonan-Roy et al. (2016) suggests a model in which critical consciousness is central to the developmental model and two additional competencies, resistance and resilience, are added to best fit the needs of adolescent girls of color (Clonan-Roy et al., 2016).

Resource deprivation and discrimination against AAB compromise their psychological and physical health, evoking trauma-like symptoms (Pieterse et al., 2012) and racism related stress can deplete coping resources and threaten the well-being of AAB (Harrell, 2000). A social justice perspective demands equal opportunities for all adolescents to develop talents and have access to resources to develop competencies needed to thrive (Barbarin et al., 2019). Barbarin et al. (2019) present future research considerations that include integrating an understanding of racial and economic inequity on development; designing interventions to enhance AAB’s capacity to negotiate their environments; and studies on the impact of reducing socially toxic environments and combatting white racism (p. 204). While dimensions of PYD are not invalid for adolescents of color; research suggests a need for frameworks that establish connections between individual and environmental assets in more culturally relevant ways (Travis & Leech, 2014).

Social Justice Youth Development

Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD) can be defined as, “An approach focused on the development of equitable access and opportunities for all youth by actively reducing or eliminating disparities in education, health, employment, justice, and any other system that hinders the development of young people” (Outley et al., 2018). Recent race-related events have highlighted the unique challenges marginalized youth face that are critical to their development. Discussing these realities are important for youth who struggle with issues of oppression that are supported by unjust economic policies (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). The role of care, healing, and justice have gradually become more recognized in neighborhood-based organizations within minority
communities for how they develop young people and promote strong community life (Ginwright, 2010). Youth organizations with social justice-based practices help promote a form of activism that emphasizes the building of caring relationships, reviving community life, and embracing culture (Ginwright, 2010). Investing in caring relationships deters youth from internalizing trauma and builds their capacity to transform oppressive conditions (Ginwright, 2010). Janie Ward (2000) suggests “‘addressing racism, in an open and forthright manner is essential to building psychological health’ among African American and Latino youth who have been failed by other social supports, including traditional youth development programming” (as cited by Ginwright, 2010, p. 80).

The SJYD framework is adapted from PYD and focuses on the relationship between critical consciousness and social action. Critical consciousness can be defined as “an awareness of how institutional, historical, and systemic forces limit and promote the life opportunities for particular groups” (Ginwright & James, 2002). Critical consciousness is derived from theorist Paulo Freire’s term conscientizagao, an educational and social concept that describes the ability to intervene in reality to change it. Ginwright & Cammarota (2002) state that through critical consciousness and social action, young people can make sense of their social world and take steps to begin transforming it. Through their own praxis, or reflection and action on the world to change it, young people can explore their experiences with oppression and privilege and are equipped with tools to understand and change systems or processes that perpetuate problems they face daily (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Critical consciousness and
social action are intimately tied to the tangible ways that young people respond to oppressive forces in their communities (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002).

SJYD is comprised of three levels of awareness that creates critical consciousness and focuses on systemic injustices and actions required to overcome oppression: self-awareness, community awareness, and global awareness. Self-awareness refers to “an awareness of self in positive, healthy terms” (Cammarota, 2011). This level of awareness is the most foundational and imperative for youth to increase confidence and nurture positive self-perceptions of their racial identities. The second level of awareness, community awareness, fosters an understanding of how social and economic factors contribute to youth’s impaired perception of self (Cammarota, 2011). Awareness of community enables youth to relate to others within their community and instills a sense of hope that alleviates the impact of social and economic structures they face daily. The final level of awareness within SJYD is global awareness which encourages youth to understand ways oppression impacts the lives of others while simultaneously engaging in social justice practice to address the oppression (Cammarota, 2011). This builds a sense of compassion and the capacity for youth to make changes within their own lives.

The SJYD framework operates through five principles: analyzing power in social relationships, making identity central, promoting systemic change, embracing youth culture, and encouraging collective action (Ginwright & James, 2002). Through analyzing power in social relationships, including between adults and youth, young people can recognize the misuse of power in systems that reproduce inequality. Identity is often linked to inequality; SJYD seeks to celebrate identity by making it central to
developing young people. Promoting systemic change allows young people to identify root causes of social problems and strategize, research, and act to make changes in school policies and within their community (Ginwright & James, 2002). Ginwright and James (2002) state “youth culture has been effective at communicating messages that promote social justice” (p. 37). SJYD framework focuses on creating organizations that strive to be youth run and led. Finally, collective action involves strategies linked to organizing and activism, seeking to change oppressive conditions through collective action. Collective action in the SJYD framework is an avenue for youth empowerment and healing.

Engaging marginalized adolescents can be a challenge because they are often disconnected and distrust the environments they live in (Davidson et al., 2010); however, youth engagement is key for the optimal development and serves as a catalyst for systemic change to improve support for marginalized communities (Iwasaki, 2016). Recent studies of SJYD have shown the positive impacts of such engagement on the lives of marginalized youth. Johnston-Goodstar and Sethi (2013) conducted a critical, qualitative study with a Native youth media program, MIGIZI. The study explored how the program practiced SJYD within an Indigenous context and what goals, outcomes, and experiences were observed in adolescent participants (Johnston-Goodstar & Sethi, 2013). Findings from the study successfully demonstrated Indigenous-centered SJYD practice in both activities that participants got to engage in (e.g., creating PSA’s, documenting community gatherings, etc), but also in the media productions adolescents created. Participants critiqued the glorification of “old White guys” and the absence of Native
people in the buildings that housed their programs (Johnsson-Goodstar & Sethi, 2013). Additionally, they connected past policies to present conditions and pointed out the failure of public institutions to present the Native American content in media. Johnston-Goodstar and Sethi (2013) note, “All youth participants evidenced an ability to critically read the world and reflect on power in their own lives” (p. 73). Aviles and Grigalunas (2018) engaged in an exploratory case study observing youth experiencing housing instability (YEHI) as they participated in Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) workshops guided by the SJYD framework. The workshops were offered by Youth Support Services (YSS) drop-in center located on the southside of Chicago. Approximately 14 adolescents enrolled in the workshops with a total of six, primarily African American (n = 4), completing them. Results of the study revealed that, when given the opportunities, adolescents have the capacity to “understand, deconstruct, and develop solutions to systemic injustices negatively impacting their lives” (Aviles & Grigalunas, 2018, p. 84), demonstrating the potential of using a SJYD approaching with YEHI and ethnic minority youth.

**Radical Healing.** The SJYD framework is the premise to what Ginwright (2010) calls healing centered engagement. Ginwright (2010) argues, healing from oppressive trauma caused by poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, and class exploitation is an important political act. Radical, a term most often used politically, promotes the idea that complete change is necessary to diminish social problems (French et al., 2020). Healing occurs when marginalized youth gain critical consciousness about their oppression and actively seek ways to resist the associated trauma (French et al., 2020). The process of
healing requires reconciling the past to change the present, allowing for the imagination of a new future (Ginwright, 2010). Centering healing allows for intentional consideration of the relationship between justice and healing and moves away from the individualistic focus of coping to collectivism in which marginalized communities thrive (Heilbron & Guttman, 2000). French et al. (2020) argues:

It is important that POCI are able to cope with symptoms tied to trauma; however, healing involves identifying the source of the trauma, engaging in collective resistance against that source, and fostering hope as POCI actively work to prevent recurring trauma for not only themselves but also their communities (p. 19).

Radical healing helps promote hope and political possibilities for youth in their communities through integrating issues of power, history, self-identity, and the possibility of collective agency and struggle (Ginwright, 2010). Ginwright (2010) argues, “By rebuilding collective identities (racial, gendered, youth), exposing youth to critical thinking about social conditions and building activism, youth heal by removing self-blame and act to confront pressing school and community problems” (p. 86).

The radical healing framework consists of five components: Culture, Agency, Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement, often referred to as CARMA. Culture is the foundation that connects adolescents to racial and ethnic identity that is both historical and contemporarily relevant. Culture is important for youth of color to develop a healthy ethnic identity while also celebrating urban youth culture. Agency describes the individual and collective capacity to act, create, and change both personal and external
issues. Agency encourages youth to discover their personal power to change problems. Relationships describe the ability of youth to create and sustain healthy connections. Ginwright (2016) states, “Relationships build a deep sense of connection and prepares youth to know themselves as part of a long history of struggle and triumph” (p. 25). Meaning is the discovery of purpose and awareness of our role in progressing justice. Meaning “builds an awareness of the intersections of personal and political life by pushing youth to understand how personal struggles have profound political explanations” (Ginwright, 2016, p. 26). Achievement highlights life’s possibilities and movement towards clear goals. Achievement encourages youth to understand oppression while working toward personal and collective advancement. The CARMA components help facilitate identity exploration, action, social connectedness, and understanding positionality and power (Ginwright, 2016, p. 25). When CARMA is operationalized within youth programming, healing and wellness outcomes may be experienced on an individual, social, and community level (Ginwright, 2016, pp. 25-26) as demonstrated in Table 1. The individual level of wellness focuses on strengthening hope, optimism, political and social consciousness, and youth voice (Ginwright, 2010). Ginwright (2010) states, “individual wellness provides an internal capacity and resilience to engage in civic and social justice efforts” (p. 88). Cultural awareness, ethnic pride, and youth engagement are signals of social well-being; this level is where adolescents engage in social movements and other forms of collective action with their peers (Ginwright, 2010). Community wellness emphasizes collective power and control over local public policy;
this can involve community organizing, attending public hearings, and other collective action that drives adolescents to achieve social justice.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table 1. CARMA Healing Outcomes</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Individual</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Healing</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Hope and optimism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sense of purpose</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sense of accomplishment</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Cultural awareness</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sense of belonging</td>
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<td>• Collective identity</td>
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<td>• Ethnic pride</td>
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<td><strong>Community</strong></td>
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<td>• Community well-being</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Collective consciousness</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Community power</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Civic action</td>
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<td>• Relationships and trust</td>
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<td>• Social capital</td>
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Community and out-of-school time programs can play a vital role in healing and responding to neighborhood and community problems (Ginwright, 2009). These organizations provide opportunities or ethnic minority youth to connect with peers, adults, and activities that address social and community problems (Ginwright, 2010). In addition, collective agency allows youth to define the purpose of social relationships through actions promoting justice in neighborhoods, churches, and youth programs which are important sources for understand civic like for marginalized youth (Ginwright, 2010). Theriault (2009) suggests, “Awareness of the root causes of oppression is theorized to facilitate action against oppressive social structures, particularly when facilitated by caring relationships such as those that can be found in out- of-school-time programs” (p.
A study with the organization Leaders Organizing 2 Unite & Decriminalize (LOUD) focused on radical healing with a group of formerly incarcerated and probation adolescents and allies. LOUD a partnership between a grassroots community organization and the local juvenile justice system in New Mexico (Desai, 2020). The study conducted Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) that addressed extrajudicial killings by creating a Dia de los Muertos float to give voice to Chicana adolescents (Desai, 2020). The Dia de los Muertos float empowered the adolescents to translate their anger and pain into social action and raise awareness about extrajudicial killings of Black, Native, Latinx, and Trans lives in a concrete manner (Desai, 2020). Desai (2020) notes:

Our wellness began to improve once we engaged in actions that led to agency and resistance, studying how BLM helped to advocate for racial, sexual, gender, immigrant, and other forms of justice, and learning how the principles of In Lak’ech and Ubuntu promoted a sense of interconnectedness because of a shared solidarity in the suffering of others (pp. 779 – 780).

The author notes examples of radical healing that were exhibited throughout the extent of the project. Dia de los Muertos allowed the group to use a float to engage in community building and resistance while centering healing through listening to each other, supporting each other, and doing activities that promoted relationships (Desai, 2020). In a case study using autoethnographic writing, Rosario-Ramos (2018) demonstrates how critically caring can lead to radical healing for dispossessed adolescents in the classroom (p. 215). The study took place at Puerto Rico High, an alternative school made up of
approximately 64% of Latinos and 35% African American. Observations and data collected focused on the work of five students, three Latino/a, one Black, and one of mixed race (Rosario-Ramos, 2018). Throughout the two weeks of the writing unit, students exhibited acknowledgement of their own strength and resilience and the ability to make connections between their personal experiences and those of their peers; reframing personal misfortune as systemic oppression (Rosario-Ramos, 2018). Students utilized poetry, narrative writing, and storytelling for critical examination, rewriting their experiences, and expressing desire and hope.

**Art, Healing, & Youth Voice**

A common method often used to promote healing amongst young people have been engaging them in the arts. Art has been recognized as essential to helping understand the human experience and generates empathy through gained insight into diverse perspectives and experiences (Goessling, 2020). Art making can improve social, mental, emotional function, and increase well-being and is often used as a form of therapy (Rowe et al., 2017). Through art making, healing can occur through nonverbal communication, exploration of feelings, self-discovery, and catharsis (Malchiodi, 2011) and has been explored to facilitate healing for different forms of trauma. Art therapy has been shown to be effective with vulnerable populations (Rowe et al., 2017) and is especially appropriate for children and adolescents who often express their experiences nonverbally (Malchiodi, 2008). The arts provide these populations with a safe space to resolve traumatic symptoms (Appleton & Spokane, 2001) and explore memories and emotions subtly and symbolically (Malchiodi, 2008). Studies utilizing art therapy on
vulnerable youth populations demonstrate the ability of art to decrease the mental health impacts of trauma, including hyperarousal and avoidance symptoms in South African children (Van Westrhenen et al., 2019) and anxiety and severe emotional difficulties in refugee adolescents (Rowe et al., 2017). Additionally, artwork may be viewed by participants as an extension of their sense of self, in turn enhancing concepts such as self-worth, self-concept, and posttraumatic growth (Rowe et al., 2017). Recent studies have highlighted the opportunity to use art interventions to facilitate critical consciousness and social change (Karcher, 2017).

The arts have historically served as a critical pedagogical space where marginalized groups expressions of resistance have emerged to denounce racism and white supremacy (Marsh, 2016). Hip hop music, storytelling or narrative writing, and painting have often been popular art forms for youth expression and resistance (Marsh, 2016). Social justice art education is “the pedagogical process that engages young people in creating art to dismantle systems of inequality (Dewhurst & Desai, 2016).” Research shows that adolescent engagement with art can cultivate a broader understanding of injustices, the consequences of injustice, and the range of alternative possibilities (Bell & Dasai, 2011). The use of art to enrich and engage “at risk” youth gained popularity in the 1990’s with the rise of positive youth development (Goessling, 2020). Arts were praised for the positive social and academic outcomes they produced, including empowerment, self-esteem, enhanced understanding, and voice (Delgado, 2018). Art can transcend cultural, linguistic, and economic barriers which makes it ideal for promoting social change (Karcher, 2017).
Art forms, such as storytelling, help to facilitate community healing, resistance, and voice for young people. Youth voice refers to the perspectives, knowledge, ideas, and experiences of young people as a collective and is an essential component to youth development programming. Youth voice requires the active involvement of young people in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of their programmatic experiences. Krueger (2005) argues, “when a program promotes authentic and meaningful involvement, youth have opportunities for connection to others, self-discovery, and empowerment” (as cited by Serido et al., 2011, p. 45). Allowing youth to have a voice in matters that impact them creates the opportunity for positive youth development to emerge (Perkins & Borden, 2006). Youth voice leads to several positive youth development outcomes and encourages youth to become actively involved in democratic decision making (Larson et al., 2005). Highlighting youth voice may be especially important for marginalized youth. Repeated exposure to violence, living in poverty, and experiencing racism leads to a sense of self-doubt and a mistrust of adults (Halpern, 2006). Youth serving organizations have the potential of countering the effects of these experiences through engaging marginalized youth in program decision making and action (Zeldin, 2004), fostering confidence and young people’s sense of belonging to their communities.

**Conceptual Framework**

Practitioners have stressed the importance of moving towards trauma informed care. Trauma informed care refers to principles that guide how we view the impact of trauma on a person’s mental, physical, and emotional health and encourages treatment of
the whole person as opposed to individual symptoms or behaviors (Ginwright, 2018). While this form of care has gained momentum in schools, mental health programs, youth development programs, and juvenile justice departments, the approach has limitations (Ginwright, 2018). First, trauma informed care assumes that trauma is an individual experience rather than a collective one although studies have shown ways in which trauma is often a shared experience (Sinha & Rosenberg, 2013). Second, Ginwright (2018) argues:

[T]rauma informed care requires that we treat trauma in people but provides very little insight into how we might address the root causes of trauma in neighborhoods, families, and schools. If trauma is collectively experienced, this means that we also have to consider the environmental context that caused the harm in the first place” (p. 2).

This approach does little to address the systems, practices, and policies that negatively impact those who are experiencing trauma. Third, trauma informed care often focuses on the treatment of pathology rather than promoting possibility, such as well-being (Ginwright, 2018). Such limitations present the need to adopt approaches that promote a holistic view of healing which Ginwright (2018) terms a healing centered approach. Building on this approach and previous literature, an emerging conceptual framework was used to frame this study. This framework combines the psychological principles of Posttraumatic Growth and components of Radical Healing (Figure 1).

Figure 1.

*Posttraumatic Growth & Radical Healing Integrated Model*
This framework begins by recognizing the occurrence and impact of oppression, which leads to social toxins as a source of trauma (Gabarino, 1997). The stress that develops as a result of trauma then elicits the need for the individual to engage in coping mechanisms, as in PTG. Similarly, to the PTG model, there are personal elements (labeled as individual) and environmental elements (labeled as collective) that should be present for radical healing to take place; however, the integrated model suggests individual processes and collective action working together as demonstrated in the radical healing framework. It is here that the components of radical healing are operationalized for the process to
take place. Table 2. highlights the similarities between the five domains of growth in PTG and the five components of radical healing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Radical Healing</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PTG</strong></td>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
<td><strong>Radical Healing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture</strong></td>
<td>connects adolescents to racial and ethnic identity that is both historical and contemporarily relevant</td>
<td><strong>Agency</strong></td>
<td>the individual and collective capacity to act, create, and change both personal and external issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Strength</strong></td>
<td>an individual’s ability to better handle challenges, increased wisdom and maturity, and sense of capacity to survive or conquer circumstances</td>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td>the ability of youth to create and sustain healthy connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cloe Relationships</strong></td>
<td>strengthened social ties, the sense of belonging or unity an individual feels with others</td>
<td><strong>Meaning</strong></td>
<td>the discovery of purpose and awareness of our role in progressing justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Greater Appreciation for Life</strong></td>
<td>ways individuals demonstrate an increased sense of compassion for others’ suffering; create a changed sense of priorities about what is important in one’s life and greater gratitude, hope, and value of their own life</td>
<td><strong>Achievement</strong></td>
<td>highlights life’s possibilities and movement towards clear goals; encourages youth to understand oppression while working toward personal and collective advancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Possibilities</strong></td>
<td>allow for the individual to accomplish goals that would have otherwise been delayed; is more likely to change things that need to be changed and is able to recognize the availability of new opportunities</td>
<td><strong>Achievement</strong></td>
<td>highlights life’s possibilities and movement towards clear goals; encourages youth to understand oppression while working toward personal and collective advancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spiritual Development</strong></td>
<td>develop a deeper sense of spirituality; life beliefs and philosophies may be readjusted or revised altogether to be fully developed and meaningful</td>
<td><strong>Achievement</strong></td>
<td>highlights life’s possibilities and movement towards clear goals; encourages youth to understand oppression while working toward personal and collective advancement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Personal Strength closely aligns with Agency; Close relationships with Relationships; Greater Appreciation for Life with Meaning; and New Possibilities with Achievement.

For the integrated model, both Culture and Spirituality are recognized as individual components. This creates a more culturally relevant model of PTG, as both culture and spirituality play a major role in healing for marginalized populations (Comas-Diaz, 2012). Combining the PTG model with Radical Healing addresses the need for scholars to consider the cultural and racial contexts of stress and healing. This study aimed to fill a gap in the literature by (1) exploring how radical healing may be promoted in the lived experiences of marginalized youth and further supported within youth programming, and (2) exploring the ways marginalized youth process traumatic race-related experiences to promote radical healing. Observations during A.R.T.+ Circles’ activities, participant created artwork, and participant interviews were used to observe how these processes might occur.
CHAPTER 3
METHODS

Chapter three discusses methodologies used to conduct this study and includes the following: (a) design of study; (b) research setting, program, and sample selection; (c) data collection and positionality; (d) data analysis and establishing trustworthiness. The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of how marginalized youth process traumatic race-related experiences using a healing centered approach. The study explored the radical healing process in the lived experiences and art of marginalized youth participants in the A.R.T. + Circles program. A phenomenological case study methodology was employed to provide a firmer, in-depth understanding of how participants experienced radical healing from race-related experiences. Participant’s radical healing processes were explored using observations, in-depth interviews, and participant created art. The research questions explored during this study were:

Q1: How do marginalized youth in the A.R.T. + Circles program process traumatic race-related experiences to experience radical healing?

Q2: What components of radical healing are reflected in the experiences of marginalized youth in the A.R.T. + Circles program?

Q3: What features of the A.R.T. + Circles program were most beneficial to marginalized youth in promoting radical healing?

Design of Study

Qualitative research is aimed to “describe, interpret, and explain social reality through the medium as language” (Beuving & De Vreis, 2015, p. 19). It often involves
understanding the stories and lived experiences of a person or population and reflects insight that you cannot obtain through numerical or mathematical means of data collection (Beuving & De Vreis, 2015). For the current study, utilizing qualitative research was appropriate in understanding adolescents’ perspectives of traumatic race-related events and how they experienced and healed from them. While it has been understood that these events can increase psychological disorders specifically, quantitative research is unable to explore the varying reasons these disorders may manifest or be minimized in adolescents.

Additionally, qualitative research is used when we want to “empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and the participants in a study” (Creswell & Poth, 2016, p. 45). By using qualitative research for this study, I allowed adolescents to share their stories without assuming that all adolescents process, are impacted, or heal by race-related events in the same way, which allows for researchers and practitioners to better understand the best ways to support their healing. Williams & Deutsch (2016) note the importance of further exploring qualitative and mixed methods research designs in youth programs to allow for emergent findings of possible underlying constructs that impact positive youth development (p. 211). Williams and Deutsch (2016) argue, “Such designs allow researchers not only to better understand the local contexts and processes from the perspectives of the youth, but to identify and follow-up on patterns that may not be evident or explainable in studies that rely solely on quantitative assessments of pre-determined measures” (p. 211).
A phenomenological approach describes the common meaning for individuals of their lived experiences of a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Phenomenologists often focus on describing what the participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon or concept to describe the essence of the experience (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The essence of participant experiences in the phenomenological approach is collected in a composite description that consists of what they experienced and how they experienced it. In this study, recent racially traumatic events (e.g., murder of George Floyd, coverage of immigrant detention centers and attacks on peoples of Asian descent) are phenomena that have been experienced by adolescents in the United States at some capacity due to media access. The phenomenological approach highlighted how participants experienced and processed these events, rather than simply how these events happened or exist in a vacuum.

Case studies are used to develop an in-depth understanding of a single case or explore a problem using a case as a specific illustration (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Case studies are often defined as a qualitative approach that explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system or multiple systems over time through detailed, in-depth data collection (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Data collection in case studies usually involve multiple sources of information, such as observations, interviews, and documents, and reports a case description and case themes (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Using such a design allows for the researcher to capture more descriptive and holistic participant viewpoints to reveal a phenomenon that otherwise may not be accessible (Glesne, 2016). For this study, each participant was selected and presented as a single case. Each case will be described and
analyzed in Chapter four and will be used to illustrate how adolescents experience radical healing and how they process traumatic race-related events. Exploring multiple cases in a study is often referred to as a collective case study (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

**Research Setting**

Momentum Bike Clubs (MBC) is a mentoring initiative founded in 2010 that uses healthy relationships and cycling as a segue for positive youth development in marginalized youth. MBC serves middle school and high school youth, typically aged 10 to 18, in the Greenville, South Carolina area. Since the start of the program, Momentum Bike Clubs has expanded to 18 bike clubs, served over 1100 youth, and has collectively ridden 110,000 miles. MBC’s founding philosophy is anchored in positive youth development and their mission is to use cycling to exercise, model healthy relationships, teach leadership and compassion, and enable personal growth amongst their students. MBC works to create programming that intentionally engages youth constructively within their communities by affirming their strengths and assets. In the program, bike club students participate in internships, trips, youth development seminars and receive high school and college preparation resources. Additionally, students receive annual college scholarships and ongoing mentoring with assistance from local community-based partners.

MBC understood youth face multiple risk factors that can inhibit their growth and development, including persistent poverty, parental incarceration and/or instability in their home life. Additionally, recent instances of police brutality and racism in the United States have heightened the need to consider the impact of racism-related experiences on
the growth and development of minoritized youth (Jones & Neblett, 2017). As a response, Momentum Bike Clubs aimed to develop an intervention to specifically support Black, Indigenous, and People of Color youth.

**A.R.T.+ Circles Program.** A.R.T.+ Circles is a group-mentoring program designed to build community and support for marginalized youth as they processed racial trauma, exercised their voices, and increased their understanding of their capacity to enact social change. The program was created through a collaboration between MBC and the Race, Ethnicity, Youth, & Social Equity Collaboratory at Clemson University. As a graduate student with REYSE, the researcher both developed the program and participated in the A.R.T.+ Circles as a mentor. A.R.T.+ Circles included weekly arts-based activities facilitated by artists of color in a supportive environment where students could safely share their experiences and dive deeper into topics including racism, discrimination, power structures, activism, and advocacy.

Prior to program development, four months were spent speaking with and listening to program stakeholders to learn more about community needs. Understanding community needs happened through weekly meetings with MBC’s Director, conversations with MBC volunteer mentors, and interest forums with potential program participants and their guardians. Additionally, the researcher attended and participated in other MBC programs to form relationships with and learn from students and mentors.

**Curriculum Development.** The A.R.T.+ Circles program curriculum was developed using the SJYD framework, creating activities and program culture that promoted the five programmatic principles: analyze power in social relationships, make
identity central, promote systemic change, embrace youth culture, and encourage collective action (Ginwright & James, 2002). Each of the A.R.T.+ Session week activities focused on the three levels of SJYD awareness: self, community and global. Additionally, each session focus was implemented in the form of an art activity, community building discussion, or reflection exercises. Table 3. illustrates a week overview including session focuses, session activities, and session reflections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.</th>
<th>Session Focus</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session Activities</th>
<th>Reflections and Prompts</th>
<th>Featured Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>March 14</td>
<td>(1) Welcome to A.R.T.+ (2) Meet the artists (3) Who are you? Activity: Find art that represents you &amp; share</td>
<td>Artist and art exploration</td>
<td>Moody, Vera, Bex, Ariel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Awareness</strong></td>
<td>Storytelling</td>
<td>March 28</td>
<td>(1) Poetry and writing workshop (2) “Quick Hit” writing prompts</td>
<td>(1) observe your surroundings, things that happen in your life, and the emotions that you feel in that moment, and things you want to change (2) create a poem, narrative, etc. about what you observe, how it makes you feel/things you want to change</td>
<td>Moody &amp; Vera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(poetry/narrative)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Building</strong></td>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>April 11</td>
<td>(1) Review, share, and reflect on previous session. (2) Writing: Praise and Rant poems. (3) Courageous Conversations - Journey to anti-racism, racism, and world events</td>
<td>(1) What did you observe this week? (2) Reflection Questions: How can we create change How can we make a difference individually and collectively?</td>
<td>Moody &amp; Vera</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A.R.T sessions were guided by youth-led conversations, which highlighted the need to adapt the curriculum and activities based on the interests, needs, and the pace at which participants were interested in engaging. The program concluded with an art
exhibition in which program participants shared artwork created over the span of the program to parents, family members, community partners, and Clemson University personnel. The presentations included students sharing impactful activities from the program, what they learned, and how they plan to implement what they have learned beyond the program. Additionally, students participated in a bike tour to Civil Rights landmarks around Greenville, SC on June 19th, historically known as Juneteenth, followed by a celebration ceremony.

**Participant Recruitment.** Artists and youth panelists were all recruited through community partnerships established through relationships with MBC directors and volunteers. Artists included local poets and spoken word artists, a graphic and logo designer, musicians, and a photographer. Artists were compensated for their time through a grant awarded to MBC to support A.R.T. + Circles. MBC volunteers of color were also recruited as mentors to support students as they processed and shared their experiences. A recent Furman University intern and MBC mentor was selected to assist in program development and implementation and was provided with a stipend from MBC.

Students for the program were recruited through MBC program directors utilizing homogeneous sampling strategies, a purposive sampling technique that aims to achieve a homogenous sample by selecting cases that share the same or similar characteristics or traits (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Purposeful sampling was appropriate for this study as the research questions aimed to address the experiences of marginalized adolescents, specifically. A total of 20 high school students, grades 9th – 12th, participated in A.R.T. + Circles over the span of the semester. The participants were located in South
Carolina, North Carolina, and Texas and participated in sessions via the Zoom app. All participants identified as Black, Indigenous, or Persons of Color –more specifically Asian, Hispanic/Latino, or Mexican American. Participant demographic information was collected through a short intake survey collected via Google Forms a week prior to the program start date.

**Sample Selection.** The cases for this study were selected from students who participated in the A.R.T.+ Circles program for the Spring 2021 semester. A total of seven cases participated in in-depth interviews and were selected intentionally to show different perspectives of the phenomena, a method defined by Creswell and Poth (2016) as purposeful maximal sampling. More specifically, maximum variation sampling was used by selecting a small number of cases that maximize the diversity of the relevant research question. This approach consists of the researcher selecting cases that are different on determined criteria (Creswell & Poth, 2016), which for this case were race or ethnicity and age. In selecting differences at the beginning of the study, the researcher increases the likelihood that findings will reflect different perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2016). A detailed description of each case is provided in Chapter four.

**Data Collection**

**Positionality.** As a student researcher, I understand that my individual world view, personal experiences, beliefs and values, and identity influence every aspect of the research process. This includes the development of the research questions, the methods and methodologies employed to investigate the research questions, its outcomes, and
results (Holmes, 2020; Rowe, 2014). With this in mind, it is important for me to acknowledge my positionality and ways it shaped the research process.

In the spring and summer of 2020, I was deeply impacted by the highly publicized, race-related events that occurred in the United States. This included instances of police brutality, videos and images of death, violence against peaceful protestors, and instances of threats directed at marginalized communities. It is my belief that many of these instances were a result of systemic racism and white supremacy that exists within the United States. Conversations with friends, family, and scholars that identify as persons of color led me to inquire about the psychological impact these experiences were having on us and how we each heal from traumatic racial phenomena that is reoccurring. As a student with an interest in youth development, I wondered how young people process these events.

Being a person of a marginalized community, I recognized that marginalized groups experience racism, discrimination, and healing differently; this includes within group and across group differences. I identify as a Black or African American cisgender, heterosexual woman. I was raised in a middle, working-class family and in a two-parent household. I have experienced racism and discrimination firsthand; however, I lack understanding of what it is like being Indigenous, AAPI, Hispanic/Latino, or any other person of color. I recognize there are distinct experiences of racism and discrimination each community experiences and intersectionality plays a role in the oppression faced by each individual. Additionally, there are distinct ethnic and cultural practices involved in healing that are unique to each group and person.
I have worked with youth and adolescents for several years as a youth program volunteer, mentor, and program director. I acknowledge we live in a world that oppresses youth and they are often robbed of autonomy, voice, and can be seen as incapable of critical thought or reflective action. As an adult who has learned from this population, I actively work to challenge oppressive youth-adult power dynamics that are asserted by an adultist society.

As a student, I attended a predominately white, but diverse, high school in addition to two predominately white universities. I acknowledge that every aspect of my research process is guided by my identities, subjective understanding, and the educational disciplines and traditions in which I’ve been trained. In my research, I recognize marginalized and youth communities as co-creators of knowledge and I aim to share power and center their voices with intent to learn from their subjective experiences and to advocate from the perspective of the oppressed. Throughout the research process, I attempted to critically reflect on the ways my individual worldview could obstruct or support my understanding of students who participated in the study.

**Collection Methods.** The current study utilized full participant observation, semi-structured interviews, fieldwork/reflective journal, and participant-created artwork as means of qualitative data collection. The following sections discuss the data collection methods used in the study.

*Observation* - Participant observation is a key tool used for data collection in qualitative research studies (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Observation involves taking note of a phenomenon in the field setting, using the five senses of the observer (Creswell & Poth,
2016). Notes are typically collected using an instrument, such as a notebook, and observations are based on the research purpose and questions. The goal of participant observation was to better understand the research setting, the participants, and their behaviors and perspectives. This often takes time and what Glesne (2016) describes as a “learner’s stance” (p. 67). The stance of a full participant was used in this study; this is simultaneously an investigator and a member of the community under study. The researcher participated in A.R.T.+ Circles as a mentor by undergoing required program mentor trainings and participating in all activities. Becoming a mentor and learning about the customs and expectations within the MBC culture helped the researcher develop rapport with the participants.

Field Journal – Developing participant rapport allowed for the collection of deep, descriptive fieldnotes to record descriptions of cases, conversations, and observations later used in data analysis. A field journal was used to take notes throughout the day and to write observations and analytic memos. Saldana (2015) describes analytic memos as a “brain dump” about the participants or organization under investigations (p.44). Different than summarizing, analytic memos were used to reflect and expound on the data and observations being collected (Saldana, 2015). Descriptions about the cases, A.R.T.+ Circles’ activities and activity engagement were taken in addition to general observations. Field notes were typed during and directly following A.R.T.+ sessions. Analytic memos were typed after interviews to capture self-reflections regarding responses to research questions and noting links or connections being made between cases.
In-depth interview - The most common form of data collection used in a phenomenological research approach is using multiple in-depth interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2016). It is recommended for the researcher to interview anywhere between 5 to 25 participants (Creswell & Poth, 2016) for at least one hour and to conduct multiple interviews over the span of their study (Glesne, 2016). In-depth interviews were conducted with program participants who had parental consent to participate in the study.

A semi-structured interview approach was utilized, using the questions as a guide (Appendix A) while still allowing for opportunities to probe and remaining responsive to the participant (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). The questions focused on their experiences with traumatic race-related events, both directly and indirectly, how they processed these experiences, and how they have healed from these experiences. The interviews ranged in length from 30 – 60 minutes and were conducted with the MBC Associate Director or the MBC intern who facilitated A.R.T.+ Circles present to uphold MBC minor participation policy of two adults to one student ratio for conversations. Due to COVID-19, all interviews were conducted via Zoom and recorded and transcribed utilizing the Zoom platform. Interview videos and transcriptions were saved on a password protected computer and in password protected folders. Throughout the interviews, the field journal was used to take additional notes and analytic memos. Prior to data collection, all participants were informed about research purposes, procedures, and future data dissemination. Participants, and their parents, were provided with all information necessary to make decisions about participating in an interest meeting held via Zoom. Participants were reassured of their right to voluntarily withdraw at any point during the
process and all procedures were approved by Clemson University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) office.

Artwork - The third source of data used in this study was participant-created artwork, specifically poetry and photo collages. Participant-created visual data can be used to invoke comments, memory, and discussion, also known as photo-elicitation. This form of qualitative data works well with children and adolescents (Glesne, 2016). Unlike psychological experiment, participant-created visuals go beyond participants response to particular images and generates dialogue about the participants lived experiences and point of view (Glesne, 2016). Throughout the course of the program, participants were challenged to create artwork and were asked questions used to describe what they created, the meaning, and why.

Data Analysis

Data analyses were done using the data analysis spiral developed by Creswell and Poth (2016). The data analysis spiral occurs in four loops: (1) managing and organizing the data; (2) reading an memoing emergent themes; (3) describing and classifying codes into themes; and (4) developing and accessing interpretations (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Loop one, managing and organizing the data, was done through recording and transcribing interviews using the Zoom platform. Zoom transcriptions were then transferred to a Microsoft Word document and thoroughly reviewed in correspondence to the Zoom video recordings to ensure accuracy. To assist in data management, transcriptions were assigned line numbers. Additionally, pseudonyms created by the
participant were used in addition to omitting or revising descriptive characteristics of participants to maintain privacy and confidentiality (Glesne, 2016).

Loop two of the data analysis spiral involves reading and memoing emergent themes. This loop allows the researcher to get a sense of the whole database, or case, to lead to code development, reflections over time, and summaries across cases. I began this loop by reading and rereading the transcript of each interview; this kind of “rapid reading” allows the researcher to approach the text in a new light and build a sense of the data (Creswell & Poth, 2016). As I read through each interview transcript, I wrote notes and memos for each case. These memos included reflective thoughts about statements made, key terms or phrases that stood out to me, and questions that arose while reading the transcript. This process is not only helpful for developing initial codes, but also for creating an audit trail that can be retrieved and examined as a validation strategy for documenting thinking processes (Silver & Lewis, 2014).

Loop three of the data analysis spiral is describing and classifying codes into themes. This study involved a balance of both inductive coding and deductive coding, allowing the components of radical healing to be integral to the process of data analysis while allowing for themes to emerge directly from the data (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The inductive coding approach occurs when the researcher allows codes to emerge, or the researcher identifies codes, as they read through the data. Inductive coding was used to determine how adolescents processed traumatic race-related experiences for each case and what features of the A.R.T.+ Circles program were most beneficial to marginalized adolescents in promoting radical healing. A deductive approach, also
referred to as a priori, occurs when the researcher applied predetermined codes to the data (Saldana & Omasta, 2016). For this study, codes form a codebook created in Microsoft Excel were applied as a means of organizing text to assist in interpretation. Codes were defined by the researcher before beginning analysis of the data and the codebook was based on both the research question and conceptual framework. After reading and managing the data, I began building detailed descriptions of the data in each case, as description plays a central role in case studies (Creswell & Poth, 2016). I then began aggregating the text into small categories of information that were central to the research questions. These small categories were differentiated using an assortment of highlighter colors in Microsoft Excel. The small categories of information were then assigned a label or a code to represent the meaning of that data (Creswell & Poth, 2016) and link thoughts and actions across the data (Glesne, 2016). Next, I classified the codes to form themes which are broad unites of information that consists of grouped codes aggregated to form a shared idea (Creswell & Poth 2016). This involved creating diagrams to highlight relationships among the codes and emerging concepts as well as looking for patterns between the small categories of information that could connect to a larger theme. Table 4. demonstrates examples of the progression from codes to subthemes and themes in this study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radical Healing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Code 4. Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Definition - the discovery of purpose or awareness of the intersection between personal and political life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Description -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Analyzing experiences (“deeper meanings”, “finding the root”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communal Dialogue</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conversing with family (about race-related experiences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Talking with others (classmates, friends, significant others; about race related experiences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Telling/sharing/connecting personal experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning facts/terminology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Educating others (siblings, friends, classmates)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading up on things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberating Space</td>
<td></td>
<td>Safe / “Free” / Open space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Being myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Expressing myself</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Loop four focused on developing and accessing interpretations. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe the interpretation process as making sense of the data or the lessons learned from the data. The interpretive process involves carefully considering what the larger meaning of the patterns, categories, and themes that emerged from analysis is (Patton, 2015). The interpretive process involved understanding findings as they related to the presented conceptual framework and the larger research literature developed by other SJYD and radical healing scholars. The following questions, developed by Grbich (2013), were used in guiding the interpretation process:

1. What surprising information did you not expect to find?
2. What information is conceptually interesting or unusual to participants and audiences?
3. What are the dominant interpretations and what are the alternate notions?

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is a term often used by qualitative researchers to describe the dependability or authenticity of the research study (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Lincoln and Guba (1985) define trustworthiness as the way a researcher can persuade their audience that the findings of qualitative inquiry are worth paying attention to (p. 290). To establish trustworthiness, multiple strategies were used including triangulation, thick description, member checks, practicing reflexivity, and creating an audit trail. The following outlines the strategies and the tangible ways each strategy was implemented in the study.

Triangulation – In order to establish credibility in the findings of the research, triangulation through using multiple methods of data collection were employed in this
study (Glesne, 2016). A collection of rich descriptive field notes, in-depth interviews of cases, and participant created artwork were all gathered and analyzed in this study. I used these points of data collection to document codes or themes in different sources of data to validate findings.

**Thick Description** – Rich, thick description refers to the very detailed descriptions of settings, participants, data collection, and analysis procedures that researcher provide as a way of offering an understating of relevance to other settings of shared characteristics (Carlson, 2010; Creswell & Poth, 2016). Establishing this transferability is referred to corroboration and cannot be established without an in-depth understanding of commonalities that may exist (Carlson, 2010). Additionally, thick description helps evoke emotion and create a sense of connection between the reader and the participants of the study (Carlson, 2010). Rich, thick description was captured for each case in field notes during A.R.T.+ sessions, in interviews, and revisiting data directly after collection to add further descriptions and context.

**Member Checks** – Member checks refer to the researcher seeking participant feedback or views on credibility of the findings and interpretation of the data they provided (Doyle, 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2016). Creswell (2009) recommends using interpreted portions of data for member checks, such as themes or patterns that emerged from data, rather than transcripts. Participants should be asked to review the data and provide their interpretations, observations, and provide alternative language (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Additionally, the researcher should be interested in participant views on what may be missing (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Each of the seven cases were consulted
regarding the codes and themes that were noted from the data they provided. Each case was contacted via email and presented with the opportunity to provide pseudonyms and the opportunity to provide their perspectives and insights on codes, themes, and the overall presentation and description of their experiences. Each case was presented with an excel spreadsheet that showed the themes, associated codes, and direct extracted quotes as well as the opportunity to ask for clarification or give feedback via Zoom.

Reflexivity – Reflexivity refers to reflecting on how the interactions of the researcher, participants, setting, and research procedure all influence one another (Glesne, 2016). Practicing reflexivity means inquiring about the trustworthiness of my own research methods, interpretations, and representations in my study. Doing so helps to reveal subjectivities and contributes to more rigorous, useful work (Glesne, 2016). Subjectivities refer to the researcher’s history and attributes that form their perspectives, beliefs, and feelings (Glesne, 2016). These personal perspectives, beliefs, and feelings were reflected upon throughout the research process and recorded in the field journal. Reflections included, but were not limited to, comments and reactions from program participants, thoughts provoked by program mentors and leaders, reflections from program activities and student processes, and questions regarding the radical healing and PTG frameworks. Aspects of reflexive thought are illustrated within the positionality statement, presentations of findings, and the conclusion.

Audit Trail – Creating an audit trail refers to carefully documenting all components of the research study through keeping field observation notes, interview notes, records, calendars, and various drafts of interpretation (Carlson, 2010). An audit
trail can serve as a validation strategy to document thinking processes that can clarify understandings and a rationale for decisions over time (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Additionally, this establishes confirmability or the degree to which the study’s findings accurately portray the participant’s responses accurately as opposed to the researchers’ (Tobin & Begley, 2004). An audit trail including field observation notes, interview notes, and drafts of interpretation were kept in this study.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Chapter four is a review of the results from this study and includes the following: (a) an overview of an A.R.T.+ Circles session, highlighting programmatic processes and providing context for the program; (b) participant descriptions; (c) key findings from the study organized by themes.

The Setting: A.R.T.+ Session. It’s Sunday, March 28th at approximately 1:58pm. Asha, Tavaghn, Moody, Vera and I had gathered on Zoom and were anxiously awaiting to let the students in to begin the session. Asha starts the music to set the vibe of the Zoom room, a Spotify playlist entitled “A.R.T.+ Circles Welcome Jams” that she created earlier in the week. The playlist was a collaborative effort amongst A.R.T.+ Circles mentors, artists, and students ranging from old-school Hip-Hop classics, 2000’s hits, and songs from Moody Black, a local poet, musician, and spoken word artist. Moody and Vera were long time collaborators on the artistry scene, having done multiple events, performances, and educational seminars together. Their chemistry was organic as they discussed their strategy for the session activities they had planned for the day, open to flowing off of one another’s energy and tag teaming. We were all excited to learn more from the participants; earlier that week we started a Group Me chat where we began interacting and sharing more about ourselves.

I’d love it if everyone could send a short intro whenever you can!

I’ll start: hey! I’m Asha & I’m the Assistant Director of Student Engagement and Programming for A.R.T.+ Circles…basically I’m just an emcee. I’m a Furman
student & I’ve been with Momentum for about a year now. I love breadsticks &

I’m super excited to meet yall this weekend!

Right away, students introduced themselves and shared interests, future aspirations, and what they were looking forward to in the program. Creating the Group Me helped students begin making connections as they recognized others from their school or communities who were also participating. I wondered if they would be this active in the actual A.R.T. Circles session once we started diving deeper into more sensitive, traumatic experiences.

“Alright, its go time”, Tavaghn said as the clock struck 2 o’clock. He admitted students in from the Zoom waiting room and we all welcomed students by name in the chat box. “Hey Alexandra! Sup Kehlani.” Tavaghn had a unique, personable way of engaging with the students. Working with young people and making a difference in marginalized communities had always been important to him. In his new position as the Assistant Director of Momentum Bike Clubs, he was ecstatic to hear about his role as MBC Lead for the A.R.T.+ Circles program. As a former Clemson alumnus, he mentioned how surprised he was about such an initiative being supported and taking place in this area, as times were much different when he was a student. Knowing that he’d have a role with such a program was directly aligned with the impact he intended on making in his role as Assistant Director of MBC. Being in this role served as an important connection to MBC students, mentors, and other community partnerships that contributed to A.R.T. + Circles.
“Hi everybody, welcome to A.R.T.+ Circles! It’s 2:05 so we are going to get started! How is everybody?” Asha is a Furman student who has had a long-time connection to the Director of MBC and had also interned with the organization as a volunteer mentor. I first noticed Asha in another MBC program that I observed before I started the program development process. Her bright energy, attentiveness to students, and genuine care immediately drew me to her. I knew right away that she’d be an ideal facilitator for the A.R.T.+ Circles program given her passion regarding both the vision of the program and for social justice issues. Asha’s journey with activism and advocacy traces back to her time as a student at a local High School where she experienced instances of racism. She had just transferred to the school and immediately experienced a culture shock, she noticed that students were different, and the environment felt intense and militant. At some point, she stumbled across the name of her school which was named after a confederate general and one of the largest owners of enslaved people in South Carolina. This discovery bothered her, as she reflected on what values the school was embodying if his legacy was one of enslaved people. “I was a Black student walking into this school seeing murals of his sword and shields that he used in combat to try and stop, in the long term even, Black children going to school. And that felt very personal to me.” As a result, Asha started a petition to rename the school to honor a mayor who had done much for the Greenville community. “We could just honor so many better people and tell better stories about our community.” Once her petition gained traction, she began experiencing racism, discrimination, and hate online from both students she went to school with and strangers. Additionally, a vulgar message calling her a racial slur was
spray painted near a local state park. “I was 17. I had just said, lets change the name of a high school to better represent our community. And this was the community response.”

After seeing support from people in her community and strangers online, Asha continued in her activism journey by speaking to local news outlets, using social media to share her opinions and inform others on ways to act, and speaking on a panel at a school board meeting where she met the Director of MBC.

I have not shut up talking about this at all! This is what I was working on a year ago and I still continue to talk about this, I still tell people we can’t stop talking about this. Even though it’s been forever, even though people are really tired of hearing about it, it matters that we keep talking about the things that matter enough to us.

These efforts continued throughout her time at Furman where she writes for her school news, has led several advocacy campaigns to provide better resources for marginalized students, and now serves as the student body president as a Junior after appealing a Student Government Association bylaw. She was an integral role in the program as not only a facilitator, but as a mentor and example of ways students could make social change.

“Yay! Okay, nice. Cool! So you’re probably like, what’s up today? Well here’s the schedule.” Each A.R.T. session began with a PowerPoint presentation created by Asha. The start of the presentation was typically a “Welcome to A.R.T.+ Circles” graphic. Each week, the graphic featured a collage of different artists of color, images from protests and world events, and/or different forms of art. On this day, we featured
images of musical artists Aaliyah, Tupac Shakur, and Selena Quintanilla with a microphone and spotlights in the background. Sessions were two hours long and always included forms of youth led conversations, arts-based activities, reflection and sharing, and a segment called “Courageous Conversations”. “Courageous Conversations” was facilitated by Dr. Corliss Outley, the Director of the REYSE Collaboratory of Clemson University. She is a youth development expert in addition to being a member on my thesis committee. This segment became reoccurring as students demonstrated their knowledge and desire to dive deeper into race-related topics. It added an educational element to the A.R.T.+ Circles sessions by supporting student’s learning about key terms, concepts, and history while also giving them space to recognize how these concepts connect to contemporary events. On the agenda that day, we had a check-in followed by an introduction to writing and poetic form facilitated by Moody, a writing activity that involved drawing connections between images and our lived experiences facilitated by Vera, and a debrief with reflections from the day and things to look forward to in the next session. The weekly agenda was created in a collaborative effort between me, Asha, Tavaghn, and the featured artists for that week in a series of emails, phone calls, and Zoom brainstorming meetings.

I started feeling nervous and I took down observations in my field notes about how quiet the students were throughout the check-in and Moody’s session. Moody came in with high energy to engage the students, hoping they’d reciprocate the same energy. He shared his knowledge on poem structure and poem stanzas, giving examples of metaphors from his own work. He opened the floor for students to ask questions near the
end. I was unsure of what the response would be, given the session and chat box had been quiet so far. “I have a question.” A young girl, Araceli, who identifies as Hispanic/Latina spoke up, causing Moody to sit upright in his chair as if taken by surprise. “Yes! Go ahead”, he responded. This opened the door for students to begin inquiring about where to find inspiration for your poetry, how you convey your emotions and thoughts in your poetry, and further inquire about poem structure and strategies. This segment served as a warmup for the following activities in the session.

Vera seamlessly transitioned to the next segment after reading the room. She opened with a powerful performance of a poem called “Leaving Lamesa”, a poem she had written about the dread of her hometown and the anticipation of growing up so she could leave. Vera intentionally included traces of her artwork throughout the extent of the program. The stories told in her poems represented, for her and her listeners, the very essence of what life is like as a first-generation child of immigrants. By sharing her art, it was Vera’s goal to encourage students to share their stories and believe in the power of their words. The way Vera facilitated deep, meaningful conversations amongst the students and the connection she developed with them gave her the title of “Mother A.R.T.”.

“I want to talk about COVID-19, but to ask you, how are you feeling about the protests, about the shootings, about Black Lives Matter, about where we are in this moment in time? Particularly since you guys are younger, way younger than me cause we had the same problems when I was growing up. So I wanna remind you, it’s a safe space and just say what you guys are thinking.”
After a brief pause, Araceli answered, 

“I guess I’ll go first. Personally, I grew up experiencing lives of being a person of color because I used to have a Black stepdad and then of course, my mom is Latina. So through these times that have been happening in the Black Lives Matter movement and the kids being put in cages because of ICE, it’s just been a whole lot of anger. And kind of things that I feel I do not want to happen because you’re separating people from their families and there are people getting killed over just going to the store. It’s just been chaotic. And I’m glad that we’re all as a community, and groups of younger people too, are starting to wake up and notice that there’s a lot wrong with our system that has been implemented for lots of years. Because even though we had slavery abolished and everything, the principles of this country have been set upon colorism and racism and how certain people of color are less than people that are white. And then also it just bothers me too because we’ve also been acknowledging all these problems and it’s just bothered me how it’s taken this long to finally notice. But I’m glad that we’re speaking up against it more now and acknowledging each other’s feelings. And more people are getting educated on the subject.”

I realized right away that as a young researcher, I made the mistake of underestimating young people and thinking that I had developed the program to teach them about things they had already been exploring. This was a reflection I had to revisit after the session in order to note ways in which I might adapt the program and study as it progressed.

Tavaghn, Asha, and I were blown away by the student’s comment and immediately noted
how aware Araceli was. As she spoke, other comments began trickling in the comment box.

14:59:38 From Anitra Alexa (she/her/hers): Well said!!!!
14:59:46 From Tavaghn: We feel you Araceli!
15:00:13 From Leslie’s iPhone: Racism is still a thing today and its bc of the people who raise their kids with that mentality so when they grow up they have all this hatred towards people who don’t look like them
15:03:10 From Alexandra: I totally agree!
15:03:34 From Araceli: exactly Leslie!

This conversation continued with students sharing their feelings and thoughts and eventually developed into “quick-hit” writing prompts around a series of images Vera collected. These images consisted of pictures captured from Women’s Rights and BLM protests, immigrant children, and an image of persons of color in an office seemingly collaborating on a project (Figure 3).

Figure 3.

Quick Hit Photo Collage
Students were prompted to write three focal points that drew their attention, and three emotions the image made them feel. It was here that students became incredibly engaged, both in the chat box and by unmuting their microphones. A pivotal moment came at the reveal of the last image of Amanda Gorman, giving her speech at the 2021 Presidential Inauguration.

Before we go to the last image, I want y'all just to close your eyes and take a deep breath. And I’m going to ask you to open your eyes after I ask you this question and before Asha flips to our last image. I want you to think about, when you open your eyes, at this moment in time, what did this image make you feel. So, let’s go to our last image, Asha, and everyone open your eyes. And write down what you felt, and I’m sorry. I’m getting emotional. Just in the chat box, and then we can take a few minutes to discuss.

After quite a long pause and a few comments, a student that had not yet taken the mic, Danai, a girl who identifies as Black, spoke:

For that last image, I was in the living room with my dad, and he put it on CNN or whatever. I don’t know what I was expecting to see, who I was expecting to see, but it definitely wasn’t her. I felt like in a way, I was seeing myself and other Black girls or colored girls that I knew up there and it was just...I was just...I was trying to focus so hard on what she was saying but I was still trying to process that she was even up there. Like Alexandra said, it was just really refreshing and a different thing to see. So, I’m glad for that.
This moment was highly emotional, as I hadn’t quite taken the time myself to process how world events had really impacted me, how I felt about them, and what moments like Amanda Gorman’s inaugural speech meant to me. At some point, I cut off my camera as I felt the overwhelming feelings of the moment. Vera took the opportunity to encourage everyone to write. To continue with the theme of current world events, she gave the students two prompts: “I am so tired…” and “what do you want to see changed, how do you want to make that happen.” Students wrote for about ten minutes. Reminding students of the dome of safety, Vera encouraged the students to share. “Can I go?” Danai answered right away. Surprised, Vera answered “Yeah, yeah! Please.”

For me, I haven’t written something like this in a while. Usually if I write something like this for school. It was kinda, not stressful but…I try not to think about a lot of these things a lot because it’s just sad to say the least. But it did feel…it did relieve some stress being able write it all out because I do enjoy writing poems and all of that. But I avoid these kinds just because I think it’s going to bring up a lot of hurt. But I liked writing this so, can I share?

Learning to Drive

A tale as old as time, no matter where we are
Hope seems to be as dangerous as jumping off a cliff and hoping to be caught.
To stand strong and represent,
When I just want to live a life that brings me joy.

The responsibility can become overwhelming,
Why must I become an advocate for the importance of my life before I can learn to ever drive?
I am tired,
But I will carry on so those after me won’t be in the same trenches we find ourselves in,
Trying to dig ourselves out.
I will carry on so that they can learn to drive
Without fighting for their lives

A series of finger snaps and claps moved across the screen in affirmation of Danai’s poem. As the session continued, more students shared their poetry while also connecting with each other’s experiences through the poems. Once the session concluded, the artists and A.R.T.+ Circles lead team debriefed, sharing key observations we made during the session to help us plan for the next. This session became the A.R.T.+ Circles program blueprint and set the tone for the remainder of the semester.

Participant Descriptions

The A.R.T.+ Circles program served 20 students over the span of the semester; of the students, 7 youth participated in interviews for this study. This section provides an overview of the participants using pseudonyms created by the participants. Table 5 provides a brief overview of each individual that participated in the study.
Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>16-year-old, Hispanic male. Sophomore. Participant of Civil Air Patrol program. Has future aspirations of being a writer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandra</td>
<td>Guatemalan Indigenous female. Rising Junior. Loves art and has future aspirations of normalizing Indigenous culture as an artist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kehlani</td>
<td>Black female. Senior. Grew up in a single parent household. Long time participant in MBC and heavily involved in her community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bennet</td>
<td>16-year-old, Hispanic, and genderfluid. Mostly uses she/her pronouns. Passionate about BLM and LGBTQI+ movements. Writes poetry when she is in the mood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tye</td>
<td>Asian male, rising Junior. Adopted at a young age. Learned about the program amid challenges with racism at his school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alex. The Earth’s atmosphere displays horror, hatred, violence, But not even the sun’s ray of brightness can turn the darkness into lightness As the clouds prevent positivity and hope to shine. But as we prepare to go to sleep, our eye catches the moon gleaming through the clouds, Just igniting that sparkle of hope inside of us that still exists

Alex is 16 years old and identifies as a Hispanic male. His mother has indigenous ancestry and he’s the oldest of five. He’s currently a sophomore at a local county school, which has the seventh graders, eighth graders, and high schoolers combined. He’s also a participant in a program, the Civil Air Patrol, which is an auxiliary of the United States Air Force. One of the first facts Alex shared in the A.R.T.+ Circles Group Me was that he has flown an aircraft with an instructor within the Civil Air Patrol program. He’s also learned about aerospace, emergency services, and other military topics. As of now, he’s a Cadet Senior Master Sergeant and has plans to rank as a Chief Master Sergeant in
addition to achieving his private pilot’s license. Alex first heard about the A.R.T.+. Circles program by his school counselor. He became interested because of his creative side and his interest in discussing contemporary topics. He one day aspires to become an actor or a writer and enjoys reading. Specifically, he wishes to contribute to mystery or sci-fi books and loves anything Star Wars.

Upon joining the A.R.T.+ Circles program, Alex was one of the first students to openly share his personal experiences. In the introductory session, he openly shared art that he had created and hadn’t previously shared with other people. He also openly shared a very vulnerable experience from his childhood that opened his eyes and changed his perspective on race-related topics. He described a time when he was in the third grade, he and a friend were making their way up the stairs discussing girls and dating. His friend mentioned to him that he should date a particular girl who happened to be Black. Unaware of how hurtful it could be, Alex responded by saying “I would never date Black girls.” He was pulled aside by a teacher who talked to him about how hurtful comments like that could be, and he felt convicted to apologize and learn from this incident. “Inside myself, I felt hurt. From there on, I learned about racism and told myself I’m not going to offend anyone or hurt anyone.” Students and mentors appreciated Alex sharing this experience and it was the precedent that gave others the permission to openly share their experiences.

Alexandra. I really want to make like a big impact, like make it normalized to just look at a indigenous person’s art and not make it look like something exotic or something weird. I don’t want it to be like a big showcase I want it to be something normal, like a brand I guess you could say. Yeah, just show not only like the struggle, but how beautiful it is to live our life, and have everything all colorful and mingle together.
Alexandra is a rising junior and identifies as a Guatemalan Indigenous female. She attends a local high school with Danai, with whom she is good friends. Alexandra is very close with her family and has older sisters that she looks up to. She first heard about the program through an email from her school and was initially drawn to the program because of art. Alexandra is artistic by nature and in the future, wants to become an artist. At the beginning of the program, Alexandra seemed very reserved. As the program progressed, she gradually became one of the most engaged participants. In the future, she intends to use her art to tell the stories of her, her family, and other marginalized communities.

Alexandra is very in tune and connected with her indigenous culture. Throughout the extent of the program and the program, she often spoke about her tie to her ancestors and being proud of who she is. In 2020, she served as a Princess for her Guatemalan
community, which involved engaging in cultural traditions, like dances. Alexandra described herself as once going through an identity crisis, having gone to a predominately white school, and feeling like she didn’t fit in. Not seeing herself represented, in school, art, or media, had a major impact on her; however, transferring to a school with predominately marginalized communities and having support from her family has helped her to have pride in who she is. Throughout A.R.T.+ Circle sessions and the interview, Alexandra demonstrated the understanding of the impact of systemic racism on her community and recognizes her role in creating social change.

Victoria. The state of the world is in chaos
Conflict in our country between neighbors and foes
One angry man attacks another
Why? Who knows
It may be hate for that man’s race, sexuality, or origin
Conflict around the world goes back and forth
Civilians caught in the crossfire between angry governments and people
Does anyone stand up for their common man?
Who will care for the man on the corner as he sits and waits for his peace?
Those across the seas and streets can only do but so much
They watch in horror as lives are destroyed and nations crumble
Humans attack one another, while others watch idly
Will no one help the frail among us?
The world is dark as missiles light up the night sky
With no regard for the sleeping children, the children like me who are forgotten in conflict
Lives are lost and only a few seem so to care
In the midst of conflict, ones’ true colors are shown
Hate and Violent run rampant in the streets
Brothers forgot how to love one another
We no longer love our neighbors like ourselves.

Victoria is a 15-year-old sophomore who identifies as a Black or African American female. She was born in Philadelphia Pennsylvania and noted that, as a child, her family moved around often. She’s lived throughout the state of Pennsylvania, in
Augusta, Georgia, and currently resides in North Carolina. As a child, she also grew a love for the outdoors. She recalls playing with her sister and neighbors often, and later picked up playing tennis and cycling. She heard about the program through another bike program within MBC’s network and was intrigued by the overall concept of it. Her, a mentor from their program, and two other students were able to participate being that the program was on Zoom. Despite finishing their weekly bike rides right at 2 o’clock, Victoria always prioritized attending the A.R.T.+ Circles’ sessions.

During the interview and towards the beginning of the program, Victoria seemed to have a more reserved personality; however, when she did speak, it was often something very profound. Once she opened up, she was witty with a humorous sarcasm. Victoria began to blossom toward the end of the program, often writing and sharing poetry that touched on issues of conflict between Israel and Palestine, safety, Christian prosecution in the middle East, and other global events. Her passion for social change was highlighted during art-based activities, particularly a photo collage activity where students created a board highlighting activists and social causes they’d like to address. In conversation with her mentor, she mentioned how much she’d seen Victoria grow in comparison to when she first started their bike club.

**Kehlani.** *Another [thing I want to address] was being sure that youth have the voice and right now I keep calling it the Black boy joy summer camp, and so I wanted to do a summer camp where it was almost like an outlet. For young men to go and for the time that you’re there you don’t have to really worry about much. And I know a lot of people say like you know when you’re in the seventh and eighth grade, what could you possibly have to worry about. But you’d be surprised. So I’m just giving Black youth the ability to have places they can go where they don’t have to constantly be bombarded with information of, oh this happened today, or this might happen tomorrow so we got to do this to prevent it, or this could happen.*
Kehlani is a senior and dual enrollment student at a local charter school. She identifies as a Black or African American female and will be attending Claflin in the fall. She plans to major in business administration with additional classes in entrepreneurship, as she plans to open a chain of non-profit organizations that address different social needs in the Greenville area. Kehlani grew up in a single parent household and notes having to mature quicker than a lot of her peers. She grew up seeing different perspectives, as she attended both predominately white schools and predominately persons of color schools and had a white godmother who helped raise her. She described having to watch her mother deal with certain things as she grew up and often helped with taking care of her younger siblings. Although she often worked on Sunday’s during the A.R.T.+ Circles’ meeting, she often prioritized attending and contributing to conversations via the chat box.

Kehlani is a long-time participant in MBC and is very involved in her local community. I first observed Kehlani in another MBC program and immediately amazed at her confidence and drive. The group had just finished a book, Stamped, and Kehlani was so inspired by the content and a book club she attended with author that she met with her principal to have the book added to the school’s curriculum. Additionally, the traumatic race-related events in 2020 moved her to write a statement on behalf of MBC to let their communities know that they were standing with them. Talking with other youth about how they feel concerning matters that surround them in their communities is what drew her to the A.R.T.+ Circles program.

**Bennett. They say she was armed**
The knife a deadly threat
But the weapon wasn’t what was in her hand
It was the color of her skin, so full of melanin
Dark complexion shining, blinding the officer

They say he had no choice, but I counted four
One shot
Wasn’t that enough?
Two shots
Why didn’t he stop?
Three shots
We know how this ends
The fourth final shot

Again, someone was judge, jury, and murderer
The death warrant signed by the same hand that has killed so many,
It’s state sanctioned death
Her name now a hashtag,
say her name.

Makhia Bryant, 16 years young
Another life ended before it even started
Did we get justice?
Do we stay settling for scraps?

Justice would mean that George Floyd would be alive
Daunte Wright would be alive
Adam Toledo would be alive
Makhia Bryant would be alive

When will they see the color of our skin is not a threat?
We deserve to live just as much as white people,
But until they get rid of their most powerful weapon,
Their white privilege,
We will forever be armed in their eyes.

Bennet is a rising junior at a local high school and identifies as genderfluid and Hispanic. She uses all pronouns, mainly she/her. She’s 16 years old and has an older brother, and older sister, and two younger sisters. She has two dogs as pets and draws or will write if there’s something that she wants to write about. She grew up in a middle-
class family and often went to predominantly white schools where she experienced microaggressions and more subtle forms of racism. Although she experienced racism, she recognizes that her experiences are different from other marginalized communities, and she acknowledges her privilege.

Bennet became actively engaged in the A.R.T.+ Circles program right away, demonstrating her knowledge of terms and complex concepts. She often used words such as “intersectionality” and “discourse” while discussing contemporary world events. Bennet openly expressed her opinions and feelings and wasn’t afraid to challenge others or present explanations from an opposing point of view. Bennet, Alexandra, and Danai a close friendship, Danai even mentioning them in her interview. Danai described Bennet as someone who is often speaking up and defending BLM, LGBTQI+, and social justice matters in group chats.

Danai. At a certain point we all reached this level of...we refuse to accept this anymore, you know. We don't care if the discussion is going to make you uncomfortable. We don't care if it's going to make you uneasy, you know. If you just want us to be neutral, we don't accept that. You don't have to agree with us, but we are going to discuss it because the lack of discussion is one of the reasons that those incidents have happened; the lack of discussion by it because we don't want to make other people uncomfortable, other people don't want to be made uncomfortable you know. “It's a touchy subject so let's not just get on it”, no let's get on it so we can go through it, discuss it and figure out why it's touchy, where the issues are, and how we can work through it.

Danai is a 15-year-old sophomore who identifies as a Black female. She was born in West Africa, Togo and her family moved to the United States when she was five years old. She enjoys spending time with her family and learning about life in general. Danai and I bonded over psychology, a subject and career field she likes to explore. She loves observing how people communicate, how they respond in different scenarios and difficult
situations. She has an inquisitive nature about her with natural leadership qualities. She first heard about the program through her counselor and was drawn to the program because she loves group discussion and was interested in discussing topics that affect marginalized youth in America and other places.

In the program and the interview, Danai often discussed the toll race-related events have taken on her. She recalls how living in Africa, you don’t hear about or experience racism like you do in America. It wasn’t until she began going to a predominately white school that she noticed how prominent racism was. There was a point in time she’d even hide her school lunch that consisted of traditional African foods she enjoyed. Previously, Danai would laugh off instances or racism or push it off like it affects her. Now, she has grown confident in confronting even the smaller, more subtle instances. She often expressed that discussing these things is the only way we’d be able to move social change forward.

Tye. What I’ve learned this year from being in art circles, even from my short time, is that I could find solace and that I wasn’t alone in my experiences. I learned that I could find friends in unlikely places, and I just need to put myself out there. During this time, when I felt racism from the restaurant to even the littlest experiences, just...you know words or jokes that were spoken by my teammates or people that I knew, I felt alone. But this group gave me, you know, a reason to be here and it taught me that I wasn’t alone. [F]rom Tavaghn telling me I was not alone and that I was not the only one experiencing this, as well as Asha and Anitra Alexander making me feel included, to the friends I made, it helped me become a better person and it taught me that I wasn’t going to be in this fight by myself. Some days when I was alone, and I felt alone, and I felt sometimes that there was no one to turn to, I remember that I have family. But family to me isn’t just family by blood, its people you love and people you decide... who will always be there for you.

Tye is a rising junior at a local high school who identifies as being of Asian descent and a male. He enjoys athletic activities, at one point, participating in football,
cross country, and recently joining MBC. Tye enjoys photography and first heard about the program through the Director of MBC’s wife. Tye was adopted into a white family at a young age. He had recently been having a challenging time and his family sought support from their church community. Tye is attending a predominately white school and had been experienced increased instances of overt racism and discrimination. On his very first day of the program, he immediately opened up and sought advice about the experiences he was facing.

Tye received an overwhelming amount of support from the students in the A.R.T.+ Circles program. They actively found ways to encourage and uplift him and his entry into the program shifted the dynamic in a positive way. As he learned ways to address experiences from other students, they learned more about experiences and challenges people in the AAPI community were experiencing. Tye implemented tips learned from the A.R.T.+ Circles program almost immediately and although they seemed unsuccessful at times, he never lost hope and began to shift his perspective on things he could change. By the end of the program, Tye slowly softened and spurts of his fun, witty personality began to show.

Key Findings

Data analysis of participant observations, in-depth interviews, and participant artwork resulted with three themes: Radical Healing, Education, and Liberating Space. The following section will describe each theme with provided examples from interviews, observations, and participant artwork.
Theme: Radical Healing

Radical healing refers to a transformation experienced as the result of oppression, where adolescents gain critical consciousness and actively seek ways to diminish social problems and resist associated trauma (French et al., 2020). This section describes how each component of the integrated radical healing model was reflected in the experiences of adolescents in the A.R.T.+ Circles.

Culture. Culture is what connects adolescents to racial and ethnic identity that is both historical and contemporarily relevant. Culture was reflected in participants experiences within their families and cultural education or experiences. When asked where she gets pride in her indigenous roots, Alexandra credited her mom and sisters. “My older sister really helped me out on that because she was just really open like. To that idea of just us like you know being proud of like where we come from.” Alexandra included elements of her culture in her stories and her artwork. In her photo collage project, she included Indigenous people and Guatemalan hibiscus flowers, which she shared are commonly used in ceremonies that are important and spiritual. This collage (Figure 4.) connected with Alex, who thanked Alexandra for highlighting indigenous culture in her work. “[Alexandra] loved your collage so much!!! As someone whose family is indigenous, it touched a lot, and my mother definitely felt touched so much she was just flabbergasted by it. It means so much!! Thank you for that.” Alexandra often discussed growing up in her Indigenous culture and reported growing confident in wearing traditional clothes and being excited for others to learn about her traditions. A
memorable moment from the A.R.T.+ Circles program was her commenting on her love for Vera’s braids in the chat box.

In an A.R.T. Circles session, students created photo collages of things, people, and activists that motivated them in addition to social issues they’d like to address. Danai’s collage featured a lot of cultural elements that she said meant a lot to her. She included a dish from Togo that consists of ablo, fish, onions, and peppers and mentioned fufu, a traditional West African food. “I love my food and I try to share it with anyone who asks about it. That’s something that is very personal to me.” She shared a picture of a man from Senegal, as it “captures Black beauty. Just look at that man and the way his skin shines and he just glows. It makes me appreciate so much Black peoples’ image being captured from other Black people.” She also included the image of a marketplace in Togo. She recalled being young and going to the market with her mom and described it as “a cultural awakening.” She distinctly remembered seeing the blend of different people and cultures from all over and being able to “feel the love.”

Historical ties to culture were also observed from the analyzed data. Victoria mentioned Claudette Colvin as the person who impacted how she sees activism. She inspires me because, before Rosa Parks she did refuse to give up her seat, but she wasn’t highlighted as much because she wasn’t fair skinned, she was a teenager, and she was a teen mom. And that just wasn’t a “good look” on the civil rights movement. But despite that, she still made and impact and was still able to inspire people. And I guess because she’s not as well-known and that’s also why,
because you know, you may not be known by a whole lot a people but what you
did is just as important.

For Bennet, educating herself was a segue for her to become connected to her culture. In
the interview, she discussed how listening and learning from Indigenous persons’
 experiences made her realize how colonization has stripped her, and others in
marginalized communities, from their cultures.

I didn't really care much about being connected to my culture or where I came
from because I didn't really know. For all I knew, my parents came from Mexico
and that's kind of them. All I really saw was, “Well, my parents are Mexican so
I’m Mexican”, and that's really all I really cared about. But now realizing, a part
of my culture was also taken because of colonization and like these beautiful
cultures that you see, for all I know, could have been where I came from, a culture
that was part of me. But now I don't really have and there's like a disconnect
because I feel like this is something that I would very much enjoy to have in my
life, like have something that grounds me.

She realized that educating herself became a form of self-care for her. Although she
discovered lots of injustices, she also mentioned learning about the positive things her
community or culture has. “Before I didn't really have that much of a connection with
learning about these different things like practices, they had that took care of their mind
and their body. It’s kind of nice because you just kind of start reconnecting to those
parts.” Hint of culture are also spread throughout her artwork, in both her photo collage
project and in her poetry. She often expresses themes of both her grievances of being marginalized, but also pride and hopefulness she finds in her people.

Since elementary I always felt to be at competition with white people, especially the boys
I had to be smarter in order to be at their level
To read at a greater standard
To get the higher grades
To get the most achievements
Having to compete everyday drains you

I also felt at competition with white girls
All I’d see on the screen was a white girl be the center of attention
Even if it was her doing ordinary things
Barbie dolls were predominately pale
Their blonde hair preferable over my dark brown braids
I had to be extraordinary to be seen
To be taken seriously
To be seen as a girl

I am not just a girl
I am not just a Mexican
I’m a Mexican girl and more
My skin color doesn’t determine who I am
But it’s always what will be seen first
But we see change happening

I see women of color be in power
Giving speeches and being sworn in
There are people having conversations, and I realize there is hope
Hope that one day, I will be able to rest.

Positive themes of culture were not as demonstrated with Tye as ties to his culture were often connected to present, traumatic experiences with racism. He often mentioned the evident awareness of being the only minority or Asian amongst his peers who often made harmful comments, jokes, and even physical attacks against him. “I get a lot of cheap shot yellow jokes thrown at me.” Additionally, he experienced racism within the local community. In the interview, he recalled a time at work when he was coming back
from a convenience store when a white truck pulled up near him and the man inside spat on the ground and called him yellow, and a racial slur typically associate with Black persons. “That impacted me very negatively, because I became paranoid, and that was not a good thing, and I would constantly be on the defensive and started affecting some my relationships with people. [S]ometimes they just they see something online and they're going to use it, they just want to use that. Scapegoats, so they have the ability to lash out.” Additionally, instances of racial attacks against AAPI communities had heightened in the United States, several of which he mentioned during the semester.

**Agency.** Agency demonstrates the youth’s discovery of their personal power to change problems, increased wisdom and maturity, and the collective capacity to act, create, and change both personal and external issues. Agency was reflected in participants future aspirations or plans, reflections regarding future generations, and personal relationships. Alexandra talked about her future career aspirations as an artist and changing the perception of Indigenous and POC communities in the media through sharing “our narratives”. She noted the few instances of representation in art and how she could contribute this skill to the movement and creating change. Similarly, Kehlani plans to open a chain of non-profit organizations that focuses on different social justice issues in Greenville and surrounding areas. These focuses include the homeless rates and providing financial support for medical expenses of low-income families; the latter arising from a personal experience with a cousin who was born with a heart condition. “I can only imagine the amount of bills that were needed right after he was born just because he had to have that heart surgery, and so I wanted to find a way to continuously
fundraise for, not necessarily hospitals, but the families, so that they had a way to focus on the real issue rather than how they're going to pay for it.”

Future generations were a motivation for Alex, Bennet, and Victoria to act and change both personal and external issues. Alex expressed an awareness that one day, his younger siblings would face challenges associated with their race. He mentioned educating them, himself, and others on ways to respond and challenge systemic issues is a personal responsibility each person should acknowledge. “If we teach the next generation how to stand up, then our and their future will be in good hands.” Similarly, Bennet talked about managing her mental and emotional health in order better contribute to the movement and be of help to her friends and younger siblings.

Although you do have a right to be angry it's also very important to try to stay positive, because if you just like let that overtake you then you're just going to let it win and you're not gonna be able to push back like keep trying to find better solutions. I feel like my friends are definitely a huge source and like trying to stay positive and not give up and then also like having my little siblings. As like people that I want to be able to be strong enough, and like being able to have a strong hold on my life so that I can also be able to help them out when they're struggling.

To do so, she mentioned the importance of educating herself so that she can do her part in helping change systemic issues. Creating a future world where systemic issues are no longer an issue was a reoccurring topic in A.R.T. + Circles’ sessions. In Victoria’s collage presentation, she covered several issues, such as crime in Black and Brown
communities, pollution and environmental issues, education quality in public schools, and low wage workers. "A lot of different things inspire me. I guess to summarize it all, I’m passionate about the world and many different aspects of it and trying to save it." She discussed wanting the world to be better for future generations and to do that, we must think about the future and how we want our world to look.

Danai and Tye have recognize their power in creating change, beginning in their immediate social circles and personal relationships. In her interview, Danai recalled a time when she would allow small instances of racism to “slide with her white friends”. Through further understanding of different forms of racism and acknowledging how hurtful it is to her, she made a conscious decision to use those times to education others even it was unintentional.

I have a tendency to push off stuff like that, because in my mind, they didn't mean it like that, so don't take it like that, but that's when they continue to do things like that, until maybe finally, one day, they do mean it like that, because you haven't said anything this whole time, you know. So that's something that I’ve had to kind of reteach myself. [I] try to just do what’s in my power to do what I can against situations like those.

As he participated in the A.R.T.+ Circles, Tye found new ways of approaching his peers to address instances of racism and discrimination. Although some conversations created adverse responses, being in a space with like-minded participants made him hopeful that his efforts won’t be in vain. “It helped me become a better person and it taught me that I wasn’t going to be in this fight by myself.”
**Relationships.** Relationships describes youth’s ability to create and sustain healthy connections while strengthening social ties or feeling a sense of belonging or unity with others. Relationships were reflected in participant family dynamics and relationships built in their local communities. In her interview, Alexandra mentioned the appreciation she had for her mother and sisters as they collective fought against people with power over them; however, their experiences drew them closer as a family. “There's a lot of people who have like taken power over us and, like we've been diminished so once we started like living on our own. I really started to notice that you know, like these are the people I have with me they've been with me.” Alex mentioned family, specifically his little brother, as motivation to continue healing and fighting back. Assisting as a caretaker for his brother has strengthened their bond, giving Alex the sense of responsibility to mentor and teach him.

Tye often mentioned the bond he has with is parents and how they are incredibly supportive in finding ways to help him. Although his experience at his local high school had been challenging, he mentioned how grateful he was for the friends he had made in his time there. “My parents for one. They're always there for me, always supporting me; my friends, you know they've always been there for me. Additionally, their relationship with MBCs Director and his wife prompted his participation in the A.R.T.+ Circles program. Relationships was also demonstrated in discussion about community and friendships with Vitoria, who mentioned feelings a sense of community with peers at her school and her local bike club. The bond she had established with her peers in her local
bike club was shown in their interactions at the end of program bike tour and celebration, where they playfully joked, played games, and engaged with each other.

Bennet, Danai, and Alexandra had a unique bond established prior to the A.R.T.+ Circles program. The three had once attended the same school and regularly hang out together outside of the program. In A.R.T.+ Circles, they’d often affirm each other as they shared personal experiences and bounced ideas, concepts, or solutions off each other. Danai mentioned Bennet’s effort to stand up for oppressed communities as something that inspires her to continue in her personal efforts to do the same. Bennet mentioned engaging with friends, both long-term and new, as a form of self-care. She recently reconnected with an old friend who added her to a group chat of other students their age. She widened her social circle and formed new, healthy relationships.

I made from there probably like some of the more better friends I’ve made that aren't negative or toxic. And that actually support me and aren't going to bring me down or make me feel worse. So that's been a huge source of happiness because now, I feel like I have more people that I can reach out to for when things like become kind of like overbearing or overwhelming.

Kehlani also mentioned engagement in relationships as a form of self-care; this includes peers from work and childhood friends. She connects with others be in her circle through shared values while being open to different perspectives. Kehlani has a long-term relationship built with the Director of MBC and their staff and discussed how she often collaborates in speaking engagements and community engagement activities.
**Meaning.** Meaning is the discovery of purpose or awareness of the intersection between personal and political life that often leads to a changed sense of priorities about what’s important in one’s own life, increased compassion for others’ suffering, and greater gratitude, hope, and value of their own life. Meaning was reflected in participant reflections of traumatic race-related events and personal or shared experiences with others. Alexandra reflected on world events that are occurring in Palestine and on the Indigenous people fighting for their land, an experience she said she deeply relates to. She related these systemic issues with those of her local community, where she recognizes the impact of urbanization and gentrification are impacting the lives of indigenous people.

I feel like another thing that my community struggles with is people come here, you know as an immigrant I guess you can say, and they have to deal with the repercussions of everything that they've been through. So they end up becoming addicted to certain substances or become alcoholics and I feel like that's a lot of things that POC struggle with is not knowing how to deal with the trauma that they've been given, so they end up hurting people are hurting themselves.

The stories of such experiences are what directed the path of her art career with the goal of telling stories of marginalized communities that reflect more than just our suffering, but also how beautiful it is to live life as a person of color. Kehlani recalls the impact the death of Trayvon Martin had on her. “I remember automatically thinking, my brothers. [J]ust being that young and my first thought being, okay, well how do I protect them.” The experience was hard for her to understand, but it encouraged her to learn about the
facts of why these things happen and to spread awareness and knowledge to others for all to act. She’s learned to not stay silent and uses her social media platforms and role with MBC to use her voice.

Alex reflected on the recent video of the death of Adam Toledo, a 13-year-old Hispanic boy who was shot and killed by a police officer. Alex was deeply impacted by the video because he could relate to Adam Toledo. Such events prompt Alex to become educated on the “deeper meanings” of racism and to also educate his younger brother.

One day he’s going to grow up and he will face reality and as he gets older, I will talk to him about it and just like tell to look out for himself and what he can do to protect himself, for him to go to others about serious problems. I think every sibling who has younger siblings should educate or you know talk about these things with your younger siblings as they grow older, so the next generation can be better or more prepare for reality.

Danai began to make meaning of her own personal race-related experiences and world events after being educated by her older sister. “I learned a lot to from my sister because ever since we came, she has been aware of those things she's just a very aware person. And she goes and learns a lot about those things. So, she was constantly trying to inform me about those things, and she explained a lot of it to me too. So, I’m thankful for that.” For Danai, this education promoted increased self, social, and global awareness to how deeply rooted systemic racism is in the United States. With this increased awareness, she’s become a big advocate for educating others to create change even in the small
ways. “You know, knowledge is power and once you become aware of those things, then you can work against them.”

Victoria and Bennet reflected on shared experiences with others. In her photo collage presentation, Victoria presented on issues within the public school system as things that she would like to work towards addressing. As an attendee within several public schools, so she has seen what physical and educational conditions are like. While living in a suburb of Philadelphia, she observed circumstances within the city and often heard about conditions her family members lived. “It definitely has an impact on me, and I want to improve those communities and those schools so that children can be better educated and have better living conditions. Because your home life does impact how you learn in school.” Similarly, Bennet learned about the living conditions, school experiences, and instances of racism some of her other marginalized peers endured and immediately recognizing how she could not relate. These clear differences in experiences, while also experiencing other forms of oppression herself, challenged her to reflect on why.

if you take a deep look into like what you think and like how you view things, you'll see that a lot of times it's rooted in racism and white supremacy or misogyny and it's just like realizing that you have to really analyze the way you think, to make sure that it's not because of that urge not rooted in something like that. [It’s] something that it’s very important for me to be educated on so that I can do my part and helping change that.
Meaning was reflected in Tye’s processing of his own personal experiences of racism and oppression. Before the start of the A.R.T.+ Circles program, Tye often internalized his experiences which led to angry outbursts sometimes turning into physical altercations. The program gave him an outlet to engage in dialogue with others who offered solutions and shared personal experiences, which he said opened his eyes beyond just his own experiences. He’s now learned how to be patient with others and look for more constructive ways to address race-related experiences. “Patience is key. [Y]ou just have to show them through your own experiences, you have to try to talk with them as much as you.”

Achievement. Achievement highlights life’s possibilities and movement towards clear goals, changing what needs to be changed, and recognizing the availability of new opportunities; allowing for the individual to accomplish goals that would have otherwise been delayed. Additionally, achievement encourages youth to understand oppression while working toward personal and collective advancement. Achievement was reflected as participants discussed personal growth and self-exploration. Alexandra demonstrated achievement during her while discussing her growth over the past year. She discussed changes from being introverted to more confident in herself and her culture. She stated, “it’s like really like pushed me towards like you know everything that I wanted to be like a few years ago." This motivated her to look for opportunities in school to teach others about indigenous traditions.

Similarly, Kehlani, Alex, and Victoria have all sought out ways in their daily lives or communities to educate and spread awareness. Before experiencing recent events,
Kehlani reflected on how she’d never speak or be too concerned about her peer’s opinions. She has since teamed up with MBC to do speaking engagements and uses her social media platform to share her opinion and facts with others. Over the past year, both Bennet and Danai mentioned going through personal changes and a process of self-discovery. Bennet specifically mentioned the importance of prioritizing her mental and emotional health to best be there to support others when they’re struggling.

When Tye first joined the program, the impact of his race-related experiences caused his relationships to become impaired; however, as he became more involved in the A.R.T.+ Circles program, he began seeking other spaces to form community with like-minded people. “I learned that I could find friends in unlikely places, and I just need to put myself out there.”

**Spiritual Development.** Spiritual Development refers to the development of a deeper sense of spirituality in which life beliefs may be readjusted or revised all together to be fully developed and meaningful. Spiritual Development was reflected in participants’ cultural, religious, and mindfulness practices. Alexandra often acknowledged the presence of her ancestors, in both A.R.T.+ Circles sessions and throughout the interview. She describes her Guatemalan Indigenous ancestry as nature type of people and as a practice, spends time outdoors to connect with nature. “Every single time I go outside and try to reconnect with the earth, you know, some philosophical thing. Just reconnect with the earth, try to breathe in, and be thankful for the things that I have, you know, be able to be here.” Bennet also credited the Earth as a space she has recently sought out to reconnect to the world around her. When asked how
she has engaged in self-care since experiencing recent race-related events, she mentioned going out into nature to observe the animals, plants, and trees. “It just like helps you helps me feel a lot more grounded and helps me feel that I’m actually present and I’m here, and that this is what's going on. And it just helps me feel more connected to myself and to just the world around me in general.” She also described a spiritual connection she receives from the Earth, a transference of energy that occurs that helps her feel more refreshed and alive. “I feel like that's a huge help when doing self-care and on focusing on healing different wounds from like trauma or stuff like that.”

Religious practice was also observed in data from Alex, Danai, Victoria, and Kehlani. Alex described going to church and saying prayers as a part of his healing process. Danai also mentioned having a religious family and how she has grown in her faith over the past year. A part of her religious growth was discovering what religion meant to her. She acknowledged how others have used religion and Christianity in the past to do horrible things. In a photo collage project, she intentionally included a picture of Jesus with dark, brown hair and tanned skin, arguing for the need to step away from Westernized depictions of Jesus. Religion was also a focus in Victoria’s collage project, as fighting for religious freedom is a cause that is important to her. Her connection to religion drives her interest in bringing awareness about Christian persecution in the middle East, Africa, and Asia. Kehlani mentioned religious practices when asked about ways she has been able to experience joy recently.

I do Bible studies with a local organization. Doing the Bible studies and just being sure that my connection with God remains intact and I don't lose my way because
of a video you know or because of how America may see me. And that I stay true to myself and it's really helpful.

Additionally, Kehlani mentioned doing a lot of meditation with crystals and crystal healing practices as a form of self-care.

**Subtheme: Communal Dialogue.** Communal dialogue was a subtheme of Radical Healing that emerged from the data as a way participants process traumatic race-related experiences. Communal dialogue was a component of the Culture, Agency, Meaning, and Achievement codes. Communal dialogue included discussing or sharing the details or feelings about the event with others, spreading awareness of events by talking with others, seeing others talk about events, or sharing personal experiences. Communal dialogue was often mentioned as one of the first steps in participants’ processing. After seeing or experiencing a traumatic race-related event, participants often sought out people to talk about the details or their feelings about the experience.

When asked about something traumatic she had seen or experienced recently, Danai mentioned how challenging it was to process and understand the video of George Floyd’s death. One of her initial responses after seeing the video was talking to her family about it. “It was mainly me my dad and my sister talking about it, but it wasn’t anything new. We didn't really like sit down have a conversation about what it meant and all of that. We were just like, the usual. We can't believe stuff like this is still happening.” After finding healthier, more constructive ways of processing direct forms of racism, Tye mentioned his first response as talking with his girlfriend and friends to help
him through it and trying to understand it. “[E]ven if that they haven't experienced it just try to sit down and talk with me.”

Participants also find outlets outside of family or close friends to talk about race-related events, like peers or teachers at their school. Previously, Victoria and her sister were participants of a debate club where, after meetings, her and her sister would converse with another student about events happening around the world. Kehlani sought spaces within her school community talk about events and how they made them feel to make sense of them. She noticed distinct differences from attending a predominately white school, where events were never acknowledged, to a predominately Black and Hispanic school, where teachers at least offered students the opportunity to talk about how they felt. Even though teachers were never really allowed to get too in depth in politics, it was always shown that the teachers that taught the black schools I went to, they were more open to talking about it and they didn't really care about the system because they knew it was something we needed to know. But the PWIs it was, “they'll talk about at home, not really going to worry about it.” And so a lot of the other students, if I ever said anything I knew they would have no idea what I was talking about, because it was something that neither them or their parents could relate to so it wasn't something that they bothered to care about. Kehlani felt it was hard to process when there weren’t really ways to talk about it. Even if they cannot talk about race-related events with others, seeing other groups of people talk about events or sharing their feelings and facts about the events are also
helpful forms of communal dialogue. Seeing others talk about the events helped participants gain context to what they’ve seen or experienced and better manage their emotions. When asked about processing, Bennet stated:

Trying to see other people talk about it to get more perspective on the thing because when you first you see something, it’s easy to get caught up in the heat of the moment and your emotions just kind of go everywhere and you're not really sure. But I feel like if you try to just keep a little bit of an open mind and see what everyone else is saying, all that’s happened, and then what the context or what was going on, helps a lot.

Understanding context by sharing personal experiences and communal dialogue also helped participants draw conclusions about the world around them. In her interview, Bennet discussed understanding how systems of power, privilege, white supremacy, and colonization through conversations with friends of diverse backgrounds. Connecting her experience with their shared experiences allowed her to spot differences in ways systemic racism had manifested, or not manifested, in their communities. These conversations also helped her empathize with other marginalized peers and created a sense of agency for her to do her part in stopping systems of oppression. She also noticed how easy it is for those not impacted by systems of oppression to not care about these issues.

Participants also expressed interests in engaging in communal dialogue with those who may differ in opinions than them. Bennet, Alexandra, Tye, and Danai all shared instances in which they engaged with peers who had opposing views on race-related events they experienced. Danai recalled a time engaging with a white, male friend that
other students label as a “redneck”. They had a conversation about George Floyd and all the recent killings that had happened, and he believed all the shootings were justified. Though she disagreed with his stance, she listened and allowed him to share his perspective and why he felt the way he did. She offered her perspective and clarified statements that had been misinterpreted regarding the movement. “He was still standing on his topic, but I was happy that he let me talk and we came to a mutual understanding about what was going on.” When asking how they handled talking to people with opposing viewpoints, Alexandra and Tye both mentioned the need to be patient with others.

There was a consensus amongst participants that engaging in communal dialogue is the key spreading awareness and creating change. Danai stated, “I really feel that it's important to talk about those things, or else we're not going to learn anything from each other or about the subject in general.” To do her part, Kehlani takes opportunities to use her social media platform to share facts, repost content, and help to educate or spread awareness about events happening in the world. Alex mentioned using social media to spread awareness as a way he thought he could create change in his local community. In her interview, Bennet stated, “You start seeing more people talking about it, which also gives off hope because if more people talk about it, then there's more of a chance that there's going to be a solution and that it's going to be fixed.”

Similar conversations centered on talking about events or experiences and spreading awareness were also reoccurring during A.R.T.+ Circles’ sessions. I noted several instances of students sharing opposing opinions and respectfully offering different
perspectives. There were often “light bulb” moments and opportunities for both students and mentors to validate each other’s experiences. The opportunity for communal dialogue was also an emergent theme in the data as one of the beneficial features of the A.R.T.+ Circles. Opportunities for communal dialogue was created in the program during group art exercises, small group activities, and in our community GroupMe. Art exercises often had a collaborative group sharing component where students and mentors shared their experiences, perspectives, and sometimes respectfully challenged each other. The group would break into small groups to learn more about their peers and mentors in interview activities discussing things in their communities and schools, or contemporary world events. The GroupMe was used for community building where participants, mentors, and students could dialogue about things they observed throughout their week or about world events as they occurred. When asked what he’d tell other students about A.R.T.+ Circles, Alex mentioned A.R.T. being a program that touches on topics that you probably wouldn’t hear about in your schools or with some other adults or students. This is also a feature he says drew him to the program. This was a feature that all seven interview participants stated as helpful or something they’d mention to invite other students.

**Theme: Education**

The theme of education also emerged as a way that participants process race-related experiences. Education referred to learning facts, history, or key terminology that could help them make meaning of their experience. To do so, participants described analyzing the way key terms, facts, and history work together; then applying their newfound knowledge to understand what’s happening and why. Participants also
discussed seeking solutions or resources to address these occurrences and placed an emphasis on the need to educate themselves and others. Education appeared to be another initial response or second step in participant processing.

Participants often demonstrated their knowledge of how these concepts work together, frequently using terms like systemic racism, white supremacy, intersectionality, discourse, colonization, and gentrification. When asked where they learned these terms, nearly all mentioned social media as a source of education. They all shared stories of initially noticing racism through personal experiences, and later learning concepts that they could apply these terms to. When asked how seeing events online have impacted her, Victoria stated, “I am more knowledgeable now for sure.” This knowledge was mostly acquired through self-education and research.

Each participant, aside from Tye, described a process of seeing or reading about an occurrence on social media. The most common platforms named were TikTok, Twitter, and Instagram. They would seek out other users who were sharing details about the occurrence and read comments to start forming an understanding of what happened. From there, they start seeking exploring other parts of the internet to seek further understanding. Victoria mentioned, “I would start on social media, I guess, I hear about these things. And then I would travel over to the Internet to read up about them or try to find people on social media who are maybe more expert.” They also research reports from news outlets and search for articles to compare their findings on social media. When asked what sources he typically pulled from, Alex stated, “Probably my local area news or Fox news, or just find some articles; the Washington Post, New York Times, and see
what they say. See like what the difference is from social media and then news articles and news reports.” Kehlani described a similar process, first beginning on TikTok or Instagram and from there, searching headlines, news outlets like CNN, and reading on it from multiple sources. From the different sources, participants begin piecing together information and identifying terms and information to further dive into. I noted often picked up terms such as getting to the “deeper meaning” or “the root” across interviews. Social media was often the place they returned to gather knowledge about terms and other resources. When I asked Bennet where she learned what “intersectionality” meant, she responded:

A lot of the things that I like started learning and being introduced to was on social media. Seeing people talk about it and then giving sources on where to educate yourself more, like books to read on certain topics and I that's definitely been the main factor trying to learn about all these issues.

Participants also emphasized the need to do their own research to receive information that was reliable and unfiltered. Kehlani sated, “I mean it wasn't taught to us, and so, when you get to that age where you do start using social media, it's like you're opened up to the real world because nothing is filtered.” She mentioned begin unable to trust history books because everything is “sugarcoated.” Using social media to research and find resources are ways adolescents feel they are having to get education about these things, as they feel there have not been other spaces these topics are being brought up. Danai mentioned Twitter as her trusted source, especially with topics involving systemic racism and
discrimination. She described Twitter as a space to both learn and cope through the humor of Black Twitter:

Black Twitter takes hold of it and run with it, a lot of it is through memes and jokes to try to make it easier; But there are also a lot of people that educate and explain stuff like racism, prejudice, discrimination, and all of that. I think that's where people go, social media, just in general that's where they go to first because they deem Google and all those sources unreliable.

Danai explained social media as the quickest way to learn and it begins a deeper exploration into research about history, institutions, policy, and practices that negatively impact marginalized communities and solutions to begin creating change.

Throughout A.R.T.+ Circles sessions and interviews, I made a note of how well participants are able to reflect on the way contemporary traumatic race-related events were historically tied to systemic racism and oppression. When asked about who is being impacted by recent race-related events, Bennet reflected on the long, deep-rooted history of the oppression of Black and Indigenous populations and on how it might feel to continuously be subjected to it.

[Y]ou thought things they taught in school, like racism, isn't really a thing anymore, things are different, everyone can go and people have rights. But really, it's just a lot of these systems are just changed in appearance to give off the illusion that things are different, things are better here. It's something that has been confusing to come to terms with this. A lot of the stuff they taught in school
was just to hide the fact that the system is still very much racist, there are still a lot of problems with how the system is being run.

Once Danai came to her own realization of how deep rooted and present racism was in the United States, she also demonstrated an ability to correlate incidents like George Floyds murder, down to being turned away from a job because of your name, as current manifestations of systemic racism related to historical forms of slavery. When asked why she thought these events like George Floyd’s murder occurred, Kehlani acknowledged the root of it all being another way of keeping forms of slavery intact.

[A] lot of people don't think about the fact they always say, “oh slavery was abolished” and then I’m like, slavery was not abolished, it just means now if you break a law you go to jail and then you're back in slavery or you can be used as a prop for the government. And so when people process that, they finally start to see “okay well why was so and so arrested, but this person wasn’t?” Well because they know that if you become property of the law once you are arrested, then they know, “okay just one less person on the street, that we need to worry about”. And I mean, killing them, that's taking them out the game completely. It's equivalent to when people were dying years and years ago trying to get their own freedom.

The education process does not end with them, all participants mentioned the duty to educate others through their social media platforms, daily conversations, and lived experiences. Alexandra discussed taking opportunities at school to speak up and educate others about her Indigenous culture and traditions. They also take opportunities to educate younger siblings and correct misinformation or call out friends when they engage
in harmful, racist behaviors. In a perfect world, Tye mentioned gathering everyone in a conference room to get everyone on the same page; however, he’s acknowledged that change will take time and will continue educating others through dialogue and educating them.

Education was also an emergent theme in the data as one of the beneficial features of the A.R.T.+ Circles. Every interviewee mentioned Courageous Conversations with Dr. Outley as a highlight of the program. Courageous Conversations specifically focused on three SJYD principles: analyzing power in social relationships, promoting systemic change, and encouraging collective action. The segment consisted of a presentation defining key terms and diving into history, group dialogue applying terms to contemporary events, and the sharing of activism toolkits with participants. Alexandra specifically liked learning about factual information, specifically terminology, as she felt it gave straightforward knowledge that we as marginalized communities need to know.

There was a consensus across interviews of appreciation of the opportunity to learn about contemporary world events that are impacting them but aren’t discussed in school or other public learning spaces. Kehlani specifically mentioned the growing need for spaces to learn about these issues, as states like Texas are diligently working to ensure these conversations will not be had in public schools. She stated, “It's a new way of keeping us from reading and writing. It’s just now that we do know how to read and write, now it's just the holding information.”

“Courageous Conversations” helped participants break down larger concepts to better name different forms of racism to apply knowledge to real world events or lived
experiences and discover the best solution to create change; a skill that Bennet said you can’t learn by a simple Google search.

Having more explanations, going to detail on what is, and work what these issues are rooted in and how there’s different types. How it’s not just one big jumble, just one big space is racism. But there’s smaller versions and different ways. Because I feel like oftentimes when everything's just so generalized, it comes to a point where it's like “oh you didn't go through this, it wasn’t a hate crime, so you haven't really experienced racism.” Because that's what most people think of when they think of racism is people attacking you or mistreating you in a physical, violent way when really, racism isn't something that you see in physical manners, but more in micro aggressions and seeing it in the workplace or schools and stuff like that.

“Courageous Conversations” was a segment specifically named by participants as beneficial and something they’d inform other students about when inviting them to join the program.

**Theme: Liberating Space**

The theme of Liberating Space also emerged as primarily a beneficial feature of the A.R.T.+ Circles program, and as a part of processing race-related events. Liberating Space refers to a safe space where participants can be free to express themselves and just "be", without fear of being judged. Participants often seek liberating spaces as they are processing race-related events to clear their head, manage their emotions, and as a form of recovery or self-care.
Throughout the interviews and in A.R.T.+ Circles program, participants discussed the negative mental, emotional, and physical impacts of experiencing traumatic race-related experiences. This often consisted of feeling a range of emotions, from anger to sadness, experiencing depressive and anxious symptoms, and being on the receiving end of physical attacks. The impact of these experiences was described as overwhelming, especially while experiencing reoccurring events or discovering information that can be hurtful. Danai explained how experiencing reoccurring events could be so traumatic, that at some point she simply becomes “numb” which can extend or delay the time taken to process the experience. To resume processing, participants discussed taking time to step away to a space often described as “safe” or “free” to clear their minds or get re-energized before re-engaging with traumatic experiences. For Alex, his “free” spaces were nature and music. These are spaces that allow him to “lose focus of the world” and joy being yourself.

Having a Liberating Space was a theme discussed across participant interviews as a highlight and something they’d inform other students about. The program was a space participants felt they could open up with others and share personal experiences, a feature that Alexandra would take away from the program. She stated:

Mostly what I’ve learned is just learning how to be vulnerable; I didn't know that people were gonna be very vulnerable when I got here so I was just like, “okay, let's not go into detail into everything.” But when I realized that this is a really safe space, I was like okay yeah, this makes me feel like a lot better.
I noted “free” in my field journal as a word used by multiple participants to describe the environment or culture of the program. Free specifically describe their ability to have an opinion, express yourself, and share an experience without the fear of being judged.

When describing the space, Bennet stated, “It’s a space where everyone can share their thoughts freely and there really isn't a wrong or right answer because we're all there to learn from each other.” Danai mentioned the potential for conversations about traumatic race-related events to feel awkward, as these topics are “touchy” due to how current and present they are; however, she enjoyed having the opportunity to have these tough conversations. She stated, “It's definitely something that is important to talk about and I’m glad that this was a safe space to be able to do that.” In her interview, Danai mentioned previously avoiding conversations about race-related events in other spaces out of fear of being viewed as the “woke girl”. A.R.T.+ Circles was a space participants described as having no limits to expressing yourself, with no fear of the response, judgment, for discrimination. This space was promoted through encouraging youth-led conversations and evolving program activities based on the desires and expressed needs of the participants. Art activities and group discussions were guided by topics participants mentioned or discussed in previous sessions and segments, like Courageous Conversations, were added to support the participants education and healing processes.

Group norms were set in a collaborative effort between students and mentors, promoting youth-adult partnerships. Additionally, youth culture was celebrated through the focus on the exercising of youth voice and hosting a youth activist panel. At the end of their
interviews, most participants thanked us for creating a space that cared about their concerns and centered their concerns and experiences.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, & CONCLUSION

Chapter five details the discussion, recommendations, and conclusion of the study. This concluding chapter details key findings as they relate to the presented conceptual framework and the larger research literature, and recommendations for future research and MBC for future A.R.T.+ Circles programming. The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of how marginalized youth process traumatic race-related experiences using a healing centered approach. This study aimed to fill a gap in the literature by (1) exploring how radical healing may be promoted in the lived experiences of marginalized youth and further supported within youth programming, and (2) exploring the ways marginalized youth process traumatic race-related experiences to promote radical healing. This concluding chapter details key findings as they relate to the research questions, the emerging conceptual framework, and the larger research literature and recommendations for future research and MBC for future A.R.T.+ Circles programming.

Discussion

For this study, a phenomenological case study approach was used to explore radical healing in the lived experiences and art of marginalized youth. Seven students from the A.R.T.+ Circles program were intentionally selected to participate as cases in the study to maximize the diversity of the relevant research questions. The study was framed using a conceptual framework combining the Posttraumatic Growth model and
Radical Healing framework (Figure 1). The discussion is organized by the research questions explored in this study:

Q1: How do marginalized youth in the A.R.T.+ Circles program process traumatic race-related experiences to experience radical healing?

Q2: What components of radical healing are reflected in the experiences of marginalized youth in the A.R.T.+ Circles program?

Q3: What features of the A.R.T.+ Circles program were most beneficial to marginalized youth in promoting radical healing?

Figure 1

Posttraumatic Growth & Radical Healing Conceptual Framework
**Research Question 1.** Two themes, Education and Liberating Space, and one subtheme, Communal Dialogue, emerged from the data to describe how marginalized youth in the A.R.T.+ Circles program process traumatic race-related experiences to experience radical healing. Communal dialogue included discussing or sharing the details or feelings about the event with others, spreading awareness of events by talking with others, seeing others talk about events, or sharing personal experiences. Communal dialogue was often mentioned as one of the first steps in participants’ processing of racial trauma. In relation to the model, participants experienced an act of oppression, this could be seeing instances of police brutality, events in Palestine, or hate crimes against AAPI populations. These events were captured on camera and disseminated online, which participants identified as sources of trauma. Additionally, participants recounted several experiences of microaggressions in school, being exposed to low-income living conditions, and in Tye’s case, physical attacks from peers. The mentioned experiences are all examples of what Gabarino (1997) called “social toxins”, which he argues can severely impact the development of young people. Just as marginalized youth live in physical environments that influence their health, they are also influenced by what Stevens et al. (2017) considers online digital neighborhoods, the combination of the various media platforms in which an adolescent engages. The quality of these neighborhoods differs across platforms (Lenhart, 2015) and adolescents are exposed to social media content that feature substance abuse, sexual risk, and violence (Stevens et al., 2019), which are also considered as social toxins and common risk factors to positive youth development for marginalized youth. Participants mentioned a range of impacts
from both their physical and digital neighborhoods, including feelings of anger and sadness, experiencing depressive and anxious or paranoid symptoms, and feelings of hopelessness. According to Gabarino (1997), depression, anger, hopelessness, and pain are aside effects often experienced when exposed to high levels of social toxicity. These emotions are also associated with trauma literature as behavioral and emotional consequences of experiencing trauma (Becker et al., 2003). Continuing in the model, the stress that develops as a result of trauma should elicit the need for the adolescents to engage in coping mechanisms, as in PTG. At this stage of development, adolescents are expected to be developing emotional competence which, refers to the ability to manage emotions, and social competence, the ability to relate effectively with others (Sanders, 2013). Based on interviews, this is the point where most participants began talking to others about their experiences to make sense of their emotions and where the theme Communal Dialogue emerged. Participants often talked about race-related occurrences with their close friends and family members and sought outlets outside of their family, like their peers and teachers at schools. This demonstrates the move away from the individualistic focus of coping to collectivism in the radical healing framework, which marginalized communities tend to thrive in (Heilbron & Guttman, 2000). Even if they were not able to find others to talk to, seeing other people’s dialogue online helped participants gain context and draw conclusions about the world around them.

Education was also a theme that emerged in the data. Education referred to learning facts, history, or key terminology that could help them make meaning of their experience. To do so, participants described analyzing the way key terms, facts, and
history work together; then applying their newfound knowledge to understand what’s happening and why. Participants also discussed seeking solutions or resources to address these occurrences and placed an emphasis on the need to educate themselves and others. Education appeared to be another initial response or second step in participant processing. Participants described a process of research and self-education by using social media and other sources of information, including news outlets and articles. Through their research, participants were able to gather terms (e.g., intersectionality, white supremacy, privilege, power) and resources to further educate themselves on solutions to social problems. Using social media was a quick way for participants to learn and began a deeper exploration into research about history, institutions, policy, and practices that negatively impact marginalized communities. According to Ginwright (2010), radical healing requires reconciling the past to change the present, which allows for the imagination of a new future.

Liberating Space refers to a safe space where participants can be free to express themselves and just "be", without fear of being judged. Participants often seek liberating spaces as they are processing race-related events to clear their head, manage their emotions, and as a form of recovery or self-care. To resume processing, participants discussed taking time to step away to a space often described as “safe” or “free” to clear their minds or get re-energized before re-engaging with traumatic experiences.

Research Question 2. While interpreting the data, Radical Healing was observed as a theme in interviews, artwork, and participant observations. Radical healing refers to a transformation experienced as the result of oppression, where adolescents gain critical
consciousness and actively seek ways to diminish social problems and resist associated trauma (French et al., 2020). Radical healing occurs when Culture, Agency, Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement are operationalized in youth program. Additionally, the component Spiritual Development emerged from the conceptual framework, as spirituality often plays a role in healing for marginalized communities (Comas-Diaz, 2012). For this study, participant data was observed to see which radical healing components might be reflected in the lived experiences of marginalized youth.

Culture was reflected in most participants experiences within their families and cultural education or experiences. According to the literature, racial identity is critical to the development of marginalized adolescents and is a central task of identity development. Ethnic-racial identity are the beliefs and attitudes adolescents have towards their ethnic-racial groups and their overall process of how these beliefs and attitudes form (Umana-Taylor et al., 2014). An exploration of ethnic-racial identity begins as adolescents are exposed to information about their racial group through talking with others and participating in activities that highlight their race (Syed et al., 2013). During exploration, youth learn about their racial group’s experiences in different contexts, including school, home, and the broader society, and may reflect or act on issues their racial group faces within these contexts (Rivas-Drake & Umana-Taylor, 2019). Participants in the study credited members of their family for their pride in their ancestry and connections to their culture’s food, historical figures, and self-care practices were all highlighted in interviews and their artwork. This suggests healthy ethnic-racial identity formation had occurred for most participants before the program. The theme
Communal Dialogue may have also contributed to their healthy ethnic-racial identity formation as it gave participants opportunities to talk with family members share personal experiences with their peers.

Communal Dialogue seemed to also be a premise to Agency. Sharing experiences with others helped participants draw conclusions about the world around them. Through dialogue, they were able to connect experiences and spot differences in ways oppression has, or has not, manifested in their communities. The abilities to relate to others and empathize with their experiences demonstrates the psychosocial, cognitive, and moral development that typically occurs in adolescents (Sanders, 2013; Sturdevant & Spear, 2002). Shared experiences helped them empathize with other marginalized peers and created a sense of agency. The combination of healthy identity exploration and connection through shared experiences represent the first two levels of awareness in critical consciousness. Self-awareness refers to an awareness of self in positive, healthy terms; community awareness enables youth to relate to others within their community and instills a sense of hope that alleviates the impact of social and economic structures they face daily (Cammarota, 2011). In the study, agency was reflected in future aspirations or plans, reflections regarding future generations, and personal relationships. Participants detailed ways they intend to address social issues within their respective communities through future career aspirations and discussed their duty to create a better world for future generations. To create a better future, participants spend time educating their younger siblings and look for specific social issues to address that negatively impact youth.
The literature suggests investing in caring relationships deters youth from internalizing trauma and builds their capacity to transform oppressive conditions (Ginwright, 2010). In the study, relationships were reflected in participant family dynamics and discussions of strong ties within their family that resulted from a collective trauma. Although trauma is usually assumed to be an individual experience, research has shown trauma is often collective experience (Sinha & Rosenberg, 2013); and healing involves engaging in collective resistance against the source of oppression (French et al., 2020). Relationships that participants developed and maintained in their communities allowed them to collaborate in speaking and community engagements.

Meaning was reflected in participant reflections of traumatic race-related events and personal or shared experiences with others. Global awareness was demonstrated when meaning was operationalized in participants lived experiences. The final level of awareness in critical consciousness is global awareness, which encourages youth to understand ways oppression impacts the lives of others while simultaneously engaging in social justice practice to address the oppression (Cammarota, 2011). According to literature, global awareness builds a sense of compassion and the capacity for youth to make changes within their own lives. Their critical reflections on race-related events online demonstrated their ability to recognize how contemporary events are historically tied to slavery and oppression. These findings were congruent with the study from Johnston-Goodstar and Sethi (2013) that found critical consciousness and SJYD practices led to their participants ability to connect past policies to present conditions. It is through critical consciousness and action that young people can make sense of the world around
them and take steps to begin transforming it (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Participants demonstrated their capacity to transform the world by discussing opportunities they take on social media, in other roles, and in their future career aspirations to create change.

Achievement was reflected as participants discussed personal growth and self-exploration. Participants discussed how personal growth led to seeking opportunities to educate others and spread awareness, opportunities to engage in self-exploration, and opportunities to seek out community. Feelings of empowerment, self-empowerment, and opportunities for connection are usually present when youth development programs promote authentic youth involvement, or youth voice (Kreuger, 2005). Youth voice refers to the perspectives, knowledge, ideas, and experiences of young people as a collective. Youth voice leads to several positive youth development outcomes and encourages youth to become actively involved in democratic decision making (Larson et al., 2005). The development of youth voice could be attributed to opportunities they have online and in their respective communities to contribute to the broader conversation on contemporary race-related events.

Spirituality is often a form of healing for many marginalized communities and often make meaning out of diversity through their spirituality (Comas-Diaz, 2012). Comas-Diaz (2012) asserts, “Spirituality validates ethnic minorities’ experience as a source of healing and power” (197). Spiritual Development was reflected in participants’ cultural, religious, and mindfulness practices. Connecting with their ancestors and the Earth were forms of cultural and mindfulness practices participants often engaged in.
Religious practices are also prominent in their lived experiences, as they often mentioned using prayer and Bible studies as forms of healing and self-care.

**Tye.** All components of radical healing were not observed in the lived experiences of Tye, specifically Culture, Meaning, and Achievement. Additionally, Relationships weren’t observed as often as other participants. These components were mostly identified by Tye as a result of participation in the program. The absence of these components in his lived experiences could be a result of his distinct experiences.

As mentioned, most participants resorted to engaging in communal dialogue as a form of healthy coping and educating themselves to help them process their experiences. Prior to the program, Tye mentioned initially engaged in negative coping mechanisms. When describing how he initially responded to his experiences, he stated, “I would lash out angry, I would be mad. At times I would get physical, and it would be occasional shove or a smack, or sometimes even a fist thrown. That was on the rarest occasions, but that's generally how I dealt with it before art circles.” According to trauma literature, the inability to regulate or process emotional and cognitive arousal from trauma may subject youth to adopting unhealthy forms of coping and negatively impact developmental tasks (Becker et al., 2003). The differences in coping mechanisms between Tye and the other participants may have been attributed to how he was experiencing racism at the time. Most other participants were experiencing what Bor et al. (2018) described as the “spillover effect”; that is, experiencing the negative psychological effects of an event they are indirectly exposed to through video or images. Tye, however, experience more direct forms of racism in the forms of physical assault,
verbal harassment, and other forms of discriminatory treatment (e.g. intimidation tactics). These attacks were also a spillover from the national attention drawn to AAPI populations during COVID-19. Although Tye is not an avid user of social media, he still experienced the direct effects of race-related events online. His lack of social media use may have also contributed to unhealthy, emotional processing. As stated in the literature, COVID-19 posed as a threat to the psychological well-being and development of marginalized youth (Liang et al., 2020). Social distancing restrictions confined adolescents to their homes, in some instances leading to social isolation (Courtney et al, 2020). The feeling of social connectedness is more prominent in adolescent years, which makes them more susceptible to the negative psychosocial consequences of social distancing than adults (Power et al., 2020). Experiencing direct forms of racism and social isolation simultaneously could have exacerbated negative psychosocial consequences, leading to maladaptive coping mechanisms.

Positive themes of culture were not demonstrated in Tye’s lived experiences, possibly due to the ties of his culture being connected to present, traumatic experiences with racism. Additionally, his adoption into a family with a different culture could be challenging to his ethnic-racial identity. Meaning and Achievement were reflected post program in Tye’s processing of his own personal experiences of racism and oppression. Before the start of the A.R.T.+ Circles program, Tye often internalized his experiences which led to angry outbursts sometimes turning into physical altercations. The program gave him an outlet to engage in dialogue with others who offered solutions and shared personal experiences, which he said opened his eyes beyond just his own experiences.
He’s now learned how to be patient with others and look for more constructive ways to address race-related experiences. “Patience is key. [Y]ou just have to show them through your own experiences, you have to try to talk with them as much as you.” As he became more involved in the A.R.T.+ Circles program, he began seeking other spaces to form community with like-minded people.

Relationships for Tye had been strained before the program, although he had support from his parents. Tye’s strained relationships could be attributed to his race-related experiences that were occurring at the time; specifically, an incident that intimidated him. He stated, “That impacted me very negatively, because I became paranoid, and that was not a good thing, and I would constantly be on the defensive and started affecting some my relationships with people.” The paranoia and defensiveness reflect negative cognitive and behavioral consequences of trauma and the impact on psychological functioning that trauma can have (Becker et al., 2003; Schimmenti, 2018).

**Research Question 3.** Two themes, Education and Liberating Space, and one subtheme, Communal Dialogue, emerged from the data to describe which features of the A.R.T.+ Circles program were most beneficial to marginalized youth in promoting radical healing. By adopting the SJYD framework and utilizing art, it was the goal of the A.R.T.+ Circles program team to help support participants in their radical healing process. Further exploration in interviews helped to identify which features of the program were most beneficial. Specifically, Communal Dialogue allowed participants to talk about topics that impact them and allowed for the opportunity to connect with other people who share similar experiences. Communal Dialogue was promoted through group
art exercises, small group activities, and in our community GroupMe. Art exercises often had a collaborative group sharing component where students and mentors shared their experiences, perspectives, and sometimes respectfully challenged each other. The group would break into small groups to learn more about their peers and mentors in interview activities discussing things in their communities and schools, or contemporary world events. The GroupMe was used for community building where participants, mentors, and students could dialogue about things they observed throughout their week or about world events as they occurred.

Additionally, participants were provided with a Liberating Space to freely discuss their experiences. Participants described A.R.T.+ Circles as a “free” space they felt comfortable being vulnerable with others and sharing personal experiences without fear of being judged or discriminated against. A Liberating Space was promoted through encouraging youth-led conversations and evolving program activities based on the desires and expressed needs of the participants. Art activities and group discussions were guided by topics participants mentioned or discussed in previous sessions and segments, like Courageous Conversations, were added to support the participants education and healing processes. Group norms were set in a collaborative effort between students and mentors, promoting youth-adult partnerships. Additionally, youth culture was celebrated through the focus on the exercising of youth voice and hosting a youth activist panel. Participants mentioned the potential for conversations about traumatic race-related events to feel awkward, as these topics are “touchy” due to how current and present they are; however, they enjoyed having a space to have these tough conversations. Ginwright &
Cammarota (2002) argue, discussing these realities are important for youth who struggle with issues of oppression that are supported by unjust economic policies.

Finally, “Courageous Conversations” served as a source of education for participants. Courageous Conversations specifically focused on three SJYD principles: analyzing power in social relationships, promoting systemic change, and encouraging collective action. The segment consisted of a presentation defining key terms and diving into history, group dialogue applying terms to contemporary events, and the sharing of activism toolkits with participants. The segment helped them break down larger concepts to better name different forms of racism to apply knowledge to real world events or lived experiences and discover the best solution to create change. As stated in the literature, radical healing occurs when marginalized adolescents gain critical consciousness about their oppression and actively seek ways to resist the associated trauma (French et al., 2020). The beneficial features of the A.R.T.+ Circles program further promoted radical healing for participants and supported Tye in filling in gaps with positive ethnic-racial identity formation, relationships, and seeking healthy coping mechanisms and solutions.

**Limitations**

To situate the research findings in context, it is important to note the limitations of this study. Due to social distancing guidelines, all interviews and participant observations were conducted via Zoom. This data collection method may have limited participation observation that may have occurred in in-person interactions. Time and availability were also limitations in this study. Participants of the study managed several obligations during the extend of the program and interview process, including school, jobs, and other
activities. Due to time constraints, I was unable to conduct follow up interviews with some participants. Additionally, the time spent participating in the A.R.T.+ Circles program and conducting interviews only extended over an eight-week time span. More time spent with program participants may have created opportunities to conduct follow up interviews and collect more in-depth information and participant observations.

Participants for A.R.T.+ Circles were self-selected into the program, meaning they selected themselves to participate in the program mostly due to their interest of art or the topics being discussed in the program (Collier & Mahoney, 1996). Due to this, there may be certain biases present that are not representative of the overall experiences of marginalized youth who experience traumatic race-related events. Self-selection and pre-established relationships amongst participants may have also contributed to participants openness to share and be vulnerable in the eight-week time span spent in the program. Additionally, other program experiences, such as Kehlani’s time in MBC, may have contributed to participants understanding of race-related events and prepared them to engage in such conversations.

**Recommendations**

**Research.** Marginalized youth are facing several risk factors that inhibit positive youth development in both their physical and digital neighborhoods. Contemporary world events present new threats to positive youth development that must also be explored. Likewise, in the face of oppression, marginalized youth have demonstrated their ability to be agents in change and healing. This presents the need to shift research from negative psychological outcomes to healing centered approaches to further promote pathways to
positive youth development for marginalized youth. The current study utilized a qualitative approach to explore radical healing in the lived experiences and art of marginalized youth. This research project provided a preliminary glance into how adolescents process race-related experiences and how components of radical healing may be operationalized in their daily lives; therefore, the following sections provides recommendations for future research.

First, the current study used participant observations, participant created artwork, and interviews to explore the lived experiences of participants prior to the program. This approach was beneficial in providing in-depth information and context for each case; however, it did not fully distinguish how much of an impact the A.R.T.+ Circles had in contributing to healing processes. Therefore, utilizing a mixed methods approach would be beneficial in determining what SJYD skills or healing processes participants are bringing into the program versus what the program is promoting. There is a gap in radical healing research that could be filled with the development of a measurement tool to evaluate pre- and post-program processes and better determine program impact. Additionally, the current literature on radical healing often emphasizes the capacity of programs to promote radical healing without consideration of ways adolescents are agents in their healing process. More studies are encouraged to unpack the lived experiences of marginalized youth, as this study focused on a small selection of adolescents.

Second, participants in the current study demonstrated their understanding of contemporary events and their desire to engage in action within their local communities.
Due to COVID-19, the action component of the SJYD framework was not fully explored. Further research implementing healing centered approaches is encouraged to explore the role of action, or activism, in the healing process. Specifically, more research is needed to examine the ways activism might minimize negative psychosocial effects of traumatic race-related events or coincide with healing from these occurrences. Engaging youth in youth participatory action research (YPAR) is encouraged. Youth participatory action research equips young people with practical tools to conduct systematic research to improve their lives, communities, and the institutions intended to serve them. YPAR would allow researchers to look more closely at the role of action in healing while also promoting positive youth development.

**A.R.T.+ Circles.** To maintain or increase engagement for participants, there are several recommendations for the A.R.T.+ Circles program for future semesters. First, the inclusion of more cultural program components; this can be added to program activities, topics, and general program culture. An activity recommendation includes examining the way marginalized cultures are portrayed in the media and creating counter narrative media highlighting the truths and beauty of marginalized people’s cultures. This would not only promote positive racial-ethnic identity, but also incorporate more forms of art. Ways to center culture in the general program culture is more opportunities to discuss historical figures from marginalized communities and incorporating different cultural music into the program. Second, exploring more artforms. A highlight of the program for participants included the dialogue that emerged from the art activities and the use of art to process or manage their thoughts and emotions. Additionally, research shows that
adolescent engagement with art can cultivate a broader understanding of injustices, the consequences of injustice, and the range of alternative possibilities (Bell & Dasai, 2011). Recommendations to expand artforms in the program include a deeper exploration into music, more photography, painting, film and media, and dance.

Third, more for youth-adult partnerships and youth leadership within the program. This included more youth panels, youth led conversations, and involving participants in the planning process. A key to the success of the first semester was the planning team’s ability to evolve and adapt the program to the expressed needs of the participants. Youth in the current study demonstrated an awareness of social justice issues they’d like to address in their communities and topics that matter to them. One way to encourage youth leadership is by including youth in the planning process and allowing them to direct program planning. Additionally, providing students with more opportunities to engage in activism and advocacy. Interviews with participants suggests there may be barriers to engaging in popular forms of activism, such as not having a ride or license to drive to protests or not having funds to donate to fundraisers. An opportunity to develop youth-adult partnerships in upcoming semesters is through engaging in activism and advocacy within their local communities. This will not only evolve the program but will also help promote radical healing and support students in finding more tangible ways to contribute to creating change.

Conclusion

Marginalized youth face several risk factors that impact their healthy growth and development (Pinckney et al., 2011). Consumption and circulation of police brutality and
the death of persons in the marginalized community present major concerns for the psychological well-being and development of marginalized youth. Contemporary events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have increased both negative media attention and instances of oppression towards AAPI communities. Not all adolescents are directly exposed to traumatic race-related events online; however, many are likely experiencing the direct effects of such incidents. Despite exposure and effects of these events, marginalized adolescents still demonstrate indicators of healthy coping. Indicators of healthy coping present the need to shift research from negative psychological outcomes to healing centered approaches to discover effective interventions and pathways to positive development for these populations (Meyerson et al., 2011).

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of how marginalized youth process traumatic race-related experiences using a healing centered approach. A healing centered approach considers culture, spirituality, civic action, and collective healing while viewing those who have experienced trauma as agents of their own well-being rather than victims of traumatic events (Ginwright, 2018). The study explored the radical healing process in the lived experiences and art of marginalized youth participants in the A.R.T. + Circles program. Finally, this study aimed to expand the literature on Posttraumatic Growth (PTG) and Radical Healing research by introducing a conceptual framework that integrates the psychological principles of PTG and the five components of Radical Healing. The integrated model of PTG and Radical Healing recognizes the impact of traumatic events in addition to oppression as a source of trauma and addresses the need for scholars to consider both the cultural and racial contexts of trauma, healing,
and positive youth development. A phenomenological case study methodology was employed for this study to provide a firmer, in-depth understanding of how participants experienced race-related experiences. Participant’s radical healing processes were explored using observations, in-depth interviews, and participant created art.

The study found that radical healing was reflected in the lived experiences of adolescents in the A.R.T.+ Circles program through Culture, Agency, Relationships, Meaning, Achievements, and Spiritual development; however, certain lived experiences may inhibit components from being operationalized. Additionally, the study show that communal dialogue, education, and a liberating space were both ways that adolescents process race-related experiences and beneficial features of the A.R.T.+ Circles program. Findings from this study are important in helping practitioners find more effective pathways to positive youth development for marginalized communities. Future research is encouraged to further unpack the ways radical healing is operationalized in the lived experiences of marginalized youth.
Self-Praise

I give praise to myself.

I give praise to the nights no one sees
Where it’s just me and I suppose the moon
I give praise to tears I’ve learned to hold back in times when they struggle to pour out.
I give praise to the strength I gather each day to make it all worthwhile
I give praise to the strength I own
And to the weakness I choose to control.
I give abundant praise to my faith, my power to believe, sometimes despite the screaming voices of past failures to give up all hope.
I give praise to the self-reassurance I’ve adapted unto myself to keep said hope alive
And praise to my stubbornness, refusing to ever give up.

But most importantly,
I give praise to me.

- Danai
REFERENCES


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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Guide

1. Tell me a bit about you.

2. How did you first learn about the A.R.T.+ Circles program?

3. Tell me about your experience so far.
   a. What have been your highlights?
   b. What are something you would like to explore more of in future semesters of the program?

Context: Transitioning to topics we would usually discuss in A.R.T.+ Circles.

4. How do you define trauma?

5. Tell me about an event you’ve recently seen on social media that you would describe as traumatic.
   a. How did the event initially make you feel?
   b. How did you initially respond? Tell me about things you did to process what you saw.

6. Describe events you’ve seen recently in your community that you’d describe as traumatic.
   a. How did the event initially make you feel?
   b. How did you initially respond? Tell me about things you did to process what you saw.

7. What groups of people do you think are most impacted by these events?
8. Are there people that you know, personally, who were impacted by these events?
   a. In what ways?
9. Are there people that you know in your broader community who were impacted by these events?
   a. In what ways?
10. Describe the impact seeing these events had on you.
11. In your opinion, what is the cause of these events? Why do they happen?
12. You often used words like (power, intersectionality, white supremacy, gentrification, etc), where do you learn these terms / concepts?
13. What are lessons you have learned as a result of seeing / experiencing these events?
   a. What are ways you have grown since seeing / experiencing these events?
14. How do you define healing?
15. Despite traumatic events you’ve seen / experienced, who or what inspires you to heal?
   a. Who or what inspires you to create change?
16. During this time (since last year), what are some activities you’ve done that have sparked joy?
17. During this time (since last year), what are some ways you have engaged in self-care?
18. What are skills or gifts you possess that can contribute to ending these kinds of events in your community?
19. If you were describing A.R.T.+ Circles to someone, describe to me all the things you would tell them.
Appendix B

A.R.T.+ Circles Parent Interest Meeting Form

Invitation

Many Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) youth who have been feeling overwhelmed by videos of racial injustice and are tired of hearing about unarmed Black men and women being shot. Many Hispanic youth are tired of being traumatized by the threat of ICE raids and children locked in cages or are weary of the constant narrative that they are second-class citizens. Momentum Bike Clubs recognize these injustices take a toll on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) youth. We are holding space for students to process these traumatic events with the support of healthy BIPOC mentors. (It is a safe space for only Black and Brown mentors and youth to gather). Building on the book, Punching the Air, by Ibi Zoboi and Yusef Salaam (of the Exonerated Five), A.R.T.+ Circles will use a variety of artforms – including spoken word, hip hop, photography, and drawing to support youth in overcoming trauma from racial injustices, finding their voice, and developing skills to create change in their community. Youth and mentors will have the opportunity to hang with Black and Brown artists who will share their passion for art and social change.

How long is the program?
The program will begin in March and conclude in early June 2021.

When and where will students meet?
Mentors and students participating in the program will gather on the afternoon every 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month from 2:00-4:00 pm via Zoom. There will be other opportunities to check in and build connections with mentors and friends.

What will students be doing?
Participants of the A.R.T.+ Circles will engage in a combination of youth-led, small group discussion with trusted mentors and community building sessions with their peers. Students will explore the novel “Punching the Air”, written by bestselling author Ibi
Zoboi and prison reform activist Yusef Salaam of the Exonerated Five. “Punching the air” is a story of a 16-year-old, black artist, and poet Amal Shahid whose promising future is upended when he is wrongfully convicted of a crime and incarcerated. Participants will discover how Amal is able to use his passion for art to maintain his humanity and fight for justice in a system designed to strip him of both. Youth will step into Amal’s shoes by exploring various artforms to support them as they process race-related incidents and share their personal experiences with racism and discrimination. Participants will hear experiences from guest speakers and Momentum Bike Clubs alumni on how they used their passions to challenge social and economic structures that often suppress BIPOC communities. Through the use of adult-youth partnerships, participants will channel their collective passion for cycling to organize a community wide Bike Tour, visiting civil rights landmarks in their communities throughout the Upstate, South Carolina region.

**What will students learn?**
Participants in the program will learn about and create different forms of artwork - including poetry, music, and photography – to help them process and share their stories. Exploring artwork is intended to help students discover their voice and learn to process trauma in healthy ways. In group discussion, participants will share experiences related to racism, discrimination, and power structures with their peers and program mentors. With the support of mentors and peers, participants will develop skills, such as leadership, to engage in activism, community organizing, and civic action.

**Do students have to be good at art to participate?**
Students do not need a background in or experience with art to be a participant in the program. We encourage students of varying interests to participate, as art is only one component of the program.

**What are the benefits of participating?**
The program for A.R.T.™ Circles uses an arts-based social justice approach. The arts are an essential tool for understanding adolescents' experience and producing positive social and academic outcomes. Social Justice Youth Development will equip participants with the tools necessary to address systemic racism and understand power, privilege, and oppression in order to disrupt existing power structures and advocate for transformative change in their communities. Through this program, we expect to see youth build capacity to change personal, community, and social conditions; show signs of healing from personal trauma brought on from oppression and recent race-related events; increase in self-esteem; develop youth voice; and a number of other positive youth development outcomes.
**What is the Clemson University study associated with the program?**
The purpose of the Clemson University research study is to understand adolescent’s perceptions about traumatic events in 2020 (including race-related events and COVID-19), the impact these events had on them, and how they process these events. The purpose of this research is to help Clemson researchers understand adolescents’ meaning making processes of these events and demonstrate how outlets, such as art, can help adolescents heal and promote change in their communities. This research may help Clemson researchers identify how Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) adolescents process trauma, recognize and address needs within their community, and understand how arts-based social justice programs can promote healing in BIPOC youth in the selected communities of the Upstate of South Carolina. Additionally, evaluation and results from the study will be used to measure the success of the program and make program modifications as needed to provide the appropriate ongoing support to BIPOC youth in the community.

**Does my child have to participate in the study?**
Student participation in the study is voluntary. Students may refuse to take part or quit being in the study or program at any time. If students are interested in participating in the study, the parent or guardian has to complete the parent consent form.

**What if I have additional questions?**
For more information or to sign up, contact Tavaghn Monts, Associate Director of Momentum Bike Clubs tmonts@clemson.edu or Anitra Alexander, Graduate Student Researcher anitraa@clemson.edu There is no cost for participating. This is an opportunity to build relationships and support for racial justice among youth.
Appendix C

Momentum Bike Clubs Consent Form

Momentum Bike Clubs

Parent/Guardian Permission Form

NOTE: THIS FORM INCLUDES A RELEASE OF LIABILITY.

Please review and sign in the space provided to indicate your agreement with all statements made in this permission form.

AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY

I, the parent or guardian of ____________________________ (child), authorize the participation of my child in the Momentum Bike Clubs (the “Program”). I understand that this Program is a nonprofit community program for youth and that my child's participation is voluntary and not essential to completion of requirements of any program, school or government agency. I understand that the Program is conducted by nonprofit and community volunteers and staff, including mentors of other participating children.

I further understand and agree that my child's participation in athletic and other activities of the Program necessarily involves the risk of injury and even death from various causes, including but not limited to: accidents, falls, strenuous and prolonged physical activity, dehydration, illness, collision or dispute with other participants, riding area and equipment defects, and negligence of volunteers and mentors. On behalf of my child, me, and my family, I assume these risks.

(initial here)____________________

In consideration of the privilege of my child's participation in the Program, and on behalf of my child and me as parent/guardian, I hereby release, discharge, hold harmless and indemnify, and covenant not to sue, the Momentum Bike Clubs, Clemson University, individual program organizers, and all of these organization's directors, officers, trustees, employees, volunteers, insurers, agents and representatives, and all other persons associated with the Program (including without limitation any other participating sponsors, parents, vendors, mentors and other event workers, officials, drivers, and organizations) as to any and all claims of my child, me and other family members for personal injuries suffered by my child, property damage, medical expenses, and economic loss arising directly or indirectly out of my child's participation in the Program, and any first aid, medical care or treatment provided to my child in the event my child is injured or becomes ill while participating in Program activities, and excepting claims that may not be released under applicable law.

(initial here)____________________

This Release of Liability shall be as broadly construed as allowed by law to include all claims and rights that the child, that I as parent/guardian, and that other family members may have. I am a legally responsible parent or guardian of my child. If any provision of this Release of Liability is deemed invalid, the remaining provisions shall
remain in full force and effect. This Release of Liability shall be binding on me, my family, heirs, next of kin, legal representatives, beneficiaries, successors and assigns. I give permission for free use of my child's name and picture in broadcasts, telecasts or written accounts for any participation in any Program sponsored event.

(initial here)________________

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

I understand that participation in the Program may involve strenuous and prolonged physical activity. I agree that my child is healthy and able to participate in the Program activities. I understand that the Program or its representatives may request health information concerning my child and/or ask my child to undergo a medical exam. If the Program determines that my child does have a physical or mental condition that may affect his/her ability to safely and appropriately participate in Program activities, the Program may determine that my child cannot be permitted to participate. I understand and agree that such decisions may have to be made out of concern for the best interests of my child and other participants.

(initial here)________________

CONSENT TO HEALTH CHECK

Program needs to ensure that all participants are healthy and able to do rigorous physical exercise. With your initial below, Program has permission to do a blood pressure screening on your child.

(initial here)________________

CONSENT TO SHARE INFORMATION

Gather and share pertinent information to outside agencies to aid in connecting my child and family with helpful resources and to evaluate student and program success. (initial here)________________

CONSENT TO EVALUATION

A.R.T. Circles is evaluating the effectiveness of the program. Your child's participation in this evaluation is confidential and voluntary, meaning he or she does not have to participate if he or she does not want to. A.R.T. will NOT use the data to identify any individual student's responses to the valuation questions. Students who participate in the evaluation will describe how the racial trauma of 2020 possibly affected them. This information will be used to determine whether students learned about the available resources in A.R.T. and whether they have any recommendations for improving the program. We do not anticipate that exposure to the program or the evaluation materials will result in significant distress on the part of your child. If any aspect of the program makes your child uncomfortable, he/she is free to withdraw at any time. If your child feels uncomfortable answering any of the evaluation questions, he or she may skip those questions. If students are distressed, they are encouraged to talk to their health teacher or school counselor. Student responses to the survey will be confidential. Only A.R.T. staff will have access to this any information.

Check one only.
___ Please include my child in the program and study.
___ Please exclude my child ONLY from the study.
___ Please exclude my child from the program and the study.
My signature below indicates that I have read and understand this permission form, that I have asked and had answered any questions related to this form, that all information provided by me regarding my child is true and accurate, and that I fully agree to all statements made on the form, including but not limited to the Authorization and Release of Liability, Medical Conditions, and Consent to Medical Treatment.

Each responsible parent/guardian should sign.

Signatures:

Printed Names:

Date:

If only one parent/guardian signs this form, the following must also be signed:

I affirm that this form was signed by only one parent/guardian because (1) I am the sole parent/guardian responsible for the care and custody of the child due to death or incapacity of the other parent/guardian or court order, or (2) I have made a good faith effort to obtain the signature from the other parent/guardian but have not been able to do so, and I am not aware of any reason that the other parent/guardian objects to the child's participation in the Program.

Signature:

Printed Name: Date: