

# Identity Based Stress and Developmental Trauma in African-American College Student-Athletes: Considerations for Assessment and Screening

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# Introduction

- Second Year Doctoral Student in Counselor Education
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- National Certified Counselor (NCC)
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- Former Division I Women's Basketball Player at Ohio University



# Introduction



- Tell me a little about you...
- What led you to today's presentation?



# Outline of Presentation

- Brief Introduction
- Goals and Objectives
- Overview of Identity Race Based Stress and Trauma
- Case Conceptualization
- Language of Identity Race Based Stress and Trauma
- Brief Overview of NCAA Best Practices and Screening Tools
- Overview of Race Based Stress and Trauma Screener
- Case Conceptualization
- Overview of Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Overview of ACE Questionnaire
- Conclusion



# Today's Goals

- Identify and discuss Identity Race Based Stress and Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Identify effective screening tools of Identity-based stress and Developmental Trauma in African-American Student-athletes



# Today's Objectives

To create space and facilitate discussion regarding Identity Based stress and trauma in African-American Division I College Student-Athletes



# Today's Objectives

Define and understand the impact of Identity Based Stress and Developmental trauma to provide context for case conceptualization



# Today's Objectives

Apply research from Adverse Childhood Experiences literature to gain deeper understanding of this effective assessment tool





# Today's Objectives

Illustrate how integration of the Race-Based Stress and Trauma Screener and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) will guide clinicians in identifying subjective experiences related to race, identity, and areas of trauma



# Today's Objectives

Demonstrate how the Race-Based Stress and Trauma Screener and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) can be used as a part of the initial assessment process throughout the counseling relationship



# Overview

- Being a College Student-Athlete embodies a unique and demanding culture which encompasses several stressors.
- Student-athletes often define themselves by their identities as athletes



# Overview

- Factors such as race also play a role in how athletes identify themselves
- African-American student-athletes have additional stressors that often go unnoticed yet are seen throughout the news and media on a consistent basis.



# Overview

During their medal ceremony in the Olympic Stadium in Mexico City on October 16, 1968, African-American athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos each raised a black-gloved fist during the playing of the US national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner".



# Overview

During the 49ers' third preseason game in 2016, Kaepernick began to sit during the playing of the U.S. national anthem prior to games, rather than stand as is customary, as a protest against racial injustice and systematic oppression in the country.



Colin Kaepernick  @Kaepernick7 · 2h

Believe in something, even if it means sacrificing everything. #JustDolt



 1.4K  31K  68K 

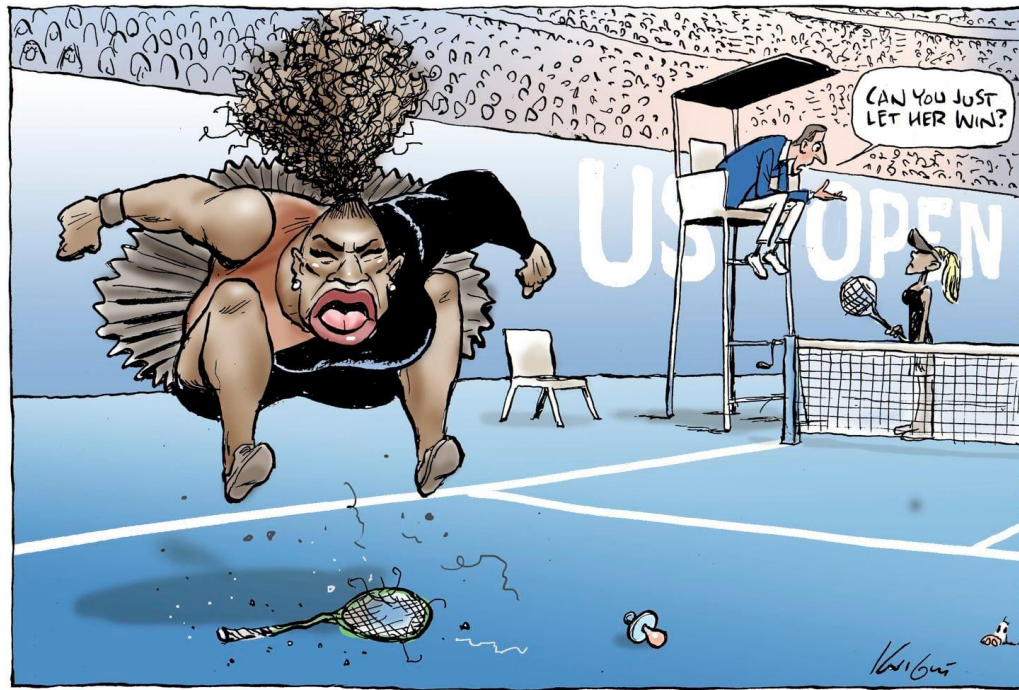
# Overview

Naomi Osaka defeated legendary tennis star Serena Williams to become the first Grand Slam singles champion.

But Osaka's victory was soon overshadowed. After chair umpire Carlos Ramos cited Williams for three code violations during the second set of the loss — for receiving coaching during a match, breaking her racket and calling Ramos a “thief” — Williams accused him of sexism.



# Overview





# Overview

This Mark Knight cartoon published by the Herald Sun depicts Serena Williams as an irate, hulking, big-mouthed black woman jumping up and down on a broken racket. The umpire was shown telling a slender blond woman — meant to be Naomi Osaka, who is actually Japanese and Haitian — "Can you just let her win?" (Mark Knight/Herald Sun-News Corp./AP)



# Overview

Such images are not neutral, rather they tap into long-standing racist and sexist stereotypes that remain embedded in the fabric of Western culture, ready for reuse when a black man or woman is perceived as crossing a line or being “out of place” in a public space.



# Overview



Lebron James' thoughts on racial double standards for athletes was one of several topics covered in the premiere of "The Shop," which HBO has described as "unfiltered conversation and debate" set in a barbershop.



# Overview

<https://youtu.be/Mp-UgwQzTc4>



# Case Conceptualization

As a college counselor to this student-athlete, I want you to think about how would you respond to this next scenario?



# Overview

How has race impacted your life on the campus?

“shocked me because like I'm so used to being around more of my race, I grew up with ... strictly African Americans and when I got here it kinda like shocked me, because I've never been around this many people with other ethnicities so it was like ... it took me a while to get used to and it's just, something that I had to do.”



# Overview

Do you feel like you've reached a point where you adjusted?

“I don't think I will reach that point until it's almost time for me to leave because it's just very different from what I'm used to and most people they don't want to get accustomed to things that they are different to and that's kind of how I am right now.”



# The Language of Identity Based Stress

**Racism:** Prejudice towards people based on their race or ethnicity

**Discrimination:** Unfavorable or unfair treatment against a person or thing based on group, class, gender, ability, sexual identity, etc.





# The Language of Identity Based Stress

**Micro-aggressions:** Everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insights whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons solely upon their marginalized group membership.



# The Language of Identity Based Stress

**Biased incident:** Any activity that intimidates, demeans, mocks, degrades, marginalizes, or threatens individuals or groups based on that individual's or group's actual or perceived ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, and ability (Wessler & Moss, 2001).



# NCAA Best Practices

The NCAA Best Practices states that cultural competency addresses both societal diversity and the culture of sports.

*NCAA Sport Science Institute, NCAA. Mental Health Best Practices: Inter-Association Consensus Document: Best Practices for Understanding and Supporting Student-Athlete Mental Wellness. Indianapolis, IN: NCAA; 2016.*



# NCAA Best Practices

Regarding societal diversity, cultural competency should extend to treating student-athletes from diverse racial, ethnic, gender identified, and other unique cultural experiences influencing help-seeking.



# NCAA Best Practices

Individuals providing mental health care to student-athletes should have cultural competency in treating student-athletes from diverse racial, ethnic, gender identified, and other unique cultural experiences influencing help-seeking.



# NCAA Screening Tools

## Appendix F

### ADHD

#### Alcohol Use-AUDIT

*The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test—Consumption (AUDIT-C) is a brief validated screen for risky drinking and alcohol abuse and dependence (alcohol misuse). However, the AUDIT-C was validated in predominantly White populations, and its performance in different racial/ethnic groups is unclear.*

*NCAA Sport Science Institute, NCAA. Mental Health Best Practices: Inter-Association Consensus Document: Best Practices for Understanding and Supporting Student-Athlete Mental Wellness. Indianapolis, IN: NCAA; 2016.*



# NCAA Screening Tools

## Appendix F

Anxiety

Apnea

Cannabis Use

Depression

Disordered Eating

Insomnia

National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA)  
Recommendations for Pre-Participation Exams



# NCAA Screening Tools

**What it does not screen or assess for is:**

- Identity Stress
- Racism, Discrimination, Microaggressions, Biased Incident
- Trauma





# Race-Based Stress and Trauma Screener

- Purpose: To create space and facilitate conversations with students of color about their subjective experiences related to race and identity, as well as help guide clinicians in identifying areas of trauma (Brooks, 2017).
- Rationale: To develop a tool and clinicians guide to help students of color voice their unique experiences and to provide clinicians terms and definitions of biased incidents in the hopes of developing a sense of awareness of one's own bias.



# Race-Based Stress and Trauma Screener

- Can be used as a part of the initial assessment process or throughout the counseling relationship.
- Reliability, validity, and norms: The RBSTS will need to be empirically tested to establish these.
- Six brief questions designed to detect exposure to experienced or witnessed incidents and any subsequent symptoms.

(Brooks, 2017)



# RBSTS: Instructions for Clinicians

- When working with a student-athlete/client of color it is important to identify multicultural factors when conceptualizing the student's presenting challenges.
- If the student voices issues of concern surrounding race and culture, please consider using the RBSTS screener.
- There is no time limit or scoring for this screener.

(Brooks, 2017)

# RBSTS: Instructions for Clinicians

- You can choose to administer this screener at the beginning of each session at your clinical discretion.
- Please create space for the student-athlete/client to process their experiences.
- Be self-reflective about your own process, identity, culture, race, and potential bias.

(Brooks, 2017)



# RBSTS: Instructions for Clinicians

- Please identify campus partners or community resources that are supportive spaces for student-athlete/clients of color.
- If the student-athlete/client requests to speak with a therapist of his/her/their gender or race please be sensitive and affirming of their decision and request a reassignment.



# Race-Based Stress and Trauma Screener

- Be open to having a conversation with student-athlete/client, even as early as the intake assessment.
- Ask your student-athletes/clients about their identities:
  - How do they identify in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, etc.?
  - How do their identities impact them on a daily basis?
  - How do their identities shape their worldview?
  - How do their identities impact the way they are seen by others?
  - Is their presenting concern(s) related to their identities?



# Case Conceptualization

You have an African-American male student-athlete come into your counseling office with the following presenting problem: “I was racially profiled and pulled over by the police and forced to get out and my car was searched. My friends and I had to sit and wait on the curb and everyone was looking at us. Once the police officer found out I was a student-athlete the officer pat me on the back and said you can go.”



# Case Conceptualization

“I haven’t really talked to anyone about what happened and I’m starting to have problems sleeping at night. It’s even affecting my performance and the way I respond to my coaches. I would prefer to speak with an African-American counselor and someone who has worked with student-athletes if possible.”





# Case Conceptualization

- What do you as the counselor do?
- How would you respond?
- How might the RBSTS assist you in the process of assisting the student-athlete?
- What if there are no African-American Counselors on staff?
- What if there is no one with experience working with student-athletes?



# Adverse Childhood Experiences

Incorporating the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) Questionnaire as a part of the assessment and screening process is another way that allows the clinician to assess for additional trauma.

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). About Adverse Childhood Experiences. About the CDC-Kaiser ACE Study*

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/about.html>



# Adverse Childhood Experiences

This allows the clinician to tailor an intervention to best fit the needs of the student-athlete.

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). About Adverse Childhood Experiences. About the CDC-Kaiser ACE Study*

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/about.html>



# Adverse Childhood Experiences

The CDC-Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study is one of the largest investigations of childhood abuse and neglect and later-life health and well-being.



# Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are categorized into three groups: **abuse, neglect, and family/household challenges**. Each category is further divided into multiple subcategories.



# Adverse Childhood Experiences

Children of different races and ethnicities do not experience ACEs equally. Nationally, 61 percent of black non-Hispanic children have experienced at least one ACE, compared with 40 percent of white non-Hispanic children and only 23 percent of Asian non-Hispanic children.

<https://www.childtrends.org/publications/prevalence-adverse-childhood-experiences-nationally-state-race-ethnicity>



# Adverse Childhood Experiences

In every region, the prevalence of ACEs is lowest among Asian non-Hispanic children and, in most regions, is highest among black non-Hispanic children.

<https://www.childtrends.org/publications/prevalence-adverse-childhood-experiences-nationally-state-race-ethnicity>



# Adverse Childhood Experiences

“Scientists are calling the correlation between childhood trauma, brain architecture, and adult well-being the new psychobiological theory of everything.” (Nakazawa)





# Adverse Childhood Experiences

## ACES can have lasting effects on....



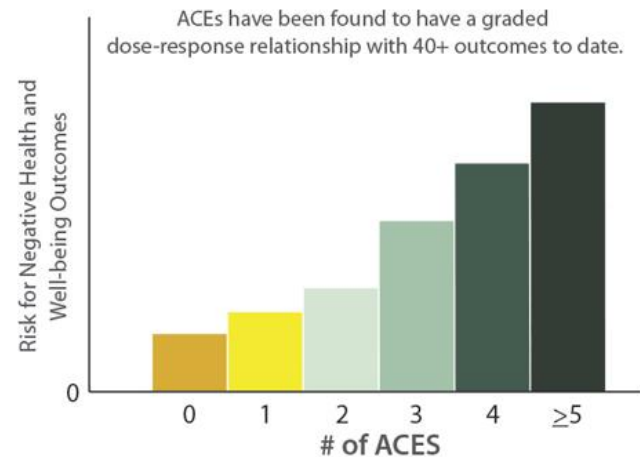
Health (obesity, diabetes, depression, suicide attempts, STDs, heart disease, cancer, stroke, COPD, broken bones)



Behaviors (smoking, alcoholism, drug use)



Life Potential (graduation rates, academic achievement, lost time from work)



\*This pattern holds for the 40+ outcomes, but the exact risk values vary depending on the outcome.



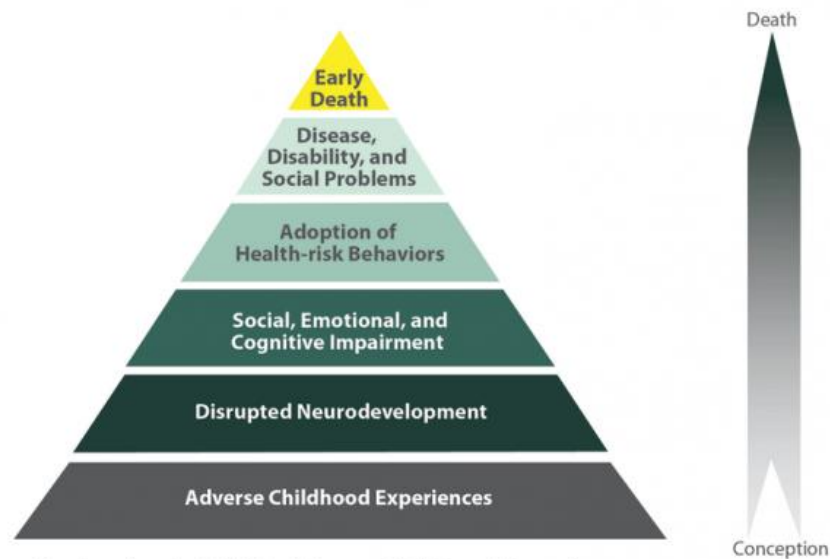
# Adverse Childhood Experiences

**As the number of ACEs increases so does the risk for the following\*:**

- Alcoholism and alcohol abuse
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Depression
- Fetal death
- Health-related quality of life
- Illicit drug use
- Ischemic heart disease
- Liver disease
- Poor work performance
- Financial stress
- Risk for intimate partner violence
- Multiple sexual partners
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Smoking
- Suicide attempts
- Unintended pregnancies
- Early initiation of smoking
- Early initiation of sexual activity
- Adolescent pregnancy
- Risk for sexual violence
- Poor academic achievement



# Adverse Childhood Experiences



Mechanism by Which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan

# Adverse Childhood Experiences

Nadine Burke Harris at TEDMED 2014  
**How childhood trauma affects health  
across a lifetime**

<https://youtu.be/95ovIJ3dsNk>

# The Tree Illustration

The **fruit or leaves**=behaviors/presenting problem (addiction, oppositional behaviors, aggression, anxiety/panic, suicidal ideation, sleep issues, inattention/lack of focus, perfectionism)

The **branches**=underlying issues (shame, pride, rejection, fear, self-esteem issues, identity issues, trust issues)

The **roots**=identity stress, race based trauma, developmental trauma, genetics/generational patterns



# The Tree Illustration

- We are not getting to the root cause. We are only focusing on one layer of the problem
- We need to do the bottom up kind of work
- We need to be **proactive** versus **reactive**



Questions??



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# References

Brooks, C. (2017) Race-Based Stress and Trauma Screener. Post-Doctoral Scholarly Project.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). About Adverse Childhood Experiences. About the CDC-Kaiser ACE Study

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Wessler, S. & Moss, M. (2001). Hate crimes on campus: the problem and efforts to confront it. U.S. Department of Justice, office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance.

