

It's bad enough I'm black but disabled too?: A qualitative exploration of after-covid-19 experiences for black college men living with disabilities

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The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the experiences of Black college men living with disabilities, namely ADHD and/or depression, as defined by DSM-5. Prior literature focuses on the schooling experiences of people of color living with disabilities, COVID-related educational effects among people of color, and Black students' experience during COVID-19, giving little to no attention to COVID-related experiences of Black college students' living with disabilities. This is the focus of the study that informs our plenary presentation. Two key questions guided the project:

1. What are the on- and of-campus experiences of Black college men living with ADHD and/or depression?
2. How do these experiences of Black college men living with ADHD and/or depression potentially shape post-COVID-19 campus support services, designed to enhance their well-being and foster a sense of belonging?

Using naturalistic methods and a semi-structured interview protocol, we conducted one-on-one interviews with willing participants (18 years or older), averaging 45 minutes each, largely focused on understanding their experiences during the Great Pandemic (COVID-19) and any significant implications for campus support services in a post-COVID-19 era. All interviews were digitally recorded and later transcribed by a professional, yielding over 60 pages of verbatim transcriptions. Data analysis proceeded in five stages that will be fully described in the presentation: ranging from verbatim transcription with aid of artificial intelligence (Ai) to line-by-line review, open- and axial coding, as well as theme development. Key findings were Black college men living with ADHD and/or depression expressed (a) feelings of social isolation, (b) financial distress, (c) stress from lack of support, and (d) other issues that would be discussed in the final presentation. The key implications for future research, policy, and practice are highlighted.

Biography

Terrell L. Strayhorn (he/him/his) is Professor of Education and Psychology at Virginia Union University, where he also serves as Director of the Center for the Study of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Principal Investigator of The Belonging Lab. He has worked in higher education and/or student affairs in progressively responsible positions, both as a full-time faculty member, chief academic officer, and senior student affairs officer formulating policies, practices, and designing programs that effectively support college students, including LGBTQ+ and other minoritized populations at HBCUs and PWIs.

J'Quen O. Johnson (he/him/his) is Assistant Director of Enrollment Management at Tusculum University. A doctoral candidate at the University of the Cumberlands, he also serves as Research Associate in the Center for the Study of HBCUs. Johnson has worked in higher education and/or student affairs for over 6 years in progressively responsible positions, both coordinating and/or (co)leading development of policies, practices, and programs that effectively support college students, including LGBTQ and other minoritized populations at PWIs.