PARTNERS FOR EMPOWERMENT OF PARENTS: EXPLORING A NEW
AFROCENTRIC PARENTING PROGRAM IN HALIFAX REGIONAL
MUNICIPALITY

by

Jemell P. Moriah

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Social Work

at

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
September 2011

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

The undersigned hereby certify that they have read and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance a thesis entitled "PARTNERS FOR EMPOWERMENT OF PARENTS: EXPLORING A NEW AFROCENTRIC PARENTING PROGRAM IN HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY" by Jemell P. Moriah in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Work.

Dated: 12 September, 2011

Supervisor: _____

Readers: _____

                        _____

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

DATE: 12 September, 2011

AUTHOR: Jemell P. Moriah

TITLE: PARTNERS FOR EMPOWERMENT OF PARENTS: EXPLORING A NEW AFROCENTRIC PARENTING PROGRAM IN HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

DEPARTMENT OR SCHOOL: School of Social Work

DEGREE: MSW   CONVOCATION: May   YEAR: 2012

_____
Signature of Author

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my five wonderful children, Howard, Royland (Jim), Abigail, Deborah and David. You are such an inspiration in my life. I thank God for each of you and the contribution you have made to my life, for your patience and love and all you have taught me about motherhood and being a parent. I thank you for your dedication to each other and your nieces and nephews. I pray that you would trust God, work hard and persevere so that your children, nieces and nephews would have a better life. I pray that this research will inspire you to be the best parent you can be to your children.

I would also like to dedicate this book to my beautiful grandchildren, Kelis, Nya, Kamran, Jadon and Safiya and others to come. You have brought me such joy. I love you all dearly and pray that each one of you may be given the opportunity to reach your full potential. Trust God, work hard and look out for each other.

Lastly, I would like to dedicate this book to my husband for his love, devotion and encouragement to me over the years. You are such a blessing and source of inspiration to me. I could not have completed this study without your love and encouragement. I thank God for you daily.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

A major challenge facing parent educators and professionals who provide prevention and early intervention programs/services for people of colour, specifically Black families in Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), is the lack of culturally relevant programs. An Afrocentric approach that incorporates concepts from the Empowerment and Ecological Systems theories will bridge this gap because it provides a framework for examining the impact of culture and race on Black family life and parenting. Reflecting on the African proverb, "it takes a village to raise a child", the study emphasizes the role of Black communities in supporting families for enhancing the healthy development of their children. The study examines Black parents' beliefs and goals about using racial socialization as a parenting strategy to address issues of race and discrimination that impact Black parenting. Findings indicate that parents in HRM are currently practicing some form of racial socialization, and are receptive to this model.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

PEP	Partners for Empowerment of Parents
ACSD	African Canadian Services Division
AUBA	African United Baptist Association
UNIA	United Negro Improvement Association
HRM	Halifax Regional Municipality
BLAC	Black Learners Advisory Committee
ABSW	Association of Black Social Workers
MGT	Modified Grounded Theory
GT	Grounded Theory
CAG	Community Advisory Group
CPR	Cultural Pride Reinforcement

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I thank God for bringing me to this phase in my journey. Without the help and strength you have given me daily I could not have completed this thesis. Many people have been helpful to me in this journey and I will forever be grateful to each one of you for your contributions. You have all provided incredible support to me and for this I am grateful.

Thanks to my family for their love, devotion, prayers and encouragement. My husband, Lionel provided steadfast support throughout my academic endeavours. My church family constantly reminded me of their prayerful support. Rev. Cheryl-Ann Beals was a great motivator whose prayers and words of wisdom was a source of inspiration.

To my colleagues at the Nova Scotia Association of Black Social Workers, your passion about culturally relevant programs and services for African Nova Scotians inspired and challenged me. My colleagues at Family and Youth Services, Department of Community Services, your commitment to serving vulnerable families with complex needs kept me going. Thanks to the many families I worked with whose stories inspired my interest in culturally relevant parenting program. Professors, Kathleen Donovan and Dr. Eleanor Wint thank you for your interest in my work. Thank you to Dr Judy MacDonald and Dr. Felicia Eghan for stepping in to be readers.

Finally, my deepest appreciation to Dr. Wanda Thomas Bernard, my thesis supervisor, for your unwavering support throughout this research and the many hours you devoted to reading and re-reading my thesis. Thanks for just being there. When the journey seemed so long, you inspired and motivated me.

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

There is an absence within parent education literature in Canada of an examination of what Black parents believe, practice, and experience as they seek to raise their children in a society where being Black is often devalued. Although there is a growing awareness in the field of parenting research that families do not live in a cultural vacuum (Coard, Wallace, Stevenson & Brotman, 2004; Forehand & Kotchick, 1996; Kotchick & Forehand, 2002; Moran, Ghate & Merwe, 2004; Turner, 2000; Whaley & McQueen, 2004), parenting programs often operate as if culture is not an important characteristic to be considered in the development of parenting practices. While some researchers suggests that cultural and ethnic background may shape parenting beliefs and behavior (Kotchick & Forehand, 2002), others assert that these concepts are crucial to any discussion of parenting Black children or interpretation of Black parenting (Peters M.F. 1985; Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 1985; Stevenson, Davis & Abdul-Kabir, 2001).

Many researchers agree that parenting makes a significant contribution to the well-being of children and families, but concur that the majority of intervention and prevention programs used with families were developed from a White, middle class perspective (Kotchick &Forehand, 2002; Gorman & Balter, 1997). These programs lack any consideration for the impact of culture and ethnicity on parenting (Forehand & Kotchick, 1996; Kotchick & Forehand, 2002; Turner, 2000; Whaley & McQueen, 2004). On the other hand, other family researchers note that the concept of 'race' also has a huge impact on parenting (Alvy, 1987; Boykin and Toms, 1985; Brown & Lesane-Brown, 2006; Coard, et al., 2004; Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 1985; Peters, 1997; Stevenson, et al., 2001).

With the growing recognition and acknowledgement that cultural factors influence parenting, researchers studying the cultural implication of parenting focused primarily on three areas of parenting (Kotchick & Forehand, 2002). These areas: ethnic variations in parenting and how cultural values or traditions influence those differences, ethnic group differences in the use of

1

physical punishment, and ethnic variations in social support networks and the resultant differences in parenting styles are viewed as deficits (Kotchick & Forehand, 2002). When Black families were studied, the focus was on the poorest and most vulnerable, and the results were generalized to all Black families (Alvy, 1987; Hill, 1998). Hill (1998) posits that research on Black families perpetuate the 'deficit' perspective which de-emphasizes how factors like race, sex, economic forces and social policies may influence parenting. Additional dysfunctions in Black families are usually attributed to individual or family values and/or internal structures.

Ogbu's Cultural Ecological Perspective of child development suggests that parenting is determined by two cultural characteristics: (1) the availability of resources in the environment that facilitate the development of culturally valued competencies; (2) folk theories of childrearing that dictate the customary parental practices believed to be successful in fostering culturally valued child behavior (Ogbu, as cited in Kotchick & Forehand, 2002). This perspective provides a framework for beginning to understand the complexities of parenting African American children (Kotchick & Forehand, 2002). However, it is surprising that the strong association between parenting and adaptive behaviours in children has not stimulated more research on the factors that contribute to parenting Black children.

Given the complexity that 'race' brings to parenting, this lack of research on factors relating to race and racial discrimination that may impede Black parenting, creates a void in the parent education resources for Black families. Researchers focusing on Black families suggest that 'race' adds additional stresses to Black family life and should be an essential factor in discussions about parenting Black children (Alvy, 1987; Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 1985; Hill, 1998; James, Este, Bernard, Benjamin, Lloyd and Turner, 2010; Peters, M.F., 1985, Stevenson, et al., 2001). In light of the diverse cultural groups that make up North American society, researchers have also criticized the dominance of parenting programs developed from a Eurocentric theoretical framework and the lack of similar programs from other cultural

2

perspectives, specifically, programs that reflect an African centered perspective (Graham, 1999; 2002; 2004; Schiele, 1996; 1997).

The absence of parenting programs based on the worldview and experiences of African Canadians (specifically African Nova Scotians) and other people of colour suggests that parent educators are seeking to address the parenting needs of these groups without any consideration of the history and varied cultural experiences that impact their lives. Black families need additional parenting strategies to raise their children in a society where racial hostility is still a common occurrence (Stevenson, et al., 2001), and this lack of culturally specific programs for African Nova Scotian families suggests that parent educators are severely limited in their ability to offer parenting advice to Black parents. In addition, given the complexity of Black family life, this lack of culturally specific programs may result in the perpetuation of focusing on Black families from a pathological perspective (Littlejohn-Blake & Darling, 1993). Parent education programs that do not address the history and cultural experiences of Black families are less likely to engage Black parents, because they may not affirm the skills and strengths of Black parenting, and may suggest to them that parent educators are experts who will teach them how to parent their children. Such programs lack the perspective of Black parents, and may result in parent educators losing any opportunity to hear their stories and different ways of addressing a parenting issue is lost. Turner (2000) posits that cultural considerations should include a clarification and appreciation for the role of race, ethnicity and culture in the occurrence and prevention of problems.

Significance of the Problem

The lack of parenting programs based on the history and cultural experiences of African Nova Scotians is significant for several reasons. First, there is a growing recognition that social services for people of colour, specifically programs and services for Black people, should be released from the dominance of the Eurocentric perspective and be expanded to include the

worldviews of people of African descent (Graham, 1999; 2002; 2004; Schiele, 1996; 1997). Although cultural sensitivity is being integrated in parenting programs in Nova Scotia, there is a need for cultural models that are indigenous to the African Nova Scotian experience to address this gap in parenting programs. The concept of Afrocentric Parenting is an example of such a model. Several parenting programs have been developed in the United States for Black parents that focus on strategies to assist them in protecting and teaching their children about living in a predominantly White society (Beal, Villarosa, & Abner, 2000; Brody, Murry, McNair, Brown, Molgaard, Spoth, Gerrard, Gibbons, Wills, Luo & Chen, 2006; Cherry, Belgrave, Jones, Kennon, Gray & Phillips, 1998; Whaley & McQueen, 2004). The *Partners for the Empowerment of Parents (PEP)* is the first of such programs to be developed in Nova Scotia, and possibly Canada. These strategies are referred to as 'racial socialization' (Coard et al., 2004; Brown & Lesane-Brown, 2006). In addition to preparing children to live in a race conscious society, studies have shown that the more parents practice *racial socialization*, the more children's socio-emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes are enhanced (Coard, et al., 2004). Other studies found that *racial socialization* is positively associated with children's academic success (Suizzo, Robinson & Pahlke, 2008) and a reduction in behavioral problems (Caughy, Campo, Randolph & Nickerson, 2002).

Secondly, given the emphasis on multiculturalism and the cultural make up of Nova Scotia where African Nova Scotians make up more than half of visible minorities (Canadian Census, 2006), it is vital that parenting programs reflect this diversity in culture and experience. If programs do not reflect the cultural experiences of the population they are intended for, they are likely to reinforce the very problems they are trying to ameliorate. However, programs that are developed from the perspective of the community they are intended to serve have the potential for practitioners to develop an understanding of the strengths of that community (Littlejohn-Blake & Darling, 1993). Hill (1998) posits that African American families have developed a

variety of family strengths that have sustained them during very challenging and difficult periods of their history. Similarly, African Nova Scotians, who were among the early settlers of this province also have experienced racial hostility and are very concerned for their children who must learn how to navigate a system where racism is experienced both individually and institutionally (James, et al., 2010). Therefore, effective parenting programs developed from the perspective and worldview of African Nova Scotians will draw attention to the survival and coping skills that this population has utilized to overcome race related challenges. Such programs could be a source of empowerment and strength for Black families and communities today.

Third, racial conflicts in schools in Nova Scotia, specifically Halifax, the capital city, continue to be a major source of stress for African Nova Scotian parents (James, et al., 2010) and this can have a huge impact on the healthy development of African Nova Scotian children. Suspensions and expulsions based on race related conflicts have the potential to negatively impact the future well-being of African Nova Scotian children, communities and the province in general. African Nova Scotian parents have a challenging job ahead of them. They must socialize their children to live and get along with the dominant society while teaching them to get along with their peers within their own communities, many of which are experiencing an increase in violence. It is my belief that a parenting program developed from Afrocentric perspective can be a source of empowerment to African Nova Scotian parents who are seeking to raise psychologically healthy children and help them to reach their full potential.

Goal of this Study

Participation in parenting programs that address the history and cultural experiences of Black families have the potential to build on skills and strengths of Black families. They may also enhance parenting to help Black children deal with the stereotyping of Black people that is often negative and degrading. Additionally, it may reduce the risk of Black children behaving in

5

unacceptable ways in schools and other social settings. I came to the decision to do this research with personal and professional experiences. As a parent, I have experienced firsthand the negative stereotyping of raising Black children in a predominantly White society.

My husband and I along with our five children moved to the city of Halifax in the mid nineteen nineties. Our first residence was in a working class neighbourhood and we were the only Black family on our street. One day while one of our sons was cleaning our yard, a police cruiser stopped in front of our house, the officer came into the yard and asked my son what he was doing there.   Apparently, this police officer did not expect to find a Black family living in that part of town and immediately thought that our son was up to something bad. This was our introduction to racism in Halifax. Our son who has never had any dealing with the law was devastated. He could not understand why he was approached by the police for doing nothing but cleaning his front yard.   It was the beginning of our understanding of the racial overtones of living in Halifax as a Black family. After that experience I became over-vigilant and overprotective of my children, especially of our sons. I realized that racial profiling of Black youth was the norm in Halifax and that Black youth did not have to break the law to have an encounter with the police, being Black was enough reason to be stopped and questioned even if it is in your own front yard.

A few years later while working as a family support worker I learnt from a professional point of view what it was like to work with Black families in the social service system.   In my work as a Family Support Worker, I provided supportive counseling to families who were involved with the child welfare system.   Many of these parents needed support especially in the area of discipline. The only resources that were available to me were written from a White middle-class perspective and did not reflect the reality of many of the families I worked with, including a number of White families. I worked with many Black families during this time who were often considered to be resistant to change or hard to reach, and I became more uneasy about the

6

curriculum I was using because it was not relevant. I worked with families whose young children were often suspended or expelled from school because of conflicts in school that were race related. I made several attempts to find parenting programs for Black families but without success.

While completing my Bachelor of Social Work degree I learned about the Afrocentric theory and it immediately resonated with me. I connected with this theory immediately and wrote several papers using this perspective. A few years later, while a student in the Master of Social Work program I had moved to a new job and part of my responsibility was to work with community agencies that provide among other services, parenting programs for families. At this time I still had not found a parenting program for Black families and became interested in developing such a program.

My personal and professional experiences have both greatly influenced my decision to become involved in this research on Black parenting. Initially, I developed the Partners of Empowerment for Parents program which focuses on the racial and cultural experiences of Black parents and how these factors may impact the parenting styles of this population. In this program parents learn by sharing their parenting experiences with each other and also gain new insights about parenting from the research literature on Black parenting.

This study is meant to be a catalyst for further discussions about the racial and cultural factors that shape the development and everyday practices of Black parenting in Nova Scotia, a province in Canada. It will examine the effectiveness of the Partners of Empowerment for Parents in helping Black parents to learn skills to enhance the self esteem and self worth of Black children and teach them how to respond positively to racism.

Research Question

The aim of the research was to answer the following questions: Does the Partners for Empowerment of Parents program (PEP) assist African Nova Scotian parents in Halifax

7

Regional Municipality in building skills to help their children enhance their sense of self-worth and respond positively to racism? What are the perspectives of the parent participants in the PEP pilot program regarding the effectiveness of the program as presented? What are the perspectives of the Community Advisory Groups and the program facilitators regarding the process of the PEP pilot program? It was hoped that the findings would facilitate the development of culturally relevant parenting programs for African Nova Scotians.

Theoretical Base of the Study

The next section presents the theoretical principles underlying this study. Throughout this study African Nova Scotians will be referred to either as Black families, African descended people, Black people, or Africans in the Diaspora.

The theoretical base of this study was framed from an Afrocentric perspective, which also draws upon concepts from the empowerment and ecological systems theories. These theoretical constructs provide a framework for examining the impact of internal and external factors on Black family life and parenting. The basic premise of Afrocentricity is that African people should be the center of any analysis that involves this population (Mkabela, 2005; Graham, 1999) and using this perspective participants in this study are located as the agents instead of "the Other" (Mkabela, 2005), thereby generating indigenous knowledge based on the cultural histories, philosophies, social interactions and experiences of African people (Graham, 2002). In this context, the empowerment approach that is often used in Black communities seeks to help individuals develop a stronger sense of self and group consciousness and develop resources as well as confirm the prevalence of African American's struggles with racism and oppression (Gutierrez, 1990). The ecological systems theory presents the opportunity to consider the environmental factors that impact Black family life and parenting. These elements are consistent with the Afrocentric perspective because it recognizes the importance of weaving family, community and culture to address the concerns of Black families.

8

The following sections will describe the theoretical foundation that was used in this study.

Afrocentric Theory

The Afrocentric theory views the reality of African people in the Diaspora from the perspective of African people (Akbar, 1984; Asante, 1998; Alkebulan, 2007; Graham, 1999; Schiele, 1996; Schiele, 1997; Swigonski, 1996). These researchers contend that models based on this theory support the liberation of Africans first and foremost but can also be applied to the liberation of all people. Despite the rapid growth of social scientists trained from Eurocentric perspectives, social problems continue to grow exponentially, and intervention models based on Eurocentric perspectives continue to focus on deviance, deficiencies and analyzing victims (Akbar, 1984; Graham, 1999). Schiele (1996) suggests that the so called 'social problems' may in fact be 'cultural problems' stemming from the cultural environment in which people live.

Eurocentric perspectives normalize the experiences of Caucasians and generalize those experiences to other cultural groups including Black people, and therefore do not reflect the cultural and racial experiences of Black families (Alkebulan, 2007, Mazama, 2001; Akbar, 1984). There is increasing evidence that prevention and intervention models used with Black families that do not reflect the cultural, racial and historical contexts of their lives are often ineffective and do not meet the needs of this group (Berkel, Murry, Hurt, Chen, Brody & Simons, 2009, Brody et al., 2006, Coard et al., 2004). According to Hill (1998) any analysis of social problems affecting Black families that excludes the historical and cultural contexts of this group is flawed and result in approaches that are "fragmented, unbalanced, deficit-oriented, static and ahistorical" (p. 15). The Afrocentric theory is another lens from which social problems can be studied since it legitimizes cultural and racial differences, and, addresses how these differences impact the analysis of social problems (Alkebulan, 2007; Kershaw, 1992; Schiele, 1997, 1996).

In addition, Afrocentric theory addresses the negative stereotyping of Black people and how the impact of the historical realities of this population affects contemporary Black family life (Schiele, 1997, 1996). With respect to parent education programs developed from this theoretical perspective, there is the potential for positive long-term impact on families from this population (Littlejohn-Blake & Darling, 1993) and a cost saving to society as a result of decreases in social and educational problems (Peters, 1999). Peters (1999) further points out effective programs could also reduce the need for specialized services, juvenile arrests and convictions, unemployment and welfare dependency, factors that are on the rise in Canadian society.

Exponents of Afrocentric theory assert that social work practice models are dominated by theories and paradigms from a Eurocentric worldview that emphasizes the philosophies and traditions of Europe while neglecting the worldviews of people of Africans (Alkebulan, 2007; Graham, 1999; Mazama, 2001; Schiele, 1996; Schiele, 1997 & Swigonski, 1996). These scholars contend that the history, culture and worldview of people of African descent must be included in any theory that is used to explain the problems or issues that Africans in the Diaspora face, and that any intervention that seeks to address the issues faced by African peoples must place them at the center of the analysis. Mazama (1999) reminds us that the knowledge base of traditional social work practice is ethnocentric in nature and therefore cannot be used to analyze human behaviour among all cultural groups. Mazama states,

> The African-centered worldview challenges social work to expand its philosophical and intellectual base to embrace humanity; to release the domination of the Eurocentric worldview over the psyche of African peoples; and to open the way for the transformation, creativity, and unlimited potential that is embedded within authenticity. (p. 104)

Thus, Afrocentricity rejects the idea that social work practice models developed from an ethnocentric perspective can adequately address the physical, intellectual, psychological,

10

emotional, spiritual, and social needs of Black people (Alkebulan, 2007; Graham, 1999; Mazama, 1999; Schiele, 1996; 1997).

Afrocentricity is not about replacing 'White knowledge' with 'Black knowledge', it is about respecting and acknowledging the culture of all people, and people of African descent reclaiming their cultural and historical roots (Mazama, 1999; Asante, 1998). Afrocentricity is primarily concerned with liberating people of African descent from cultural oppression, but it also supports the interconnectedness of all human beings and can be used to promote human justice and compassion for all people (Kershaw, 1992; Schiele, 1997). Afrocentric scholars point out that Afrocentricity emphasizes the cultural inclusion of people of African descent in any analysis of social problems that affect them, but does not minimize the experiences of other cultural groups. Table 1 shows the major assumptions of human beings asserted by the Afrocentric paradigm.

Table 1 - Assumptions of the Afrocentric Paradigm

Individual Identity as Collective Identity	Emphasis is placed on the collective identity of human beings rather than focusing on individual identity (Akbar, 1984; Akbar, 1985; Schiele, 1996; Schiele, 1997; Manning et al., 2004) but the uniqueness of the individual not rejected (Akbar, 1984; Boykin & Tom, 1985).
Spiritual Nature of Human Beings	The importance of spirituality or the non-material aspect of human beings is emphasized and is viewed as a legitimate source of social science inquiry (Akbar, 1984; Akbar, 1985; Manning et al., 2004; Schiele, 1996; Schiele, 1997).
Affective Knowledge	Feelings and the experiences of human beings are emphasized as legitimate sources of knowing (Akbar, 1984; Akbar, 1985; Schiele, 1996; Schiele, 1997).

Individual vs collective identity

The Afrocentric paradigm views the individual identity of human beings as a collective identity. This conceptualization of the collective identity of human beings denotes collective responsibility for the survival of human beings (Akbar, 1984) and challenges the Eurocentric assumption that the individual can be understood to the exclusion of her/his social group.

11

Although this paradigm supports the uniqueness of individuals (Akbar, 1984; Boykin & Toms, 1985), it rejects the notion of rugged individualism. It promotes a sense of community and interconnectedness to one's social group and environment (Schiele, 1996) and reinforces the notion that what affects one family member affects not only that entire family but the community at large. Therefore the family and the community have a shared responsibility to find solutions for social problems that affect them.

This concept has traditionally been practiced in Diasporic African communities and attests to the strength of Black families, and, their ability to find solutions to ensure that despite challenging circumstances, communal responses can be made to support the healthy functioning of Black families (Hill, 1998; Littlejohn & Darling, 1993; Manning, Cornelius & Okundaye, 2004). Manning et al., (2004) define collective responsibility as "taking care of each other and sharing the trauma of painful experiences" (p. 232) and suggests that it creates strong social and familial bonds in African communities. In a study about the effects of racism on African Canadians, James et al., (2010) argue that Afrocentricity has a global effect on African descended peoples because it "recognizes and acknowledges the effects of colonization, slavery and the continuation of structural racism on the material and spiritual well-being of African peoples in the Diaspora" (p. 24). African Canadians, therefore, are connected to Africans in the Diaspora because they face similar struggles. James et al., (2010) also point out that Afrocentricity is both diagnostic and prescriptive because it examines the causes of social problems and suggests solutions to those problems. From a diagnostic perspective it recognizes the effects of colonialism, slavery and structural racism on the material and spiritual well-being of African people in the Diaspora; and from a prescriptive perspective it embraces a methodological approach to finding solutions to social problems faced by African Canadians and society in general.

Spiritual Nature of Human Beings

The Afrocentric paradigm acknowledges and emphasizes the spiritual nature of human beings as a valid source of social science inquiry (Akbar, 1984; Akbar, 1985; Harris, 1992; Schiele, 1996) and suggests that this concept is essential to understanding human behaviour and resilience. This perspective resonates with African people in the Diaspora whose survival and experience is evidence that there is more to life than the material aspect and it also promotes a holistic view of human life (Akbar, 1985; Schiele, 1996). It legitimizes the view that any study of human beings should include the spiritual aspect of their lives, not only the materialistic (Akbar, 1985; Schiele, 1996). Littlejohn-Blake & Darling (1993) posit that spirituality plays an important role in the lives of African Americans because it gives them a sense of purpose and hope, despite challenging life circumstances.

African Nova Scotians who have experienced spirituality in a similar way have also used spirituality as a coping strategy to deal with the effects of racism and discrimination (Bernard & Este, 2006). Bernard and Este posit that spirituality has been a major strength of African Nova Scotians which has helped them develop a sense of connectedness and reinforced their ability to face the daunting challenges that resulted from racism. Graham (1999) also argues that any analysis of people of African descent would not be complete without an analysis of the concept of spirituality as it relates to this group, and further suggests that integrating spirituality into the analysis of human beings requires a paradigm shift of valuing human beings regardless of economic or social status assigned to them.

Affective Knowledge

Afrocentricity validates knowledge gained through feelings or emotions (Akbar, 1985; Schiele, 1996) and views affective knowledge as being related to the social work tradition of emphasizing feelings or empathy (Schiele, 1996). This perspective views rationality and

emotions as being essential elements in building knowledge and points out that these elements are related to the social work tradition of emphasizing feelings in practice (Akbar, 1985; Schiele, 1996). Schiele further points out that this concept is like "two transparent and penetrable sides of the same coin, that coin being the ways people experience life" (p. 287). This concept legitimizes the knowledge gained from experience, accepts the view that feeling emotionally attached to experience as being just as relevant as rationality (Akbar, 1984), and contributes to a holistic way of viewing social problems. The Ecological Systems Theory also provides a framework to examine social problems from a holistic perspective and is consistent with the Afrocentric perspective. The following section explains how this theoretical concept views the family and the contributions it makes to this study.

Ecological Systems Theory

The ecological system theory views the family as a system and describes the reciprocal relationship within families and the internal and external forces that impact family life (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and therefore is an extremely appropriate lens through which the challenges faced by families of African descent can be examined and analyzed (Stewart, 2010). According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) children and families are influenced by four ecological systems: the microsystem (structures that the child has direct contact with), the mesosystem (family, school and religion), the exosystem (factors at the community, society and cultural level which have indirect impact) and the macrosystem (factors at the global level that impacts a child's development).

Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, Maron, et al., (2004) assert that, "parenting does not take place in a vacuum, but within a complex web of interacting, interdependent factors, and that we cannot understand factors associated with one level of the model without also exploring those at other levels" (p.21). The ecological perspective supports the examination of factors at the societal, community, family and individual levels that impede or

facilitate the structure and functioning of Black families, and racism is considered a major societal factor that impacts Black family life (Hill, 1998). This perspective therefore suggests that parenting is influenced negatively or positively both at the familial and larger societal levels and these factors shape the parenting process. Kotchick & Forehand (2002) posit that the parenting process is shaped by ethnicity and culture, family socioeconomic status, and neighborhood/community contexts, and several researchers conclude that culture and ethnicity have a significant influence on the parenting of Black children (Kotchick & Forehand, 2002; McAdoo & McAdoo, 1985; Noble, 1997; Ogbu, 1997). However, this factor is seldom taken into consideration in the parenting programs that are available for African Nova Scotian families.

From an African Canadian perspective, James et al., (2010) assert that anti-Black racism at various levels in society negatively influences the lives of Black families. Based on Bronfenbrenner's theory, anti-Black racism is a factor at the exosystem and the macrosystem levels that significantly impacts the everyday lives of African Canadian families and is likely to influence the parenting of Black children. In addition, Black children and families are often portrayed negatively in child development literature without any consideration of the complex environmental factors that impact their lives (McAdoo & McAdoo, 1985) and the dissemination of this perspective to various disciplines perpetuates the view that Black families are dysfunctional. There is a decline of research on minority children, including Black children and when these children are studied they are compared to White children resulting in a disproportionate focus on problem behaviour (Lambert, Rowan, Kim, Rowan, Shin An, Kirsch, Williams, 2005). The ecological systems theory supports the view that Black families are not inherently dysfunctional; rather there are environmental factors that negatively influence the lives of families and children. Researchers posit five environmental factors that impact the lives of Black children: "the theoretical, socioeconomic, educational, parental and the internal environment of children's racial attitudes and self-esteem" (McAdoo & McAdoo, 1985, p. 10).

The Afrocentric parenting program examined in this study proposes protective and supportive factors at the family and community levels that may influence the positive developmental outcomes and functioning of Black children who are exposed daily to stressful circumstances as a result of anti-Black racism.

Protective and supportive factors at the family, community and societal levels do influence the positive developmental outcomes and functioning of children even if they are exposed to stressful circumstances, but, stressful factors at these three levels impact children psychologically, cognitively and physically (Harden & Koblinsky, 1999; Letiecq & Koblinsky, 2003; 2004; Moran, et al., 2004). James et al., (2010) corroborate that racism related stress affects the health and well-being African Canadians and therefore it is likely that this factor also impacts the parenting process in Black families. Although young children cannot escape the influences of factors at all levels, those at the family level such as parenting practices and behaviours are likely to have a profound influence on their lives (Wessel, 2005) because the ecological perspective suggests that change at one level will generate change at another level.

There is congruence between the Afrocentric theory and the ecological systems theory since the former emphasizes the interconnectedness between the family and the community and the latter stresses the impact of societal factors on families. This congruence implies that the development and design of parent education programs, specifically programs for Black families and children, should include an examination of the impact of ethnicity and culture, community and the larger society on parenting. The ecological systems theory provides the basis for social workers and human services workers to better understand how the interactions within and between systems in society influence family life, and it embraces the view that the deficit model does not accurately reflect the complexity of family life. It provides the tools for examining the environmental factors that influence family life, specifically Black family life.   Afrocentricity promotes the empowerment of African people by its appreciation and acknowledgement of

cultural knowledge to inform social service delivery (Graham, 2002), and conventional strategies to empower Black families have been espoused by the Empowerment theory. The next section will describe the approach from the empowerment theory that was used to support this study.

Empowerment Theory

Empowerment is a guiding principle of social work although the literature suggests that the concept is still contested in the profession. Despite this situation, several researchers have recognized the need for social workers to develop empowerment practices that are effective and relevant to the lives of the individuals and groups being served. Empowerment practice emerged in an attempt to provide responsive and effective services for women and people of colour in society who are often viewed as lacking the power or ability to improve their life's circumstances (Gutierrez et al, 1995). Empowerment practice also involves developing tools to bring about desired change (Gutierrez et al, 1995). The concept of empowerment is generally defined by professionals who subscribe to the ideals and values of the dominant helping approaches that use Eurocentric definitions of empowerment and these definitions exclude any consideration of the analyses of the socio-cultural perspectives of the individuals and groups being addressed, thereby rendering their perspectives and understandings as being irrelevant to the process (Graham, 2002, 2004).

The suppression of cultural values and interpretations suggests that individuals or cultural groups receiving services based on traditional empowerment perspectives are likely to experience some level of cultural oppression in society (Young, as cited in Graham, 2004). The suppression of cultural values is likely to further result in social problems being viewed as individual or group deficiencies if the deficit-approach to service delivery is the dominant approach used to find solutions to societal problems. To address this problem, social work practice is increasingly adapting existing services and programs to meet the needs of people of colour and other diverse groups (Gray & Allegritti, 2003; Schiele, 1996). Although this is step

in the right direction towards recognizing cultural diversity, it nevertheless "de-emphasizes the legitimacy of using the cultural values of people of colour as a theoretical base to develop new practice models" (Schiele 1996, p. 284) for finding solutions to problems that these communities face.

Black communities have always found creative ways to address the social problems affecting their communities, many of which are ignored by the larger society, and these community-based interventions which originated in mutual aid societies and self help processes have been a source of empowerment for them (Graham 2002, 2004, Roker, 2006). In Black communities, empowerment denotes freedom from oppressive barriers and control. It creates a space for the development of new thinking about the challenges they face, and how they can reclaim control over their lives through their understanding of their cultural histories, knowledge and experiences (Graham, 2002). Cultural knowledge is crucial to the empowerment of Black communities since it is through this medium that the distortions and omissions of histories, cultures and philosophies of Black people are corrected (Graham, 2002). Cultural knowledge is fundamental for addressing the psychological, intellectual, spiritual, social and emotional needs of Black people and is therefore a central tool for the personal and social development and overall empowerment of this group (Graham 2002).

Solomon (1976) posits that social workers working with African descended people need to take into consideration the powerlessness of this group which is based on their negative valuation in society. Solomon defines empowerment as "a process whereby the social worker engages in a set of activities with the client or client system that aims to reduce the powerlessness that has been created by negative valuation based on membership in a stigmatized group definition of empowerment" (p. 19). The application of this definition to the current study in the African Nova Scotia context is very useful since it refers to the direct or indirect blockage of power to a group because of group affiliation (Graham 2002).

18

The widespread use of dominant helping approaches to address social problems in Black communities without consideration of the historical and cultural experiences of people of African descent may well result in the use of intervention strategies that are irrelevant, ineffective and costly. Since empowerment practice was developed in an effort to provide responsive programs and services for those who are disadvantaged and disenfranchised, the goal of interventions with Black communities should be to "increase the actual power of the client or community so that action can be taken to prevent or change the problems they are facing (Guiterrez et al, 1995, p. 535). Solomon's definition is congruent with the Afrocentric theory since it recognizes how people of African descent are marginalized both individually and collectively and suggests a way of bridging the gap both at the micro and macro levels (Graham, 2004). Empowerment practices for people of African descent based on this perspective are more likely to be effective and responsive since they will focus on the interpretations and cultural values of this group instead of on perceived needs of service providers (Graham, 2004).

Building on Solomon's definition Zimmerman (1988) suggests that "many social problems exist due to unequal distribution of, and access to, resources" (p.44) and asserts that an empowerment approach should focus on strengths and the environmental influences that impact individuals and communities rather than blaming victims. Zimmerman further asserts that in the empowerment process the terms "client" and "expert" are replaced with "participant" and "collaborator", and collaborators "learn about the participants through their culture, their worldviews, and their life struggles" (p.44) and professionals are viewed as a resource for the community. The empowerment process also involves participants in the implementation of projects and setting the agenda for projects (p. 45). This perspective is harmonious with the Afrocentric theory because it recognizes that cultural knowledge is central to the empowerment of people of colour, specifically people of African descent. It challenges those involved in

19

social service delivery to people of African descent to critically rethink the concept of empowerment and how vital cultural knowledge is to this area of practice.

Graham (2004) posits that because conventional empowerment approaches refuse to acknowledge the experiences, values, cultural antecedents and interpretations of Black communities to address social problems, it indirectly promotes the disempowerment and marginalization of African people. Manning et al (2004) posits that the integration of an Afrocentric perspective with 'ego psychology' and 'spirituality' has great potential for enhancing the well-being of African Americans. Similarly, by utilizing an Afrocentric approach, conventional empowerment models can be strengthened to meet the needs of African people and communities rendering culture specific and cost effective programs that likely produce better outcomes for Black people. This integration of an Afrocentric approach into conventional empowerment models and a refocus on environmental influences that impact Black families and communities may also reduce the marginalization of this population because of the shift in focus from weaknesses to strengths of this population. Finally, this integration may also result in the development of genuine partnerships between community leaders and the social service system to find solutions to the social problems that plague Black families and communities. The inclusion of cultural knowledge in empowerment practice has great potential for profoundly transforming the lives of people of African descent both individually and collectively.

It is anticipated that the findings from this research will be useful in expanding the knowledge of program designers and developers about the effectiveness of Afrocentric parenting programs, and new knowledge about program design, curriculum, implementation and facilitation in Black communities will emerge. Additionally, it is hoped that the findings will provide new ways of knowing African Nova Scotian families. To help the reader understand the context of the study, and its findings, the thesis is organized as follows: chapter two-literature review, chapter three-

summary of the PEP program, chapter four-methodology, chapter five-findings and chapter six-discussion and conclusion.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

Parenting Black Children

There is a growing need for prevention and early intervention programs that reflect the reality of Black family life and parenting. Many researchers agree that effective programs for Black families must include the reality of race and culture on this population (Alvy, 1987, Peters, M.F., 1985). However, evidence-based programs on Black parenting are emerging mainly in the United States and are a rarity in Canada.

With this in mind, this chapter will examine the literature on Black parenting in the United States and how it is being used by Black families as a means of helping Black children to succeed in a society where their racial group is often devalued. Since there is a lack of research on Black parenting programs from a Canadian perspective, the literature review includes relevant empirical studies of Black parenting programs which were developed in the United States. The African Canadian Services Division (ACSD) of the Nova Scotia Department of Education currently uses an adaptation of the Positive Parenting Program with Black parents. This program was originally developed from a Eurocentric perspective but ACSD incorporated the Afrocentric principles in the program to addresses the unique challenges that African Nova Scotian students and parents face. The chapter will include an examination of the literature on Black parenting, the formal development of parent education programs in Canada and the current status of these programs as they relate to the diverse racial/ethnic realities of Canadian society. Building on the premise that strong families are the foundation for strong communities, an examination of Parent Education programs as a vehicle for building strong communities is explored in addition to an investigation of the African proverb "it takes a village to raise a child" and how it has been operationalized in Black communities.

There is a scarcity of research on Black parenting in Canada. However, a plethora of research has been done over the last several decades in the United States on Black parenting and its impact on Black children and Black family life. Research on Black parenting evolved from a descriptive and comparative deficit approach to studying Black families (Peters, 1997). Currently, there is an evolution of research that acknowledges and accepts the cultural differences, functionality, and authenticity of Black family lifestyles (Peters, 1997). Specifically, social scientists replaced the deficit-oriented approach of studying Black families with ecologically and culturally relevant approaches, and as a result basic information about parenting in Black families began to emerge (Peters, 1997). The literature acknowledges that the issues of race, culture, and economics are rooted in Black families' approaches to family life and in their childrearing practices (Alvy, 1987; Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 1985; Peters, M.F., 1985, 1997). These factors significantly influence how Black families live and raise their children and the kinds of coping behaviours they develop to help them deal with the unique pressures these issues impose on their lives (Peters, M.F., 1985, 1997).

Peters, M.F., (1985) found that although progressive changes have been made regarding racism, Black families regardless of their economic or social status continue to experience an extraordinary amount of stress in their childrearing roles because they have to prepare their children to live in a society where the devaluation of Black people is displayed in varying degrees and at different levels in society. Peters M.F., (1985) concluded therefore that no discussion about Black parenting or interpretation of parental behavior in Black families will be complete without discussing the impact of racism and other related factors on Black families. She further argues that because Black parents have the added burden of teaching their children how to "cope with ubiquitous deterrents and roadblocks" (p. 160) generated by racism, racial socialization must be part of Black parenting. She acknowledges that:

23

The socialization of children in Black families, then, occurs within the mundane extreme environment of real or potential racial discrimination and prejudice. The tasks Black parents share with all parents – providing for and raising children – not only are performed within the mundane extreme environmental stress of racism but include the responsibility of raising physically emotionally healthy children who are Black in a society in which being Black has negative connotations. (p.160)

Although racism is pervasive in society, there is historical and contemporary evidence that shows that African people have allies in mainstream society who recognize the deleterious effects this construct has on African people and society in general, and are partners in the struggle against racism (Alvy, 1987, McIntosh, 1988).

Alvy (1987) a researcher and developer of parenting programs for minority families in the United States, states that in addition to the challenges and tasks all parents experience in raising children, Black parents face unique challenges in raising Black children because of the all-pervasive phenomena of racism which complicates their job. Alvy (1987) asserts that because of these contextual differences parenting has become a much more arduous responsibility for Black parents, and has a great influence on their childrearing priorities and practices.

James et al (2010) concurs with Alvy (1987) that racism is an all-pervasive phenomenon that creates much complexity in Black parenting and often the crucial goal for most families becomes survival physically, emotionally and economically. They contend that the minority families, specifically Black families who are the focus of this study, are affected by a level of racism that is not experienced by other groups. Alvy posits that Black parenting authorities who have studied the effects of the pernicious influences of racism on African American families trying to raise their children in a predominantly White society share a deep respect for the onerous burdens and unique challenges Black parents face. He asserts that:

Black parenting authorities ….. clearly understand that these challenges and burdens are visitations on black parents from a cruel and oppressive political and economic system. These authorities note that while slavery was abolished as a physical reality, its psychological legacy has continued for decades and has been reinforced by unequal opportunity, neglect, and abuse. This legacy has influenced how blacks think about

themselves, their options in life and their children. It has influenced their child-rearing priorities and practices. (p. 16)

Authorities on Black parenting share a profound respect for the survival strategies employed by African American parents in navigating a hostile environment, and recognize that Black people still face discrimination and are disproportionately poor. However, they suggest that "blacks now have more realistic opportunities for advancement and achievement, and that different strategies to survive and thrive are required. At the core of these strategies is "how black parents raise and prepare their children" (Alvy, 1987 p.17).   Alvy acknowledges that there is much diversity among Black families and this leads to divergent views about cultural and ethnic consciousness. He states:

> There are diversities of outlook and opinion regarding cultural issues that need to be considered. While most blacks share a special consciousness about what it means to be black, there are different levels of cultural or ethnic consciousness, different degrees of ethnic identification and even ethnic denial and ethnic self-disparagement. (Alvy, 1987, p. xiv)

This diversity of outlook and opinion regarding cultural and ethnic issues results in parents transmitting diverse messages in multiple ways to their children about what it means to be Black (Lesane-Brown, 2006). This way of socializing Black children is commonly known as *racial socialization,* and it is considered to be "a complex, multidimensional construct" (Lesane-Brown 2006, p. 403). Lesane-Brown (2006) further states that, "because of its complexity, there is no single or commonly accepted definition that is assigned to this construct; rather, there are "multiple definitions, each describing either single or multiple functions exist" (p. 403). Consequently, African American children are socialized about race in many different ways.

Benton (1997) in her study about how racism affects African Nova Scotians asserts that most African Nova Scotians cope with racism by "developing an Afrikan consciousness influenced by the knowledge of racism" (p. 91). She argues that having knowledge of racism is not enough, rather, Afrikan consciousness must be matured and maintained by African Nova Scotians to

assist them in effectively coping with the effects of racism on both individual and collective development. She provides a clear discussion about the resources available to assist African Nova Scotians in coping with racism and contends that, "resources which have proven to be valuable in assisting Afrikans when coping with racism are our knowledge of truth and reality of self, and our authentic cultural heritage. These resources are the foundation of our natural identity and consciousness" (p. 168).

Benton concludes that in order to minimize the effects of racism, African Nova Scotians must implement coping skills and posits that these skills can be developed as they become more aware of their African identity and mature in African consciousness.

James et al (2010) suggest that the family is a beacon of hope for the development of Black children with strong individual and cultural identity. They reported that research participants in their study with African Canadians felt that Black families have the power within them to help them raise Black children successfully. However, participants also recognize some families need help and support to develop positive coping skills. In addition they found that all Black people regardless of their level of education or social standing, whether they are descendants of escaped slaves who moved to this country from the United States or recent immigrants, encounter racism which increases the complexity of their role as parents. They point out that some Black families have strong social support networks but a growing number of families, especially immigrants, refugees and single-headed families, have very limited family support and experience many stressors that impact their family relationships. They argue that the family is the best place to begin the socialization of Black children about their cultural heritage and identity. They contend that:

> The Black family has historically served as a bulwark against racism: as a strong and central source of social and psychological support for immediate and extended kin members, as a site of socialization and learning, and as a site of resistance. The family plays a central role in providing positive role models for Black youth, in the development

26

of a strong and positive self-identity, and in giving youth the skills and wisdom to cope with racism and to navigate life's challenges. (p. 163)

The literature suggests that that although the concept of racial socialization is new and still developing, the practice of socializing children about race has been central in the socialization process in Black families for generations (Lesane-Brown, 2006; Peters, M.F. 1985). In a study about the influence of birth cohort on race socialization Brown & Lesane-Brown (2006) found that the types of messages parents and caregivers transmitted to their children were influenced by: (1) Children's personalities which determined whether parents transmitted messages about race and the content of those messages (Hughes & Johnson as cited in Lesane-Brown, 2006); (2) Social change which influenced the type of messages parents pass on to their children (Brown & Lesane-Brown, 2006). These researchers suggest that children's views of the world were based on the type of socialization they received. (3) Parents' childhood racial experiences and workplace experiences that were related to race influenced the types of messages children received about race (Chen as cited in Lesane-Brown, 2006). (4) Parents of young children either avoided talking about race and concentrated on teaching basic skills or stayed away from messages that had the potential to make children dislike their racial group (Chen as cited in Lesane-Brown 2006; Richardson, 1981).

It has been very challenging for researchers to develop a single definition for *racial socialization* because of the complex and multidimensional nature of this construct, and the lack of consensus regarding a definition makes it difficult to compare published articles (Lesane-Brown, 2006). Lesane-Brown (2006) proposes the following comprehensive definition for racial socialization which emphasizes how messages are communicated, the types of messages and the purposes of the messages:

specific verbal and non-verbal (e.g., modeling of behavior and exposure to different contexts and objects) messages transmitted to younger generations for the development of values, attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs regarding the meaning and significance of race

27

and racial stratification, intergroup and intra-group interactions, and personal and group identity. (p. 440)

Wright (1998) posits that racism is a curse on society that cannot be erased overnight and suggests many strategies that parents can employ to reduce the negative impact of racism. She states,

> A child who is lovingly cared for, who is shielded as much as possible from racism and who learns about race in a way that is developmentally appropriate can even become emotionally stronger than children who do not have to deal with the challenge of racism. (p. 8)

In reviewing twelve published studies that assessed the content of messages parents transmitted to their children about race, Lesane-Brown found there was much inconsistency among the studies about the type of messages and the labels assigned to the message categories. The messages were integrated and organized into three major categories: (1) culture messages 2) minority experiences and, (3) mainstream experience (Boykin, Boykin & Toms, Demon & Hughes, Fatimilehin, as cited in Lesane-Brown, 2006). Table 1 outlines the categories of race socialization and the messages assigned to each category.

Table 2 - Major Categories & Sub-Categories of Race Socialization Messages

Major Categories	Focus of Messages for Major Categories	Sub-categories	Focus of Messages for sub-categories
Cultural messages	Emphasize racial pride and specific teachings about Black Americans or African culture (Boykin & Toms, Demo & Hughes, Hughes & Chen, Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis, 2002, as cited in Lesane-Brown(2006)	None	None
Minority experiences	These include messages that prepare and make children aware of an environment that is often oppressive of Blacks (Lesane-Brown, 2006)	Racism awareness	Helps children recognize potential racist and discriminatory events and experiences (Stevenson, as cited in Lesane-Brown 2006)
		Cultural coping with antagonism	Ways to cope with racism and discrimination (Stevenson, as cited in Lesane-Brown, 1994)
Mainstream experiences	These messages focus more on life skills and personal qualities, such as ambition and confidence in addition to emphasizing Blacks' co-existence in mainstream society (Boykin & Toms, Demo & Hughes, Stevenson et al ., as cited in Lesane-Brown, 2006)	Self-development messages (Bowman & Howard, Marshall, Sanders Thompson, as cited in Lesane-Brown, 2006)	Messages about working hard, getting a good education, and liking oneself that do not relate to race
		Egalitarian messages (Bowman & Howard, Marshall, Sanders & Thompson, as cited in Lesane-Brown, 2006)	Messages that emphasize commonalities among all people with a de-emphasis on race

This review also found two other race socialization factors that are comparable to cultural messages and minority experiences – proactive messages that promote Black culture and cultural empowerment and protective messages that promote coping with and an awareness of societal oppression (Stevenson as cited in Lesane-Brown, 2006). Mainstream messages can also be further broken down into two sub-categories: 'self-development' which focuses on messages about working hard, getting a good education, and liking oneself, and 'egalitarian messages' which highlights commonalities among all people, however, both of these types of messages de-emphasize race (Stevenson, as cited in Lesane-Brown 2006). Other minor race socialization categories found in this review were physical attributes, differences in personal hygiene for Black people and White people (Marshall as cited in Lesane-Brown, 2006), extended family caring, and spiritual and religious coping (Stevenson, Stevenson et al, as cited in Lesane-Brown, 2006). Studies also found that youth who received 'racial barrier awareness messages' and 'self-development messages' were more likely to achieve better academic outcomes than youth who did not receive these messages (Bowman & Howard, as cited in Lesane-Brown, 2006). Some scholars also suggest that race socialization messages also promote positive psychological functioning in children because it prepares them to deal with and understand prejudice and discrimination (Barnes, Hughes & Chen, as cited in Lesane-Brown, 2006).

In a similar review of published articles Hughes, Smith, Stevenson, Rodriguez, Johnson & Spicer (2006) examined the socialization practices of parents across ethnic lines including how Black parents socialized their children to deal with the issue of racism. These scholars point out that in research literature the term *racial socialization* is used almost exclusively to refer to the type of socialization that Black parents provide for their children and the concept includes "exposure to cultural practices and objects, efforts to instill pride in and knowledge about African Americans, discussions about discrimination and how to cope with it, and strategies for succeeding in mainstream society" (p. 748). They suggest that the construct of race is viewed

from a Black versus White perspective in the United States and have coined the term ethnic-racial socialization because it reflects socialization across all ethnic groups including African Americans. Four key themes of socialization practices that these researchers captured from the literature are *cultural socialization, preparation for bias*, *promotion of mistrust*, and *egalitarianism.*

   Cultural socialization refers to "parental practices that teach children about their racial or ethnic heritage and history; that promote cultural customs and traditions; and that promote children's cultural, racial and ethnic pride, either deliberately or implicitly (Boykin & Toms, Hughes et al., Hughes & Chen, Thornton et al., Umana-Taylor & Fine, as cited in Hughes, 2006). This concept includes "talking about important historical or cultural figures; exposing children to culturally relevant books, artifacts, music, and stories; celebrating cultural holidays; eating ethnic foods; and encouraging children to use their family's native language" (p. 749) and is considered a significant part of child rearing practices in Black families (Hughes et al, 2006). The concept of *cultural socialization* captures the socialization messages that are espoused in Lesane-Brown's (2006) *cultural messages* concept.

   Preparation for Bias refers to parents' attempts to promote an awareness of discrimination in society and prepare their children to cope with it (Hughes et al, 2006). The literature reveals that few parents spontaneously discussed this aspect of socialization openly, but it is not clear whether this is so because the topic is less salient in the socialization process or because it is too painful for parents to discuss (Hughes et al). *Promotion of mistrust* refers to the practices that emphasize the need for being careful and vigilant when interacting with other races (Hughes et al., Hughes & Chen, as cited in Hughes et al, 2006). In spite of the general pattern in the research that suggests this topic is not a main aspect of socializing Black children, themes associated with mistrust have emerged in qualitative studies implying that this topic is very salient (Hughes et al, 2006).

31

Egalitarianism and Silence about race refers to the preference of some parents to openly encourage their children to value individual qualities over membership in a racial group or avoid talking about race in discussions with their children (Spencer, as cited in Hughes et al, 2006). In these instances the priority for parents is familiarizing their children with developing skills and traits that would allow them to succeed in mainstream society instead of teaching them about their native culture or their status as minorities (Boykin & Toms, as cited in Hughes et al., 2006). However, in an effort to make a distinction between these two strategies, Hughes et al., refer to them as *Egalitarianism and Silence about Race.*

With the exception of the category *promotion of mistrust*, the findings of Hughes et al., (2006) regarding the type of socialization messages Black parents transmit to their children are consistent with the findings of Lesane-Brown (2006). There is similarity between the concepts of *minority experiences* and *preparation for bias* because both of these categories refer to the need for children to be aware that they may be treated differently in society because of their racial identity. Although researchers have explicated the need for racial socialization practices among African people, the differences in the emphases in racial socialization practices helps to explain the challenges they have encountered in trying to come up with a single definition for the concept. Table 3 outlines the concepts that emerged in Hughes et al (2006) review of the literature.

Table 3 - Socialization Concepts Emerged from Hughes et al (2006) Review

Concepts	Focus of Messages
Cultural Socialization	Giving children information either implicitly or explicitly about their race, ethnicity, history that promote cultural customs and traditions and promote children's cultural, racial and ethnic pride (Boykin & Toms, Hughes et al, Hughes & Chen, Thornton et al, Umana-Taylor & Fine, as cited by Hughes et al., 2006).
Preparation for Bias	Promotes an awareness of discrimination in society and prepare children to cope with it (Hughes et al, Hughes & Chen as cited in Hughes et al., 2006)
Promotion of Mistrust	Practices that emphasize the need for children to be cautious about interacting with other races (Hughes et al, Hughes & Chen, as cited in Hughes et al., 2006)
Egalitarianism & Silence about Race	Socialization that promotes individual qualities such as working hard, getting a good education and the equality of humans above group membership and de-emphasize discussions about race (Spencer as cited by Hughes et al., 2006).

Racial socialization of Black children is a new phenomenon in research, but it is an important factor in determining the healthy development of Black children, therefore more knowledge needs to be generated about its effectiveness in addressing the realities of Black parenting (Lesane-Brown 2006). The proliferation of programs on race socialization has not attracted a matching number of qualitative or quantitative studies to evaluate their effectiveness. However, it is clear that research of the topic cannot be achieved without a consensus in the literature on the definition of race socialization and consistency about what should be included in each category of race socialization (Hughes et al, 2006; Lesane-Brown, 2006). Consequently, the literature review only provides an understanding of why these programs are necessary.

However, the clear message that has emerged is that Black parents need to socialize their children differently to deal with the issue of race, racism and the reality of growing up Black in a White society. Although *racial socialization* is recognized as a crucial aspect of Black parenting, researchers point out that the concept only teaches survival skills on how to navigate a racist environment and that parenting involves both teaching and nurturing of children (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 1985).

This section discussed research-based information on the parenting ideas and practices of Black families. It reveals the critical role that race and culture play in preparing children of African descent to deal constructively with racial barriers and negative stereotypes, and, the key points about culture and race that Black parents consider as important aspects to be included in parenting Black children. These crucial aspects of parenting are not considered in mainstream parenting programs, therefore, it is questionable that current parenting programs can adequately address issues that Black parents view as vital to their parenting role. Given the complexities that race and cultural experiences bring to Black parenting, it is imperative that Black parents have strategies to teach their how to cope with racism. Concurrently, Black parents must also teach their children to be proud of their cultural differences and how to creatively navigate this system to reach their full potential. Therefore, parenting programs for Black families must take these realities into consideration. An examination of the development of mainstream parent education programs may be helpful to consider in this context. The next section will examine parent education in mainstream society.

Parent Education

Alvy (1987) defines parenting as:

> the process of raising children which involves a variety of interrelated functions and responsibilities that include (1) providing resources to maintain a family and home, (2) caring for the home, (3) protecting children, (4) the physical and psychological care-giving of children, and (5) advocating for children and interfacing with the community and wider society. (p. 9)

One factor that is common among parents regardless of their cultural background is that most care deeply for their children and want to do a good job at parenting (Moran et al, 2004) to enhance the well-being of their children. The concept of Parent Education or Parenting Support as it is more commonly known emerged in North America in response to significant changes affecting families and the well-being of children in both Canada and the US (Alvy, 1987; Mann, 2008; Skrypnek, 2002). Demographic changes, poverty and increasing demands of work and family life have affected the structure and functioning of families and as a result families have become isolated from their communities (Skrypnek, 2002; Webster-Stratton, 1997), losing the traditional support network that was available to families and increasing the complexity of the role of parenting. The more isolated families become, the less interest they have in advocating as a collective for the needs of all children, essentially, forcing them to focus more exclusively on individual family interests (Webster-Stratton, 1997).

Skrypnek (2002), a leading authority on parent education in Canada conducted a literature review of parent education programs that traced the development of formal Parent Education in Canada and argues that the early roots of parent education can be traced to Home Economics, Public Health, and Early Childhood Education. Each of these disciplines has made significant contributions to the knowledge base of child development, parent-child relations and to parent education as we know it today. Currently, parent education in Canada includes a variety of programs and resources to support parents and improve the well-being of children, but there is a dearth of studies regarding the long-term effectiveness of these programs (Mann, 2008; Peters, 1999; Skrypnek, 2002).

Peters, (1999) points out that compared to the proliferation of parent education programs that have been developed in Canada and the United States over the last thirty years, research on the outcomes of these programs have been negligent. According to Peters, (1999), programs have

either not been evaluated or the evaluations have been flawed and an increased interest in these programs has led to renewed attention to their effectiveness, specifically those programs that focus on the healthy development of children and their families living in high-risk, socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Skrypnek (2002) contends that "a lack of comprehensive, outcome evaluation studies has left researchers and practitioners unsure of the particular program components and delivery modes that are most effective" (p. 3).

There is much similarity between Canada and the United States in the way parent education programs/services developed. In the United States, Ellen Richards (Bois, 1997) and Catherine Beecher (Skrypnek, 2002) began the movement to establish 'domestic education' as a science equal to other sciences. Meanwhile in Canada, Adelaide Hoodless advocated for and was instrumental in establishing 'home economics' program in schools and universities (Skrypnek, 2000) and parent education was part of the curriculum. In the inception parent education programs emphasized the importance of proper nutrition and good hygiene and these early efforts were increasingly broadened to include public health clinics, home-visitation programs and the distribution of educational materials that focused on teaching parenting skills (Skrypnek, 2002).

Early efforts in Canada also included publications such as 'The Canadian Mother's Book' which focused on the healthy development of infants, 'The Normal Child: Its Care and Its Feeding' that viewed children as blank slates and parents as having the responsibility to shape children's characters, and popular parenting manual called "The Management of Young Children". In addition, "public lectures, radio programs, newspaper and magazine advice columns, and government published bulletins, pamphlets, and manuals" were other mediums used to promote Parent Education (Camacho, Lewis & Strong-Boag, as cited in Skrypnek, 2002). The establishment of Canada's first nursery 'St. George's School for Child Study, at the University of Toronto (Atkin, as cited in Skrypnek, 2002.) also played a major role in the

development of Parent Education in Canada and as a result parents became increasingly dependent on expert advice for raising children, instead of the traditional method of seeking advice and support from family and neighbours (Skrypnek, 2002).

Parent Education became more formalized in Canada during the 1960s – 1990s as the growth in research and theory development in the discipline of psychology led to the publishing of more books and the development of programs based on the Adlerian, Humanistic or Behaviourist school of thought (Skrypnek, 2002). Programs using the Adlerian theory advocated democratic parenting practices, instead of the traditional authoritarian parenting style. Those using the Humanistic theory focused on parents developing more compassion and empathy for children, with an emphasis on parents gaining a better understanding of affective parenting. Finally, those using Behaviourist theory emphasized modification techniques that taught parents how to reward positive behaviours and punish negative behaviours (Skrypnek, 2002).

In addition, there are also a variety of parenting programs that were developed by hospitals or health care facilities to address the needs of parents with special needs children, while others were designed to address language and literacy in young children (Skrypnek, 2002). One parenting program that has become very popular across Canada is Nobody's Perfect which focuses on Child Development, developing parents' confidence in parenting, problem solving and enhancing their social support network.

Parent education has experienced tremendous growth over the last three decades and currently reflects various philosophies (Gorman & Balter, 1997; Mann, 2006; Skrypnek, 2002). It is generally recognized as an early intervention/prevention approach designed to support parents and other care-givers in their parenting role, and has the potential to impact a variety of social and health problems that have huge social and financial implications for society (Alvy, 1987; Webster-Stratton, 1997). These programs are delivered in a variety of settings with differing duration and intensity. Researchers refer to parent education by numerous terms that include a

range of programs and services with different content, format and focus that support parents in their parenting (Mann, 2008; Skrypnek, 2002; Gorman & Balter, 1997; Webster-Stratton, 1997). *Parent training, parenting programs,* and *parent support* are some of the terms that are used interchangeably to describe parent education programs (Gorman & Balter, 1997).

The literature indicates that differing ideology regarding the role of parent education has resulted in a lack of consensus on the goals of parent education (Gorman & Balter, 1997). However, Gorman and Balter reflecting on the complexity of parenting across cultural groups and the increasing diversity in American society suggest that, "the content and overall goal of these programs should differ according to the target populations, to accommodate the complex nature of working with families of diverse ethnicity" (Gorman & Balter, 1997, p. 340). They assert that cultural sensitivity imply an understanding and appreciation of the values, beliefs and customs of cultural groups, and acknowledges different ways of being (Gorman & Balter, 1997, p. 342). They identified three types of culturally sensitive programs; *translated, culturally adapted,* and *culturally specific* programs. In addition to considering the diversity of ethnicity, the inclusion of components that address the socio-economic needs of parents (Alvy, 1987; Gooden, 2008; Webster-Stratton, 1997) and the disadvantage circumstances (Alvy, 1987; Mann, 2008) are recognized as being vital aspects of parent education programs that address the complexities in family life which have the potential to negatively impact parenting. Mann (2008) posits there is a growing need for programs that address the needs of non-traditional families.

Gorman and Balter (1997) also found that programs in the United States focused on four distinct groups: programs designed to *improve parenting generally* which focused on parents that are functioning well, but desire additional knowledge to improve their parenting; programs aimed at *specific populations of parents* which targeted incarcerated parents or single parents because of concern for their socio-economic condition; programs focused on *specific populations*

of children that addressed the concerns of children with disabilities or those that are chronically ill; and programs built around *specific parenting issues* which focused on concerns raised by parents such as drug prevention among teenagers (Gorman & Balter, 1997). However, parent education programs in the United States have increasingly focused on the impact of culture and race on parenting (Alvy, 1987; Gorman & Balter, 1997; Hughes et al, 2006; Lesane-Brown, 2006; Webster-Stratton, 1997;) and a number of empirically based programs have been designed specifically for African American families (Alvy, 1987; Brody et al, 2006; Gorman & Balter, 1997; Whaley, A.L. & McQueen, J.P., 2004).

In Canada researchers found six categories of parent education programs. *Remedial* parenting programs for parents who are identified as either abusive, neglectful or lacking in effective parenting skills and for whom participation is either court-ordered or voluntary; *preventive* programs for parents identified as 'at risk' and participation in this category is usually voluntary; *promoting family well*-being programs which focus on families who are interested in enhancing their parenting skills and promoting the well-being of families and participation is usually voluntary (Skrypnek, 2002).

Mann (2006) in reviewing programs that are effective in Canada identified three categories of parent education programs: *universal programs* that provide basic parenting education for all parents*, high priority programs* which focus on parents experiencing many stressors, and *specific & urgent needs programs* that targets families experiencing crises such as homelessness or custody issues. In Nova Scotia, the majority of programs currently being offered fall under the category of *universal programs* but there is recognition of the diversity and complexity within family life and new programs to address the complex needs of families are being developed. Table 4 outlines categories of parent education programs found in the United States and Canada.

Table 4 – Categories of Parent Education in the US and Canada

Program Categories	Target Populations
General Parent Programs (US)	Well functioning parents who desire to improve their parenting skills.
Specific Populations of Parents (US)	Parents whose circumstances raise specific concerns i.e. incarcerated parents or single parents.
Specific Populations of Children (US)	Children with special demands, i.e., chronically ill children or children who have learning disabilities.
Specific Parenting Issues (US)	Parents with specific concerns such as, raising drug-free teenagers.
Remedial Parenting Programs (Canada)	Parents who are identified as abusive, neglectful or lacking in effective parenting and participation is either court-ordered or voluntary.
Preventive Parenting Programs (Canada)	Parents who are classified as being 'at risk' and participation is usually voluntary.
Programs Promoting Family Well-Being (Canada)	Parents who are interested in enhancing their parenting skills. Participation is usually voluntary.
Universal Programs (Canada)	Geared towards providing basic parent education for all parents.
High Priority Programs (Canada)	Focuses on parents who are experiencing multiple stressors.
Specific and Urgent Needs Programs (Canada)	Families who are experiencing crises i.e., homelessness or custody issues.

In assessing the effectiveness of culturally sensitive programs in the United States Gorman & Balter (1997) found that two well-known general programs, Parent Effectiveness Training (PET) and Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) that are often used with low-income and minority families do not reflect the realities of their lives, and are culturally insensitive because their focus is usually White, middle-class families (Gorman & Balter, 1997).

Parents do not begin their parenting role on a level playing field and often they encounter different circumstances either internally and/or externally that facilitates or impedes the process of parenting. However, attempts to level the playing field are often made by providing parents with the tools to function at a level that is considered to be society's ideal of what is a good parent and these ideals don't always reflect every parent's reality (Moran et al, 2004). All parents therefore, do not necessarily need to use the same tool. Effective parenting programs must reflect the needs and the strengths of the target population (Mann, 2008).

Although the research from a variety of sectors supports the need for programs and services to promote the healthy development of children and healthy families (Health Canada, 1999; Mann, 2008; Peters, 1999; Skrypnek, 2002), there is no Canadian system through which organizations can share their resources and experiences (Health Canada, 1999). The available literature suggests that most of the parenting programs used in Canada were develop commercially in the United States (Health Canada, 1999), and programs that have been modified or adapted focus on parents of teens since this group generally faces more challenges than parents of younger children (Skrypnek, 2002). Appendix 1 outlines parenting resources identified in Health Canada's (1999) review of parenting resources available in Canada. It includes the popular "Nobody's Perfect" parenting program that was developed by Health Canada in partnership with the four Atlantic provinces and "Sacred Child" an Aboriginal Parent Education Resource Kit developed by the Saskatchewan Prevention Institute (2008) for parents of Aboriginal children. As indicated in Appendix 1, there is a wide variety of parenting programs available across Canada, both commercially developed programs from the United States and programs developed by Canadian agencies, however, there are few references to culturally sensitive parenting programs. Subsequent research has recognized the need for culturally relevant parenting programs to address the multicultural reality of Canadian society (Mann, 2008; Skrypnek, 2002). This reality highlights the significance of this research on parenting programs for Black parents

in Halifax Regional Municipality. Although some Black parents may benefit from parenting programs developed from a Eurocentric perspective, I propose that a parenting program developed from an Afrocentic perspective is more likely to enhance the parenting skills of Black parents and be embraced by them.

This review of the development and current status of Parent Education programs in North America, specifically Canada, suggests that an overwhelming majority of programs are developed from a Eurocentric perspective and designed to meet the needs of families from the dominant group. Given that Canada is a multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic country it is imperative that parent education programs be developed to reflect this diversity. One of the guiding principles of Afrocentricity is building community. A parenting program developed from an Afrocentric perspective may help in restoring a sense of cohesion and community in Black communities that are often disproportionately underserved, isolated and where young children are increasingly experiencing suspension and expulsion from school. Organizing community through parenting programs will be explored next.

Parent Education as Community Organizing

Drawing from the work of Rubin and Rubin, 1992, Shragge (2003) defines community organizing as:

> A search for social power and an effort to combat perceived helplessness through learning that what appears personal is often political….Community organizing creates capacity for democracy and for sustained social change. It can make society more adaptable and governments more accountable…..Community organizing means bringing people together to combat shared problems and to increase their say about decisions that affect their lives. (p. 41)

Four components of community organizing are identified in this definition - *social power*, *learning*, *democracy*, and *sustained social change,* however, Shragge (2003) suggests that goals related to these elements require both local and state interventions, thus limiting the role of the community in some instances to effect social change. *Social power* is achieved through

collective action and has traditionally taken the form of 'community action' and 'personal

development', while *learning* is a participatory process through which individuals can develop

leadership skills. The third component *democracy* is gained when individuals become involved

in community organizing and are able to voice their opinions on decisions that impact their daily

lives. The final component, *sustained social change* is more complex and has five goals

regarding social change:

> improvement of the quality of life through the resolution of shared problems; reduction of
> the level of social inequalities caused by poverty, racism, and sexism; the exercise and
> preservation of democratic values as part of the process of organizing; enabling people to
> achieve their potential as individuals; and the creation of a sense of community. (Rubin &
> Rubin, as cited by Shragge, 2003)

Traditionally, community organizing both formally and informally, has been the means by

which communities provided mutual aid or demanded social justice for the disadvantaged in

their communities (Bradshaw, Soifer & Gutierrez, 1994; Gooden, 2008; Shragge, 2003;

Gutierrez et al, 1996; Gutierrez & Lewis, 1994; Laing, 1996). Shragge (2003, citing Rothman,

1999) and Laing (1996), identify three models of community organizing. The first is *locality*

development, a grass-roots approach to community change based on the assumption that

community change can take place bringing together citizens with common interest to solve

community problems. Next is *social planning,* a top-down approach to solving community

problems which often involves community residents in the process but its focus is on providing

and managing services that were developed outside of the community without the transfer of

power to community members. Third, is the *social action* model which promotes social change

through changes in the power structure with the aim of acquiring more resources and stronger

voices to help communities achieve their goals.

Despite the lofty goals of these models, there are aspects of the process of community

organizing that often reproduce the injustices that it seeks to ameliorate (Shragge, 2003;

Gutierrez et al, 1996; Gutierrez & Lewis, 1994). Although the models mentioned above were

proposed at a time when matters relating to diversity and culture were common discussions in

social work circles, these models do not include an analysis of ethnicity, culture or race (Laing,

1996). Several researchers have asserted that the lack of attention to matters relating to ethnicity

(Bradshaw, Soifer & Gutierrez et al., 1994; Gutierrez & Lewis, 1994; Gutierrez et al, 1996;

Laing, 1996), culture (Gutierrez et al, 1996; Laing, 1996), race (Bradshaw et al., 1994; Gutierrez

et al, 1996; Laing, 1996) gender (Gutierrez, 1996; Gutierrez & Lewis, 1994), and class

(Gutierrez et al, 1996; Gutierrez & Lewis, 1994) have contributed to the ineffectiveness of

mainstream models of community organizing in communities of color. The Alinsky and

Feminist models which are identified as the two most effective models of community organizing

have also been criticized for their failure to include a reflection of the dynamics of race, culture,

and class (Bradshaw et al., 1994). Laing (1996) points out that culture based models of

community organizing are crucial to the elimination of the dominance of mono-cultural

approaches to community organizing as the only method of addressing social phenomena.

Therefore, community organizing models based on Afrocentric principles or existing models

adapted to incorporate Afrocentric principles may be more successful in addressing the needs of

Black communities.

Critics of the Alinsky model suggest aspects of the model that would not be congruent with

empowering Black communities. The literature suggests that this model, though strong on

techniques that have made it one of the most used models in community practice, does not focus

on bringing about fundamental social change in communities (Miller; Fisher & Kling as cited in

Bradshaw et al., 1994). Alinsky's model is not congruent with effecting real change in Black

communities because community organizers are viewed as experts who 'work for the

community' instead of facilitators of change who work 'with the community', and as a result

community strengths are not acknowledged and utilized, and indigenous leadership is not

developed (Bradshaw et al, 1994; Gutierrez et al, 1996). These scholars further argue that this model also perpetuates dependency on community organizers.

The feminist model views the organizer as being an equal partner with the community who works in collaboration with the community to bring about social change with the aim of empowering communities (Bradwein; Joseph et al., & Weil as cited in Bradshaw et, 1994). The organizer therefore learns from and gives to the community (Bradshaw et al., 1994). Another principle of feminist organizing is its aim of recognizing and celebrating diversity and building unity through diversity, however, the model is often criticized for not reaching this ideal (Bradshaw et al, 1994; Gutierrez et al, 1996).

Researchers point out that community organizing has a long and rich history in Black communities and the models used by these communities have increasingly been documented over the last decade (Bradshaw et al., 1994; Gutierrez & Lewis, 1994; Gutierrez et al, 1996; Smyth, 2009; Gooden, 2008; Holley, 2003). Drawing from the definition cited by Shragge (2003), community organizing involves bringing people together to solve shared problems and therefore effective community organizing models in Black communities need to focus on the problems as identified by the community and solutions need to be owned by the community (Bradshaw et al., 1994; Gutierrez & Lewis, 1994; Gutierrez et al, 1996; Laing, 1996).

Gutierrez et al (1996) contend that, "community organization methods are designed to create social environments that support social justice through influencing policies, developing programs, or governing locally. Although the target of change is the community, the forum for change can be individuals, families, groups, or organizations" (p. 502), hence parent education programs that are designed to enhance the healthy development of children fits perfectly as a medium for social change because of their potential to positively affect the lives of individuals, families, groups and organizations. Parent education programs have been successfully used as a medium for bringing about positive changes in individuals, families, organizations, and

45

communities (O'Donnell & Karanja, 2009; Webster-Stratton (1997). Parenting programs can be used as community building strategies since these programs often reach their initial goals of improving parenting skills. However, they also have the added benefit of strengthening parents' social support and increasing their involvement in schools and other community building activities (Webster-Stratton, 1997). Holley (2003) posits that community building which primarily focuses on building strong communities is a central aspect of community organizing. The next section will focus on two community organizing models and how aspects of these models can be used in Black communities.

Researchers who have critically examined two popular approaches to community organizing - the Alinsky and Feminist models, have suggested that a hybrid of these models, which draws on the strengths of both models, would be most effective in working with communities of color, including Black communities (Bradshaw et al., 1994). They point out that this hybrid model is more useful for working with communities of color because it addresses the dynamics of race and ethnicity and how these phenomena affect community organizing. The model includes the following characteristics:

- It is flexible according to the organizing context.
- The organizer becomes familiar with the community and its subgroups.
- The organizer develops organizing strategies based on the community's perspective and skills.
- The organizer engages members of the community in an analysis of their conditions, with the goal of developing ideology/vision regarding change.
- The organizer is a facilitator and learner.
- A collaborative, participatory, democratic process is used among community members.
- The organizer identifies indigenous leadership; leadership is developed organically through a democratic process.
- Confrontational tactics are used when necessary, for example, when there is an extreme power imbalance between the community and its opposition or oppressors. (Bradshaw et al., 1994)

In addition to the principles mentioned above, recognizing diversity (Bradshaw et al., 1994; Gutierrez et al., 1996) and building on community strengths are two important skills that would

46

enhance community practice within communities of color (Gutierrez et al., 1996). These skills could be applied to organizing work with Black communities. There is much diversity within Black communities based on culture, ethnicity, and socio-economic position (Alvy, 1987) and recognizing and acknowledging this diversity is an important step towards ensuring that all groups within communities are well represented in the organizing process (Gutierrez et al., 1996). Similarly, by recognizing the strengths that exist within communities of color, including Black communities, the organizing process can build upon these strengths that were acquired as a result of their many years of struggles and survival against oppressive systems (Gutierrez et al., 1996).

By merging the above elements of community organizing, a holistic approach to working with communities is suggested. This will also eliminate dichotomies that often exist between communities and the power structures, and between the organizer and the community, thus paving the way for meaningful collaboration and less dependency on the organizer (Bradshaw et al., 1994). Similarly, the notion of unity, that is families and communities working together for their mutual development, is a foundational principle of Afrocentricity.

The models examined in this review identified the need for culturally relevant community organizing models for effective community practice (Bradshaw et al., 1994; Gutierrez et al, 1996). It has been argued that community organizing in communities of colour that focus on issues identified by the community and use community strengths and leadership in the process of finding solutions to those problems have great potential for bringing about positive and sustainable social change These strategies are congruent with the Afrocentric perspective that proposes that African people should be central in any discussion that analyzes social phenomena in their communities (Graham, 2002; 2004; Asante, as cited in Mazama, 2001; Schiele, 1996). The following section will examine the role of Black communities in supporting parents in the task of child-rearing and how this practice can promote healthy families and build communities.

Black Communities and Child Rearing - It Takes A Village

The principles of Afrocentricity emphasize the importance of communal living and suggest that families and communities have a shared responsibility for influencing and shaping the lives of children. They are congruent with the well-known African proverb - '*it takes a village to raise a child*' which is increasingly becoming popular in mainstream society. However, this proverb is much more than a slogan to African people. It views child rearing as a collective responsibility rather the responsibility of individual nuclear families (Graham, 1999; Stevenson et al., 2001), and this practice has been a cultural strength in Black communities for generations (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 1985; Hill, 1998). The Afrocentric principles encourage families and communities to work together to nurture and shape the lives of children and build community.

Hill (1998) points out that, "the extended family which is perhaps the most enduring cultural strength" (p. 22) in Black families plays a significant role in rearing Black children, a first developed in Africa. The helping tradition in contemporary Black communities was enhanced through the exclusion and social isolation from resources and services reserved for mainstream society, which inadvertently led to the creation of many unique opportunities for building and strengthening Black families and communities (Johnson, 1981; Laing, 2009; Pachai, 1990; Roker, 2006). The literature supports the collaborative approach to community building will enhance the healthy development of Black children and communities (Franklin, 2007; Johnson, 1981; O'Donnell & Karanja, 2009). Traditionally, there has always been a bond between Black communities, Black institutions and Black families and contributing to the healthy development of Black families and children (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 1985; Johnson, 1981). Those historical links and functions have been eroded and need to be revived and strengthened for the

benefit of families and communities and society in general (Johnson, 1981; Franklin, 2007). The *village* concept does not diminish the role of individual families, but recognizes that communities play a crucial role in raising children. Johnson (1981) posits that families "play an important and vital role, for it is the family that has the initial, primary, and enduring responsibility for the socialization of the individual members of a group, community, society, or nation" (p. 25). Johnson (1981) contends that,

> Historically, a number of institutions within the Black community have undergirded Black family life and guided its development; the extended family, the church, mutual aid societies, and educational institutions. This assistance has included economic and moral support. Likewise the founding and maintenance of these institutions came about as a result of the collective efforts of families. (p. 35)

Johnson further argues that Black families like other families do not have the resources, and in many instances the know-how to initiate programs. He asserts that if Black institutions that are more resource rich and have more organizational capabilities, partner with Black organizations and professional groups they can provide services and training programs for the betterment of Black communities. As previously mentioned, demographic changes have affected the way communities function. Black communities have not escaped the negative impact of this demographic trend which resulted in "less direct interaction between the Black family and other Black institutions" (Johnson 1981, p. 35) and interaction within Black families and communities (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 1985; Johnson, 1981). As a result, traditional family functions are served by specialized institutions external to Black communities and often "these external institutions are alien, hostile to, and unfamiliar with Black cultural experiences, lifestyles, and family patterns" (Johnson 1981, p. 35), thereby rendering services that do not reflect the cultural experiences of Black families. Franklin (2007) responding to the challenges of Black family life in the American context states,

> The vitality of far too many African American communities is threatened by the rapid erosion of old, hard-won habits and cultures of learning and excellence. The question that looms now is, how resilient are those traditions? That erosion is dramatically

49

manifested in the vast number of urban schools where kids are not learning, where learning itself has been devalued and ridiculed, and the public will and resources to reverse that situation are lacking. Reversing this will require a major outpouring of public and private investment, faith, and effort. But I'd like to make the case for community leadership that helps to lead and inspire that renaissance. (p. 172)

Historically, many Black institutions were developed by and for Black people and catered to the needs of Black families (Franklin, 2007; Gooden, 2008; Johnson, 1981; Pachai, 1990; Roker, 2006) and this practice is very evident in African American and African Canadian communities where the church, family and local Black institutions collaborated to ensure the healthy development of families, children and communities. In sounding the alarm for Black communities to return to their traditional way of working together for the betterment of families and communities, Franklin states:

> I want to focus here on three institutions that have played a heroic role in serving Black communities in the past. Of course, every ethnic community has these same institutions. What's important is that these are institutions that *African Americans control and for which they set the agenda, determine priorities, and pursue solutions with the necessary or available energy and resources* [emphasis mine]. They are the church, the family and the school. If the potential and power of just these institutions were properly aligned and mobilized, no matter who occupies the White House and no matter what Wall Street is up (or down) to, African Americans could make the lives of their children significantly better. This really is the power of the people. (p. 13)

Similarly, in Nova Scotia, Black churches, families and schools (though to a lesser degree) have played a significant role in serving the needs of Black communities in the past (Evans & Tynes, 1995; Roker 2006).   Given the sense of loss of cultural identity and cultural consciousness that has weakened the community spirit among African Nova Scotians (Benton, 1997), a rekindling of the community spirit that engendered their survival against great odds (Roker, 2006; Pachai, 1979) may be one strategy that needs to be revisited. This strategy may assist Black parents in their struggle to raise healthy Black children in existing communities.

Holly (2003) contends that the healthy development of Black children is dependent upon strong Black communities since "it is through building strong communities that families can create networks of support that are so vital to their healthy functioning" (p. 40). Community

building is defined as, "the activities, practices, and policies that support and foster positive connections among individuals, groups, organizations, neighborhoods, and geographic and functional communities" (Weil, 1996, p. 482). Weil's definition suggests that there are activities and practices that communities can engage in that support the building of strong communities and families. In Black communities these activities and practices were expressed through the informal social support networks carried out by the extended family or kin-family and neighbours that laid the foundation for strong Black communities and the nurturance of Black children (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 1985; Littlejohn-Blake & Darling, 1993; Roker, 2006; Wright-Edelman, 2008).

This interdependence and communal cooperation which was born out of necessity was crucial for the survival of Black families and communities and nurturance of Black children (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 1985; Littlejohn-Blake & Darling, 1993; Roker, 2006; Wright-Edelman, 2008). Franklin, (2007) suggests that Black families and communities need to revisit this type of collective work to foster the kinds of supports that are required to strengthen Black families, and provide the collective nurturance Black children need for their healthy development. Wright-Edelman (2008) posits, "those of us who see the threads of our families and neighbourhoods and social networks fraying know we need to reweave the fabric of family and community that has supported us and brought us this far" (p.2). In Nova Scotia many organizations were developed to support Black families and communities.

The African United Baptist Association (AUBA), an association of Black Baptist churches formed in 1853, was established to provide support, fellowship and spiritual development to the Black community in Nova Scotia (Thomson, 1986; Pachai, 1979; 1990; Roker, 2006). Establishing and sustaining an organization such as the AUBA over 157 years ago when Black people in Nova Scotia were marginalized and underserved, is also an example of the spirit of survival that was evident among Blacks in Nova Scotia and their willingness to organize to take

51

care of their people.   This helping tradition also led to the establishment of the Nova Scotia

Home for Coloured Children that was organized to meet the needs of orphaned children of

African descent who were at the time receiving informal care in the community (Pachai, 1990;

Roker, 2006). The Black United Front (BUF) that emerged as a result of critical race

consciousness following the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s was established to provide

needed social services to the Black community, and Roker (2006) posits that this organization is

likely the first organized effort by African Nova Scotians to respond to the social service needs

of African Nova Scotian communities and families. The Association of Black Social Workers

(ABSW) that recently celebrated its 30th anniversary is another group that has organized to meet

the social needs of African Nova Scotians and continues to work to improve the conditions in

Black families and communities and society in general (Bernard & Hamilton-Hinch, 2006).

Another example of a Black organization that was established in Nova Scotia that contributed

to the socializing of African Nova Scotians is the establishment of the United Negro

Improvement Association (UNIA) in Cape Breton.   The UNIA was a meeting place for Blacks

at a time when Blacks were not allowed in White establishments, but it was also a cultural

organization that instilled cultural pride in young people and prepared them for life in a race

conscious society (Marano, 2010). Nova Scotia was regarded as a hot spot for UNIA activity

with the establishment of the UNIA in several Black communities including Glace Bay and

Sydney, one of Canada's port towns, now a port city (Marano, 2010).   Sydney was home to

many West Indian immigrants who established the largest UNIA in eastern Canada (Marano,

2010) and the Glace Bay UNIA hall which currently houses the UNIA Cultural Museum is now

the oldest UNIA in Canada still in operation (Marano, 2010). The literature suggests that

African Nova Scotians despite enormous struggles have a strong legacy of organizing themselves

and building both formal and informal systems that sustained families and communities for

generations.

Berkel et al (2009) assert that when parents and communities engage in the collective socialization of Black youth they positively influence Black youth's racial identity and self image resulting in proactive responses to racism and discrimination. These responses positively impacted academic achievement, peer pressure and aggressive tendencies. It is imperative that Black families and communities rekindle the spirit of caring and sharing that "created networks of extended family and near-family and laid the foundation for strong Black communities and the nurturing of Black children" (Wright-Edelman, 2008, p. 1).

However helpful the *village* concept may have worked in Black communities, there are some limitations. Franklin & Boyd-Franklin (1985) suggest that the use of the *village* concept results in Black children having multiple care-givers which provide a rich socialization experience for them, but this practice may also question parental authority and requires a coordinated response to parenting that ensures that children do not receive conflicting messages about discipline and socialization. Also, the growing trend of abuse of children needs to be taken into consideration if this concept is implemented in communities. There may be concern, and rightfully so, about the safety of children with employing the village concept in communities. Recognizing the value of the village concept to communities, researchers recommend that parents carefully consider a network of trustworthy persons who can add to the love and care they give their children, and make agreements with these persons to parent their children in their absence (Stevenson et al., 2001). These persons may be godparents, aunts, uncles, church members, trusted friends and neighbours who add to and support what parents are doing (Stevenson et al., 2001). The key is finding trustworthy persons with whom children can build a trusting and respectful relationship.

Summary

The literature review presents a vast amount of empirical studies that have emerged in recent years about parenting in general and specifically Black parenting. Recognizing that culture and ethnicity have a profound influence on the development of children, researchers have identified

the need for culture specific programs to reflect the changing demographics in North America. However, much of the existing programs offered in community-based organizations reflect a White, middle-class approach to parenting while few programs have been adapted to reflect the diversity of cultural groups in society. Although African Nova Scotians make up the largest minority group in Nova Scotia and their presence in this province can be traced to its early development, there are no culturally specific parenting programs available for this group.

Afrocentric scholars contend that programs and services for African descended people must reflect the cultural worldview of this population and is therefore an appropriate theoretical foundation upon which parenting programs for African descended people can be developed. The ecological systems theory and the empowerment theory support the assertion that social service delivery for people of African descent must reflect the worldview of this population if they are to be effective and relevant. The ecological systems theory supports the examination of the contextual factors that influence Black parenting, while an examination of traditional empowerment theory emphasize that relevant and effective social service delivery for Black families and communities must ensure that cultural knowledge is developed from the perspective of the specific cultural group.

One of the major differences between traditional parenting programs and programs used by Black parents is the need to socialize Black children to live in race conscious societies. The literature suggests that the vast amount of parenting programs available are developed from a Eurocentric perspective and therefore do not reflect the multicultural reality of society. Discussions about race and culture are considered vital aspects of parenting to be included in Black parenting to prepare Black children to live in a society where being a Black person is often devalued. Black communities have played a significant role in ensuring the preservation of Black families. Traditionally, one of the strengths of Black communities has been Black institutions, mainly Black churches, that played a critical role in supporting Black families but

this traditional strength has been slowly eroding resulting in the weakening of Black communities.   Community organizing developed from the perspective of Black communities with solutions emerging from the respective communities may be one way to address the social issues faced by Black communities to help find sustainable solutions.

One of the main tenets of Afrocentricity is that African people must be central in analyzing social phenomena in their communities and this principle if utilized in parenting programs, has the potential of creating cohesion and restoring that sense of community that has been the strength of Black communities.   Given the extreme challenges African Nova Scotians families have experienced in maintaining their cultural heritage, community organizing to address parenting from an Afrocentric perspective has the potential to rekindle that sense of community where extended families and near-families are willing to nurture and prepare Black children to live in a race conscious society.   As I reflect upon the personal and professional experiences of parenting Black children, and the gaps in the literature about effective culturally specific programs, I decided to develop a new parenting program for African Nova Scotians.

CHAPTER 3 - PILOT

Several researchers who study African Nova Scotian families assert that African Nova Scotian children are not exempt from the negative effects of racism on their development (Benton, 1997; James et al., 2010; The BLAC Report, 1994). This chapter is about the Partners for Empowerment of Parents (PEP) program that was developed to assist African Nova Scotian parents in helping their children overcome the obstacles of racism and fulfill their dreams of reaching their full potential as contributing members of society. From my location as a researcher, I believe that the PEP program may contribute significantly to the parenting of African Nova Scotian children.

History and Community Context

Partners for Empowerment of Parents (PEP) is a nine-week parenting program developed for African Nova Scotian parents that focuses on an African Centered socialization of children of African descent, and the provision of social supports to assist parents in the important responsibility of raising their children in a race conscious society. Unlike other parenting programs that address general parenting issues faced by all parents, PEP addresses the racial and cultural dynamics that impact Black parenting.

The PEP program is the focus of this exploratory study. The primary target group for this program was Black parents with children between the ages of 6-11 years old residing in Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM).

As part of the Master of Social Work program I developed this program during a practicum placement with the Association of Black Social Workers (ABSW). ABSW is a volunteer charitable organization that develops programs and provides services that are of interest to the Black community and the larger community. Halifax Regional Municipality is home to the largest number of indigenous Blacks in Canada and an increasing number of immigrants of

African descent call Nova Scotia home. According to the Canadian Census (2006) almost 20,000 individuals representing Blacks, Chinese, Filipinos, Latin Americans, South Asians, and Southeast Asians make up the minority population in Nova Scotia. Fifty-one percent (51%) of this population identified as African Nova Scotians and almost two-thirds (2/3) of the African Nova Scotian population reside in HRM.

The PEP program provides an opportunity for African Nova Scotia parents to discuss the challenges they face in raising their children in a racialized society and some of the racially challenging issues their children face daily. Parents have the opportunity to discuss and share strategies to enable them to positively influence their children's coping skills to deal with racial issues as well as additional parenting strategies to enhance their parenting skills. Additionally, children attend the program where they engage in cultural activities, as well as creative arts to enhance their self-esteem and self-worth.

Benton (1997) found that racism has had a deleterious effect on the psychological and social development of African Nova Scotians. Children of African descent from a very young age are constantly exposed to Eurocentric ideology and bombarded with negative portrayal of people of African descent through the systems they encounter in their socialization, and these experiences hinder the development of their African identity and consciousness. Benton asserts that these experiences also rob African descended people of their understanding of self, and their authentic culture, and as a result, a significant number of Diasporic Africans function from a non-African perspective because they either lost or have no knowledge of their authentic cultural heritage. This program is an attempt to refocus the attention of African Nova Scotian parents on the cultural strengths and strategies that have contributed to the survival of African peoples despite difficult and challenging circumstances since their forced removal from the motherland.

To develop the PEP program, I organized two focus groups to test the theoretical components they thought should be included. Their voicing of experiences and beliefs led to the program

development. Parents in the focus groups represented African Nova Scotians whose ancestors

have lived in this province for centuries and more recent immigrants from Africa and the

Caribbean. The focus groups comprised of twelve Black parents with varied life experiences.

They shared aspects of their family and cultural histories and the personal struggles they

experienced in trying to raise their children in a society where cultural differences were

minimized, and being Black is seen negatively. Through these conversations, nine themes

(coaching, relationship, culture, community, responsibility, education, diversity, respect and

faith) emerged that parents believed would reconnect them to their historical, cultural and

spiritual roots and assist them in effectively parenting their children. In addition to the voices of

ordinary African Nova Scotian parents, strategies and resources from research on Black

parenting contributed to the development of the curriculum. The Afrocentric theory is

articulated within this program through the incorporation of the seven Nguzo Saba principles

(Karenga, 1977, 1997), which are the guiding philosophy upon which this nine-week parenting

curriculum is built. These principles are based on the assumption that despite the oppression of

African peoples and the imposition of Eurocentric cultural values upon them, African peoples

have retained in varying degrees the traditional elements of African culture such as; a strong

sense of collective identity, spirituality, and affective ways of understanding the world (Schiele,

1997).

In addition to providing culturally specific parenting tips for African Nova Scotian parents,

this program also addresses the role of community in supporting parents in the challenging job of

raising their children in a society where being Black is often portrayed negatively. The African

proverb "it takes a village to raise a child" is a main feature of this program because as

previously noted the village concept of raising children has been one of the survival strategies

used successfully by people of African descent for centuries. Recognizing that it takes more than

two people to raise a child, the program explored what a healthy village looks like and the role village/community elders can play in assisting parents to raise their children.

Beginning this process with the family, is an appropriate starting point through which parenting children can be inculcated with authentic cultural values resulting in the development of their authentic self.

The goals of the program are as follows:

- To assist parents in improving their parenting skills.
- To enhance cultural pride in parents and children of African descent.
- To develop strategies to respond to ethnic-related issues that affect the healthy development of their children.
- To enhance the relationship between African Nova Scotian parents and their children, empower, motivate them as well as strengthen their sense of community.

Program activities

To ensure the success of the program, a number of activities were undertaken to meet the goals of the program. These activities include:

- Cultural appreciation activities.
- Family Life Skills.
- Visit to Black Cultural Centre.
- Creative Activities for children.
- Utilization of guest speakers where required.
- Childcare and healthy snacks/meals each week.

A summary of the weekly sessions of the PEP program is attached (appendix 2). Each session is based upon a theme that emerged from the focus group data and is integrated with one of the Nguzo Saba principles.

The ABSW tradition of developing relevant programs for African Nova Scotians resulted in the delivery of the pilot projects in two Black churches situated in historically Black communities in HRM. Research was done on the two pilot sites and the findings are discussed in the findings chapter. The following chapter will describe the methods used in this research.

CHAPTER 4 - METHODOLOGY

The literature review reveals that an important principle of Afrocentric research is that the researcher must be concerned with understanding social phenomenon from the perspective of the participants and communities being studied (Bogdan & Biklen, as cited by Mkabela, 2005), and this is a significant criterion for *this exploratory research*. Therefore, in pursuit of developing this research on the pilot projects from an Afrocentric perspective, I sought to learn with, by and from the parent participants and community representatives involved in the research study (Mkabela, 2005). This was necessary to ensure that the information obtained reflected the values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts of this particular population. The effectiveness of the Partners for the Empowerment of Parents program is the focus of this exploratory study.

Utilizing an Afrocentric perspective and a modified grounded theory (MGT), I was able to document and analyze in-depth interviews and focus group data about Black parents' and community members' perspectives of the effectiveness of the PEP program in two African Nova Scotian communities. In this research study, I sought to answer the following questions: Does the Parents for Empowerment of Parents program (PEP) assist African Nova Scotian parents in Halifax Regional Municipality in building skills to help their children enhance their sense of self-worth and respond positively to racism? What are the perspectives of the parent participants in the PEP pilot program regarding the effectiveness of the program as presented? What are the perspectives of the Community Advisory Groups and the program facilitators regarding the process of the PEP pilot program? In this chapter I outline the steps taken in developing a method of studying African people which reflected the centering of this group while enhancing the sense of empowerment among `participants. The following are the key steps in this research.

General Study Design

A qualitative approach also seeks to understand social problems from the perspective of local populations involved (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003). This approach complements the Afrocentric

perspective and is therefore a good fit for this exploratory research. In addition to its

effectiveness in obtaining culturally specific information about local populations, the qualitative

design also gives the researcher the ability to provide textual descriptions of how people

experience the research issue (Newman & Kreuger, 2003). By utilizing a qualitative method in

this study I was able to get firsthand information about Black parenting in HRM and the various

ways it is impacted by the concept of race. The qualitative design provided me the opportunity

to discuss the human side of this sensitive topic through face-to-face discussions with

participants, allowing me to get a glimpse into their daily lives through personal stories,

perspectives and experiences. It also provided a space for parents, community members and

facilitators to share about how the PEP program impacted their lives and their thoughts about its

usefulness for Black parenting in HRM.

Other features of the qualitative approach that appealed to me were the flexibility that the

face-to-face discussions provided and the spontaneity and ability for adaptation of interactions

that this approach offered (Newman & Kreuger, 2003).   Semi-structured interview protocols

with open-ended questions were used for both the in-depth interviews and focus groups.

Therefore, participants were free to answer using their own words which allowed them to give

meaningful and salient responses to questions. This also meant that answers were unanticipated.

I had many opportunities to tailor subsequent questions, probe initial responses further, and

engage in further conversation with participants. The probing often led to very rich, complex

and elaborate responses that explained the Black parenting further.

The qualitative design coupled with a modified grounded theory (MGT) approach, allowed

for an analytical technique that honored the oral knowledge of participants through the stories

told, while supporting the importance of my understanding of the subject matter. According to

Glaser & Strauss (1967), Grounded Theory (GT) is based on two analytical assumptions: 1)

constant comparison of data, and 2) theoretical sampling. Although constant comparison was

part of the data analysis process (this will be explicated later), a theoretical sampling approach was not utilized in this study. Hence the rationale for the modified grounded theory approach which is an adaptation of the GT. According to Cutcliffe (2004), any adaptation of the original GT method should be considered a modified version of the theory. However, the procedure used in the data analysis allowed for the emergence of rich data that reflected the knowledge and experience of the local population. The modified grounded approach was also a perfect fit for this study because:

1. No model of Black parenting currently exists in HRM that is based on the knowledge and experience of African Nova Scotians.

2. Existing models of parent education in HRM do not recognize the importance of culture in Black parenting.

The modified grounded theory approach also provided a better understanding of the complex reality of Black parenting in HRM as expressed by the participants and complements Afrocentric principles which promotes research from the viewpoint of African people (Mkabela, 2005). Hence, its usefulness in this research study about the effectiveness of the PEP program from the participants' perspective was very appropriate.

Sample

Participants for the study were twelve African Canadian women from two Black communities in HRM. Four women were parents who participated in the pilot project, four were facilitators of the pilot program, and four were community advisory group members. Each Community Advisory Group (CAG) was comprised of two facilitators (representing each pilot site) and two community members (representing each pilot).

Parents responded to invitations to participate in the research on Afrocentric parenting program. The program was delivered in the rural site in a 9-week block and in the urban site it was condensed and delivered in a 5-week block because of the challenge of recruiting parents.

In each site the program was facilitated by two trained facilitators. I made a presentation at the commencement of each pilot, advised parents that there is a research component to the pilot, and invited them to participate in the research. Each parent was also given a letter explaining the research (appendix 3), a fact sheet about the pilot (appendix 4), and two copies of informed consent forms (appendix 5). Consent forms were signed and returned before participation in the research.

Recruitment for the study was exclusively focused on African Nova Scotian parents who participated in the two pilot projects.   In consultation with community leaders, community members were invited by the researcher to form the CAG. The role of the CAG was to bring the community's perspective to the researcher and to educate the community about the pilot. Community members also shared the information about the pilot with persons from the community whom they thought might be interested in attending the pilot. Specifically, CAG members were required to attend at least one or no more than three parenting sessions. They were expected to provide useful overall feedback about how the content of the program was impacting participants and areas where the program could be improved, including feedback about concerns of parents regarding the program. At the completion of the pilot CAGs were expected to be part of a focus group in their community and share their ideas and opinions about the pilot. Facilitators of the pilot participated as members of the CAG (appendix 6).

Data Collection

Data were collected through three processes; face-to-face in-depth interview, focus groups and feedback questionnaires.   Four private face-to-face interviews lasting about 1 hour and 1.5 hours were conducted with parents using semi-structured questions and parents gave their feedback about the curriculum, program delivery process and the benefits of the program from their perspective. Two parents chose to have the interviews in their homes and the remaining two chose the program site. Interviews began with pleasantries and I reiterated to the

interviewees that their identities or places of residence would not be revealed when communicating the findings of the research.   Using an Interview Guide (appendix 7) I asked each parent several open-ended questions about their involvement with the pilot program and interviews were recorded using an electronic devise which ensured that attention was given to asking questions and responding to answers. The open-ended format of the questions facilitated responses that reflected a wide range of thoughts and feelings about the topic (Neuman and Kreuger, 2003) influenced the level of engagement respondents had in the interviews. The open-ended questions also allowed me to probe and generate additional questions and answers. Questions that had significant meaning for respondents elicited enthusiastic responses and this often led them to freely speak about other related topics.

Two focus groups were conducted by the researcher, one in each of the communities where the pilot was delivered. In the rural area the focus group was held at the program site and in the urban area it was held at one of the participants' home. Focus groups lasted approximately 2 hours and each group comprised of 4 individuals who were members of the CAGs. Questions for the focus groups followed a similar guide as the face-to-face interviews (appendix 8) and were framed in a way to help me obtain information about focus group members' thoughts about the program content, the facilitation process, and their reflection of their experience with the program. With the consent of participants, both private in-depth interviews with parents and the focus groups were captured using a digital recording devise and the responses were transcribed by me for analysis.

In addition, I collected weekly-completed feedback questionnaires from the facilitators of the two pilot programs after each session. These were used by the facilitators on an ongoing basis while working with the parenting groups, and helped me to gain insight to the pilot sessions. Twenty-five questionnaires were given out to the parents in the urban pilot site during 5-week pilot and 17 (68%) were returned. In the rural site forty-five questionnaires were given out to

64

parents over the 9-week period and 28 (62%) were returned. The feedback questionnaires were

collected as additional data.

These three forms of gathering data employed by the study allowed for triangulation of the

data. According to Neuman and Kreuger (2003) this process allows researchers to increase the

accuracy when measuring a phenomenon. Shenton (2004) also states that triangulation is one

measure that researchers can incorporate in the data collection method to ensure trustworthiness

of data. The use of three methods of data collection in this research study may be beneficial in

addressing concerns about reliability and validity of the research. The data collected from the

interviews and focus groups in the rural and urban areas provided an opportunity for comparison

of rural and urban perspectives of the phenomenon. Also, since rural pilot was delivered during

a nine week period and the urban in a five week period, a comparison of the responses from each

of these groups would shed some light on concerns about trustworthiness. Finally, the voluntary

completion of questionnaires immediately after each session also provided another opportunity

to compare data for similarity.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is described as a foundational method of qualitative analysis that should be

developed by new researchers because the core skills employed are applicable to other forms of

qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Following Braun & Clarke's (2006) method, the

first stage of this analysis involved transcribing the parent interviews and focus groups that were

audio-taped into written form and information from feedback questions were also brought

together and typed.   Through this process I began to develop familiarity with the data by reading

it over several times and making notes. Using Braun and Clarke's definition of a theme "a theme

captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents

some level of patterned responses or meaning within the data set" (p.82), the initial coding began

by transcribing the data on the left hand side of the page. Initial codes were transcribed on the

right hand side of the page. Interesting themes were colour coded using highlighters and the data was searched for additional themes.

The data set was read several times during this process in order to refine the initial themes. Because of the number of broad themes that emerged from the data, further analysis continued with the collating of the initial codes into potential themes. Data extracts relevant to the themes were also colour coded and rechecked to ensure that they were a fit and that they formed a coherent pattern (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes were further analyzed to determine main overarching themes and tables were used to get a visual image of the picture that was emerging. Themes related to the research questions were then placed into categories, while themes that did not have enough data to support them were dropped. Finally, the scope and the content of each theme were determined and sub-themes were assigned to related themes. Extracts from the research literature relevant to the themes were also identified for the analysis.

This approach to data analysis resulted in the emergence of four major categories: *Receptivity & Understanding of Program, Cultural Coping, Enhanced Parenting Skills and Program Enhancements* and the initial themes are covered under these major categories. Also, under each category are themes that describe the essence of participants' responses as they relate to the research question. The responses from the feedback questionnaires were not as rich and elaborate as those from the interviews and focus groups but were of similar content. This could be attributed to the structured nature of the questionnaire feedback forms.

Trustworthiness

There are four ways to validate the trustworthiness of data; persuasiveness, correspondence, coherence and pragmatic use (Riessman, 2002). To address the trustworthiness of this study two of these areas were considered, *persuasiveness* and *pragmatic use*. A triangulation design was employed which allowed for the 'cross-validation' of data through three sources: interviews, focus groups and feedback questionnaires. The interview data were collected from parent

participants of the PEP program and the focus group data were collected from CAGs. Data from feedback questionnaires voluntarily submitted by parents after each parenting session were obtained as well to add another set of responses from participants. The triangulation of the data set yielded similar themes.

This study which examines the effectiveness of the PEP program provides the mechanism for further discussion both at the community and academic levels about the impact of race and culture on African Nova Scotian families, and steps have been taken to continue this discussion. After the study was completed, the program was offered in the community to parents who participated in the research and it was enthusiastically received and will be offered again in the fall. The ABSW is very supportive of this work and is sponsoring a Professional Development seminar in the fall at which time I will be presenting the findings of the study. In addition, one of the CAG members and I will present the findings at the National Association of Black Social Workers conference in the spring of 2012, in Atlanta, Georgia. Finally, the findings were present to my colleagues at the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services, and presentations to community groups that offer parent education programs are also planned for the fall.

Ethical Considerations

The following ethical concerns were taken into consideration when applying to the Research Ethics Review Board for permission to conduct this study: confidentiality, informed consent and emotional safety. Considering that participants in this study would share their private thoughts and opinions about this very sensitive topic, provisions were made to ensure that information shared with me will remain confidential and, that where it is necessary to include quotes from interviews or focus groups, no identifiable information will be attached.

The nature of qualitative research where participants can be prompted to answer questions that may trigger emotional responses makes it necessary for provisions to be made to ensure that

they are not unduly re-traumatized. Two social workers from the Association of Black Social Workers volunteered their time to participants if their service was needed. Informed consent was also sought for engaging participants in focus groups and interviews.

Since discussions in this research included the concept of race and racism, consideration was given to the possibility that participants may experience some level of discomfort or emotional distress. Therefore the names and contact information of two counselors were provided to all participants should they require debriefing at any time during the study.   Also, since data collected is a reflection of personal experiences of the participants, steps were taken to ensure the safe storage and destruction of the data. Finally, no names are attributed to quotations used in this study in order to protect the anonymity of participants.

In summary serious thought was given to this research to ensure that the validity of the process and to respect the confidentiality of participants. The research was granted approval from the Dalhousie Research Ethics Board (appendix 9). The findings of the research will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5 – FINDINGS

The data reported here were drawn from a qualitative research study that utilized private in-depth interviews and focus groups using semi structured questions. The population comprised of twelve African Nova Scotian adults, four of whom were parents who participated in the PEP pilot program, four facilitators (two from each pilot site), and four community members from the two Community Advisory Groups (two from each program site). Although the participants of the study cannot be considered representative of Black parents in HRM or the province of Nova Scotia, they are viable examples of the African Nova Scotian parents who are seeking to raise their children to make a meaningful contribution to society. Below is a demographic of parents (mothers) who participated in the study. Although the invitation to participate in the study was open to both men and women, as reflected in table 5 only mothers responded to the invitation.

Table 5 - Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Participant's Age	Children's Gender and Age (years)	Mother's Marital Status	Mothers Education	Mother's Employment Status
31	Girl: 6	Single	University degree	Unemployed
44	Girl: 10 Girl: 6	Married	Some college	Social Service Worker
42	Boy: 9	Single	Some college	Child Care Worker
38	Boy: 6 Girl: 5	Married	University degree	Social Worker
*53	n/a	Divorced	University degree	Social Worker
*56	n/a	Divorced	University degree	Civil Servant
*25	n/a	Single	University	Graduate Student

			degree	
*39	n/a	Single	University degree	Human Service Worker
*41	n/a	Married	University degree	Teacher
*46	n/a	Married	University degree	School Administrator
*63	n/a	Married	High School	Home maker
*23	n/a	Single	University student	Unemployed

The above table includes parents and Community Advisory Group (CAG) members. Asterisk indicates that the participant is a CAG member.

The findings of the study revealed several themes that are covered under four major categories: *receptivity and understanding of the program, cultural coping, enhanced parenting skills* and *program enhancement.* The categories and themes capture participants' responses to interview and focus group questions. Each is discussed in detail below. The extract in this section are primarily taken from parent interviews and focus groups. Information from the feedback questionnaires from the two pilots will be included where it is applicable.

Receptivity and Understanding of Program

Receptivity and Understanding of Program refers to participants' openness to and appreciation for the program. Under this category of four sub-themes emerged: *parental engagement, safe environment, relevant curriculum and children's program,* each is explored more below.

Parental Engagement

Parenting programs specifically for Black parents is not a common occurrence in Halifax Regional Municipality. Since this pilot was advertised as an Afrocentric parenting program, an important aspect of this research was that the researcher considered how the program was

received by participants, and their perception of what an Afrocentric program entailed. Therefore a number of key questions were asked to get parents' perspectives of how the program was received and participants' understanding of why this program was different from other parenting programs. Participants explained that they were happy to have the program in their community and were very interested in becoming a part of the program because they believed it would be beneficial to them. As one parent remarked,

> *I just thought it would be really good to get involved with this program that's gonna be delivered in our community because, I think it's really important that my kids and people my age and older people too that they get some kind of feel about where they come from and getting some of the historical background about what it is to be, to have African descendants and to be part of the African Diaspora. So I just think it's really important that there is actually provided to people in the community and the kids because if that's provided it would help, you know, people in the community and plus myself.*

This parent felt having the program in her community was a positive thing because it would be beneficial to both parents and children because of the cultural history that is a part of the program and the sense of community that it would generate among people of African descent. There was strong appreciation that the program was held in Black communities and that the focus was not only on children but it also included a section for children. From the perspective of this parent the program attracted parents because it was in the community, it dealt with Black history and it included programming for children. Another parent stated,

> *Basically, I wanted to be part of it, anything to improve my parenting skills and giving insight into parenting….to be involved in a group like that I thought it was really interesting. I wanted to be part of it to see what I could get out of it and to learn.*

This mother was clearly interested in finding ways to enhance her parenting skills and welcome the opportunity to attend a parenting program in her community. When prompted further with the question, "Were you concerned when you learnt that it was an Afrocentric parenting program?" she replied, "*basically, I was .....more interested in that because you know, it's something by people of my culture and their experiences too, because it was like something that I could relate to.*" For this parent the fact that the program was an Afrocentric program

71

was a drawing card, as an African Nova Scotian she felt that she could relate to it thus suggesting the significance of race and culture on Black parenting. It may also shed some light on the reluctance of Black parents to engage in parenting programs that do not reflect this perspective. Another parent stated,

> *I thought it would be a good thing…….think people confuse what Afrocentricism is. It's more than being Black. It's actually practicing how you live and community, and unity, and peace and…a village and I think that's it important to bring these important thing to the surface for Black people because I think we're a very lost people especially when you're in a country that is predominantly Caucasian and you lose your own Black history whether it's, you know, you're immigrant our you've been here for generations.*

This parent felt that the focus on Afrocentric parenting was a positive thing for Black parents because it would reconnect Black parents with their African roots and values that have been lost through assimilation in a predominantly White society. Another parent explaining what she thinks an Afrocentric parenting program is stated,

> *When I think of Afrocentric parenting, I think of not having to raise the child alone, but you have the community like, as it says 'it takes a village to raise a child'. Everybody participating in trying to raise that child, you know, get to where they need to be and provide those skills as a group so working together and supporting parents within the community, and that's how I would describe it.   Being there, supportive in a positive way and if you have down falls help to assist, you know, help to assist instead of criticizing, try to work with them, look for the positive and try to work with the kid and the parent so that's what I see Afrocentric parenting as.*

For this parent this African proverb, "it takes a village to raise a child" is more than a popular slogan, it is the essence of Afrocentric parenting and requires the community working together to help children reach their full potential. Parents and children need the help and support of a caring community if children are to reach their full potential. It is easy to criticize families when they are experiencing parental challenges, but reaching out in a positive way goes a long way towards building that sense of a caring village or community.

Focus group participants also commented on how they welcomed the Afrocentric focus of the program and saw it as being relevant to Black parents and communities. One focus group participant commented,

I think the focus was really important..we do need to acknowledge who we are as a people because …knowing ourselves helps us to prepare and guide our children so that we can through our experiences help them to move through the many experiences that they will have to live through as Black children. I think it helps to give them a better understanding of who they are and I think…I know that when I was raised race wasn't a key component in that development and it became a key component as I developed and recognized the importance of race. But I think as a parent it helps me to help my children get a better sense of who they are as individuals and it just reaffirms for them that they are just as good as anybody else. It prepares them for what's happening now and it will prepare them for the future, and it just helps them to develop in a positive way as Black children.

From this participant's experience of growing up as a Black child in Halifax she felt that the

focus on culture was crucial for the PEP program because it helped parents to reflect on who

they are as Black parents which helps them to raise their children with confident self-awareness

of who they are as people of African descent.   This participant felt that racial self-awareness

was vital for the positive development of Black children.

Safe Environment

   Participants in the parent interviews and the focus groups repeatedly spoke of the freedom

and support parents experienced in the program to share their parenting experiences, dreams and

aspirations for their children. The program was not only viewed as an opportunity for parents to

enhance their parenting skills, but also as a safe environment where parents could build

relationships with other parents who understand their struggles and fears for their children's

future. One parent shared,

It meant a lot even to be able to come together week after week and know that you're coming together with other Black women in particular. That there's conversations that we don't need to have because they already exist, because we live them and we breathe them, and there's …… certain questions sometimes that might have gotten asked and even if nothing was being said, we could look around and already have an understanding about. There's conversations that happen just from being in the same space….there's this synergy that was happening…we can talk about what it means to be Black and be in the room and to talk about our children and our hopes and our dreams and our own disappointments around things and what that means….Community also came up early as one of the topics and I remember we're a community of people no matter where we live and what's going on. There're so many similarities no matter in what part of the province we're in or were raised in.

From this parent's perspective it was much more that attending a parenting program, it was the opportunity and the freedom to be in a space where she could express herself without fear of being misunderstood because there was a sense of connection among the parents even though they had come from various walks of life. She felt comfortable to share the challenges and fears of being a Black parent in a society where Black children are generally perceived as being incapable of being successful, and even when nothing was said there was an unspoken connection among parents. There was a sense of bonding and community because of their shared reality and a reminder of what community is all about. As one focus group member remarked,

> *It's an amazing feeling of strengthening to come together in a place where it's Black folks all together in a place, I can't say enough about the energy and that, and not to kind of make it sound like, oh, it's always this wonderful, smooth thing that's happening. But it's real, and it's genuine and so you can have the conversation that comes from some aspect of a shared lived experience and that conversation creates a safe space so I could talk about the good stuff and the difficult stuff and feel like there's a way to come for support and people need places to go where you can do that.*

Although there was not always agreement about parenting strategies discussed, there was a feeling of empowerment because parents felt a genuine concern in the group and this gave them the freedom to share their challenges and disappointments without fear of being judged. In addition, parents also shared that they looked forward to this time together because it was an opportunity to socialize with other parents. Similarly, feedback questionnaire from the urban site where five parenting sessions were held indicated 5 times that parents felt that 'parent sharing time' was one of the things they liked best about the parenting sessions. One focus group member commented,

> *I guess what I see as part of a benefit, is that there is a social network that it's an opportunity to get out of the house. It's an opportunity to have one night that you don't have to cook (lots of laughter from the rest of the group). And you know what? We joke about that but I'll tell you, it would take me out of the house. We do so much as Black mothers, we do so much for everybody else with nothing, and it's an opportunity to just sit there …we learn that we are not alone in terms of the struggles that we have in parenting and I think it creates this, you know, it has the potential to create a sense of*

bonding that allows me to know there is a support network somewhere out there and that I'm not isolated by myself.

This participant felt that providing a meal during the sessions, meant parents had one night when they could have a break away from home without having to prepare a meal.   One parent noted that the program also gave parents an opportunity to discuss issues that arise in the schools and in the community and helped parents to look for positive ways to support each other.   She stated, "*my job was something that was bothering me and I could bring that up to them and they gave me some suggestions to help me out and tell me what I could do, like just for that support it really helped me feel accepted.*"   Another parent expressing her understanding and appreciation for the focus of the program commented,

> *it's a program designed for Black parents from Black parent's perspective to try to get us to be able to parent our children better. There's probably obstacles that we all deal with as Black parents and they're giving us ideas about how to improve on those things. Also, we're sitting there together getting ideas from each other.*

Because this program focused on Black parenting, parents were more open to attending because they saw it as an opportunity for them to enhance parenting skills specific to their reality. Although not all Black parents parent their children the same way, this parent recognized that Black parents deal with different issues from the general population and was hopeful that this program provided help in dealing with those issues. Part of that help was available through listening to the ideas of other Black parents.

Relevance of Curriculum

Participants were appreciative of every topic discussed in the program and noted that the topics were interconnected and relevant. They appreciated the emphasis on culture that was specific to this program. For example, one focus group participant remarked, "*one of the things that I found to be important is the theme around culture throughout the nine sessions. And I think that that's the theme that runs through all the sessions. And it just shows how integrated it is in everything that we do and in parenting.*"   This participant could see the significance of

culture being incorporated all through the program because from her perspective it is a crucial part of Black parenting and its emphasis in the program was seen as very relevant. Parents found the topic of *responsibility* very enlightening, but shared their ambivalence about budgeting, an element of this topic. For example, one parent remarked,

> *I found the finance piece to be, really very important. Just sort of in the group being able to hear people talk about our experiences with finances and the way we were taught and not taught how to manage our money…and how to teach your children how to manage money when you aren't necessarily taught how to do that yourself….for the most part it's not because we've been necessarily shown, it's just been a place of survival*

For this parent managing money is similar to parenting, this is one area that she had not received a lot of instruction on, it was just part of what she does and she was just surviving. She found that the discussions (facilitated by a guest speaker) gave her lots of helpful tips to improve her skills in this area. Another parent commented,

> *We had a speaker come and she was really, really helpful. Breaking it down and helping you to see where people can get into a lot of traps and into a lot of trouble and how you can just really simply just keep that under control so that was a really good thing, and that was important. Because a lot of Black people also disproportionately use like credit cards and are in debt and things like that and we have to learn how to control that……that's something that you kind of know but not something that you might even think that applies to you. But I mean I know it applies to me, so it was really, really helpful just to clarify and it gives you ideas of how you can move on with that and things you can try with your own child.*

This parent found the budgeting tips were helpful in steering her from getting into credit traps and also appreciated the section on budgeting for children.

Another topic that participants found vital to the discussion about Black parenting is 'faith and *spirituality'*. Although not all participants consider themselves to be religious they acknowledged the significance of the topic in sustaining Black families. One parent stated,

> *Faith was really important, it felt like that…sort of felt..it resonated. The spirituality around God and where God is in all of this and does this relate to you…our history and heritage, even looking at the words from the Black National Anthem, there's always a sort of sobering thing that happens in the room when we look at how far…just as Black people we've come.*

This parent expressed the sentiment shared by participants in the parent interviews, and focus

groups, that faith was very significant in the lives of Black people and is therefore a crucial topic

for discussions about Black parenting. The topic of 'faith' helped parents to reflect on the

history and heritage of Black people and how they survived as a people. Another parent summed

it up with this statement "*faith was another big one for me because with everything that goes on,*

it all comes down to God. You know there is this peace, there is hope." This parent views *faith*

as the foundation that upholds parents during challenging times and gives them a sense of peace

in the midst of current struggles and hope for the future of their children. Feedback

questionnaires showed that 4 parents of the 5 present in the urban pilot site enjoyed the

discussion of about budgeting and 2 parents enjoyed the discussion about faith.

Children's Program

Another feature of the program that parents found relevant was the inclusion of children in the

program. Parenting programs are often designed to include a section that caters to the care of

children while parents participate in the program. Parents found the fact that this program

included instruction on the same topics especially appealing Parents commented that involving

children in the program was one element of the program that aroused their interest, because it

meant that they did not have to make special arrangements for the care of their children while

attending.   They were also appreciative of the learning opportunities the sessions provided for

their children. One parent remarked,

> *I think it was important having the kids involved because we have programs for*
> *parents and teach parents but we neglect to teach the kids, so I like this program*
> *because it involves the kids with the activities…it's important that they are being coached*
> *too and mentored and talked about similar things that we do in a child appropriate*
> *way…I think that the activities for the parents and the kids was really fun because it was*
> *like hands-on and so they really were interested in trying to get involved in these types of*
> *activities and not just the kids, but also the parents so that part I really love about the*
> *program.*

Having her children involved in a meaningful way in the program was very special for this parent. Both parents and children enjoyed the interactive activities and looked forward to these times when they could learn in a fun-filled atmosphere. One focus group participant remarked that,

> *Children that had a chance to come felt privileged because they had an opportunity to learn different activities and to showcase their work as well, once they were done, to the parents...They were so proud of the creations they had made, you know after all those many weeks and they were able to say, you know, this is us.*

Having the children involved in meaningful activities where they learn new skills and take pride in their work and develop the self-confidence to present their work was one of the reasons this parent found the curriculum relevant. This participant felt that the program was a positive experience for the children, especially for those who initially were very timid, but as the program progressed, their confidence increased and they were able to improve their artistic abilities. From this parent's perspective the program was not only concerned with the enhancement of parent skills, but also the enhancement of children's skills as well. One focus group member commenting about the program said,

> *It takes into consideration the children's voice which is very important, not just the parents' voice. I think that's important that the children's voice is valued. Some kids feel that their voice is not being valued, right? So to have them as part of the program which was a big deal..share ideas , they felt great. They were excited and happy to be part of the group.*

This participant saw the significant role the program played in the lives of children because it provided them an opportunity to share with other children and adults and the children were very happy to be part of the program.

The findings suggest that participants responded positively to the PEP program because of its Afrocentric focus and relevance to the parenting needs of African Nova Scotian families. In addition, the component for children was a drawing card for parents. Another category that emerged from the analysis was *Cultural Coping* which will be discussed next.

Cultural Coping

Cultural coping are cultural activities and practices that participants felt were important elements of Black parenting. The program provided a framework for parents to explore positive ways of integrating Black culture in all its diversity into their parenting style to reduce the negative stereotypes of Black parenting. *Parent sharing time, Cultural reflection, cultural pride reinforcement,* and *faith/spirituality* are themes that fall under this category and are discussed next.

Parent Sharing Time

One of the major themes emerging from the data was the space the program provided for parents to come together and share their fears, dreams and aspirations for their children and the obstacles they face as Black parents and this is referred to as *Parent Sharing Time*.

Participants liked this feature of the program because it gave them the opportunity to share with other Black parents who were experiencing similar parenting struggles and they felt a freedom to share the fears, struggles, hopes and aspirations they have for their children. They felt it was a safe place where their concerns would be heard and where they would receive valuable counsel and support to assist them in raising their children and also reduce that sense of isolation and it was also a place where they could make some contribution. From this parent's perspective a strong bond developed between parents because of this space to share. In the rural pilot site feedback questionnaires show that parents from that pilot indicated 10 times that they liked the 'parent sharing time', while those in the urban site parents indicated 23 times that they liked the 'parent sharing time'. One parent from the parent interviews commented,

> *What I liked about this program is that it really sort of brings out, it's not an imposition, it doesn't come from a perspective of saying, yea, it's not sort of bringing things and imposing them, it really draws out, you know, expert, but if there's any. Some sort of*

existing knowledge that we have we're sharing that, everyone is bringing that to the table and we get a chance to share it. I wouldn't have known that this is something that I would leave every week and say, oh wow, I didn't realize that I needed to talk about that, I didn't quite understand that that way……I wouldn't have sought it out because I wouldn't necessarily be thinking about my parenting in this way. It's just getting through cause that's most often what we do as Black women in parenting, you know? It's kind of what, we're just sort of moving through getting through raising the kids, end of it, you know what I mean? Then do this, but I'm not necessarily conscious of how specifically I could be doing that differently or bring other women's voices into that, so now it's not just me feeling like, oh gosh, this is overwhelming…

This parent felt coming together with other parents to discuss parenting was very empowering and believe it provides the opportunity for parents to learn from each other and give counsel and emotional support to each other. Parents' knowledge about parenting was validated because of these opportunities and they were not coming to the program merely to receive information. Sharing with other parents gave her new perspectives about parenting that involved more than doing the practical things to 'get the job done' and she looked forward to being with other parents each week, although previous to this program she did not think she needed to attend a parenting program. For her, being in the group helped to reduce the stress and isolation she experienced as a Black single parent.

Another example of the impact of the *parent sharing time* is echoed by a focus group participant who commented that:

One of the things that I see is that some of those parents may not have naturally connected with each other and because of the program have something in common now and so, you know, they may be out on the street and may say hi, but it would be a different hi, you know what I mean? In terms of ..... they've had those conversations, they've had those relationships as a result and I think, you know, it may, depending on how it ended in the end, it may provide an opportunity to have a support network, an extended support network, but I think more critically, it's around the bonds those women would have just by virtue of the topics that were discussed and the sharing that happened.

This participant felt that because of the conversations the parents shared and the relationships that developed over the nine weeks parents it is quite possible that an extended support network could develop among program participants. Another idea was shared by another focus group participant who said,

They brought to the table whatever their experiences are. That's important because here, there is no prescription. We don't know, we didn't take any course as parents. You know, you had this child….there were certain things you would do differently, but we're still learning, it's an ongoing process. So, like we want to just try to break some of those stereo-types too because some of our parents are single and they're doing a good job but it's so challenging.

This focus group participant, who was a member of the Community Advisory Group felt that although parents involved in the program had no formal knowledge of parenting, they were doing their best with what knowledge they had and being together gave them an opportunity to be encouraged, especially single mothers who are often stereotyped but are doing a good job given the complex challenges they face. Another parent said, "*it allows the opportunity for people to…….. ask questions or talk to one of the other women or to the facilitator because it's not a blaming kind of program.*" From this participant's perspective, the program did not blame or shame parents and it made them feel safe to share their struggles. This theme also emerged in the weekly feedback questionnaires. Of the 45 questionnaires that were voluntarily completed, parents indicated 28 times that they value the time they had to share with other parents.

Cultural Reflection

Cultural reflection is the opportunity to think about past cultural experiences that engendered hope and pride in ones culture, despite challenging circumstances. The program provided many opportunities for parents to reflect on their cultural history and the challenges and struggles faced by historical figures and their triumphs. Participants pointed out that the program gave them opportunities to share personal experiences that were culturally relevant, and helped them to reflect on the impact of those experiences on their parenting behaviour and practices. In describing the program one focus group participant shared:

> *We talked about Afrocentric principles, using that, and I think it's very relevant to every parent of African descent because it takes you back to your history and makes you reflect on something that you may have ignored or forgotten. Just talking about the importance of having something that talks to you about your heritage…can make a child think about…..this is something they can relate to.*

81

For parents the discussions about cultural history were also positive learning experiences that evoked renewed pride in cultural practices. Reflecting on the cultural practices that helped historical Black communities to survive very harsh living conditions one parent commented:

> *We're going back to how we use to parent back in the day, learning about ourselves and who we are……because you need to have a self identity and know who you are before you can actually be proud of who you are and be proud of your people, and you know, be able to respect each other.*

For this parent, participating in cultural reflection helped her to have a sense of who she is and made her proud who she is as a Black woman and her people.

Another parent remarked:

> *A lot of great things have happened as we all know….we have Black history month because thank God someone got angry about it, but did something really positive………So taking some of that and equipping ourselves I think with the knowledge and then passing that on verbally …story-telling to our children, not letting those things just pass on, pass away. I think it's really important.*

Cultural Pride Reinforcement

Cultural Pride Reinforcement is a form of racial socialization that includes "parents' teaching children how to feel good about themselves and their cultural heritage" Stevenson et al., 2001, p. 46). One way of reinforcing cultural pride was the inclusion of cultural activities in the program. Children attending the program engaged in cultural activities such as reading about the struggles and triumphs of Black people both past and present, and the contributions they have made and continue to make to society in general. Both the parents' sessions, as well as the children's sessions included opportunities for cultural pride reinforcement. Participants felt that the cultural activities were positive experiences that would help children feel good about themselves and their heritage. One focus group participant remarked:

> *I think that the parenting program helped them, the little children as well as the parents develop a sense of self-worth, self-value, self-esteem. All those self things that they cannot… may not be feeling good about themselves but they'll say, I know how to tackle that big R word'.*

One parent commenting on her increased cultural awareness and pride said,

The part I think I'll take away from it is..something to do with Black art or it could be books, something to do with Black history into your home and making it a part of your home...I didn't have a lot of things in my home, couple of pictures here and there of Black people and couple books but what I started doing more of is looking for more art. We're going to the library more, finding more Black authors.   I think it made me more aware, ok, that there are people out there that have contributed ......Let's explore them and show my kids that, look at these here Black people, these are some of the things that they have contributed, see Black faces in these books, not a lot of them in school!

Another parent also commenting on the parent-child activity said,

I think that the activities for the parents and the kids were really fun because it was like hands-on, interactive and so they really were interested in trying to get involved in these types of activities and not just the kids, the children, but also the parents so that part I really love about the program.

Faith/Spirituality

Faith/Spirituality is a coping strategy used by Black people to help them handle the impact of racism and discrimination. Este and Bernard (2006) affirm that faith and spirituality are coping strategies used by African Nova Scotians to deal with racism and discrimination. Discussions on the topic of faith also resonated with parents who viewed faith as very vital to their survival as Black parents. Although not all participants were regular church goers they felt that faith was an important element of Black parenting. One parent stated,

I think faith is important because you need something to sustain yourself and like, people say to you everyday like, how do you maintain that sense of wellness that you feel happy and stuff like that. It's the spirit inside of you so there is something greater that keeps you going so it has to be your faith. It's not your knowledge because there's all kinds of smart people out there and they don't have common sense...But when you have a sense of who you are and an understanding of your inner self then it's like, your faith it like directs you and keeps you going. It keeps you grounded as a person so that you don't lose sight of the bigger picture.

This parent felt that she needed more than her knowledge about parenting to support her in her role as a parent. To maintain her sense of well-being and that of her children she felt the need for connection to a higher being, who she credited as the one who sustains her and gives her a sense of well-being. This belief in a higher being as a source of support that sustains a sense of well-being in the midst of racism and discrimination is consistent with research on Spirituality in

African Nova Scotian society (Beagan, Etowa & Bernard, Forthcoming, 2011; Este & Bernard, 2006). One focus group participant remarked,

> *We talked about all the Nguza Saba principles that each has a different focus and then to end with spirituality is like saying we are focusing on all these but we don't have to leave out spirituality because it's like the basis of everything else, we rely on spirituality to get us through all of this. We were talking about diversity the other time and there is those activities we are trying to teach the parents about respecting diversity and racism and stuff and it all has to do with spirituality in a sense.......It makes you look at everyone as one. It guides your action or behavior. It makes you responsible and if you don't have spirituality then there cannot be any oneness in community. You cannot coach your children well.*

In contrast to the strong faith expressed by some parents this participant viewed spirituality as a guiding principle that helps us to recognize our humanity and influences how we treat others. She believes spirituality makes one accountable to be respectful of diverse cultures.

The themes discussed in this section are reminders of the coping strategies that African descended people have used as survival skills and these strategies are still relevant today. However, they are also a reminder that the need to develop strategies to live in a racist society has also resulted in African people rebuilding community. As parents came together for this program they too learnt new strategies, but they also began the process of re-building community and this is a central tenet of Afrocentricity.

Enhanced Parenting Skills

Enhanced parenting skills refer to the parenting strategies that participants identified that they will take away from the training to help parent their children in a race conscious society. Although parents shared many aspects of the program that was beneficial to them, when asked what they will take away from the program to enhance their parenting they identified four different areas: *teaching children the Kwanzaa principles, teaching children good money habits, becoming more involved in child's school,* and *becoming more involved in the community.* The following quotes from parents are illustrative:

What I got from this program is, I to try to teach my children more about the Kwanzaa. The seven principles, it's really important that they get that grounding information in regard to reasons why this is done this way and how this is important to Black people to learn these things.

I know that the children were doing spending, giving away (sharing) and saving, that part I thought was really good. I actually took that part and we took it back home and that's what we're doing right now, they still have the little boxes that they made ...and that's what they are using now when they get their allowances, we actually took that, yes,

I guess what I incorporate in my parenting is more for me than for her, just you know, just be more aware of how things can be just slightly off and how that can really affect her, so I'm much more involved in what's going on in school...how are things going with the teacher, how is she treated like if she gets disciplined or whatever. I am very aware of those things, a lot more aware than I was before….so I'm definitely more aware of those things and of course if there's an issue that we can talk about.

Being a part of my community, like how they say about the community coming together, it shouldn't only be for sad times or bad times, it should be the good celebration and stuff. Like coming together and knowing what's going on in your community.

Parents who completed the feedback questionnaire also indicated that they found the program helpful. Responses from the 25 questionnaires given out in the urban pilot indicated 8 times that parents found the program helpful while responses from the 45 questionnaires given out in the rural pilot indicated 29 times that the program was helpful to parents.

Although parents identified several ways that the program has helped them to improve their parenting skills, they noted these skills could prepare their children to respond positively to racism. However, some focus group participants were uncomfortable with the idea that a positive response could be given to racism. For example, these are the comments made by some participants:

I am struggling…..actually struggling with the phrasing in this question a bit. The part about responding positively to racism….and so I've been trying to kind of put…..well I hope that I get through what I'm trying to say but it just doesn't seem like the right phrasing…….respond positively to racism or to sexism or to any of that..so I'm trying to think. For me it's about how do I not do self-harm or do harm to the Black community or something like that is what it's more like. Because…..it just seems like a disconnect to say respond positively to racism.

I think it's about helping them to find ways of resolving within themselves internally and externally, because there's external things as well……if you watch a film about Amnesty

International…you want to do something external. It makes you want to do something….desensitize…if you're watching something and it's appalling and like it's just so inhumane, you want to do something with it otherwise you're just living with it. So how do we sort of channel that into a place where it's gonna be something constructive…and maybe that's more the language you're thinking...how do you deal constructively with racism..as a child…not just crying and going over and punching a little kid in his face, so that when they're 16-17, they're not involved in a race riot either. Or when they're growing up as an adult because of however they didn't learn to deal with it as a child …how are they processing that? That's a big conversation. It's a lot of conversation actually.

This explains the sense of unease that some parents experienced with the concept of 'responding positively to racism'. Parents did not want their children to simply accept racist behaviors as if they were complimentary and were concerned that expecting a positive response may be construed as an acquiescence of racism. However, the concept of "responding positively to racism" does not mean that children will be expected to welcome racial slurs and denigration. Rather, it is meant to help children develop responses to racism that are not harmful to themselves or their community, such as aggression, succumbing to peer pressure, academic underachievement, dropping out of school or other social settings because they are overwhelmed with racist attitudes or remarks (Berkel et al., 2009). Such responses often negatively affect Black children.

Program Enhancements

This final category refers to recommendations made by participants that relate to gaps in the PEP program and other improvements. The gaps in the program as identified by participants are: *discipline, employment and educational support* and *recruitment*. These will be discussed below:

Discipline

Although the topic of discipline was covered under relationships, parents felt that because it is more likely to be scrutinized in Black families, it is necessary to include in it the program as a stand-alone topic. As one parent shared,

I think an issue, but not an issue but always present is how Black families discipline our children.....We have different terminologies that doesn't necessarily mean that word but it's an overview like, for example we say OK, well you're going to get a beating. Well, you're not actually going to beat your kid like if yes, you're fighting for your life, but we understand that as meaning, well yes, you are going to get a spanking on your bum, but that's interpreted differently...So I think it would definitely be.... interesting if we had a whole session just on discipline...What is acceptable discipline, how you were disciplined and how that discipline has come down from your parents, your grandparents etc.....so I think that's a big thing that needs to be considered especially now that .....it's not, you can't always tell people what happens in this house stays in this house...we have Children's Aid and..the Department of Community Services and they have a lot of power, so you need to understand that if you do this, this could result in this even though that wasn't your intention. So I think it would be really, really helpful to have that definitely as a session in the program.

This parent felt the language used to describe discipline by many Black families, and the outdated disciplinary practices that were have been passed down from parents and grandparents are instrumental in creating suspicion about how Black families discipline their children. Therefore, she was strongly recommending more discussion about appropriate and effective discipline is warranted in this program. Another parent remarked:

I think the program was excellent. It was a great program. It had almost every aspect that you can think of in the program.... Maybe they could talk a little bit more about discipline, I guess it did talk about discipline...we had the handouts but a little more about discipline would be good.

Employment and Educational Support

Another topic that was suggested for inclusion in the program is employment support and mentoring for parents who often experience significant challenges in gaining employment. As one single mother commented:

I think another piece would just be like to have somebody come and talk about educational options, you know as Black student or as Black people that there are options there ....just to look at how you can further help yourself by going to school, by trying to get a job, how you go about this and if there is any mentors we have in the community that would be helpful.

This parent felt that employment and education can influence Black parenting and suggests that they are critical topics to be included in the discussions about Black parenting. Employment opportunities for African people are often impacted by race (James et al, 2010) and this creates

87

added stress to families. Many African Nova Scotians find it very challenging to secure paid employment and joblessness affects the Socio Economic Status (SES) of parents which ultimately impacts the parenting beliefs and practices of parents (Hill, 2006). Stress caused by SES also leads to psychological stress (Early, D.M. Eccles, 1995) in parents and for Black parents this further complicates parenting. The recommendation, therefore, to add *employment* and *educational supports* to the curriculum of the PEP program would likely benefit Black parents.

Recruitment

Recruiting parents to attend a parenting program for Black families proved to be very difficult.   Parents expressed a desire to have more parents involved in the program and made several suggestions on how to improve recruitment.   One parent suggested,

> *Basically, letting people know what the program is about…a lot of people don't like to…when they see parenting program, their antennas go up and they say, 'I don't need no parenting program, how dare you tell me that I need a parenting program'. But let them know it's designed for us to communicate among each other and that their input would be valued by other people in the group, as opposed to you will learn something from this program…Just to know that they can contribute instead of just being a person that needs to take information from, they can give a little bit, that's what I find…that would be helpful, most definitely.*

This parent felt that the program needed to be explained more to the community so parents should be informed that this program not only an information sharing program about parenting but that their contribution to the program was vital.   She felt that parents would have been more open to attending the program it they were aware that they could bring something to the program.   The suggestion by another parent was, "*maybe an incentive or something like that, I don't know, it doesn't have to be money*".   One focus group participant suggested:

> *The only way that I can think of with the struggles of trying to recruit people, I think part of that initially was because people where it was advertised didn't know the facilitators, they didn't know the names..and so that was kind of a resistance, not a resistance, but they were kind of guarded. I think the only other way or another way not the only way, might be a face-to-face contact to ease that sense of uncomfortability people might initially have just by the fact that we are a private people, right. And so, it's about, oh,*

ok, yea, they are approachable……it means a lot of leg work in the beginning and then kind of charging the participants to go out once they come and say, oh yea, this is a great program and bring somebody else in with them.

From this participant's perspective a lack of knowledge about the facilitators made it difficult to recruit parents because Black parents are very private people and would have felt very uncomfortable coming to a parenting program when they didn't know the facilitators. She suggested a face-to-face contact with parents would put them at ease and increase the likelihood that they would attend the program, and also word of mouth invitations by program participants would be a good way of recruiting more parents.

The parents, focus groups participants and CAG members all found the PEP program to be relevant to the parenting needs of African Nova Scotians. The key findings indicate that participants support the establishment of the PEP program and the inclusion of race and culture in parenting programs for African Nova Scotian families. The responses from the weekly feedback questionnaires about key themes indicate that 'receptivity and understanding of program' was shared by participants of the program.

The changes they recommended included a chapter on discipline and one on Employment and Educational support. Participants also recommend that special efforts be made to recruitment more parents to participate in this program.

CHAPTER 6 - DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This exploratory study, which involved a small sample of African Nova Scotian parents with children 6-11 years old, expands on a growing body of literature on ethnically specific parent education programs for people of colour, specifically people of African descent. This qualitative research is unique within parent education literature in Canada in that it explores ways that people of African descent parent their children. In addition, it provides an African Nova Scotian parents' perspective on racial socialization as a strategy for enhancing parenting skills, their children's sense of self worth to help prepare them to respond positively to racism. The findings provide support for the assertion that culture and race are crucial aspects of Black parenting that should be included in parenting programs for African Nova Scotian families.

Key Findings from Literature

Several studies indicated that race and/or culture are crucial aspect of Black parenting to be included in the design and implementation of programs for Black families (Coard et al., 2004; Forehand & Kotchick, 1996; Kotchick & Forehand, 2002; Stevenson et al., 2001) and that Afrocentric parenting is a viable alternative to Eurocentric models of parenting (Cherry et al., 1998; Thomas, 2000) that is widely used in Canada and the United States. Other studies have found that Black parents routinely socialize their children about race and culture as a coping strategy which protect them from negative responses to racism and increase their self esteem and self worth (Berkel et al, 2009; Stevenson et al., 2001). Socializing children about race or racial socialization as it is commonly called in research literature is not only a coping strategy to deal with racism; it also helps children to appreciate their unique cultural heritage as Black people (Cady et al., 2009; Stevenson et al., 2001). Racial socialization also has the added benefit of improving Black children's academic achievement (Neblett, Chavous, Nguyen, Sellers, 2009).

90

The PEP Program

The PEP program was developed to fill the gap in parent education programs for African Nova Scotian parents. This program was designed with the help of African Nova Scotia parents to bring an Afrocentric approach to parenting to assist African Nova Scotian parents in helping their children to respond positively to racism and improve their self esteem and self worth and has been the focus of this study.

Key Findings from Study

The findings of this study reveal that parents were very excited about the PEP program as a parenting strategy for enhancing their parenting skills to raise their children in a race conscious society. There is often the misconception among practitioners that African Nova Scotian parents are resistant to, or hard to reach for parenting programs. However, the study indicates that racial socialization in varying degrees is included in the parenting practices of African Nova Scotians and that parents will engage in parenting programs that are culturally relevant. Parents in the study point out that they are interested in enhancing their parenting skills, and are receptive to parenting programs that include the impact of culture and race on Black parenting. They also affirmed that although they share similar child-rearing responsibilities to parents from other cultural groups, the reality of raising Black children in a racialized world adds another level of complexity to their role as Black parents. These complexities lie at the heart of the PEP program and this resonated with Black parents because of its relevance to their parenting needs.

Although measuring the effectiveness of this program will require a prolonged involvement in the program, the responses from parents and the Community Advisory Groups to the study suggest the critical need for culturally relevant parenting programs for African Nova Scotian families. For parenting programs to be utilized and be beneficial to African Nova Scotians, they need to more inclusive of the racial and cultural realities that impact parenting of this population. The findings from this research support the idea that the PEP program is a viable alternative

parenting program for African Nova Scotian families. These findings are similar to those of Coard et al., (2004) whose qualitative study with African American families explored the rationale for including racial socialization in the design and implementation of empirically based parenting programs. Both studies revealed that Black parents were more likely to engage in parenting programs that are culturally specific.

Having the programs delivered in Black communities by Black facilitators also created a culturally specific and safe space for Black parents to share their concerns and challenges and learn from each other. It is not common for Black parents' voices to be heard in the discourse about issues facing Black families (Graham, 2002). However, this study found that the program provided a unique opportunity for Black parents' voices to be heard with respect to their concerns, difficulties, or positive experiences and successes regarding parenting. The program provided additional opportunities for Black parents to contribute to the discourse about culturally relevant parent education programs for African Nova Scotians.

   Consistent with Afrocentric values, the provision of a space for Black parents to share their knowledge about parenting is recognition that the cultural knowledge of Black parents and communities is vital to the development of culturally relevant parenting programs (Graham, 2002, Schiele, 1996). In addition, parents in the urban pilot all of whom were single mothers expressed a need for 'employment and educational support services' to assist them in preparing themselves for meaningful employment. Given that this service is already available in the wider community, the identification of this as a need suggests that employment and educational concerns of Black single mothers were not being adequately met. These mothers were not only interested in improving their parenting but also wanted to improve their lives economically because they are the breadwinners for their homes. They also saw the need for fathers to become involved in future parenting programs but were concerned that if single men were to join the group the challenging role that they play in raising their children with very little resources

would be minimized and "single fathers" would be revered since society still views parenting as the norm for mothers to take of children.

Nevertheless, this inclusion of the voices of Black parents is a source of empowerment for Black parents and communities, because it acknowledges that this population has the ability to shape interventions to address the parenting challenges they face (Graham, 2002). Such culturally specific interventions may reduce the dependence of social work interventions that are based solely on ethnocentric models that have become normalized in society (Schiele, 1996). The sharing, togetherness and community spirit among the participants of the pilot projects are the building blocks for reinforcing and enhancing strong Black families and communities. In essence, these are the Afrocentric principles in action. This notion of collective responsibility has helped people of African descent reduce the sense of alienation and isolation associated with living in a race conscious society. It has also helped in the development of support systems to assist them in dealing with racial discrimination (Manning et al., 2004), as well as kept generations of Black families and communities together despite the negative effects of racial discrimination. The study also has implications for parental and community engagement in Black communities.

Although participants in both pilot sites welcomed the space to share their challenges and triumphs, the study found that participants in the urban site, all single mothers, were more concerned about having a *safe environment* to share their stories than their more rural counterparts, the majority of whom were from two parent families. Having the pilot in the community in a place that parents were familiar with gave parents the freedom and support they needed to talk about their struggles in culturally relevant ways. Instead of being guarded in the discussions about parenting, the *safe environment* gave parents the freedom to share their most passionate thoughts and feelings about life and parenting without the feeling that they will be judged, blamed or shamed. This study demonstrated that in a supportive environment parents are

encouraged in their role as parents and are likely to be engaged in parenting programs when they are validated for the positive things they are doing and may be more open to learning new parenting strategies.   It is likely that this type of sharing will be modeled in the parent-child relationship and that children will feel safe to share their fears and triumphs about other issues including those pertaining to race. In addition, the study found that cultural space to share was an important element of this program.   Similarly, the provision of a component of the program that focused exclusively on children was another attraction to the program.

The study also found that parents were attracted to the program because of the component for children that was delivered concurrently with the parenting sessions and focused on culturally enrichment learning experiences. The findings reveal that the inclusion of opportunities for children to use their creative abilities to learn about and appreciate their cultural heritage and enhance their understanding of themselves as Black children kept parents engaged in the program. Through a variety of media forms children of African descent are exposed to negative and conflicting myths about people of African ancestry and the cultural enrichment activities gave children an opportunity to learn about the positive contributions that people of African descent have made towards the well-being of Black people and society in general. The cultural enrichment learning activities also reinforces the Afrocentric objective to dispel the negative misrepresentation about people of African ancestry and promote the contributions African people have made to society (Carruther & Diop as cited in Schiele, 1996).

Although Black children need proactive messages about how to respond to racism, it is vital that they receive both proactive and protective messages through this socialization process (Stevenson et al., 2000) and the parent/child activities provided opportunities for parents to give proactive and protective messages to their children.

Parents also had lots of opportunities during the program to reflect on their experiences with racism to ensure that they were not projecting their own unresolved racial anger and fear in the

94

messages they were giving their children (Wright, 1998). This is another significant element of Afrocentricity which espouses the need for African people to regain their cultural history (Schiele, 1996). Black children need to be inculcated with positive things about their cultural history in a society where the media primarily reports the negative experiences of Black individuals and families. Parents appreciated these learning opportunities for their children but they were even more appreciative of the opportunities children had to develop respectful relationships with other Black children, because Black racial socialization involves teaching Black children to get along with other Black children as well as to get along with children from mainstream society (Dixon as cited in Peterson, 1997). With the increase of violence among Black youth, it is crucial that Black children learn from an early age to respect each other and to live together in harmony. Cultural enrichment activities also kindled and reinforced cultural pride in children who were part of the program.

Cultural pride reinforcement was an important aspect of Black parenting for parents involved in this study. As previously mentioned children who participated in the program engaged in cultural enrichment activities that taught them about their history and heritage. In addition to enhancing their knowledge of cultural history, these *cultural pride reinforcement* (CPR) activities were also intended to enhance children's pride about who they are and where they've come from. Instead of only giving them messages about being careful of those who may hurt them because of the colour of their skin, these activities were constructive ways of socializing children about their race to help them overcome racial discrimination (Stevenson et al., 2001).

Cultural Pride Reinforcement activities also included making available to children books, videos, music, and art work that emphasize Black culture so that children will learn about the positive contributions of Black people in these areas and develop pride in their racial group. Through CPR activities children also began to gain an appreciation for these different art forms that may eventually become constructive diversions from undesirable activities that are often

95

appealing to Black youth. Cultural Pride Reinforcement activities may also be helpful for parents who may be wary of talking to their children about racism or may feel that their children are not old enough to begin the discussion about race. Whatever Black parents' preference for race socialization may be, CPR activities have the potential to enhance Black children's self-esteem and self-worth in a race-conscious society. The activities encouraged them to dream big, to know that they can be whatever they want to be just like some of the people they learn about in the cultural activities. Another coping strategy that participants identified as being very helpful is *faith/spirituality*.

Faith/Spirituality

Faith/spirituality has been the strong foundation of Black families and communities for centuries and is one coping strategy that is still very prevalent today. Although not all participants were engaged in formal religion or church attendance, all study participants spoke of a strong faith which they considered to be an effective means of coping with the race related stress of being Black parents. While some participants said they believed in a higher being, some participants referred to that higher being as God and acknowledge that their dependence on Him to see them through very difficult situations. In addition to new strategies in parenting, participants felt they needed to connect with a higher being to maintain their sense of well-being and that of their children. Faith/Spirituality is identified among the three senses (family, history and spirituality/faith) that Black parents need to instill in their children as they strive towards reaching their full potential and formalized religion, because of its ritual, is an important aspect of that experience (Noble, 1997). Noble argues that the ritual "helps to replenish the necessity and the belief in the supreme force" (p. 91), but points out that, helping children to understand, respect and obey the supreme force which is within us all is even more important. The supreme force helps children realize that there are no limitations to what they can do or become. According to Schiele, (1996), Afrocentricity emphasizes the spiritual nature of all human beings

and this connection to "God or the generative spirit" (p. 287) is derived from traditional African philosophy. Unlike other social science theories that are based on Eurocentric philosophies that de-emphasize spirituality (soul), Afrocentricity acknowledges and recognizes the holistic nature of human beings (mind, body and spirit).

In the African Nova Scotian experience, spirituality and/or faith has been used as a coping strategy for generations and has helped individuals and families survived the ravages of racism and discrimination, and is also credited for contributing to the health and well-being of this population (Este & Bernard, 2006). Since it is important that parent educators meet families where they are at, a critical aspect of working with African Nova Scotian families is that practitioners gain an understanding of the role that spirituality/faith/ plays in the lives of this group if their work with this population is to be effective (Este & Bernard, 2006). It is also critical that practitioners understand from an Afrocentric perspective how spiritual alienation affects the lives of people of African descent, particularly youth who because of the inequities and injustices of racism, lose that sense of connectedness to a higher being and other humans and become detached, individualistic and materialistic in their view of life (Schiele, 1997). Respect for the role of spirituality/faith in the lives of African Nova Scotians is vital when working with this group.

The specific aspects of the program that parents identified as being things they will add to their parenting tool kit were: teaching children the seven principles of Kwanzaa, reinforcing the budgeting (money management) skills that kids learnt in the program, becoming more involved in child's school and becoming more involved in the community.

The Kwanzaa principles focus on building family, community and culture and teaching children about these principles may instill in them an appreciation for their African roots and an understanding of the connectedness between family and community. In addition, since these principles emphasize unity in the family and community it may also instill in young children

97

respect for their peers and other community members leading to positive effects on the types of relationships children develop in their communities and other social settings such as schools. Also, with the emphasis of this program on preparing children to respond positively to racism, teaching children the principles of Kwanzaa may help children to develop a strong sense of self which is necessary to withstand racial hostility.

Teaching children about using money wisely is a skill that parents would find useful, but in Black families it is especially needed because like sex and death, money is hardly discussed in this family group, even though Black families are susceptible to falling prey to many money traps (Harris, 1998). Reinforcing this skill has a double affect because parents can only successfully teach what they practice and as parents teach their children, they will have the opportunity to reinforce some of the skills they learnt in the program. In a society where there are so many temptations to make easy money and where children are bombarded daily with Television Ads about more 'stuff' they could get it, is vital for children to be taught solid money values from an early age. In addition, children, specifically Black children living in urban areas, are susceptible to drugs and a myriad of delinquent behaviours, and parents learnt many prevention tips about these and other issues. The study found that this topic left a lasting impression on parents and it is quite possible that the children of these parents may be learning by example what it means to manage money as parents practice their new skills.

Another parent indicated that she will include "*becoming more involved in her child's school*" as a parenting strategy. This strategy may prove to be very helpful since children spend a significant amount of time in the school system where racism and discrimination are major issues for African Nova Scotian parents (BLAC Report, 1994). The BLAC Report urged parents to take an active role in their children's education, and becoming involved in a child's school is one way that this could be achieved. Such involvement will keep parents abreast of issues that may arise but it also helps the parent to develop a relationship with the school that could positively

impact the child's educational outcomes. It is the responsibility of parents to be fully engaged in the school and all the activities that contribute to their children's school life. This sends a clear message to children that their education is important to their parents and children in turn may become motivated to do their best which may positively impact Black children's educational outcomes.

The study found that the concept of "it takes a village to raise a child" was not widely discussed but it was modeled by participants. However, the comfort that participants experienced in sharing their concerns and successes, while seeking advice from each other on a weekly basis, and relationships that were being built was akin to a weekly family gathering with caring elders. The relationships that children built with caring adults in their community reinforced the 'village concept' that is dependent on strong families and caring community members who are willing to lend a helping hand to ensure the healthy development of young children. Building open communication with the school system and social supports with other parents in the community may be considered as two strategies that parents can use to develop a support system to help them raise their children. The concept of "it takes a village to raise a child" needs to be explored further.   In addition, the study revealed several suggestions to enhance the curriculum of the program and the following section outlines two key suggestions.

Implications

Despite the study's small sample, the findings provide valuable insights that may be helpful for those interested in rebuilding the fabric of strong Black communities. Black communities have a role to play in the development of programs and services for their community, and culturally specific programs have the potential to strengthening the capacities within Black families and communities. It is important that the strengths of this population be tapped into as considerations for effective programs and services for this community.

Also, policy makers need to consider the impact that race and culture have on the healthy development of African Nova Scotian children and youth and the wider community. These are important considerations since prevention and early intervention programs significantly impact other domains such as academic achievement, social functioning, employment status, delinquency, health and welfare use (Peterson, 1999). In a climate of increasing fiscal restraint, it makes sense to consider culturally relevant parenting programs for African Nova Scotians families. Increased support for culturally relevant programs would provide other ways of viewing African Nova Scotian families. The provision of culturally relevant parenting programs for African Nova Scotian families is another step in the journey towards cultural competence in service delivery for this population. However, such programs require the integrated efforts of service providers, agencies and institutions (Bernard & Moriah, 2007).

Parent educators and other professionals working with families, especially those who develop programs need to determine what works well for minority populations, and in this case African Nova Scotians, instead of trying to figure out why programs and/or services developed for mainstream society do not work with this population because such comparison reinforces the use of deficit models (Turner, 2000). In addition spirituality and/or faith are important elements of Black family life that professionals working with this population need to take into consideration when working with this population.

Limitations

The findings reveal that participants are receptive to the program and the curriculum and have adapted their parenting styles to include strategies to prepare their children to deal with issues of racism that they are quite likely to experience as Black children. However, several factors limited the interpretation of the findings and their generalization to the wider African Nova Scotian population. First, the study employed a small sample, all of whom were women. The use of a small sample precluded meaningful comparisons of parents with different demographic

characteristics. Secondly, meaningful comparison was also inhibited since all participants did not complete or respond to every question on the feedback questionnaires. Thirdly, the sample consisted of only women and this excluded the male perspective from the research. Although mothers primarily attend parenting programs, having the perspectives of fathers would add to the development of parenting programs since fathers play a significant role in the parenting of children. Fourth, the sample was recruited mainly through advertisement in church bulletins and this may have prevented participation by parents who are not in some way affiliated with the church which in turn restricted the demographics of the sample. Although this was not a representative sample of Black parents in Nova Scotia, there is no reason to believe that the concerns raised by the participants about race and culture were dissimilar from the discussions about race and culture anywhere else in the wider African Nova Scotian community. Future research should consider these demographic characteristics.

Suggestions for Future Studies

This study also provides a framework for future study on African centered parenting within the wider Canadian context. It is recommended that future studies focus on parenting by African Nova Scotian single mothers, and Rural African Nova Scotian families versus Urban African Nova Scotian families. Future research could also focus specifically on Black fathers, from single and two parent households. Given the changing demographics of Nova Scotia, additional studies are needed which include a more diverse group of African Nova Scotians consisting of immigrant and indigenous African Nova Scotians. A longitudinal study of the PEP program should also be considered using a larger sample to determine its effectiveness. Finally, future studies should also include comparisons of models of Afrocentric parenting to determine the effectiveness of this theory as the foundation of Black parenting.

Summary

In this study I explored the effectiveness of the PEP program as an alternative parenting program to address the lack of parenting programs that focus on the reality of the Black experience in Nova Scotia. I sought answers to the following questions: a) Does the PEP program assist African Nova Scotian parents in HRM in building skills to help their children enhance their sense of self-worth and to respond positively to racism? b) What is the role of the Black community in assisting in the parenting of Black children? c) What is the perspective of the parents who participated in the PEP program about the effectiveness of the program? d) What is the perspective of the Community Advisory Groups and program facilitators regarding the program? Based on the findings previously mentioned, I am proposing the PEP program as a relevant parenting model for African Nova Scotian families.

Efforts to improve parenting in Black families which focus primarily on Eurocentric models cannot result in fundamental and sustainable changes to improve Black parenting. In addition, translated and adapted models, although a step in the right direction, do not address the racial and cultural realities of African Nova Scotians or Black families in general. Although these programs may be helpful, they are still a negation of the cultural roots of this population and an acceptance that parenting programs developed from a Eurocentric perspective are the solutions to the problems that Black families face. It is also a negation of the parenting skills and strengths Black families have developed over the years to survive the hostility of racial oppression. In an era of increasing cultural diversity and multiculturalism, an acceptance that the Eurocentric perspective is the only way is a contradiction and backward step. The cultural history of Black people must be appreciated and honoured and what better place to begin than in the Black family. To expect Black families to adapt to the parenting styles of White parents is a rejection

of the Black family life in favour of Eurocentric ideals and a continued undermining and certain destruction of who we are as Black people.

Finally, unless Afrocentric models of parenting are accepted and implemented, the practice of comparing Black parenting to White parenting will continue the deficit approach to viewing Black families. Strong Black families are foundational to strong Black communities and the cultural roots and the strengths of Black families that have preserved this population for generations must be acknowledged and appreciated and can also beneficial to the wider society.

References

Akbar, N. (1984). Africentric social sciences for human liberation. *Journal of Black Studies*. 14(4), 395-414.

Akbar, N. (1985). Our Destiny: Authors of a Scientific Revolution. In H.P. McAdoo and J.L. McAdoo (Eds), Black Children: social, educational, and parental environments. (17-31). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Alvy, K. (1987). Black Parenting: strategies for training. New York, Irving Publishers, Inc.

Asante, M. K. (1998). The Afrocentric Idea. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. Philadelphia.

Alkebulan, A.A. (2007). Defending the paradigm. *Journal of Black Studies*. 37(3), 410- 427.

Beagan, B.L.; Etowa, J. & Bernard, W.T., Forthcoming 2011. "With God in our lives he gives us the strength to carry on": African Nova Scotian women, spirituality and racism-related stress.

Beal, A. C., Villarose, L., & Abner, A. (1998). *The Black Parenting Book: caring for Our Children in the First Five Years*. New York: Broadway Books.

Benton, W. The Evolution of Afrikan Consciousness: The effects of R.A.C.I.S.M. on Afrikans in the Diaspora. Unpublished Thesis, 1997.

Berkel, C., Murry, V.M., Hurt, T.R., Chen, Y. Brody, G.H., Simons, R.L. (2009). It takes a village: Protecting rural African American youth in the context of racism. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*. 38: 175-188.

Bernard, W.T. & Hamilton-Hinch, B. (2006). Four Journeys – One Vision: ABSW comes to Halifax. In W.T. Bernard (Ed.), Fighting for change: Black Social Workers in Nova Scotia. (18-26). Lawrencetown, NS: Pottersfield Press.

Bernard, W.T., Este; D. (2006). Spirituality among African Nova Scotians: A key to

    survival in Canadian Society. *Critical Social Work*. 7(1). Retrieved online @

    http://cronus.uwindsor.ca/units/socialwork/critical/nsf/main/21A3338CBA4AF85 25717

Bernard, W.T. & Moriah, J.P. (2007). Cultural competency: an individual or institutional

    responsibility? *Canadian Social Work Review* 24(1), 81-92.

BLAC (Black Learners Advisory Committee). 1994. *BLAC Report on Education: Redressing*

    Inequity: Empowering Black Learners. VOL. 1,2,3,. Halifax.

Bois, D. (1997). Distinguished women of past and present. Retrieved online @

    http://www.distinguishedwomen.com/bio.php?womanid=246.

Boykin, A.W. & Toms, F.D. (1985). Black Child Socialization: A conceptual framework.

    In H.P. McAdoo and J.L. McAdoo (Ed.), Black families. (33-52). Beverly Hills, CA:

    Sage Publications.

Bradshaw, C., Soifer, S., & Gutierrez, L. (1993). Toward a hybrid model for effective

    organizing in communities of color. *Journal of Community Practice,* 1, 25-42.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative*

    Research in Psychology, 3, 77-101.

Brody,G.H., Murry, V.M., McNair, L., Brown, A.C., Molgaard, V., Spoth, R.L., Gerrard,

    M., Gibbons, F.X., Wills, T.A., Luo, Z., & Chen, Y. (2006). The strong African

    American families progam: Prevention of youths' high-risk behavior and a test of a

    model of change. *Journal of family Psychology*. 20(1), 1-11.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and

    design. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Brown, T.N. & Lesane-Brown, C.L. (2006). Race socialization messages across historical

    time. *Social Psychology Quarterly*. 69(2), 201-213.

Canadian Census (2006). Statistic Canada, retrieved online @

https://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/index-eng.cfm

Caughy, M.O., Campo, P.J., Randolph, S.M., & Nickerson, K, (2002). The influence of racial

socialization practices on the cognitive and behavioral competence of African American

children. *Child Development*, 73, 1611-1625.

Cherry, V.R.; Belgrave, F.Z.; Jones, W.; Kennon, D.K.; Gray, F.S.; & Phillips, F. (1998).

NYU: An Africentric approach to substance abuse prevention among African

American youth. *Journal of Primary Prevention,* 18(3), 319-339.

Cutcliffe, J.R. (2005). Methodological issues in nursing research: adapt or adopt: developing

and transgressing the methodological boundaries of grounded theory. *Journal of*

Advanced Nursing. 51(4), 421-428. Retrieved online @

http://www.brown.uk.com/teaching/HEST5001/cutcliffe.pdf.

Coard, S.L., Wallace, S.A., Stevenson, H.C., & Brotman, L.M. (2004). Towards culturally

relevant preventive interventions: The consideration of racial socialization in parent

training with African American families. *Journal of Child and Family Studies,* 13(3),

277-293.

Early, D.M. & Eccles, J.S. (1995). Understanding the links between socio-economic status

and parenting behavior in African American and European American samples.

Presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development,

Indianapolis, Indiana, April, 1995.

Este, D. & Bernard. W.T. (2006). Spirituality among African Nova Scotians: A key to

survival in Canadian society. *Critical Social Work,* 7, 1-22.

Evans, D., Tynes, G. (1995). Telling the truth- Reflections: Segregated schools in Nova Scotia.

Hantsport, NS. Lancelot Press Limited.

Forehand, R. & Kotchick, B.A. (1996). Cultural diversity: A wake-up call for parent

>   training. *Behavior Therapy,* 27, 187-206.

Franklin, A.J. & Boyd-Franklin, N. (1985). A psychoeducational perspective on Black

>   parenting. In H.P. McAdoo and J.L. McAdoo (Eds.), Black children: social,

>   educational, and parental environments. (194-210). Newbury Park, CA: Sage

>   Publications.

Franklin, R.M. (2007). Crisis in the village: Restoring hope in African American communities.

>   Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Glaser, B.G. & Strauss, A.L. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative

>   research. New York: Aldine De Gruyter.

Gooden, A. (2008). Community Organizing by African Caribbean People in Toronto,

>   Ontario. *Journal of Black Studies.* 38(3), 413-426.

Gorman, J.C. and Balter, L. (1997). Culturally sensitive parent education: A critical review

>   of quantitative research. *Review of Educational Research.* 67(3), 339-369.

Graham, M.J. (1999), The African-Centered worldview: Towards a paradigm for social work.

>   *Journal of Black Studies.* 30(1), 103-122.

Graham, M. (2002). Creating Spaces: Exploring the role of cultural knowledge as a source

>   of empowerment in models of social welfare in Black communities. *British*

>   *Journal of Social Work*, 32, 35-49.

Graham, M. (2004). Empowerment revisited – Social work, resistance and agency in black

>   communities. *European Journal of Social Work.* 7(1), 43-56.

Gray, M., and Allegritti, I. (2003). Towards culturally sensitive social work practice: re-

>   examining cross-cultural social work. *Social work Maatskaplike Werk.* 39(4), 312-325.

>   Retrieved online @

>   http://ogma.newcastle.edu.au:8080/vital/access/manager/Repository/uon:2712.

107

Gutierrez, L., Alvarez, A.R., Nemon, H., Lewis, E.A. (1996). Multicultural Community

Organizing: A Strategy for Change. *Social Work*. 41(5), 501-508.

Gutierrez, L.M., DeLois, K.A., & GlenMaye, L. (1995). Understanding empowerment

practice: Building on practitioner-based knowledge. *Families in Society: The

Journal of Contemporary Human Services.* 79(9), 534-542.

Gutierrez, L., & Lewis, E. (1994). Community organizing with women of color. *Journal of

Community Practice,* 1(2), 23-44.

Gutierrez, L.M. (1990). Working with women of color: An empowerment perspective. *Social

Work,* 35, 149-153.

Harden, B., & Koblinsky, S. (1999). Double exposure: Children affected by family and

community violence. In R. Hampton (Ed.), *Family violence: Prevention and

treatment.* (pp. 66-102). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Harris, N. (1992). Afrocentrism: Concept and Method. *The Western Journal of Black

Studies.* 16(3), 154-159).

Health Canada. (1999). *Parenting Today's Teens: A survey and review of resources*.

Ottawa, Canada: Ministry of Public Works and Government Services Canada.

Hill, N.E. (2006). Disentangling ethnicity, socioeconomic status and parenting: Interactions,

influences and meaning. *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies.* 1(1), 114-124.

Hill, R.B. (1998). Understanding Black Family Functioning: A Holistic Perspective.

Journal of Comparative Family studies. 29(1), 15-25.

Holley, L.C. (2003). Emerging ethnic agencies: building capacity to build community.

Journal of Community Practice. 11(4), 39-57.

Hughes, D., Smith, E.P., Stevenson, H.C., Rodriguez, J., Johnson, D.J., Spicer, P. (2006).

Parents' ethnic-racial socialization practices: A review of research and directions for

future study. *Developmental Psychology*. 42(5), 747-750.

James, C.; Este, D,; Bernard, W.T.; Benjamin, A.; Lloyd,B.; & Turner, T. (2010). *Race & well-being: The lives, hopes and activism of African Canadians.* Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Johnson, R.C. (1981). The Black family and Black community development. *The Journal of Black Psychology.* 8(1), 35-52.

Karenga, M. (1977). *Kwanzaa: Origins, concepts, practice.* Los Angeles: Kawaida.

Karenga, M. (1997). *Kwanzaa: A celebration of family, community and culture.* Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press.

Kershaw, T. (1992). Afrocentrism and the Afrocentric Method. *The Western Journal of Black Studies.* 16(3), 160-168.

Kotchick, B.A. & Forehand, F. (2002). Putting parenting in perspective: A discussion of the contextual factors that shape parenting practices. *Journal of Child and Family Studies.* 11(3), 255-269.

Laing, B.Y. (2009). The universal Negro improvement association, Southern Christian leadership conference, and Black panther party: Lessons for Understanding African American culture-based organization. *Journal of Black Studies.* 39(4), 635-656.

Laing, B. Y. African American models of community organization: Towards a culturally competent theory. Unpublished Manuscript 1996.

Lambert, M.C., Rowan, G.T., Kim, S., Rowan, S.A., Shin An, J., Kirsch, E.A., Williams, O. (2005). Assessment of behavioral and emotional strengths in Black children: development of the behavioral assessment for children of African heritage. *Journal of Black Psychology.* 31(4), 321-351.

Letiecq, B.L., Koblinsky, S.A. (2004). Parenting in Violent Neighborhoods: African

    American fathers share strategies for keeping children safe. *Journal of Family Issues*,

    25(6), 715-734.

Letiecq, B.L., Koblinsky, S.A. (2003). African-American fathering of young children in violent

    neighborhoods: paternal protective strategies and their predictors.   *Fathering*. 1(3), 215-

    237.

Lesane-Brown, C.L. (2006). A review of race socialization within Black families.

    Developmental Review. 26(4), 400-426.

Littlejohn-Blake, S.M. & Darling, C.A. (1993). Understanding the strength of African American

    families. *Journal of Black Studies.* 23(4), 460-471.

Lochman, J.E., and Wells, K. (1996). A social cognitive intervention with aggressive

    children: prevention effects and contextual implementation issues. In R. D e. V. Peters &

    R . J. McMahon (Eds.), *Prevention of Childhood Disorders, Substance Abuse, and*

    Delinquency. Thousand Oaks, CA: *Sage.*

McIntosh, P. (1988). White privilege: unpacking the invisible knapsack. Retrieved online

    @ http://www.nymbp.org/reference/WhitePrivilege.pdf.

Mann, B. (2008). *What works for whom? Promising practices in parenting education*.

    Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs, Ottawa, ON

Manning, M. Cornelius, L.J. & Okunday, J.N. (2004). Empowering African Americans

    through social work practice: Integrating an Afrocentric perspective, Ego Psychology,

    and Spirituality. *Families in Society*. 85(2), 229-235.

Marano, C. (2010). 'Rising strongly and rapidly': The universal negro improvement

    association in Canada, 1919 - 1940. *The Canadian historical Review*. 91(2), 233-259.

Mazama, A. (2001). The Afrocentric Paradigm: Contours and Definitions. *Journal of Black*

    Studies. 31(4), 387-405.

McAdoo, H. and McAdoo, J. (1985). *Black children: Social educational and parental environment.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Mkabela, Q. (2005). Using the Afrocentric method in researching indigenous African culture. *The Qualitative Report.* 10(1), 178-189. Retrieved online @ http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/OR10-1/mkabela.pdf.

Moran, P., Ghate, D., and van der Merwe, A. (2004). What works in parenting support? A review of the international evidence. U.K.: Policy Research Bureau, Department for Education and Skills.

Neblett, E.W., Chavous, T.M., Nguyen, H.X. Sellers, R.M. (2009). Say it loud-I'm Black and I'm proud: parents' messages about race, racial discrimination, and academic achievement in African American boys. *The Journal of Negro Education.* Retrieved online @ http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3626/is_200907/ai_n42857090/?tag=mantl e_skin; content.

Neuman, W.L. & Krueger, L.W. (2003). Social work research methods: Qualitative and quantitative applications. Boston, Pearson Education, Inc.

Noble, W.W. (1997). African American family life: An instrument of culture. In H.P. McAdoo (Ed.), Black families. 3rd Edition. (167-182). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

O'Donnell, S., Karanja, S.T., (2009). Transformative community practice. *Journal of Community Practice.* 7(3), 67-84.

Ogbu, J.U. (1997). *African American education: A cultural-ecological perspective.* In H.P. McAdoo and J.L. McAdoo (Eds.), Black Children: Social, educational, and parental environments. (9-13). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Pachai, B. (1979). Dr. William Pearly Oliver and the search for Black self-identity in Nova

        Scotia (Occasional Paper No. 3 on Studies in National and International Issues). Halifax,

NS: International Education Centre, Saint Mary's University. F 1038 O6 P3 1979.

        Pachai, B. (1990). Beneath the clouds of the promised land: The survival of Nova

        Scotia's Blacks. Vol. II: 1800 -1989. Hantsport, NS. Lancelot Press Limited.

Peters, M.F. (1997). Historical note: Parenting of young children in Black families. In H.P.

        McAdoo (Ed.), Black families. 3rd Edition. (167-182). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

        Publications.

Peters, M. F. (1985). Racial socialization of young children.   In H.P. McAdoo and J.L.

        McAdoo (Eds.), Black children: social, educational, and parental environments. (159-

        173). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Peters, R.D. (1999). Preventing long-term social problems and costs through early support

        and intervention programs for young children, their mothers and their

        neighbourhoods: The role of social science research. *Canadian Federation for the*

        Humanities and Social Sciences. Queens University. Retrieved online @

        http://old.fedcan.ca/english/fromold/breakfast-peters1299.cfm.

Riessman, C. (2002). Narrative Analysis. In Huberman A.M. & M.B. Miles (Eds), *The*

        qualitative researcher's companion. (217-270), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

        Roker, C.B. (2006). The Association of Black social workers in Halifax: A brief history.

        In W.T. Bernard (Ed.), *Fighting for change: Black social workers in Nova Scotia*. (27-

        44), Lawrencetown, NS: Pottersfield Press.

Saskatchewan Prevention Institute. (2008). Sacred Children: Aboriginal parent education

        resource kit. Saskatoon,

Schiele, J. H. (1996). Afrocentricity: An emerging paradigm in social work practice. *Social*

        Work. 41(3), 284-294

Schiele, J. H. (1997). The contour and meaning of Afrocentric social work. *Journal of Black Studies*, 27(6), 800-819.

Shenton, A.K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information.* 22, 63-75. Retrieved @ http://www.angelfire.com/theforce/shu_cohort_viii/images/Trustworthypaper.pdf.

Shragge, E. (2003). *Activism and Social Change: Lessons for community and local organizing.* Toronto, ON. Broadview Press.

Skypnek, B.J. (2002). Parent education in Canada: yesterday, today, and tomorrow. *Canadian Home Economics Journal.* 51(2), p5(10).

Smyth, J. (2009). Critically engaged community capacity building and the 'community organizing' approach in disadvantaged contexts. *Critical Studies in Education,* 50(1), 9-22.

Solomon, B.B. (1976). Black empowerment: Social work in oppressed communities. NY: Columbia University Press.

Stewart, P.E. (2010). Stress and coping in African American families. In Price,S.J., Price, C., McKenry, P.E. (Eds), Families and change: coping with stressful events and transitions. 4th Edition. (311-332). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Stevenson, H.C., Davis, G. and Abdul-Kabir, S. (2001). *Stickin' to, Watchin' Over, and Getting' With: An African American parent's guide to discipline.* San Francisco, CA. Jossey-Bass.

Suizzo, M.A., Robinson, C., and Pahlke, E. (2008). African American mothers' socialization beliefs and goals with young children. *Journal of Family Issues.* 29(3), 287-316.

Swigonski, M.E. (1996). Challenging privilege through Africentric social work practice. *Social Work.* 41(2), 153-161.

Thompson, C.A. (1986). Born with a call: A biography of Dr.WilliamPearly Oliver, C.M. Black. Dartmouth, NS. Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia.

Turner, W.L. (2000). Cultural considerations in family-based primary prevention programs in drug abuse. *The Journal of Primary Prevention.* 21(2), 285-302.

Whaley, A.L., McQueen, J.P. (2004). An Afrocentric Program as Primary Prevention for African American youth: Qualitative and Quantitative Exploratory Data. *The Journal of Primary Prevention.* 25(2), 253-269.

Webster-Stratton, C. (1997). From parent training to community building. *Families in Society*, 78(2), 156-171.

Weil, M.O. (1996). Community building: building community practice. *Social Work* 41(5), 481-499.

Wessel, D.E. The effects of the effective Black parenting program on the parenting practices of parents of preschoolers. Unpublished Thesis, 2005.

Wright-Edelmann, M. (2008). Black families need to hold on to children – Our growing edge. Retrieved online @ http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/marian-wright-edel..

Wright, M.A. (1998). I'm Chocolate, You're Vanilla: Raising healthy Black and Biracial children in a race-conscious world. San Francisco. CA. Jossey-Bass.

Zimmerman, M. A. (1988). Empowerment theory: Psychological, organizational and community level of analysis. In Rappaport J & Seidman, (Eds), Handbook of community psychology. NY. Klewer Academic/Plenum Publishers. Pp. 43- 61.

Program	Origin	Target Audience	Program Goals	Modified/ Adapted To Canadian Context	Language
Active Parenting of Teens	US Canada	Two parent families, single parents of teens from a range of economic, educational, and ethnic backgrounds	To help parents of teens understand developmental changes in teens; communicate effectively; build courage and self-esteem in their teens; address issues of drug and alcohol use, sexuality and violence; discipline while teaching responsibility; explore and encourage non-violent conflict resolution.	No	English only
Active Parent Today	US	Parents of Grade 5 and elementary-aged children	Not available	No	English
1-2-3-4 Parent!	US	Parents of younger children	Not available	No	English
Common Sense Parenting	US	For parents of pre-teens and teens	Topics include setting clear expectations and consequences, using effective praise, helping children make decisions and solve problems,	No	English

			teaching social skills		
Developing Capable People	US	Adults who raise, teach, or are in a position to influence the healthy development of children and teens.	To help parents and other adults learn how to empower children and teens with Seven Life Principles: strong perceptions of personal capabilities; strong perceptions of personal significance; strong perceptions of personal power; self-discipline; communication; responsibility; values and principles	Yes	English
How to Talk so Kids Will Listen	US	Generally offered to parents of preschool and elementary school-aged children, but also comes with a teen supplement for flexibility in meeting the needs of communities	Helping children deal with their feelings, engaging cooperation, finding alternatives to punishment, promoting autonomy, praising, encouraging children to be themselves	This program is offered in many communities across Canada and is a popular offering in Nova Scotia. In New Brunswick it has been translated into French	English
Parenting for Prevention	US	Parents and other caregivers of school-aged children, 5-16, either in	To show parents how to take a positive approach to prevention by teaching their	No	English

		groups or as a self-help tool individually	children life skills that will help them develop into mature, responsible, non-violent and drug-free adults.		
Raising Children in Troubled Times	US	Parents, parent-teacher associations and school administrators of children between the ages of 5 and 18	To provide skills to overcome the many obstacles to raising and supervising children	No	English
Systematic Training for Effective Parenting of Teens (STEP Teens)	US	This program is aimed at middle-class parents, but the leader's guide has tips on how to adapt it to parents with lower income and education, parents mandated by the courts and multicultural groups	To help parents understand a practical theory of human behavior that can be applied to parent-teen relationships, improve communication and conflict resolution skills	No	
Teaching Parenting the Positive Discipline Way	US	Parents, teachers, nurses and others who want to lead parenting groups; counselors, psychologists, social	To train parent educators how to start and lead experientially based parenting groups, particularly how to use activities designed to reach parents	No	

		workers, family therapists, school administrators, parent educators	with cultural differences, limited reading skills and/or special problems with children		
Can We Talk?	Nova Scotia, Canada	Aimed at parents, and teens between 12 and 14 years of age	Deals with dating pressures with an emphasis on communication and postponing sexual involvement	Developed in Cumberland County, Nova Scotia	
Hey! Who's in Control?	Nova Scotia, Canada	Parents of teens, in particular teens who may be involved in high-risk activities.	Develops specific parenting skills in communication, problem solving, discipline and anger management, problem solving, discipline and anger management; and provides a safe environment for parents to discover their own parenting strengths and set goals to develop their potential	No	
Nos adolescents..parl ons-en!	Quebec, Canada	Part one is a program for parents of teens, part two is for teens regarding prevention of alcohol and drug abuse, and part three establishes a supportive environment for the	To increase parenting skills in order to enhance parent-teen relationships through exploration of knowledge, behavior and attitudes, and to prevent the abuse of alcohol and drugs	No adapted in English	

		parents and teens with teachers in the school community. This program was originally developed for use in a high school			
Parent d'ado..une traverse	Quebec Canada	Parents of children 12 to 18 years of age	Support parents in providing structure for their teens through healthy communication and establishing rules for family lire; encourage mutual support between parents of teens	No	
Parenting: A Balancing Act	Ontario Canada	Parents in single-parent, blended or two-parent family structures; suitable for high-risk families	To teach that parenting has four functions: access, guidance, control and nurturing; to support healthy family function through increasing skills, to help families organize their family structure; to encourage parents to support each other by creating a climate that is accessible, playful, learner-		

			directed and non-judgmental		
Parenting Pre-Teens and Teens	Ontario Canada	Parents of teens and pre-teens	To enhance parenting skills; deal with the key issues of parenting teens and pre-teens		
Programme d'animation de groups de parents d'adolescents (PAGPA)	Quebec Canada	Parents of teens	Increase the skills of parents and improve parent-teen relationships on themes such as values, sexuality, drugs, communication, school and family		
Juggling Cultures	Ontario Canada	A program for youth living in a multicultural environment	It addresses questions of how culture and change affect youth, families and communities and focus on building cross-cultural understanding		
S.U.C.C.E.S.S	British Columbia, Canada	Serves parents from the Chinese community in Vancouver	Provides a continuum of classes, including school-based programs for parents of pre-teen and teens, a support group for parents of pre-teens and a Parent Together support group for parents of acting out teens	No	Chinese

Nobody's Perfect	Developed by Health Canada in partnership with the Health Departments of the four Atlantic provinces	Parents of children from birth to 5 years old who are young, single, socially or geographically isolated or who have low income or limited formal education	To improve parents's capabilities to maintain and promote the health of their young children	Translated in French and adapted to meet the needs of Aboriginal parents and some immigrant groups;	English & French

Appendix 2 - Summary of Weekly Sessions

Week	Topic	Afrocentric Principl	Summary
Week One	Introduction/Coaching	Nia-Purpose	This week focused on parents as coaches and role models for their children. Parents completed activities that highlighted some of the challenges they face in raising their children as well as ways in which they can overcome these challenges. This session also emphasized the importance of self reflection and self evaluation.
Week Two	Relationships	Umoja – Unity	Material for this week focused on strengthening the relationship parents have with their children. Another emphasis of this session was the importance of unity in the family and their various communities as well as mainstream society.
Week Three	Community	Ujima –Collective Work & Responsibility	The importance of a communal way of life was emphasized in this session and parents reflected on the ways in which their community has shaped their lives and the lives of their children. Parents also discussed ways in which they can all work together to rebuild their communities and help one another in time of need.

			This session built on the old African proverb "it takes a village to raise a child".
Week Four	Culture	Kujichagulia –Self Determination	This week examinee the African Nova Scotian cultural values and the importance of instilling these values in children of African descent. This session also included discussions about diversity within the African Nova Scotian culture and parents were encouraged to teach their children the importance of cultural pride so that they can be proud of their heritage by learning more about the history of people of African descent and reconnect with their roots.
Week Five	Responsibility	Ujama – Cooperative Economics	Parents learnt ways in which they can raise financially responsible children. This session also stressed on the importance of healthy money values in children and discussed ways in which parents can keep their children from falling prey to gangs and violence.
Week Six	Education	Nia – Purpose	This session emphasized the importance of education and ways in which parents can help prevent their children

			from dropping of school. Parents were also urged to carry out their role as the first role models and teachers for their children and to be involved in their education.
Week Seven	Diversity	Kuumba – Creativity	The emphasis this week was the importance of harmony. Parents were encouraged to teach their children to appreciate differences and celebrate diversity and to view differences in the society as complementary and not conflictive.
Week Eight	Respect	Umoja –Unity	Self-respect, respect for elders in African Nova Scotian communities and respect for others were the focus of this week. Parents were urged to continue to teach their children one of the cardinal values that undergird African family life around the Diaspora.
Week Nine	Faith/closing	Imani – Faith	This session concluded the program by pointing out the importance of spirituality which has always been very important to people of African descent from the time of slavery and the slave trade to date. This session also included a closing ceremony for the program.

Appendix 3 - Research Explanation & Invitation (Parents)

Parents are invited to participate in a study I am doing about the Partners for Empowerment of Parents (PEP) program. The study is entitled, "Partners for Empowerment of Parents (PEP): Exploring Afrocentric Parenting in Halifax Regional Municipality.

Recognizing that all parents, at some time need help to assist them with the hard job of parenting, and that parenting programs in Nova Scotia are developed from a White, middle-class perspective, the PEP program was designed to be different. It is specifically for African Nova Scotian parents and reflects the hard challenges they face in raising their children in a society where being Black is often seen in a negative light.

The program is designed to be an Afrocentric parenting program and it will focus on the traditional cultural values of African peoples which includes a strong sense of community, spirituality and different ways of understanding and solving the problems facing African peoples. Nine themes (culture, faith, community, coaching, relationships, responsibility, education, respect and diversity) that resulted from discussions with African Nova Scotian parents in Halifax Regional Municipality will be incorporated into the principles of Afrocentricity.

This is a pilot study that will explore the impact of the PEP program on participants to see if they feel it is giving them new skills to help teach their children how to live in a society where being Black is often portrayed negatively. I would also like to find out if participants feel that the program gives parents some useful ideas and techniques so their children can feel good about themselves, have better self-esteem, and know how to deal in a positive way with racism when they face it.

If you agree to participate in this study, at the end of the PEP program, you will be asked to allow me to interview you for approximately 1 hr - 1 ½ hrs in your home or at the pilot site to get your opinions on the PEP program, and how it affected you.

You will be asked to read and sign a consent form which gives me the right to use your responses in discussions and reports about the research findings. The results of the study will be made available to you upon request.

1. **What is the purpose of this research**?

The purpose of this research is to assess the effectiveness of a new Afrocentric Parenting Program in HRM.

2. **What is the time commitment for this research?**

The time commitment for this research is 1 hr - 1 ½ hrs after the program is completed.

3. **What would I be asked to do to contribute to this research?**

You will be asked to complete a short questionnaire after each session of the PEP class and when the program is completed you will be invited to do an in-depth interview with me about the program.

4. **What is an Afrocentric Parenting program?**

An Afrocentric Parenting program is a parenting program that is developed taking into consideration the cultural values and traditions of African peoples.

5. **Why was this program developed?**

This program was developed because the current parenting programs in HRM do not reflect the cultural perspective of African Nova Scotians nor do they reflect the challenges that Black people experience because of race.

6. **Is this parenting model done in other African Canadian communities?**

Based on all the reading that I have done on the subject, this model of parent education is currently only being done in Montreal. However, the Afrocentric model of parenting is used in many communities in the US especially in urban settings. It is becoming well established as an appropriate model for African Americans.

7. **Why is this program called a pilot study?**

The program is called a pilot study because it's a parenting program using a method that has never been tried in HRM and it is being studied to determine if it is an effective program fo African Nova Scotian parents.

8. **How will this pilot study affect me?**

As a participant in this program you will be actively involved in developing a program that may help African Nova Scotian parents across the province.

It is not expected that this research will cause any adverse affect on the participants. However, since the concept of race and its effects on African Nova Scotians will be discussed during these interviews, participants may experience some discomfort. In the event that this happens,

members of the Association of Black Social Workers and the facilitators will be available to provide support to participants.

Before you sign this form, please take the time to read it, or have it explained, and ask questions about anything you do not understand.

Title of Research Study: Partners for Empowerment of Parents: Exploring Afrocentric Parenting in HRM

You are invited to participate in a research study designed to explore an Afrocentric Parenting Program entitled "Partners for Empowerment of Parents" (PEP). This research is being undertaken in partial fulfillment towards the Masters of Social Work degree at Dalhousie University School of Social Work.

Principle Investigator:

Investigator:	Jemell Moriah BSW, RSW MSW student School of Social Work, Dalhousie University
Project Supervisor:	Dr. Wanda Thomas Bernard School of Social Work, Dalhousie University Director of Dalhousie School of Social Work
Address:	School of Social Work, Dalhousie University 6414 Coburg Road, Halifax, Nova Scotia
Project Title:	Partners for Empowerment of Parents: Exploring Afrocentric Parenting in HRM

Participant name: _____

Please read the following points before agreeing to participate in this project. The researcher will go over these points with you after you are finished, ensuring all of your questions are answered.

  i. I consent to participate in this study. The purposes and procedures of the study have been explained to me and are attached to this form.

  ii. I acknowledge that:

·   I am voluntarily consenting to be involved in this study and I can withdraw from the study at any time without any penalties or negative consequences of any kind.
·   I understand that the research is open to participants of the PEP program.
·   The researchers will collect and store all data with due regard for confidentiality,

- I agree to participate in an in-depth interview with the researcher at the completion of the program which will take approximately 1 hr - 1 ½ hrs.
- I agree to participate in the study by answering questions (Appendix B) presented by the researcher during the in-depth interview to be recorded on audio tape.
- There will be no monetary compensation for participation in this study.
- If I so request, the results of my contribution to the research will be provided to me.
- I will be invited to attend a presentation of the summary of the final report.
- I understand that participating in this study means that I may be quoted in the dissemination of research findings. To protect anonymity, no identifying information will be attributed to these quotes. However, since this research is being conducted in a small community, the researcher cannot guarantee anonymity.
- If I disclose threat of harm to a child or adult in need of protection during the course of this research, the researcher is required by law to report this information to the authorities.
- The procedure and goals of the research have been explained to me by the researcher and I understand them.
- I have received a copy of this consent form and an information sheet on the study.

I permit quotations of my contributions to be anonymously reproduced for the final research report and/or for future possible publications.

_____ yes   _____ no

I have read the explanation of the study. I have been given opportunity to seek clarification and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I hereby consent to take part in the study. I realize that my participation is voluntary and that I have the right to refuse to answer an questions, to discontinue participation at any time and to withdraw my consent at any point without penalty.

All information provided in the consent form and interview is confidential. No one except the investigator, Jemell Moriah, will view this data. The responses provided during the in-depth interview will be combined with the responses provided by others and there will be no identifying information included in the interview.

_____   _____
Participant Signature   Date

_____   _____
Person obtaining consent   Date

Before you sign this form, please take the time to read it, or have it explained, and ask questions about anything you do not understand.

Title of Research Study: Partners for Empowerment of Parents: Exploring Afrocentric Parenting in HRM

You are invited to participate in a pilot research study designed to explore an Afrocentric Parenting Program entitled "Partners for Empowerment of Parents" (PEP). This research is being undertaken in partial fulfillment towards the Masters of Social Work degree at Dalhousie University School of Social Work.

Principle Investigator:

Investigator: Jemell Moriah BSW, RSW
                           MSW student
                           School of Social Work,
                           Dalhousie University

Project Supervisor: Dr. Wanda Thomas Bernard
                           School of Social Work, Dalhousie University
                           Director of Dalhousie School of Social Work

Address: School of Social Work, Dalhousie University
                           6414 Coburg Road, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Project Title: Partners for Empowerment of Parents: Exploring Afrocentric Parenting in HRM

Participant name: _____

Please read the following points before agreeing to participate in this project. The researcher will go over these points with you after you are finished, ensuring all of your questions are answered.

  i. I consent to participate in this study. The purposes and procedures of the study have been explained to me and are attached to this form.

 ii. I acknowledge that:

·   I am voluntarily consenting to be involved in this study and I can stop participating any time without any penalties or negative consequences of any kind.
·   I understand that the research is open to participants of the PEP program and the Community Advisory Group. The researcher will collect and store all data with due regard for confidentiality,
·   I agree to participate in three parenting sessions (3rd, 6th and 9th) during the 9-week parenting program and at the completion of the program to participate in a combined focus with Community Advisory Group members from both pilot sites.

- I understand that the focus group will be recorded on audio tape.
- There will be no monetary compensation for participation in this study.
- If I so request, the results of my contribution to the research will be provided to me.
- I will be invited to attend a presentation of the summary of the final report.
- I understand that participating in this study means that I may be quoted in the dissemination of research findings. To protect anonymity, no identifying information will be attributed to these quotes.
- If I disclose threat of harm to a child or adult in need of protection during the course of this research, the researcher is required by law to report this information to the authorities.
- The procedure and goals of the research have been explained to me by the researcher and I understand them.
- I have received a copy of this consent form and an information sheet on the study.

I permit quotations of my contributions to be anonymously reproduced for the final research report and/or for future possible publications.

_____ yes   _____ no

I have read the explanation of the study. I have been given an opportunity to seek clarification and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I hereby consent to take part in the study. I realize that my participation is voluntary and that I have the right to refuse to answer an questions, to discontinue participation at any time and to withdraw my consent at any point without penalty.

All information provided in the consent form and interview is confidential. No one except the investigator, Jemell Moriah, will view this data. The responses provided during the in-depth interview will be combined with the responses provided by others and there will be no identifying information included in the interview.

_____   _____
Participant Signature   Date

_____   _____
Person obtaining consent   Date

131

Name:_____

Venue:_____

Time: From_____**To**_____

Age _____**Sex**_____**Work Status**_____**No. Of Children**_____

_____

1.   How would you describe your parenting style before entering this program?

2.   What was your initial response when you heard about this new Afrocentric Parenting program?

3.   If someone were to ask you what is an Afrocentric parenting program, how would you describe it?

4.   As a Black parent, how do you think the PEP program will help you in your role as a parent?

5.   What other area of parenting do you think should be included in the PEP program?

6.   As a Black parent, how do you feel about having the PEP program in your community?

7.   What do you think might motivate parents to become involved in the PEP program or what do you see as a potential barrier to parents' participation?

8.   What do you plan to incorporate in your parenting practices as a result of the PEP program and why?

9.   What do you like most about the PEP program?

10.   What don't you like about the PEP program?

11.   Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the PEP program?

1. What do you consider to be the most important lesson in the nine sessions?

2. What do you consider to be the least important lessons in the nine sessions?

3. As a Black person, how do you feel about the focus of the PEP sessions?

4. How do you feel the parent/child sessions would enhance a sense of self-worth in Black children?

5. What are your thoughts about how the PEP program may benefit Black parents?

6. How do you feel about PEP? Please explain.

7. What else do you think can be added to PEP to give parents the skills they need to help their children improve their self worth?

8. How can PEP prepare parents to help their children respond positively to racism?

9. How is the PEP program different from a regular parenting program?

10. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the Program tonight?

DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY
Inspiring Minds

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board
Letter of Approval

Date: November 23, 2009.

To: Jemell Moriah, School of Social Work
Dr. Wanda Thomas Bernard, School of Social Work

The Social Sciences Research Ethics Board has examined the following application for research involving human subjects:

Project # 2009-2090 (version 2)

Title: Partners for Empowerment of parents: Exploring a New Afrocentric Parenting Program in Halifax Regional Municipality

and found the proposed research involving human subjects to be in accordance with Dalhousie Guidelines and the Tricouncil Policy Statement on *Ethical Conduct in Research Using Human Subjects*. This approval will be in effect for 12 months from the date indicated below and is subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the expiry date of this approval an annual report must be submitted and approved.
2. Any significant changes to either the research methodology, or the consent form used, must be submitted for ethics review and approval *prior to their implementation*.
3. You must also notify Research Ethics when the project is completed or terminated, at which time a final report should be completed.
4. Any adverse events involving study participants are reported immediately to the REB

Effective Date: November 23, 2009.   signed: _____
Expiry Date: November 23, 2010.   Dr. Stephen Coughlan (Chair SSHREB)

IMPORTANT FUNDING INFORMATION - *Do not ignore*

To ensure that funding for this project is available for use, you **must** provide the following information and **FAX** this page to **RESEARCH SERVICES** at **494-1595**

Name of grant /contract holder _____ Dept. _____
Signature of grant / contract holder _____
Funding agency _____
Award Number _____ Dal Account # (if known) _____