"Invisible Struggles: Addressing Mental Health Among Black Youth in Canada"
Folajinmi Oluwasina
University of Calgary, Canada
Mental Health Symposium 2024
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[2024/05/17 08:59] Elektra Panthar: Hello everyone.
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Transcription is provided by Virtual Ability, Inc.
The transcriptionists are:
Elektra Panthar
Max Chatnoir
The speakers will be identified by initials as they speak.
The following initials in the transcription record will identify the speakers:
FO: Dr. Folajinmi Oluwasina

[2024/05/17 09:01] Zri Portal: Greetings, everyone, and welcome to Virtual Ability's 2024 Mental Health Symposium!
I am Zzri Avian and I have been in Second Life for about 15 years.
I enjoy exploring the various worlds and communities of Second Life.
also volunteer as an information assistant for the Virtual Worlds Education Consortium (VWEC).
In RL, I am an IT Quality Assurance analyst from Penang, Malaysia.
Today, I would like to introduce Dr. Folajinmi Oluwasina.
He has an extensive academic foundation in Public Health, and holds a bachelor's degree in microbiology, a master's degree in public health, and a Ph.D. in Public Health Epidemiology.
He has been teaching for the past 10 years and is passionate about health innovations that increase access to high-quality mental health care.
His presentation for today is titled: "Invisible Struggles: Addressing Mental Health among Black Youth".
It explores the frequently disregarded but crucial matter of mental health among the Black youth community.

Audience, please hold your questions and comments to the end, so as not to interrupt the presentation's timing.
Welcome, Dr. Folajinmi Oluwasina! The floor is yours.

[2024/05/17 09:03] Elektra Panthar: FO: hi everyone! Thank you very much for the introduction
Thank you for joining me today - I'm Fola and I'm here to talk about this often overlooked topic
my presentation will shine some light on this problem
Mental health is important for wellbeing
Purpose of the Research

The Race-based data on the mental health of Black youth in Canada during or after COVID-19 is not readily available.
The pandemic poses a "double whammy" for Black youth as they are at an increased risk for mental health problems and Black Canadians are at an increased risk of contracting and dying from COVID-19
Our proposed work will be to examine the mental health of Black youth after the COVID-19 pandemic and offer interventions to address mental health risks among this demographic of youth

Recent research shows that youth have been impacted greatly by the pandemic, and black youth even more so
Black youth is also less likely to ask for help, and have access to help
There are also financial and cultural problems that prevent them from accessing help
How did we conduct this research?

Study Phases
Phase 1
Interviewed 48 Black youths on mental health in relation to COVID-19 (ex. restrictions, school closures, disruptions of supports and programming, physical distance, etc.)
This was the qualitative side

Phase 2
Surveyed 933 youths between 19-30 years across Canada. Outcome variables included depression, resilience, anxiety, substance abuse, etc)
Results of phase 1 informed phase 2
Phase 2 we used logistic analysis
Phase 3 Data analysis
Phase I Data was analyzed using a thematic analysis and an intersectional lens. Phase II data was analysed using Chi-square/Fisher's exact and Logistics regression analysis.
Phase 4 Knowledge Translation
Integrated Knowledge Translation (ITK) approach will be used to engage and inform Mental health practices, inform policy, inform services and contribute to scholarly knowledge.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
Intersectionality: Acknowledges the different histories and impacts of social, economic, and political marginalization experienced by African, Caribbean, and Black communities (Collins, 1990, Crenshaw, 1991).

Intersectionality was a critical aspect

Black youth has been underrepresented, and has special needs

Interconnected vulnerabilities and experiences of oppression which impact Black youth such as income and gender and are linked to mental health (Salami et al., 2020)

Policies are often insufficient because they don't keep in mind these differences

Provides supportive spaces for critical reflection, youth empowerment, and meaningful community engagement; allows youths to comprehend forces that shape their lives, and recognize their capacity for creating change (Freire, 1970).

Presents an opportunity for youths to articulate their experiences while simultaneously recognizing their strengths and capacity for resilience as well as the oppressive structures and narratives that hinder agency.

There is also reluctance for black people to participate in studies due to confidentiality concerns and worries on how their data could be used

[2024/05/17 09:13] Chezz Conundrum-Firelyte (Chezz Firelyte): Native Americans are the same way (I am one)

[2024/05/17 09:13] Elektra Panthar: FO: Intersectionality is important to understand the overlappings and the differences between unique sets of identities

We studied the mental health challenges in Canada in different ways

So social categories as well, they influence life and mental health

We need to better understand the unique experiences of black youth, the combination of all the different identities in the community

We want to advocate for inclusiveness and customize help - no one size fits all

METHODS
WHAT WAS OUR RECRUITMENT STRATEGY?
Social Media
Research team utilized HIPP social media including posting flyers on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.
Most popular and successful recruitment strategy
Connected to Dr. Bukola's educational network
RA personal social media
Messages were approved by a research committee
Common Outreach
Research assistants connected with community outreach programs in their respective provinces.
Tropicana
TAIBU Community Health Centre
iHuman
The Come Up
EDI office at University of Toronto

INTERVIEWS
Total number: 48
Interviews were conducted over Zoom
Using the interview guide initially written by Dr. Bukola
Participants given honorarium upon completion of interview
We used Zoom to conduct interviews
The research ethics committee approved the idea and form of the gift

SURVEY
Total number of eligible Black youth who participated in the survey: 933
Data was collected online using REDCap
Black youth participated in the survey across Canada.
Participants received a gift card in lieu of their time
We used surveys and questionnaires
Standardized questions
We scanned for anxiety, depression, PTSD, and the severity of them
The standardized method assured the reliability of results
We believe this will help us better understand the results
We used both random and stratified methods to include as man parts of the population as possible
So age, financial status, gender etc
We use online surveys, used data analysis
The goal was to understand the critical factors that influence mental health in black youth
Confidentiality was paramount - we asked for permission and explained how their data will be used and their rights

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHY we asked about their education, their religion, their income
REFLEXIVITY: The practice of evaluating one's own feelings, identity, and motives - and how they influence what one does or thinks in a situation.
What is the purpose of being reflexive in our research?
Understand how factors such as our social location (age, race, gender, geographical location, ability, etc.), may influence the research process
Reduces bias, set aside assumptions
More connected with our participants
How did we practice reflexivity? We completed 1-page reflexive memos after each interview, including:
How we felt completing the interview, any major learnings
What conversations came up during the interview, recurring themes or words
How much/little we could relate with the participants (ie. similar social location, similar opinions, etc.)
Any other insight that would be useful in the following stages of research (ie. oversaturation of certain demographics)
Reflexivity helps us connect more with our participants

Phase I: DATA FINDINGS
Mental Health

Lack of Awareness of Culturally Safe Mental Health Care
"I don't think it was advertised enough that I saw, I saw that it wasn't really advertised because I feel you weren't used to engage in stuff like that, you need to do, go above and beyond when it comes to the advertisement, you put a day, make them want to come, you make them want to attend, so it's more like selling it to them instead of just announcing" (Male, 26, born in Nigeria)

"And resources, yes. Resources for children, young, the old, people like me. Persons who are black, people who are indigenous, people who can relate to us, people who can understand where we're coming from other than talking to parents and stuff because they

don't always know best. Sometimes we need people outside of it to hear us out and to understand as well." (Female, 18 born in Jamaica)

Closure of Sports
"In the basketball community and where there is a lot of young black youth that was harshly affected, in the sense that sport is a vector of change through these certain underserved communities and basketball, it was basically all they had or the main thing that was driving them to wake up in the morning and go play hard and yeah, I'll do school also." (Male, 24, born in Rwanda)

Resilience
"But it says that at some point we understand that things will happen and you know, the best thing to do is you have to create your response to it. There are different responses that we can do to things, the good, the bad, neither." (Female, 18 born in Jamaica)

There was also a lot of academic stress mentioned
Some developed a fear of tests during the pandemic
So their academic career suffered

Academic stress
"I think because of school and applications, I feel like I go through periods of high stress where I'm unable to think, unable to do anything. …it's just like a constant up and down thing. But throughout this year and last year, in general, I feel very stressed out about tests. And I think because of COVID I developed a fear of tests and everything, so I'm very stressed out about the tests and grades. …it's very hard to balance." (Male, 22, born in Canada)

Financial Stress - Housing Precarity and Food Insecurity
"Yeah, I think it has been stressful …but I feel like the pandemic affected several youths, and some lost their job, some lost their means of livelihood, and some had to – some even lost their homes, because of not being able to keep up with rent." (Male, 23, born in Canada)

ANTI-BLACK RACISM
Prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping and discrimination that is directed at people of Black-African descent.
Entrenched in the policies and practices of Canadian institutions such as education, healthcare, or justice
Discussed in interviews as part of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement
Multiple Pandemics

High Stress Levels and Fear:
"That [situation] could produce high stress levels in Black folks because the pandemic is one thing and the health concerns but now, there's this fear of I might go outside and someone might shoot me for no reason, or someone might see me and commit a hate crime because I'm just running down the street trying to get some exercise." (Male, 23, born in Jamaica)

Anger and Emotional Fatigue from Lack of Long-Term Solutions:

"It was a profound moment to engage in these critical dialogues about not only what is the condition of Black life but also think about how do we create a better society, how do we move forward? And then to see the discourse to be, "we just need to support Black businesses and fund Black organizations more". It was just like, well the moment is wasted." (Male, 23, Born in Jamaica)

Multiple Pandemics:
"And also, like, during the pandemic there was the whole the Black Lives movement, the protests and everything. And that was a very big moment as well. I know those protests that, like, were held here as well in Edmonton and I know a lot of people were just fed up. I think the pandemic just accelerated all those emotions as well because it's like, how many things are we going to deal with?" (Female, 19, born in United Kingdom)

Phase II: DATA FINDINGS
We got participation from several gender identities, as well as occupational statuses - students, part time etc
The majority of participants fall in the low income bracket
We noticed this in the results:

Depression
Black youths who have been treated unfairly due to their race or skin colour were 18 times more likely to experience Major Depressive disorder than those who believed they were not treated unfairly because of their race or skin colour. (OR= 18.38; 95% CI: 2.796 – 7.166).

Black youth who have been treated unfairly due to their language accent were four times more likely to experience MDD than those who believed they have not been treated unfairly because of their language accent. (OR= 4.40; 95% CI: 1.007 – 19.241).

Black youth who have been treated unfairly due to their culture were 12 times more likely to experience MDD than those who believed they have not been treated unfairly because of their Culture. (OR= 12.29 95% CI: 1.473 – 12.530).

Depression incidence was very high
Systemic racism has greatly impacted black youth

Resilience
Black youths who were working part-time had 4 times greater odds of expressing low resilience (OR= 4.02; 95% CI: 1.82 – 11.29) than those who were not working.
Black youths who rated their physical health as fair over the last month were 7 times greater odds (OR= 7.05; 95% CI: 3.715 – 14.29) of expressing low resilience than Black youths who rated their physical health as good in the last month.
Black youths who rated their physical health as poor over the last month were 12 times greater odds of expressing low resilience (OR= 12.41; 95% CI: 1.106 – 15.385) than the respondents who rated their physical health as good in the last month.
Black youths who ranked their mental health as poor were about 9 times greater odds (OR= 8.65; 95% CI: 1.826 – 21.978) of expressing low resilience than those who rated their mental health as good in the last month.

Community plays an important role in the support and promoting resilience for youths
Mentorship programs can help them create coping skills and build their confidence

[2024/05/17 09:38] Max Chatnoir: LIMITATIONS
58% of participants had completed a university degree or were in progress, 22% were completing/had completed a postgraduate degree.
Underrepresentation of NEET (not in employment or education) youth
Despite recruitment strategies, gap in youth experiences and intersections persisted.
Our sample population was not representative of Black youth who identify as non-binary individuals
Our results may have been impacted by the COVID-19 epidemic, as some Black youth may have been exposed to stress.

KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION
Presentation
We will present a minimum of two conference presentations.

Publication
We will complete two-peer reviewed publications.

Policy and practice
To further inform future practitioners, policymakers, and academics (i.e., current students), the findings of this work will be integrated into courses taught by the applicants.

IMPLICATIONS
1. Address racism experienced by Black youth
2. Increase access to sports for Black youth
3. Increase diversity of the mental health workforce
4. Increase access to sports for Black youth
5. Implement initiatives to improve the economic outcomes of Black communities

[2024/05/17 09:44] Zzri Avian (Zri Portal): /me clap claps!
[2024/05/17 09:44] Buffy Beale: Applauds!
[2024/05/17 09:44] Sofia Varela: thankyou so much!

[2024/05/17 09:43] Mook Wheeler: QUESTION: You said one of the limitations of the study was "underrepresentation of NEET (not in employment or education) youth". Your recruitment methods utilised 1) social media, and 2) community outreach programs. All the interviews were conducted over Zoom. All survey participation was conducted and collected online. Taking part in the study would have required access to the Internet, computers/smartphones and literacy in their use. Finding out about the study would –to some extent– have required existing social media use. Would you say that this (quite heavy) dependence upon technology might have contributed to the underrepresentation of NEET youth in the study? Also, what was the ratio of responses by social media as opposed to community outreach?
[2024/05/17 09:46] Max Chatnoir: FO: Black youth in Canada have access to the internet through their phones, and can participate in interviews using their phones.

[2024/05/17 09:46] Exi Conundrum-Firelyte (Existential Conundrum): Dr. Oluwasina, How familiar are you with the intersectionality of Blackness and Autism? I am looking for BIPOC voices and studies specific to African/Black Autistic people for my Autistic Resource Center

here in Second Life. Could you help me here or through an email conversation? I'm finding it especially difficult to find blogs with consistent content to promote and studies that are specific to people of color.

[2024/05/17 09:48] Max Chatnoir: FO: Yes, we can connect by Email and I can send you some resources.

[2024/05/17 09:48] Exi Conundrum-Firelyte (Existential Conundrum): Fantastic. thank you.

[2024/05/17 09:49] Polaris Grayson: QUESTION: How has the socioeconomic struggles impacted the study did the youths parents cooperate

[2024/05/17 09:50] Max Chatnoir: FO: We are looking at 18 and above, who are not required to get parental participation.

[2024/05/17 09:51] Polaris Grayson: Thank you

[2024/05/17 09:50] Gentle Heron: Thank you Fola for your interesting presentation. You did an excellent job for your first time in Second Life.
QUESTION- You were reporting on black youth in Canada. Do you have any way to compare your conclusions with the situations for black youth elsewhere in the world? Have you researched elsewhere? A lot of what you said resonated with my observations about my black students in the central US.

[2024/05/17 09:53] Elektra Panthar: FO: Thank you very much for inviting me!
Thank you Prof. Salami for his help in this project

[2024/05/17 09:53] Chezz Conundrum-Firelyte (Chezz Firelyte): Also, you said earlier that it's hard to get people to participate in studies, etc. Just saying that Native Americans are the same way

[2024/05/17 09:55] Elektra Panthar: FO: yes true - it's hard to reach some groups of people, they don't know how far the research is going to go
Some don't want to have their face and identity known
Some have had bad experiences in the past as well

[2024/05/17 09:56] Exi Conundrum-Firelyte (Existential Conundrum): Also there is general suspiciousness of especially government usage of information that it may harm the community
thank you for this lecture

[2024/05/17 09:56] Elektra Panthar: FO Thank you so much for the opportunity and your help!

[2024/05/17 09:54] Sofia Varela: Thank you for the excellent presentation

[2024/05/17 09:54] Zzri Avian (Zri Portal): /me clap clap claps!

[2024/05/17 09:54] Wisdomseeker (Lissena Resident): So valuable to hear perspectives from around the world here

[2024/05/17 09:56] Zzri Avian (Zri Portal): Thank you, Dr. Fola, for the presentation! Claps!

[2024/05/17 09:56] Elli Pinion: Thank you! Wonderful!!!!

[2024/05/17 09:56] Elektra Panthar: ♫♫♫♪ Applauds ♫♫♫♫

[2024/05/17 09:56] Gentle Heron: Thanks Dr. Fola

[2024/05/17 09:57] DeeDeeBeaker Resident: Thank you for your great talk

[2024/05/17 09:57] Rhiannon Chatnoir: Thank you!!

[2024/05/17 09:57] Firefly (Hyenasaurus Resident): Thanks for the presentation ^^

[2024/05/17 09:57] Paws Pawzouti (Opinicus Extraordinaire): Great presentation. ^^

[2024/05/17 09:57] Zinnia Zauber: Rah! Thank you very much!

[2024/05/17 09:57] Sofia Varela: Congratulations

[2024/05/17 09:57] Itico (Itico Spectre): Very well done. Thanks for coming.