

Adolescent African American Males ' Characterizations of Healthy Dating Relationship: A Challenge to One-dimensional Stereotypes

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including the voices of young AA males as they describe the qualities and dynamics of a healthy dating relationship. This study is part of a broader research agenda aiming to understand the socialization factors that influence adolescent beliefs and behaviors surrounding their dating relationships. Specific research questions for this study were: What do adolescent minority males see as the qualities of a healthy dating relationship? What do adolescent minority males value in a dating relationship?

and can shed light on the structural underpinnings of behavior, ie perceptions, attitudes, values and norms [34,35]. A greater focus on positive youth development is warranted in both research and practice. This reframing is needed to counterbalance the persistent focus on negative dynamics within teen dating relationships that reinforce stereotypes that young minority males are bio-behaviorally prone to violence and aggression [15,36].

Conclusion

Adolescent minority males had a strong sense of healthy dating relationship characteristics. More needs to be learned about the socialization factors that shape males' perceptions and influence their dating dynamics. Programs of positive youth development should resonate with these powerful narratives and the lived experiences of