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Socialization of Culture and Coping with Discrimination Among American Indian Families: Examining Cultural Correlates of Youth Outcomes

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Abstract

Objective—The current study examines the interrelations between observed parental cultural socialization and socialization of coping with discrimination, and youth outcomes among a sample of 92 American Indian adolescents and their parents in a rural reservation.

Method—Path analysis is used to examine the relationships among observed parental socialization (cultural socialization and socialization of coping with discrimination), and youth-reported perceived discrimination, ethnic identity and depression.

Results—Findings reveal that higher levels of observed parental cultural socialization and socialization of coping with discrimination predict lower levels of depression as reported by youth 1 year later. Path analyses also show that observed parental cultural socialization and socialization of coping with discrimination are positively associated with youth ethnic identity.

Conclusions—These findings point to the importance of integrating familial socialization of culture and coping with discrimination in fostering resilience among American Indian youth.

Keywords

cultural socialization; discrimination; ethnic identity; American Indian youth

The history of the American Indian people illustrates a central theme of risk and resiliency shaped by their perseverance through historical and contemporary experiences of discrimination and oppression. A dramatic disruption of the indigenous socialization processes for individuals, families, and communities has resulted from the undeniable mark

left by the historical hardships of physical dislocation; forced acculturation to European American traditions; and the elimination of tribal culture, language, and spiritual practices (Brave Heart, & DeBruyn, 1998; Brookings Institution, 1928; Nies, 1996). As a result, the American Indian family, and subsequently their youth, face significant risks that stem from the lasting effects of socioeconomic stressors such as poverty, restricted opportunities in employment, housing, law enforcement, and health and human services. In addition, these families face unique culturally specific risks stemming from cultural oppression, including discrimination and the intergenerational transmission of trauma resulting from historical loss. However, simultaneous to facing this adversity, American Indians have also demonstrated remarkable resilience, especially the fundamental role of culture reflected in the connection to and identification with the traditional culture and spirituality that promotes resilience among American Indian youth.

This complex interplay of risk and resilience highlights the need for research to examine central mechanisms of resilience among American Indian youth. Resilience, defined as a “dynamic process that enables the individual to respond or adapt under adverse situations” (Thornton & Sanchez, 2010, p. 455), is conceptualized as stemming from multiple levels including the (a) intrapersonal, (b) interpersonal and (c) community domains (Delgado, 1995). Therefore, examining the multilevel effects of cultural risk and resilience factors on psychological adjustment of youth is critical to gaining insight into the key mechanisms of resilience unique to American Indian youth. In particular, given the limited evidence available on dynamic transmission of cultural resilience across systems, an important area of investigation focuses on understanding the ways in which cultural factors of resilience among American Indian youth are cultivated within familial socialization processes. To address this knowledge gap, we use a framework of familial socialization (Figure 1) to examine the interrelationships of cultural risk and resilience factors occurring on the intrapersonal level (e.g., perceived discrimination, ethnic identity) and the interpersonal level (e.g., parental socialization of culture and coping with discrimination), and the effects of those interrelationships on the adjustment American Indian youth.

Intrapersonal Factors of Cultural Risk and Resilience

Perceived discrimination

Central to the deep history of oppression, discrimination is identified as a cultural risk factor that considerably affects the lives of American Indian youth and families (Whitbeck, Hoyt, McMorris, Chen, & Stubben, 2001; Zimmerman, Ramirez, Washienko, Walter, & Dyer, 1994). The persistent and ongoing influence of race- and class-based barriers affect the American Indian families and communities’ struggle with the challenges of discrimination (Kavanagh, Absalom, Beil, & Schliessmann, 1999), thereby increasing the vulnerability of American Indian youth for psychological and behavioral problems (Aud, Fox, & Kewal-Ramani, 2010; Hawkins, Cummins, & Marlatt, 2004). The psychological toll of discrimination among ethnic minority youth has been well documented, with perceived discrimination associated with both internalizing and externalizing problem behaviors. These externalizing behaviors include shoplifting, skipping class, lying, cheating, stealing cars, and involvement with drugs and alcohol (Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003), and

delinquency (Prelow, Danoff-Burg, Swenson, & Pulgiano, 2004), whereas the internalizing problems include depression, somatic symptoms, and anxiety (Noh, Beiser, & Kaspar, 2003; Schmader, Major, & Gramzow, 2001; Szalacha et al., 2003).

American Indian families encounter discrimination across various contexts of their lives (e.g., among peers, school, neighborhood and community), and are more likely than any other ethnic group to be victims of interracial violence (Perry, 2004). The effects of discrimination on the psychological adjustment of American Indian youth are seen in particularly troublesome outcomes of high levels of depressive symptoms, substance use, suicide ideation, and problem behaviors (Walls, Johnson, Whitbeck, & Hoyt, 2006; Whitbeck et al., 2001; Whitbeck, McMorris, Hoyt, Stubben, & LaFromboise, 2002; Yoder, Whitbeck, Hoyt, & LaFromboise, 2006). Considering the evidence from these studies, we hypothesized that the risk factor of perceived discrimination was positively related to depression for American Indian youth (see Figure 1).

Ethnic identity

Ethnic identity is an integral intrapersonal factor of resilience that promotes the healthy development of ethnic minority youth. Ethnic identity—which an individual derives from his or her sense of membership to an ethnic group, and in combination with the emotional significance and valuing of that membership—is associated with the adaptive psychological functioning of ethnic minority youth, including lower levels of problem behaviors and internalizing problems (Phinney, 1992; Yasui, Dorham, & Dishion, 2004).

Because American Indian youth face challenges of navigating between the dominant and traditional cultures within the context of historical and contemporary oppression and discrimination, the process of developing a sense of personal identity anchored in ethnic identity and/or ethnic culture can have significant implications for their sense of self and their psychological adjustment. Despite this relevance, in comparison to other groups, literature on the role of ethnic identity on American Indian youth development has been limited. Moreover, findings are mixed. A handful of studies have linked ethnic identity among American Indians with social and adaptive functioning, higher self-esteem, positive affect, and lower substance use (Galliher, Jones, & Dahl, 2011; Jones & Galliher, 2007; Kenyon & Carter, 2011; Whitesell, Mitchell, Spicer, & Voices, 2009). In one study, ethnic identity among American Indians was also found to buffer the negative effects of discrimination, suggesting the centrality of ethnic identity in fostering resilience among American Indian youth in the context of sociocultural challenges (Galliher et al., 2011). Although evidence is mixed, we hypothesized that ethnic identity was negatively associated to youth depression, suggesting its function as an interpersonal cultural resilience factor (see Figure 1).

Interpersonal Cultural Risk and Resilience Factors

Current literature has suggested ethnic minority families engage in specific socialization processes that include the transmission of messages ranging from cultural practices and values to discussions concerning racial discrimination. Two bodies of literature point to the salience of such processes: the literature on racial socialization and that on ethnic

socialization. Notably, the literature on racial socialization has largely focused on the mechanisms by which parents (a) transmit messages preparing children to understand and cope with existing racial barriers (Boykin & Toms, 1985; Peters, 1985) and (b) transmit cultural practices and ethnic/racial pride (Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis, 2002). The second body of literature on ethnic socialization has centered on the practices that encompass the transmission of messages surrounding cultural retention, ethnic identity achievement, and affiliation towards an individual's ethnic group in the face of mainstream pressures to assimilate (Knight, Bernal, Cota, Garza, & Ocampo, 1993; Ou & McAdoo, 1993).

Within the various models of racial and ethnic socialization, scholars have identified two fundamental types of messages central to ethnic minority families: (a) messages that transmit cultural pride, history, heritage, traditions, and customs (Hughes et al., 2006; O'Connor, Brooks-Gunn, & Graber, 2000), and (b) messages that prepare children for the challenges of explicit and implicit discrimination and consequent health, social, and economic disparities. Messages relevant to transmission of culture have largely been described by constructs such as cultural socialization (Hughes & Chen, 1997), pluralism, reinforcement of cultural pride, appreciation of cultural legacy (Stevenson et al., 2002), and integrative/assertive socialization (Demo & Hughes, 1990). In contrast, messages relevant to experiences of discrimination have encompassed constructs such as preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust, egalitarianism, silence about race (Hughes et al., 2006), cautious/defensive socialization (Demo & Hughes, 1990), racism awareness training (Stevenson et al., 2002), and racial barrier awareness (Bowman & Howard, 1985).

Although no research has examined these constructs as applied specifically to American Indian families, parental transmission of messages on native culture and preparing children to cope with discrimination might be particularly germane to American Indians considering their history of intergenerational oppression and identification with tribal culture and spirituality. The following sections highlight cultural socialization and socialization of coping with discrimination as two central processes that may be critical to American Indian youth resilience.

Cultural socialization

Cultural socialization encompasses both explicit and implicit parental practices that involve teaching children about their racial/ethnic heritage and history; fostering the development of racial/ethnic identity and pride; and promoting involvement in cultural practices, customs, and traditions (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Stevenson et al., 2002, Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2004). Evidence has suggested cultural socialization is a central aspect of parental socialization among ethnic minority families (Buriel & DeMent, 1997; García Coll & Magnuson, 1997; Knight et al., 1993) and essential to an individual's development of a healthy identity and secure sense of belonging to his or her ethnic and cultural group.

The transmission of culture plays a central role in the familial socialization process within the American Indian family, influencing both family functioning and adaptive youth development. American Indian parents and their adolescent children have endorsed the importance of cultural values for the family and cultural respect as critical for youth's

success at home and school (Stubben, 2001). In fact, LaFromboise and Medoff (2004) noted that the responsibility of providing guidance and instilling cultural values is taken on not only by American Indian family members but also by tribal neighborhoods and communities. In turn, this community commitment to the culture fosters identity development, self-worth, and environmental mastery. Evidence on enculturation, which is the internalization of culture expressed through an individual's cultural identity and engagement in traditional cultural practices, suggests that enculturation is linked to both higher levels of prosocial behavior and lower rates of depression among American Indian youth and adults as compared with their counterparts who are less engaged in traditional culture (Whitbeck et al., 2001; Whitbeck et al., 2002). Given that enculturation reflects the internalization of cultural socialization, the transmission of culture within the familial context is a critical aspect of American Indian families that warrants further examination.

Cultural socialization and youth outcomes

Evidence on ethnic minority youth supports the protective effects of cultural socialization, including reduced rates of problem behaviors (Bennett, 2006), fewer depressive symptoms (McHale et al., 2006), and academic self-efficacy (Hughes et al., 2006). Although studies have not directly examined the influence of cultural socialization on adjustment among American Indian youth, research on enculturation has indicated that the internalization of traditional culture promotes school success and functions as a protective factor against harmful behaviors such as alcohol and drug use, early sexual activity, and delinquency (LaFromboise, Hoyt, Oliver, & Whitbeck, 2006; Winderowd, Montgomery, Stumblingbear, Harless, & Hicks, 2008; Zimmerman et al., 1994). Thus, parental cultural socialization is likely to function as a central familial process that fosters resilience among American Indian youth (see Figure 1).

In addition to psychological outcomes, research with ethnic minority youth has provided evidence of a strong relationship between cultural socialization and ethnic identity achievement. For example, cultural socialization has been associated with high levels of ethnic identity among African American youth (McHale et al., 2006), strong ethnic identity achievement among Latino/Latina adolescents and college students (Rivas-Drake, 2011; Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2004), and increases in ethnic identity among Asian American adolescents (Tran & Lee, 2010). Although no studies have examined the association between ethnic identity and parental cultural socialization among American Indian youth, a few recent studies have suggested American Indian youth demonstrate a pattern similar to those of other racial/ethnic minority youth. For example, in a qualitative study conducted by House, Stiffman, and Brown (2006), participants reported the an essential element of their achieving ethnic identity as an American Indian and a tribal member included the passing down of cultural and tribal knowledge (i.e., encompassing tribal history, beliefs, values, and traditions) within families through ceremonies, rituals, storytelling, and foods. Similarly, youths' involvement in tribal cultural activities (e.g., powwows) has been directly linked with ethnic identity achievement (Schweigman, Soto, Wright, & Unger, 2011). These findings point to the relevance of parental cultural socialization among American Indian families in fostering adaptive psychological functioning and high ethnic identity among their youth. Thus, we hypothesized that parental cultural socialization would be related with

better psychological functioning (i.e., low levels of depressive symptoms, high levels of ethnic identity) among American Indian youth (see Figure 1).

Socialization of coping with discrimination

The literature on racial/ethnic socialization has emphasized the salient practice of socializing children on coping with discrimination across ethnic minority families. For example, among African Americans, studies have found between 48% and 90% of parents engaged their children in discussions of racial barriers and coping with discrimination (Caughy, Campo, Randolph, & Nickerson, 2002; Coard, Wallace, Stevenson, & Brotman, 2004; Hughes & Chen, 1997). In addition, parental transmission of messages about coping with discrimination has been identified as a parenting practice among Asian American and Latino/Latina families. Likewise, American Indian families might also socialize their children to cope with discrimination (Hughes et al., 2006; Tran & Lee, 2010).

Although none of the available literature has examined parental socialization of coping with discrimination specific to American Indians, the importance of discriminatory experiences for American Indian families has been documented across generations. House and colleagues (2006) found that American Indian youth, adults, and elders discussed the impact of discrimination on their lives, with parents providing the most details on their experiences. Myhra (2011) also found that participants incorporated the discrimination experienced by others by internalizing the “elders’ stories about historical loss and trauma and about being treated as less than” (p. 24). This type of intergenerational transmission of oppression and coping among American Indian families has been reported in studies on historical trauma as being passed through narrative summaries of the losses suffered by their tribe, including loss of population, land, family, and culture (Ehlers, Gizer, Gilder, Ellingson, & Yehuda, 2013; Whitbeck, Adams, Hoyt, & Chen, 2004). Thus, within these messages transmitted from one generation to another, it is likely that American Indian families also engage in socialization practices around coping with racism and discrimination. Understanding such parenting practices is crucial, especially given the negative impact of discrimination on the psychological adjustment of American Indian youth.

Socialization of coping with discrimination and youth outcomes

Evidence from studies on ethnic minority youth has revealed the protective effects of parental socialization of children to cope with discrimination. For example, research that compared racial socialization among African Americans found the youth who were socialized to be aware of racial barriers and were cautioned about interracial challenges had more positive behavioral and psychological outcomes than youth who were given no messages about race or who received negative in-group messages (Thornton, Chatters, Taylor, & Allen, 1990). Moreover, Fischer and Shaw (1999) found the receipt of parental messages about coping with discrimination attenuated the relationship between youth’s own experiences of racism and poor mental health outcomes.

In addition to the effects on mental health outcomes, parental messages on coping with discrimination have been found to have positive influences on the development of racial/ethnic identity among African American youth. A moderate correlation has been found

between parental messages about prejudice and discrimination and child-reported ethnic identity (Hughes & Johnson, 2001). One study of a sample of African American youth showed that those whose parents had taught them about racism were more likely to report higher levels/more developed racial identity (Stevenson, 1995). Constantine and Blackmon (2002) also found that being prepared to face the challenges of racial bias and discrimination was associated with African American adolescents' high levels of positive feelings toward the family and increased self-esteem.

Although research has yet to examine the relationship between parental socialization on coping with discrimination and youth outcomes among American Indian families, the negative impact of discrimination reported across racial/ethnic minority groups suggests that American Indian families are likely to engage in similar socialization practices to foster resilience in their youth. Thus, we hypothesized that higher levels of parental socialization of coping with discrimination would be associated with higher levels of ethnic identity and lower levels of depression among American Indian youth (see Figure 1).

Current Study

Drawing from the existing literature on intrapersonal and interpersonal risk and resilience of American Indian youth, the current study examined the interrelationships of these cultural constructs and their impact on youth's psychological adjustment. As shown in Figure 1, this study was guided by the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. At the intrapersonal level, youth perceived discrimination will be positively related to ethnic identity and depression, whereas ethnic identity will be negatively related to depression.

Hypothesis 2. At the interpersonal level, parental socialization practices (i.e., cultural socialization, socialization of coping with discrimination) will have direct negative associations with youth depression but positive relations with ethnic identity.

Interrelations among these constructs were examined among 92 American Indian families by using youth survey reports and observational measures of parental socialization of youth regarding American Indian culture and coping with discrimination.

Method

Participants

The study examined data from a subsample of American Indian adolescents and their families who were participating in a larger study designed to examine a family-centered prevention intervention that targeted problem behaviors among early adolescents who were members of three tribal communities in the Northwest United States. The intervention used a multiple-baseline design that staggered the implementation of the intervention across the three participating tribal communities. Under the staggered implementation, the intervention was implemented successively in 1.5 year intervals after the initial assessment.

For the purposes of this study, we analyzed data of a subsample of 92 adolescents and their families from one tribal community. This sample included 41 boys and 51 girls who were

between 11 and 17 years old (mean age = 13.49 years). The tribal community had an average annual household income of \$26,000. Our selection of data from the larger study's dataset was based on the following criteria: (a) complete data for the baseline observational assessment procedure, (b) completed survey assessments, and (c) adolescent between 11 and 17 years old. The Institutional Review Board at the University of Oregon and the University of Chicago reviewed and approved all research associated with this study.

Recruitment Procedures

For the family-centered intervention (i.e., larger study), families were identified through tribal enrollment records. Potential participants were defined as all American Indian families residing in the community with a child between 8 and 17 years old. Families were recruited through social service programs, local schools, tribal meetings, tribal community events, and advertisements in local and tribal newspapers. In addition, staff persons at the reservation acted as intermediaries for the research team and informed families about the research study. The research team also mailed a flyer and introductory letter about the research project to all potential participants, inviting the recipients to participate in the research.

The sequence of contact for participants involved an introductory letter, flyer, telephone call, and home visit. The families chose their preferred method of contact (i.e., home visit or telephone call with research project staff, or visit to the family resource center). In individual discussions with potential participants, the research staff described the project, fully informing all participants about the research protocol, their rights, and the consent process. Consenting families were then contacted to participate in the family assessment.

Family Assessment Procedures

The baseline family assessment consisted of three sessions. The first was an initial interview with the parents, which was designed to build rapport between the families and research staff. In the second session, a baseline survey was administered to the parents and adolescent, and a family interaction was videotaped and assessed. The third session consisted of a feedback session, during which the results of the videotape assessment and initial interview were discussed with the parents; the feedback focused on the parents' readiness to change and on delineation of specific change options. Data for this study were derived from three sources: the baseline youth survey; the behavioral observations of family interactions (i.e., videotape assessment); and an annual youth survey, which was administered annually beginning 12 months from the baseline survey. At Wave 2, 96.5% of the sample completed survey measures indicating high retention of participants from baseline.

Measures

Youth measures used for this study were obtained from baseline and yearly surveys administered to youth and their families. The surveys were derived from a survey used by the Oregon Research Institute to assess a range of youth outcomes and related constructs; the Institute's survey has been empirically supported (Metzler, Biglan, Rusby, & Sprague, 2001). The demographic data (i.e., youth age and gender) were obtained from the baseline youth survey.

Youth ethnic identity—Ethnic identity was assessed using the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992), which is a 14-item scale designed to measure an individual's affirmation of an ethnic group, sense of belonging to an ethnic group, and achievement of ethnic identity based on exploration and commitment. All items used the same 4-point response scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* (coded 1) to *strongly agree* (coded 4). Higher scores indicate a higher level of ethnic identity achievement. Internal consistency indicated a standardized alpha of .85 for this sample.

Youth experience of discrimination—Youth-reported experiences of discrimination were as determined using seven items from the youth survey that asked about unfair treatment the youth received from multiple sources (e.g., teacher, police, peers) that the youth perceived as being based on their race/ethnicity or skin color. Responses were recorded using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *not at all* (1) to *all the time* (5). Example items include, "I was bothered by unfair treatment by police because of my race/skin color," "I was bothered by being called racist names," and "I was bothered by being followed in a store because of my race/ skin color." Internal consistency for the sample was .84.

Youth depression—Adolescent depressive symptoms were measured using 14 items from the Children's Depression Inventory (Kovacs, 1992). Examples of items include, "In the last month I felt depressed or sad," "I was bothered by loss of appetite," "I felt hopeless," and "I felt worthless." Items were rated on a 4-point scale that ranged from *never* (1) to *always* (4) with higher scores indicating increased levels of depressive symptoms. Internal consistency for this sample was .81 for Year 1 and .82 at Year 2.

Observational approaches to assessing parental socialization—The transmission of messages about family culture or coping with discrimination from parents to children often occur simultaneously through multiple pathways, including explicit and implicit verbal and nonverbal messages, exposure to objects, experiences and contexts, as well as parental modeling of behavioral and emotional responses (Caughy et al., 2002; Hughes et al., 2006; Lesane-Brown, 2006; Thornton et al., 1990). Developing an understanding of this integrated and often simultaneous delivery of these independent modes of transmission during the socialization process is critically important to understanding youth outcomes, and calls for methodological approaches such as observational methods that allow researchers to synthesize an assessment of the multidimensional, dynamic aspects of parental socialization. Substantial evidence has indicated observational methods are effective for assessing various parental socialization processes because such methods not only capture observable individual attitudes and behaviors but also the dynamic, contextual nature of family interactions that are often difficult to assess through self-reported surveys (Conger, Patterson, & Ge, 1995; Deater-Deckard & Petrill, 2004; Dishion & Bullock, 2001; Dishion, Bullock, & Granic, 2002; Dishion, Nelson, & Kavanagh, 2003; Forgatch, 1984).

Observational measures of parental socialization of culture and coping with discrimination—An observational measure of parental socialization processes of culture and coping with discrimination was used. Data were derived from two 5-minute parent-child videotaped interactions. As part of the family interaction assessment, adolescents and their

parents/caregivers participated in two rounds of a structured dyadic task (average duration of 5 minutes) that were videotaped for analysis. These tasks consisted of (a) a family discussion of the transmission of family culture, and (b) a family discussion of coping with experiences of discrimination.

Discussion task: Cultural transmission within the family: The observation procedure consisted of an assessment of family discussions of what family values and aspects of their culture the parents believed were important to pass on to their children, as well as to increase awareness of these cultural elements among those outside the tribal community. Families were not provided examples of cultural transmission because the aim of this task was to examine how families conceptualized “culture” and what messages parents perceived as important to teach their children.

Discussion task: Coping with discrimination: The family observation on coping with discrimination consisted of a parent-child interaction in which the target youth described his or her experiences of discrimination. After describing the event, the child was asked to talk about how he or she coped or would cope with the event. After the child finished describing the event, the parent was asked to describe their view on coping with racial discrimination.

Observational codes: Coding of the two tasks was performed using a global coding system of observational ratings that summarized the behavior and responses over the two 5 minute parent-child interactions. Specifically, the codes captured two dimensions of the socialization process. The first dimension consists of the message content of cultural socialization and socialization of coping with discrimination, which included participant-reported beliefs, perspectives, and behavioral practices. The second dimension encompasses the observed processes accompanying the transmission of these messages, which were assessed by in-task verbal behaviors, nonverbal behaviors, and affective responses that co-occurred with the transmission of content messages. The observational codes were integrative judgments that included the quality of the interaction as well as the frequency of events or behaviors observed in the parent-child interactions. Behaviors were coded along a 9-point scale, ranging from *not at all* (1) to *a lot* (9), with higher scores indicative of more frequent observations of behaviors.

For the purpose of the current study, two observational summary codes were used: parent cultural socialization, and parent socialization of coping with discrimination. These summary codes were derived by averaging across codes included in each construct. The cultural socialization summary code was an average of the following codes: valuing of tribal membership, knowledge of tribal/cultural traditions, family engages in tribal/cultural practices, emphasizes the passing down of tribal/cultural values, and tribal/ethnic pride. The coping with discrimination summary code averaged the codes for emphasizing the importance of educating youth about discrimination, promoting nonaggressive verbal responses to discrimination, seeking social support in coping with discrimination, and using strategies to problem solve challenges that emerge as a result of discrimination.

Training on observational codes: In the current study, the family observations were coded by a team of six trained coders; this team represented diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds of

American Indian, European American, and African American. All coders were undergraduate college students, and three were male. All coders were trained to reliability standards. To monitor interrater reliability, 30% of the tapes were double-coded to stringently check coder drift and to ensure reliability. When coder drift occurred, the coding process was halted and coders underwent additional training sessions led by the first author until all coders achieved reliability. Interrater reliability was assessed using percentage agreement. Coders' ratings were considered reliable if they had more than 85% agreement with the calibrator. Average percent agreement across tapes was 87%.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics and correlations between measures are provided in Table 1.

Correlations between youth-reported outcomes indicated that perceived discrimination was positively related to depression and negatively related to ethnic identity. Interestingly, we did not find significant associations between youth-reported ethnic identity and perceived discrimination.

Correlations between observed socialization codes and youth-reported outcomes showed that parent cultural socialization and parental socialization of coping with discrimination were positively related to youth ethnic identity and negatively associated with youth reported depression.

Path Analyses

To examine how youth and parent cultural factors influence American Indian youth ethnic identity and depression, path analysis was conducted to test relations between the hypothesized correlates and youth depression among 92 American Indian adolescents. All analyses were estimated using Mplus software (Muthén & Muthén, 2011). The model fit was assessed using model chi-square (χ^2), comparative fit indices (CFI; Bentler, 1990), the Tucker-Lewis fit indices (TFI), and the root mean squared error approximation (RMSEA; Browne & Cudeck, 1993). Acceptable model fit was determined using a cut-off of CFI values greater than .90 and RMSEA values of less than 0.05 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Byrne, 1994). All analyses controlled for youth age and gender. The model was estimated for direct and indirect paths, and the significance of the indirect paths was analyzed using the test of the indirect effect in Mplus (Muthén & Muthén, 2011).

Figure 2 shows the results of the path model that examined the predictive effects of youth and parental cultural correlates of youth depression. To control for covariates, the model included variables for *youth gender*, *age*, and *depression at Wave 1*. The model fit the data well: $\chi^2(7) = 7.383$, $p = 0.39$, CFI = .994, TFI = .985, RMSEA = 0.025 ($R^2 = 18.8\%$ in ethnic identity, $R^2 = 29.5\%$ in depressive symptoms at Wave 1, and $R^2 = 29.4\%$ in depressive symptoms at Wave 2).

Pathways between youth ethnic identity and depression and cultural constructs showed some variation from the hypothesized model. Although perceived discrimination was positively associated with youth depression, this association was found only at Wave 1. However, tests

of indirect effects indicated a significant effect of perceived discrimination on depression at Wave 2 via depression at Wave 1, ($\beta = .173, p < .001$). Contrary to our hypothesis, ethnic identity was not significantly related to youth depression at either Wave 1 or Wave 2 when all variables were included in the model.

Consistent with the hypothesized model, observed cultural socialization and socialization of coping with discrimination was positively associated with youth ethnic identity and negatively related to youth depression at both waves. Tests of indirect effects indicated the effects of observed cultural socialization on youth depression at Wave 2 via youth depression at Wave 1 ($\beta = -.09, p < .05$), and observed socialization of coping with discrimination on youth depression at Wave 2 via youth depression at Wave 1 ($\beta = -.09, p < .05$).

Power—Given the relatively small sample size and the complexity of the model estimated, we conducted Monte Carlo power simulations to examine the possibility of null results due to lack of statistical power. Specifically, to provide an empirical estimate of power, model estimates obtained from the original model were used as population values and 1,000 replications were conducted. Each replication involved fitting a specific sample drawn to the postulated model with parameters estimated and recorded. Thus, the average of the empirical rate of statistical significance of a given estimate across all replications (i.e., 1,000 replications) provides an empirical estimate of power. Analyses produced power estimates for each of the paths, which indicated that the power to detect paths for the model was moderate to high (see Table 2).

Discussion

The current study explored the interrelationships of intrapersonal and interpersonal risk and resilience factors on American Indian youth levels of depressive symptoms. The study findings highlight the presence of cultural factors of resilience at both intrapersonal and interpersonal levels, suggesting the important role culture plays in the psychological adjustment of American Indian youth. This study makes a unique contribution to the literature through its application of observational measures of parental socialization of culture and coping with discrimination, which captures the multidimensional nature of the process (i.e., encompasses message content in conjunction with parental behaviors and affect).

At the intrapersonal level, perceived discrimination was positively and concurrently associated with youth depression. These findings parallel existing research on the negative effects of discrimination on psychological adjustment among American Indian adolescents and adults (Whitbeck et al., 2001; Zimmerman et al., 1994). Interestingly, perceived discrimination did not predict depression a year later, although significant indirect effects via youth depression at Wave 1 were observed. Such findings might indicate that the negative impact of discrimination on later psychological adjustment occurs through manifestations of concurrent depressive symptoms, pointing to a substantial need to address the psychological toll on American Indian youth that results from discrimination.

Contrary to our hypothesis, no associations between ethnic identity and youth depression were observed. Studies that have examined the relationship between ethnic identity and youth outcomes among other racial/ethnic minority groups have indicated that higher racial/ethnic identity achievement was linked to a range of positive outcomes, including lower internalizing problems and externalizing behaviors, higher self-esteem, increased academic achievement, and improved sense of mastery (Bennett, 2006; Constantine & Blackmon, 2002; Phinney & Alpuria, 1990). However, although several studies have found the protective effect of ethnic identity among American Indian youth (e.g., Jones & Galliher, 2007; Whitesell, Mitchell, Kaufman, & Spicer, 2006; Whitesell et al., 2009), others have reported no associations between ethnic identity and psychological adjustment (Adams, Fryberg, Garcia, & Delgado-Torres, 2006; Brown & Smirles, 2005; LaFromboise, Medoff, Lee, & Harris, 2007). Considering the diversity of American Indian tribes, the ways in which ethnic identity functions to buffer youth from risk factors and promote psychological adjustment may differ by tribal culture, history, and context. For example, Oetting and Beauvais (1990) found that higher Anglo identification was associated with lower drug use among American Indian adolescents but had no associations with risks or benefits for psychological well-being. It will be important for future research to examine tribal-specific approaches and perspectives in fostering youth's identification with their particular tribal group.

At the interpersonal level, observed parental cultural socialization and socialization of coping with discrimination emerged as salient dimensions of interpersonal cultural resilience for American Indian youth. Results indicated both parent socialization domains were positively related to youth ethnic identity; a finding that matches current research linking ethnic minority youths' achievement of an ethnic identity with the receipt of messages of culture (i.e., cultural socialization) as well as messages on discrimination (e.g., preparation for bias; Hughes, Hagelskamp, Way, & Foust, 2009). Similar to other racial/ethnic minority families, these findings suggest that American Indian families value the transmission of messages on their culture and ways of coping with discrimination, and that these family processes are integral to youth's development of ethnic identity and sense of membership in their tribal group.

Parental cultural socialization and socialization of coping with discrimination also predicted low levels of youth depression. These findings parallel existing evidence that links positive youth adjustment with parental cultural socialization (McHale et al., 2006; Rivas-Drake, 2011) and parental messages related to discrimination (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Scott, 2003). Studies have suggested that American Indian families share stories of cultural and historical loss because of oppression and discrimination within the family (House et al., 2006; Myhra, 2011). If so, then extending the examination of how messages of culture and coping with discrimination are passed down in these narratives will be critical to informing interventions to help strengthen American Indians facing the hardships related to discrimination and oppression.

The significant influences of parental socialization of culture and coping with discrimination on youth psychological adjustment also have important implications for practice. Although the importance of culture to American Indians is widely recognized, few interventions have

targeted parental socialization processes as a mechanism by which cultural resilience is fostered among youth. Developing approaches to assist American Indian parents in transmitting messages that instill cultural pride and pass down effective ways of coping with discrimination is vitally important. Such efforts are even more important given that the parents themselves are victims of the loss of tribal culture and history, which has left many without the cultural knowledge, skills, or practices of their tribe that they hope to teach their children (House et al., 2006). Therefore, equipping parents with culturally specific approaches to foster their children's healthy development may provide benefits on multiple levels. For youth, culturally specific approaches directed toward parents could provide practical and palpable ways for parents to socialize their adolescents regarding tribal culture and coping with discrimination, and thus increase youth ethnic identity and self-esteem. Such efforts would also facilitate parents' own cultural knowledge, tribal pride, and cultural involvement and pride—all of which could lead to other significant benefits such as increased use of effective parenting practices, which in turn, can lead to positive child behavior (Dionne, Davis, Sheeber, & Madrigal, 2009; Goodkind, LaNoue, Lee, Freeland, & Freund, 2012).

Several limitations must be addressed when interpreting the current findings. First, our data were drawn from a single tribal community on a rural reservation; therefore, the relationships between the cultural variables may be a reflection of the specific cultural context of this sample and might not generalize to American Indians of other tribes, living in other rural reservations, or living in urban locations. These results must be interpreted with caution because our sample represents one tribal community out of more than 300 federally recognized tribes (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). Second, although power analyses indicated that the relationships found in our sample are likely to be observed in the population, our sample is relatively small for a complex model. Third, our analyses were correlational rather than experimental. As such, although we examined a conceptual relationship directing from parental cultural socialization and socialization of coping with discrimination to youth outcomes, the directionality of results may be reverse. Future studies should use longitudinal data to model nonrecursive and transactional associations among these cultural constructs. Fourth, existing measures that assess the dimensions of cultural socialization and socialization of coping with discrimination have not yet been validated with American Indians, and were not included in the original study. We acknowledge that the lack of survey measures limits our ability to examine the concurrent validity of the observational measure. However, the associations with constructs such as ethnic identity that are found with existing paper and pencil measures with other ethnic groups suggest that the observational measure captures similar dimensions. Finally, as compared with parents who do not engage in discussions of culture or discrimination with their children, parents who engage in socializing their youth regarding their cultural background and who prepare the children to cope with experiences of discrimination tend to be more involved with their children. Therefore, the negative association between youth depression and parental cultural socialization and socialization of coping with discrimination might reflect positive parenting and family relations rather than socialization on these specific domains. It will be important for future research to examine the independent effects of socializing youth on issues pertaining to their culture and on youth adjustment and ethnic identity.

Conclusion and Future Directions

In conclusion, this study highlights the centrality of culturally specific influences and risks that affect the development of resilience for American Indian youth. This study advances the literature by demonstrating the importance of parental socialization practices that transmit messages regarding American Indian cultural history, beliefs, and practices, as well as messages regarding ways of coping with the historical legacy and ongoing experiences of discrimination. Understanding these socialization processes is a critical step toward the development of culturally grounded theories of adaptive child development for American Indian youth, and guiding interventions that target factors that promote resilience in American Indian populations. In particular, although there is increasing support for evidence-based interventions with ethnic minority youth and families (Miranda et al., 2005; Reid, Webster-Stratton, & Beauchaine, 2001), a great need still exists for the development and application of culturally adapted intervention programs that incorporate culturally based, developmental concerns central to the healthy development of ethnic minority youth (Castro, Barrera, & Steiker, 2010). Thus, given the centrality of culturally grounded constructs for American Indian youth, it is critical that intervention research consider the integral role these processes play in the development and implementation of child and family interventions for American Indian families.

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Figure 1.
Hypothesized Model

Figure 2.
Path Model

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Variables

	Ethnic identity	Perceived discrimination	Depression	Observed parental cultural socialization	Observed parental socialization of proactive coping with discrimination
Ethnic identity	–				
Perceived discrimination	-.01	–			
Depression	-.21 [*]	.41 [*]	–		
Observed parental cultural socialization	.30 [*]	-.11	-.31 [*]	–	
Observed parental socialization of proactive coping with discrimination	.26 [*]	.12	-.22 [*]	.19	–
<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	3.51 (.47)	1.31 (.59)	2.0 (.67)	4.82 (1.30)	4.77 (1.33)

Note. *M* = mean. *SD* = standard deviation.^{*}
p < .05

Table 2**Power Estimates of Path Model**

Path	Estimates				% Sig Coefficients
	Population	Average	SD		
Depression (Wave 1) → Depression (Wave 2)	.414	.413	.010		.984
Ethnic identity → Depression (Wave 2)	.105	.102	.117		.153
Perceived discrimination → Depression (Wave 2)	.191	.187	.082		.506
Observed parental cultural socialization → Depression (Wave 2)	-.119	-.120	.043		.781
Observed parental socialization of coping with discrimination → Depression (Wave 2)	-.111	-.110	.015		.797
Observed parental cultural socialization → Depression (Wave 1)	-.130	-.129	.048		.808
Observed parental socialization of coping with discrimination → Depression (Wave 1)	-.094	-.095	.043		.574
Observed parental cultural socialization → Ethnic identity	.104	.104	.033		.886
Observed parental socialization of coping with discrimination → Ethnic identity	.071	.071	.033		.631
Perceived discrimination → Ethnic identity	-.013	-.013	.073		.058