

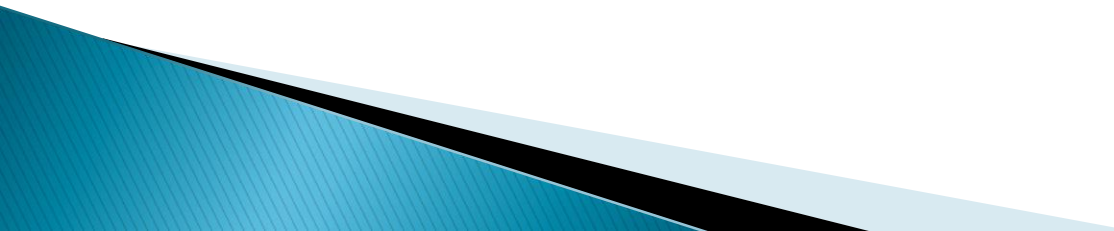
# Racialized encounters: Physiological and psychological impacts of racism on gay men of colour and their coping responses

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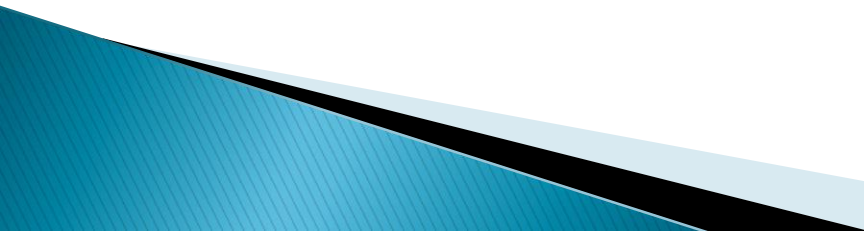
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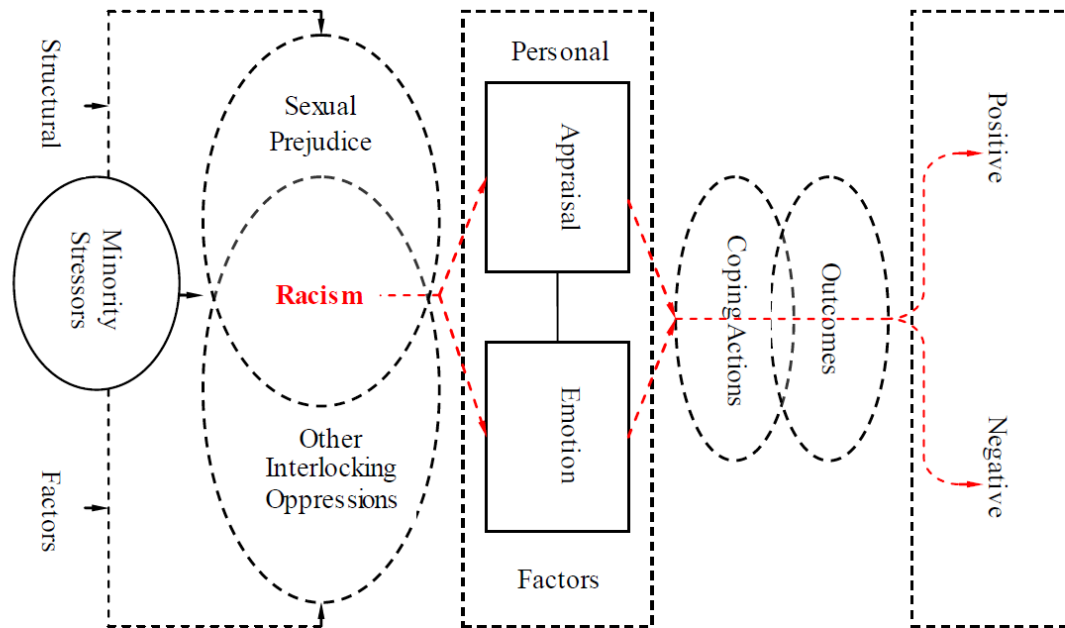
# Introduction

- ▶ Multifaceted ways racism affect gay men of colour is not well understood
  - ▶ Available research skewed towards deficit/pathology, absent of strengths
  - ▶ Lack of sustained debate and critical analysis of racism in GLB communities
  - ▶ Gay men of colour experience racism, so what?
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# Research Questions

- ▶ What are gay men of colour's experiences of—and their strategies for coping with—racism?
    - In what specific contexts or circumstances do gay men of colour experience racism and discrimination in the GLB community of Ottawa?
    - What do gay men of colour understand to be the factors that contribute to their oppression and social exclusion in the GLB community of Ottawa?
    - What strategies do gay men of colour use to cope with the overt and/or covert racism they experience in the GLB community of Ottawa?
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# Conceptual/Theoretical Frameworks



# Methods & Data Collection

- ▶ Exploratory, cross-sectional, qualitative research design
  - ▶ Purposive homogeneous and snowball sampling
  - ▶ Participants recruited in Ottawa using various methods, informed by a number of inclusion/exclusion criteria
  - ▶ Eligibility and informed consent completed
  - ▶ Semistructured interviews (N=5) and focus groups (N=8) of 1 to 2 hours, audio and video-recorded
  - ▶ \$30 incentive offered to participants'
  - ▶ IRB approved
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# Sociodemographic Characteristics

	Total count	Percentage (%)
<b>Education</b>		
High school diploma/GED	1	8
College/university graduate	8	62
Post graduate	4	31
<b>Racial/ethnic background</b>		
Arab/Middle Eastern	2	15
Black	4	31
East Asian	4	31
South Asian	3	23
<b>Nativity</b>		
Canadian-born	4	31
Foreign-born	9	69
<b>Length of residency in Canada</b>		
1-3 years	3	23
> 10 years	6	46
Lifetime	4	31
<b>Length of residency in Ottawa</b>		
1-3 years	3	23
4-6 years	2	15
7-10 years	4	31
> 10 years	3	23
Lifetime	1	8
<b>Religious affiliation</b>		
Buddhism	2	15
Christianity/Catholicism	5	38
Other	6	46
<b>Sexual orientation</b>		
Gay/homosexual	10	77
Queer	1	8
Same-gender-loving	1	8
Other	1	8
<b>*Employment status</b>		
Full-time	9	69
Part-time	2	15
Student	1	8
Self-employed	2	15
<b>Personal/household income</b>		
Less than \$10,000	1	8
\$10,000--\$19,000	1	8
\$20,000--\$29,000	2	15
\$30,000--\$39,000	1	8
\$40,000--\$49,000	1	8
\$50,000--\$59,000	2	15
\$60,000 or more	5	38

	Total count	Percentage (%)
<b>*GLB discrimination/harassment source</b>		
Age	4	31
Disability	2	15
Language proficiency/immigration status	2	15
Physical harassment	1	8
Verbal harassment	3	23
Race/ethnicity	11	85
Socioeconomic status	1	8
<b>Living situation</b>		
College/university housing	1	8
Friends/family	1	8
Partner/spouse	1	8
Renting	6	46
Own house	4	31
<b>Relationship status</b>		
Single	7	54
Committed monogamous	4	31
Domestic partnership	1	8
Other	1	8
<b>Recreational drug use</b>		
Yes	6	46
No	7	54
<b>Self-reported HIV serostatus</b>		
Positive	2	15
Negative	11	85
<b>Last HIV test taken</b>		
Last 6 months	7	54
7-11 months	4	31
1-2 years	2	15

# Completed Focus Groups

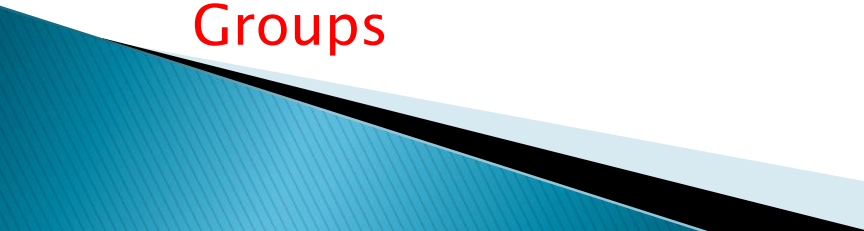
Participant	Race/ethnicity	Age group	Number in attendance
Mike	East Asian (Philippine)*	31	2
Tobey	East Asian (Philippine) $\Delta$	26	(1 no-show)
Eddie	Black (Namibia) $\Delta\Delta$	21	
Philippe	Black (Burundi)	30	3
Kwame	Black (Ghana) $\Delta$	31	(1 no-show)
Mr. M	South Asian/Indo-Guyanese (Guyana) $\Delta$	41	
Anil	South Asian (India)* $\Delta$	35	3
Dexter	South Asian (Pakistan/India)* $\Delta$	27	

# Completed Individual Interviews

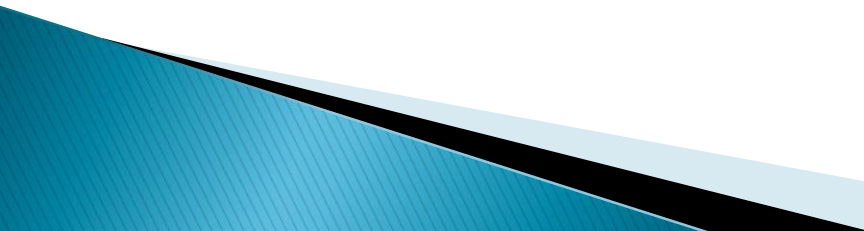
Participant	Race/ethnicity	Age group	Number in attendance
Maximus	Arab/Middle Eastern (Tunisia)*Δ	27	1
Ali	Arab/Middle Eastern (Syria)Δ	35	1
Al	East Asian (Thailand)Δ	27	1
Jordan	East Asian (Singapore)Δ	34	1
Justin	Black (Montreal)*Δ	46	1



# IPA Data Analysis Steps for Focus Groups and Individual Interviews

- ▶ Step 1: Reading and Rereading of Original Data
  - ▶ Step 2: Initial Noting or Exploratory Commentary
  - ▶ Step 3: Developing Emergent Themes
  - ▶ Step 4: Identifying Connections Across Emergent Themes
  - ▶ Step 5: Looking for Patterns Across Individual- and Within-Group-Level Themes
  - ▶ Step 6: Looking for Patterns and Themes Across Focus Groups
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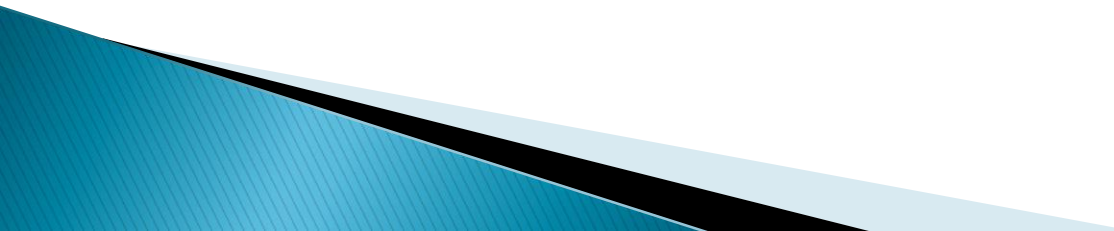
# Findings

- ▶ Racism-related coping responses:
    - Emotion-focused engagement coping
    - Emotion-focused disengagement coping
    - Problem-focused engagement coping
    - Problem-focused disengagement coping
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# Emotion–Focused Engagement Coping

- ▶ Coping efforts focused on an individual's emotional reaction to a stressful event or situation.
  - Releasing and expressing emotions
  - Seeking emotional support from others, such as family members, friends, and/or professionals

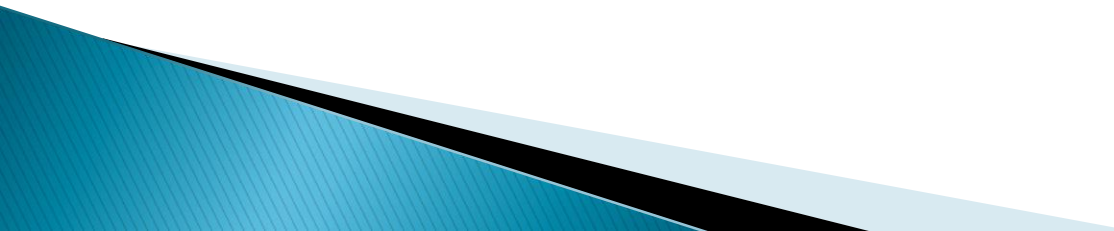
*“I do a lot of meditation and prayer. [ ] [This] helps me to surrender all negative thinking. [ ] Teaching myself to Love and helping others to love themselves, that’s what prayer is for me. It’s eradicating all negative thinking and things that [ ] are lies of the past, of our forefathers and whatnot. It’s about the truth now, the absolute truth. We were created to love. That’s what I believe. And so when I remind myself of that, then I can let go of all of the hurts and the pains that have been inflicted on me, and also all the hurts and pains I have inflicted on others, because I was hurt.” (Justin, Black, gay)*



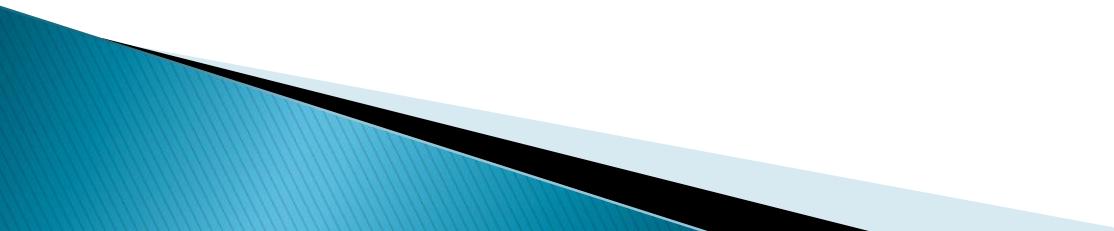
# Emotion-Focused Disengagement Coping

- ▶ Coping efforts that involve emotional distance and shutting off one's feelings from others.
  - Not expressing feelings to others
  - Self-blaming for what happened
  - Being overly self-critical and hard on oneself

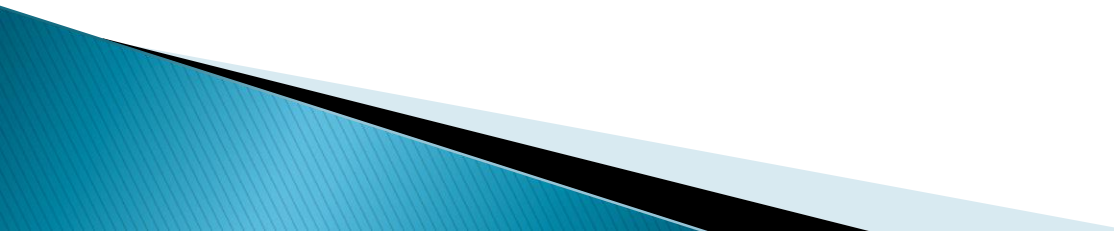
*“I mean [ ] you can’t tell people to fuck off. Because you see them [ ] and this community is so small, if you tell someone what you’re actually feeling or thinking, like if you actually tell them to fuck off, that will come back to haunt you. And like you’ll meet someone new, and they’ll be like, oh, I know you. You’re friends with my friend, and you told him to fuck off at a party, and he was just making a joke, what’s wrong with you?” (Dexter, South Asian, gay)*



# Problem-Focused Engagement Coping

- ▶ Cognitive and behavioural efforts focused on the stressful event itself.
    - Behavioural strategies to eliminate the source of stress
    - Cognitive restructuring strategies to change meaning of stressful situation so that it is less threatening
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*“I would say that sometimes in my online behaviour [ ] I’m making prejudgments based on look and based on profile as a result of the prejudgments based on me, so that I’m being the first to strike in some way. I’m like, “Yes, that person looks like he would be racist. That person looks like he would discriminate.” Yes, so, from that perspective, I tailor my approach.” (Mike, East Asian, gay)*






# Problem-Focused Disengagement Coping

- ▶ Cognitive and behavioural efforts to avoid dealing with the stressful event.
  - Denial
  - Avoidance
  - Inability or reluctance to see things differently

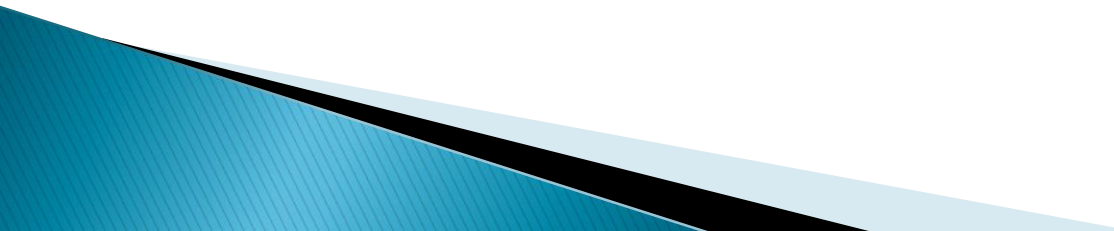
*“I don’t know about you guys, but I turn to the drink sometimes to sort of deal with the crazy situations that I’m in. Like, I mean, there’s been a few nights at a bar [ ] where something really obviously racist will happen, for me. And I’ll be, like, I need alcohol to solve this problem. And I will drink my face silly and then go home with some random White guy who I don’t like.” (Dexter, South Asian, gay)*

*“I tend to just kind of let go of the [racist] comment, sort of transcend the experience, and to not let this negative energy penetrate me or affect [ ] my self-esteem [or make me feel] that something is wrong with my ethnic background. [ ] You can’t let people sort of transform your perception, or [ ] try to crush [you] because it’s a very White world, right?” (Maximus, Arab/Middle Eastern, gay)*

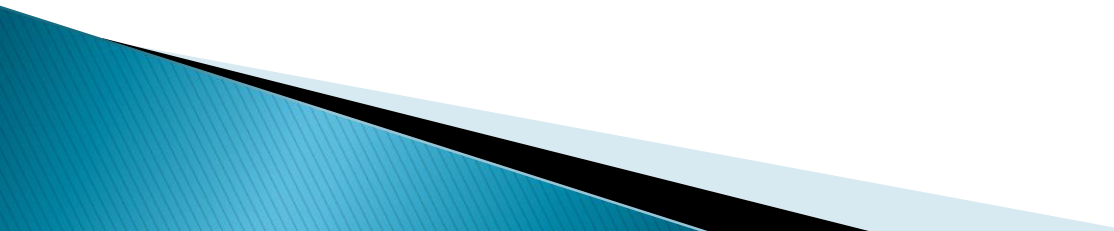
# Limitations of the Study

- ▶ IPA as unavoidably subjective
  - ▶ Reliance on self-reported racism (social desirability response, over- and under-reporting of experience and coping strategies)
  - ▶ Researcher constructed interview protocol vs. instruments measuring perceived racism
  - ▶ Limited generalizability and time/financial constraints
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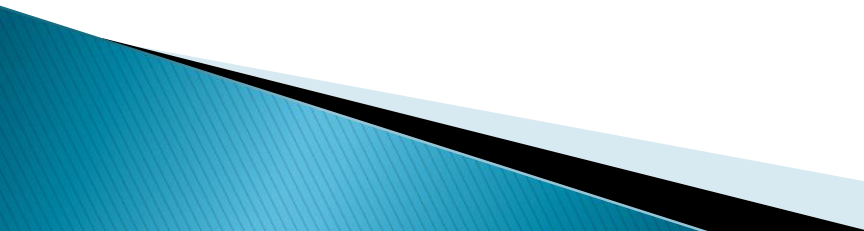
# Implications for Theory

- ▶ Multiple-axis vs. single-axis framework of oppression
  - ▶ Queer crit as important starting point for development of race/racism consciousness in GLBT communities
  - ▶ Centrality of race/racism for challenging hegemonic system of White supremacy
  - ▶ Enable counterstory to dominant stock stories about race/racism and expression of subjugated knowledge (i.e., united voice)
  - ▶ Minority stress theory of racism as applicable for studying racial discrimination among gay men of colour
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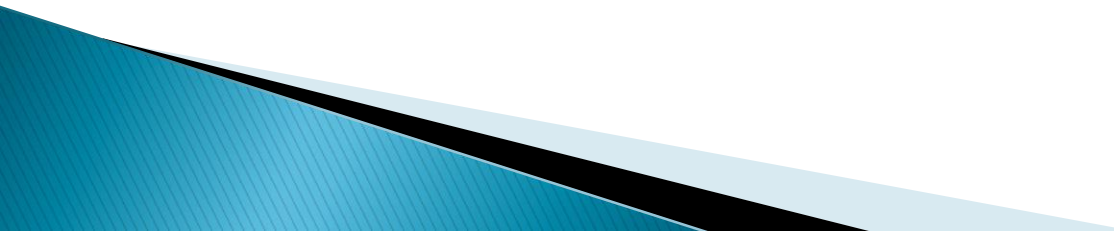
# Implications for Research

- ▶ Need for more empirical studies about gay men of colour
  - ▶ Extant literature on the group leans heavily towards a one-dimensional, deficit, frame of knowledge
  - ▶ Strength-informed research is needed for thinking more complexly and richly about the lives of gay men of colour
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# Implications for Practice

- ▶ Lack of in/formal systems of support for coping with racism
    - Improve competence of practitioners to meet needs of gay men of colour
    - Expand scope of practice to include services that address the stressful impact of racism
    - Advocate for resources to support creation of informal support systems by and for gay men of colour
  - ▶ “The danger of a single story”
    - Disease prevention vs. holistic wellness
    - Diversification of evidence-based scholarship for practice-informed outcomes
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# Conclusion

- ▶ Racism evident in multiple GLB spaces (on and offline)
  - ▶ White racial socialization promotes intragroup identity and cohesion that support racism
  - ▶ Whiteness as ubiquitous and default standard by which gay men of colour are judged at individual, institutional, and cultural levels
  - ▶ Emotion-focused coping was ideal where less control was perceived over the racist stigma
  - ▶ Problem-focused coping was favoured where greater control was identified
  - ▶ Traditional deficit-based framework limit understanding of how individuals and groups thrive in contexts of adversity
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