



Bonding in Sisterhood:

A Qualitative Study of a Virtual, Health-Related Program for Women of Color During the Double Pandemic

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Background



- Women of color (WOC) are disproportionately affected by health inequities¹⁻⁴
- Additional stressors have negative effects on physical and mental health outcomes for WOC¹⁻⁴
- Recent pandemic & social injustices (aka the double pandemic) have increased health inequities for WOC⁵
- Virtual, community-based platforms are emerging to promote health for vulnerable populations⁶
- Little research exists on the development & influence of programs created *by* WOC *for* WOC
- My Sister's Keeper (MSK),  virtual health-focused program for WOC created during the double pandemic



Purpose & Questions

Purpose: To qualitatively examine the perceptions of the experiences of WOC while participating in a virtual, health-focused program tailored to address the needs of WOC

Question

1

How would you describe your experience with MSK?

Question

2

What are your thoughts about participating in MSK in an online platform?

Question

3

Is there anything else that you would like to say?

**Probing questions were also asked*



Methods

Interviews: Qualitative, ethnographic study



Data Collection

- N = 11 WOC (1 Latina/Hispanic and 10 AA/Black)
- Age range: 22 to 84 years
- Texas residents
- Attended at least 50% of monthly sessions
- Interviews on Zoom or phone: In-depth, open-ended questions

Data Analysis

- Inductive, iterative approach for thematic analysis (Quirkos software)
- Trustworthiness (e.g., prolonged engagement, member-checking)



Results: Preliminary Findings

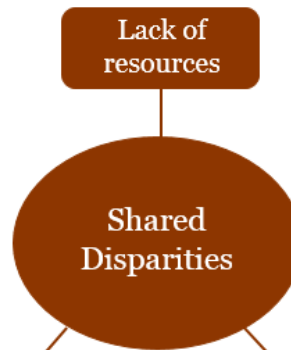


Having a Safe Space

“It [MSK] helps women whether they know it or not to communicate about things they may not normally do with other people, they don't know, other ethnicities, um, about health consciousness, health concerns” (Participant 3, Nov. 5, 2020)

Having Access

“And I guess the good thing is that you can do it, you know, from your house, you can do it in your car, you can join over the phone.” (Participant 2, Nov. 5, 2020)



Fear of Asking Questions

“I think we're some (sighs) some feel that including myself feel that you judged and not looked at favorably when you ask particular questions about what's happening in the world or what's happening in our lives. Because it's been happening and, um, why? Why rock the boat?” (Participant 5, Nov. 9, 2020)



Conclusion

- The themes are congruent with the mission of MSK: “To empower women of color to have better health through information sharing and sister-bonding”
- Virtual, health-focused program created by WOC may provide many benefits:
 - Welcoming and accessible community
 - Ability to stay connected
 - Ability to obtain timely and accurate information
- Having an interactive, safe space for WOC can encourage:
 - Exchange of health-related information
 - Freedom to ask questions



There are valuable benefits of virtual, health-focused platforms specifically tailored to address the health needs of WOC during the double pandemic

References

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Thank you