

### *Confronting and Processing Internalized Homonegativity*

All participants reportedly found value in speaking about their experiences with internalized homonegativity. For some participants, exploring internalized homonegativity helped combat anxieties around sexual orientation. Other participants described this experience as freeing and as a conduit to uncovering deeper truths about Black male sexual identity development. Additionally, conversations about internalized homonegativity increased participants' desire to engage in other dialogues surrounding masculinity, femininity, privilege, and resilience.

### *Recommendations*

As a part of the interview on homonegativity, participants were asked to provide recommendations to other cisgender Black queer men who are experiencing homonegativity, their families, and therapists who may treat this cohort. The interviewees identified that cisgender Black men living with internalized homonegativity could manage their experiences by having honest conversations with themselves, with loved ones, and with allies. It was recommended that investigation into the sources and consequences of internalized homonegativity should occur. Further, the participants provided that cisgender Black men don't need to navigate internalized homonegativity alone, as there exists a vast and diverse community of cisgender Black queer men who may share in similar experiences.

All participants emphasized that the explicit demonstration of love and acceptance by family members can assuage cisgender Black queer men's experience with internalized homonegativity. For therapists and clinicians treating cisgender Black queer men, the participants highlighted the importance of competency and representation in therapy. They further suggested that therapists need to be self-aware, unbiased, flexible, and progressive in order to avoid retraumatizing their cisgender Black queer male clients. The participants suggested that therapists and clinicians consult the literature and build intention around fostering a space for Black gay male clients to approach internalized homonegativity with curiosity. This method was highlighted as a way to understand and manage client experiences of internalized homonegativity, rather than focus on changing or erasing internalized homonegativity. Some participants also called for an increase in Black queer male therapists who have proximity to internalized homonegativity,

which can influence client comfort, facilitate appropriate therapist disclosure, and impact therapist-client alliance formation.

## Discussion

A hermeneutic phenomenological qualitative research study was conducted to provide a detailed account of the lived experiences of homonegativity, and its consequences, among nine Black cisgender same gender loving men (VanManen, 1990). Participants' experiences with homonegativity seem to be directly linked to their interactions with family, religion, and social space (Morales, 1989). Before fully developing or acknowledging their sexual orientations, the cisgender Black queer men that were interviewed learned that being gay was unacceptable from their family members, friends, and religious teachings (Morales, 1989; LaSala & Frierson, 2012; Winder, 2015). Anti-gay messages in the respondents' external environments triggered anxieties around rejection from their communities, which prompted efforts to separate from associations with queerness by performing hypermasculinity (Snorton, 2014). To these men, internalized homonegativity manifested through a hyperawareness of femininity; social distancing from flamboyant men; outwardly denying one's same sex attracted preference; and engaging sexually and romantically with partners who also performed masculinity (Lemelle, 2010; McCune, 2008; Snorton, 2014). Some participants also endorsed occasional isolation from loved ones and suicidal ideation as a response to feeling helpless in preventing their identities from being disclosed.

It is important to note that anti-queer messaging was not the only contributor to the participants' experiences with internalized homonegativity. When looking at the intersection of racial identity and sexual orientation, many of the participants felt confusion around how their sexual and racial identities could exist at once (hooks, 2004; Snorton, 2014). Even those who found cohesion between their racial and sexual selves struggled with homonegativity, as they viewed their sexual orientation as a threat or limit to their positions as Black men with privilege (hooks, 2004; Lemelle, 2010). Due to their high racial salience, many of the interviewed men recognized that they carried educational, financial, religious, and social privileges that protected them from many of the daily traumas they could face as Black men in America (Lemelle, 2010). For many of these men, to express their

gay identities in different social contexts would go against the norms of respectability (i.e., professionalism) and threaten their protections (hooks 2004; Lemelle, 2010; Snorton, 2014; Summers, 2004; Stoler, 1989); which influenced them to engage in racial and sexual identity code-switching as a means to compensate for their same gender loving attraction. This form of navigation is important because it presents a picture of the risks privileged cisgender Black queer men may associate with their sexual orientations.

Many of the participants spoke to the privilege of being able to pass as heterosexual in various social spaces, while some men identified their inability to hide their queer identity by passing as straight. It is not the purpose of this work to identify those participants currently experiencing internalized homonegativity; yet when one observes these nine participants' relationship with heterosexual passing privilege, one notices that the experience of internalized homonegativity among these Black cisgender same gender loving men is an insidious experience that conflates gender and sexuality and connects privilege to one's ability to perform masculinity (McCune 2008; Snorton, 2014). None of the hetero-passing men in this study described heterosexual passing to communicate how their social environments reinforced heterosexuality. These men identified their ability to pass as heterosexual to provide environmental confirmation that their performance of masculinity was believable in various social contexts. This dynamic, in itself, offers insight into these men's relationships with privilege. While identity disclosure may not have challenged their financial or educational statuses, such disclosure might certainly limit the level of masculinity-based privilege these men have perceivably been afforded. Therefore, the participants at some point internalized a belief that proximity to femininity (e.g., being around flamboyant men, physical closeness to transwomen, dating a man who does not pass as heterosexual, presenting in a feminine manner) would threaten their amassed social privileges (hooks, 2004; Lemelle & Battle, 2004; McCune 2008; Snorton, 2014).

Therapists intending to work with Black cisgender same sex attracted men may find the results of this work valuable, as this study suggests that internalized homonegativity may in fact be an internal cost-benefit analysis of whether the privileges one currently holds can be limited by living out one's sexual identities and displaying a nuanced gender expression. The men in this study recommended that therapists guide their cisgender Black male clients in embracing their discomfort and approaching their cost-benefit

analysis with curiosity. The participants also advised that therapists should assess and understand their own relationships with non-heterosexual identities, heterosexism, hegemony, and homonegativity (Godfrey, Haddock, Fisher, & Lund, 2006). Further, the respondents emphasized the importance of representation and proximity to the issue and called for an increase in the amount of cisgender Black queer male clinicians that exist. Such a shift in therapeutic representation would call for the identifying and dismantling of various systems that have kept this demographic from pursuing careers in mental health.

While a sample size of nine participants could be perceived as a study limitation, the participants' experiences reflected saturation of the qualitative data. It is however important to note that the salient theme of privilege and gender performance stemmed from a group of men who were homogeneously well educated, prestigiously employed, Christian at some point in their lifespan, and socially well-resourced. If this study were to be replicated, there is value in investigating the experiences of men who vary in socioeconomic status, education, communal support, and ethnicity, as experiences with homonegativity may differ throughout various spheres in the African diaspora.

Connecting internalized homonegativity to privilege and masculine performance creates space for a greater discourse of gender, sexuality, power, and oppression. For the interviewed men, processing internalized homonegativity facilitated a reshaping of the images of Black masculinity that have been ingrained by their environments—environments distorted by White supremacy. As more Black same gender loving men seek to understand their experiences with internalized homonegativity, and its consequences, they move toward resisting and transforming historical systems that have negatively impacted Black lives for centuries.

---

**P. Ryan Grant**, Psy.D., M.P.H. is a clinical psychologist in Atlanta, GA. Through research, clinical practice, and podcasting, Grant uses the narratives of Black folk to examine the intersectional impacts of white supremacy on sexual and mental wellness.

### Acknowledgements

Many thanks to my dissertation chair and committee members: Dr. Michael Sude (Chair), Dr. Julie Hill, and Dr. James Wadley. Additional thanks to the nine Black male participants who openly shared their stories and made this work possible.

## Note

1. This perspective was provided before the Supreme Court ruled to legally protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people from workplace discrimination on June 15, 2020 (Liptak, 2020).

## References

- Alexander, William H. (2004) "Homosexual and racial identity conflicts and depression among African-American gay males." *Trotter Review*, 16(1), 71–103.
- Amola, O., & Grimmett, M. A. (2015). Sexual identity, mental health, HIV risk behaviors, and internalized homophobia among Black men who have sex with men. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 93(2), 236–246. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6676.2015.00199.x.
- Barker, C., Pistrang, N., & Elliott, R. (2016). *Research methods in clinical psychology: An introduction for students and practitioners*. New York: Wiley.
- Barnes, D. M., & Meyer, I. H. (2012). Religious affiliation, internalized homophobia, and mental health in lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 82(4), 505–515. doi:10.1111/j.1939-0025.2012.01185.x.
- Battle, J., Bennett, N. (2005). Striving for place: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people in *A companion to African American history* (412–438.). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Berg, R. C., Ross, M. W., Weatherburn, P., Schmidt, A. J., Malmö University, Social Work (SA), & Faculty of Health and Society. (2013). Structural and environmental factors are associated with internalised homonegativity in men who have sex with men: Findings from the European MSM internet survey (EMIS) in 38 countries. *Social Science & Medicine*, 78, 61–69. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2012.11.033.
- Bowleg, L., Burkholder, G. J., Noar, S. M., Teti, M., Malebranche, D. J., & Tschann, J. M. (2013). Sexual scripts and sexual risk behaviors among black heterosexual men: development of the sexual scripts scale. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 44(3), 639–654. doi:10.1007/s10508-013-0193-y.
- Brewis, J. (2014). The ethics of researching friends: On convenience sampling in qualitative management and organization studies. *British Journal of Management*, 25(4), 849–862. doi:10.1111/1467-8551.12064.
- Carrillo, H., & Hoffman, A. (2016). From MSM to heteroflexibilities: Non-exclusive straight male identities and their implications for HIV prevention and health promotion. *Global Public Health*, 11(7–8), 923–936. doi:10.1080/17441692.2015.1134272.
- Cass, V. C. (1984). Homosexual identity formation: Testing a theoretical model. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 20(2), 143–167. doi:10.1080/00224498409551214.
- Choi, K., Paul, J., Ayala, G., Boylan, R., & Gregorich, S. E. (2013). Experiences of discrimination and their impact on the mental health among African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Latino men who have sex with men. *American Journal of Public Health*, 103(5), 868–874. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2012.301052.

- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.
- D'Augelli, A. R., & Patterson, C. (1995). *Lesbian, gay, and bisexual identities over the lifespan: Psychological perspectives*. New York: Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195082319.001.0001.
- Edwards, W. (2016). Measuring relationship satisfaction: Is it possible for male couples to be satisfied in a relationship? *Deviant Behavior*, 37(8), 931–951. doi:10.1080/01639625.2016.1156983.
- Elliott, V. (2018). Thinking about the coding process in qualitative data analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 23(11), 2850–2861.
- Fassinger, R.E., & McCarn, S.R. (1996). Revisioning sexual minority identity formation: A new model of lesbian identity and its implication for counseling and research. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 24(3), 508–534. doi:10.1177/0011000096243011.
- Fetterman, D. (2010). *Ethnography: Step-by-step*. California: Sage Publications.
- Ford, O. (2015). From navigation to negotiation: An examination of the lived experiences of black gay male alumni of historically black colleges and universities. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 62(3), 353–373. doi:10.1080/00918369.2014.972814.
- Foster, M. L., Arnold, E., Rebchook, G., & Kegeles, S. M. (2011). 'It's my inner strength': Spirituality, religion and HIV in the lives of young African American men who have sex with men. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 13(9), 1103–1117. doi:10.1080/13691058.2011.600460.
- Garrett-Walker, J. J., & Torres, V. M. (2016). Negative religious rhetoric in the lives of Black cisgender queer emerging adult men: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 64(13), 1816–1831. doi:10.1080/00918369.2016.1267465.
- Godfrey, K., Haddock, S. A., Fisher, A., & Lund, L. (2006). essential components of curricula for preparing therapists to work effectively with lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients: A delphi study. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 32(4), 491–504. doi:10.1111/j.1752-0606.2006.tb01623.x.
- Griffith, K. H., & Hebl, M. R. (2002). The disclosure dilemma for gay men and lesbians: "coming out" at work. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(6), 1191–1199.
- Han, C. (2015). No brokeback for black men: Pathologizing black male (homo)sexuality through down low discourse. *Social Identities*, 21(3), 228–243. doi:10.1080/13504630.2015.1041019.
- Harris, N. (2014) Black, queer, and looking for a job: An exploratory study of career decision making among self-identified sexual minorities at an urban historically Black college/university. *Journal of Homosexuality*. 61:10. 1393–1419. doi:10.1080/00918369.2014.928170.
- Haydon, K. C., Collins, W. A., Salvatore, J. E., Simpson, J. A., & Roisman, G. I. (2012). Shared and distinctive origins and correlates of adult attachment representations: The developmental organization of romantic functioning: Adult attachment representations. *Child Development*, 83(5), 1689–1702. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2012.01801.x.
- Hays, D. G., & Singh, A. A. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry in clinical and educational settings*. New York: Guilford Press. doi:10.1111/j.2044-8295.2012.02103.x.

- hooks, B. (2004). *We real cool: Black men and masculinity*. New York, NY: Routledge. doi:10.4324/9780203642207.
- Jeffries, W. L., Dodge, B., & Sandfort, T. G. M. (2008). Religion and spirituality among bisexual black men in the USA. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 10(5), 463–477. doi:10.1080/1369105070187726.
- Kafle, N. P. (2013). Hermeneutic phenomenological research method simplified. *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 5(1), 181–200. doi:10.3126/bodhi.v5i1.8053.
- Lasala, M. C., & Frierson, D. T. (2012). African American gay youth and their families: Redefining masculinity, coping with racism and homophobia. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 8(5), 428–445. doi:10.1080/1550428X.2012.729948.
- Lemelle, A. J. (2010). *Black masculinity and sexual politics*. New York: Routledge. doi:10.2979/spectrum.1.1.202.
- Lemelle, A. J., & Battle, J. (2004). Black masculinity matters in attitudes toward gay males. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 47(1), 39–51. doi:10.1300/J082v47n01\_03.
- Liptak, A. (2020, June 15). Civil rights law protects gay and transgender workers, Supreme Court rules. New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/us/gay-transgender-workers-supreme-court.html>.
- Loiacano, D. K. (1989). Gay identity issues among Black Americans: Racism, homophobia, and the need for validation. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 68(1), 21–25. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6676.1989.tb02486.x.
- Mack, N., Woodsong, C., MacQueen, K.M., Guest, G., Namey, E. (2005). *Qualitative research methods: A data collector's field guide*. North Carolina: Family Health International
- Mendoza-Denton, R., Downey, G., Purdie, V. J., Davis, A., & Pietrzak, J. (2002). Sensitivity to status-based rejection: Implications for African American students' college experience. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83(4), 896–918. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.83.4.896.
- McCune, J. Q. (2008). "Out" in the club: The down low, hip-hop, and the architecture of black masculinity. *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 28(3), 298. doi:10.1080/10462930802107415.
- Morales E. S. (1989) Ethnic minority families and minority gays and lesbians. *Marriage & Family Review*, 14(3–4) 217–239. doi:10.1300/J002v14n03\_11.
- Moseby, K. M. (2017). Two regimes of HIV/AIDS: The MMWR and the socio-political construction of HIV/AIDS as a 'black disease'. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 39(7), 1068–1082. doi:10.1111/1467-9566.12552.
- Nederveen Pieterse, J. (1992). *White on black: Images of Africa and Blacks in western popular culture*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Pitt, R. N. (2009). "Still looking for my Jonathan": Gay black men's management of religious and sexual identity conflicts. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 57(1), 39. doi:10.1080/00918360903285566.
- Pitt, R.N. (2010). "Killing the messenger": Religious black gay men's neutralization of anti-gay religious messages. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. 49(1): 56–72. doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2009.01492.x.

- Quinn, K., & Dickson-Gomez, J. (2016). Homonegativity, religiosity, and the intersecting identities of young black men who have sex with men. *AIDS and Behavior*, 20(1), 51–64. doi:10.1007/s10461-015-1200-1.
- Quinn, K., Dickson-Gomez, J., Difrancesco, W., Kelly, J. A., Lawrence, J. S., Amirkhani, Y. A., & Broaddus, M. (2015). Correlates of internalized homonegativity among Black men who have sex with men. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, 27(3), 212–226. doi:10.1521/aeap.2015.27.3.212.
- Quinn, K., Voisin, D., Bouris, A., Jaffe, K., Kuhns, L., Eavou, R., & Schneider, J. (2017). Multiple dimensions of stigma and health related factors among young Black men who have sex with men. *AIDS Behavior*, 21: 207–216. doi:10.1007/s10461-016-1439-1.
- Richardson, M. (2011). Our stories have never been told: Preliminary thoughts on black lesbian cultural production as historiography in “The Watermelon Woman.” *Black Camera: An International Film Journal (the New Series)*, 2(2), 100–113. doi:10.2979/blackcamera.2.2.100.
- Rosario, M., Rotheram-Borus, M. J., & Reid, H. (1996). Gay-related stress and its correlates among gay and bisexual male adolescents of predominantly Black and Hispanic background. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 24(2), 136–159. doi:10.1002/(SICI)1520-6629(199604)24:2<136::AID-JCOP5>3.0.CO;2-X.
- Rumens, N. (2010). Workplace friendships between men: Gay men’s perspectives and experiences. *Human Relations*, 63(10), 1541. doi:10.1177/0018726710361987.
- Rumens, N., & Kerfoot, D. (2009). Gay men at work: (Re)constructing the self as professional. *Human Relations*, 62(5), 763–786. doi:10.1177/0018726709103457.
- Santovec, M. L. (2017). The necessity of intersectionality: A profile of Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw. *Women in Higher Education*, 26(3), 8–9. doi:10.1002/wh.20414.
- Shoptaw, S., Weiss, R. E., Munjas, B., Hucks-Ortiz, C., Young, S. D., Larkins, S., . . . Gorbach, P. M. (2009). Homonegativity, substance use, sexual risk behaviors, and HIV status in poor and ethnic men who have sex with men in Los Angeles. *Journal of Urban Health J Urban Health*, 86(S1), 77–92. doi:10.1007/s11524-009-9372-5.
- Smyth, C. (1990). The pleasure threshold: Looking at lesbian pornography on film. *Feminist Review*, (34), 152–159. doi:10.2307/1395314.
- Snorton, C. R., & ProQuest (Firm). (2014). *Nobody is supposed to know: Black sexuality on the down low*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press. doi:10.5749/j.ctt6wr7jt.
- Stefanou, C., & McCabe, M. P. (2012). Adult attachment and sexual functioning: A review of past research. *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 9(10), 2499–2507. doi:10.1111/j.1743-6109.2012.02843.x.
- Stoler, A. L. (1989). Making empire respectable: The politics of race and sexual morality in 20th-century colonial cultures. *American Ethnologist*, 16(4), 634–660. doi:10.1525/ae.1989.16.4.02a00030.
- Stone, A. L., & Ward, J. (2011). From ‘Black people are not a homosexual act’ to ‘gay is the new Black’: mapping white uses of Blackness in modern gay rights campaigns in the United States. *Social Identities*, 17(5), 605–624. doi:10.1080/13504630.2011.595204.
- Stone, B.E. (2011). The down low and the sexuality of race. *Focaalt Studies*, 1 (12), 36–50. doi:10.22439/fs.v0i12.3332.



- Strayhorn, T. L., Blakewood, A. M., & DeVita, J. M. (2008). Factors affecting the college choice of African American gay male undergraduates: implications for retention. *National Association of Student Affairs Professionals*, 11(1), 88–108.
- Strayhorn, T. L., & Tillman-Kelly, D. L. (2013). Queering masculinity: manhood and black gay men in college. *Spectrum: A Journal on Black Men*, 1(2), 83–110.
- Summers, M. A. (2004). *Manliness and its discontents: The Black middle class and the transformation of masculinity, 1900–1930*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Totenhagen, C. J., Randall, A. K., & Lloyd, K. (2018). Stress and relationship functioning in same-sex couples: The vulnerabilities of internalized homophobia and outness: Stress and relationship functioning in same-sex couples. *Family Relations*, 67(3), 399–413. doi:10.1111/fare.12311.
- Totten, P. (2015). A man should never eat a pickle in public: A black man's understanding of men's enactments of gender and sexuality. *Creative Approaches to Research*, 8(2), 4.
- Troiden, R. R. (1989). The formation of homosexual identities. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 17 (1/2), 43–73. doi:10.1300/J082v17n01\_02.
- Troiden, R. R. (1989). *Gay and lesbian identity: A sociological analysis*. New York: General Hall.
- VanManen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Albany: STATE UNIV. OF NEW YORK Pr.
- Walker, J.J., & Longmire-Avital, B. (2013). The impact of religious faith and internalized homonegativity on resiliency for Black lesbian, gay, and bisexual emerging adults. *Developmental Psychology*. 49(9): 1723–1731. doi:10.1037/a0031059.
- Ward, E. G. (2005). Homophobia, hypermasculinity and the US black church. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 7(5), 493–504. doi:10.1080/13691050500151248.
- Winder, T. J.A. (2015). “Shouting it out”: Religion and the development of black gay identities. *Qualitative Sociology*, 38(4), 375. doi:10.1007/s11133-015-9316-1.
- Whiting, G. W., & Lewis, T. (2008). On Manliness: Black Masculinity Revisited. *AMQST AmeriQuests*, 6(1). doi:10.15695/amqst.v6i1.153.

## Appendix A. Semi-Interview Protocol

1. What does being a Black same gender loving, or same sex attracted, man mean to you currently?
  - a. How did you come to develop this meaning?
  - a. What experiences or influences do you feel shaped this current meaning?
    - i. Can you give an example of both a positive and negative experience related to having this identity?
2. What were your perceptions, in general, of having a Black, male, and same sex attracted identity (respectively and in combination) while you were growing up?
  - a. What are some factors that influenced these perceptions?
3. Describe your relationship with your family members.
  - a. What were your expectations for how your family members would perceive your sexual identity growing up?
    - i. Where do you imagine these expectations came from?
  - b. What were your concerns or fears for what it would be like?
    - i. Where do you imagine these concerns or fears came from?
    - ii. How have these perceptions of your family members' reactions changed as you've aged?
  - c. How do you believe your family members would perceive, or do perceive, your current sexual identity?
    - i. What factors do you think influence these perceptions?
    - ii. How would your relationship change?
  - d. Can you recall any positive interactions you've had with your immediate family?
    - i. Can you identify some positive aspects, or benefit's, you would receive from your family, regardless of if they knew of your sexual orientation?
4. What is your relationship with, or perceptions of, religion?
  - a. What has influenced your relationship with religion?

- i. Did you grow up in a religious community (if 'No,' skip to c)? What was it like for you, as a Black, same gender loving man, growing up in a religious community?
- ii. What, would you say, are some benefits you received from being in a religious community?
- iii. What are some difficulties you experienced while in a religious community?
- b. How do you believe your current religious community, or the religious community in which you were raised, receives you and your sexual orientation?
  - i. What factors do you think impact these perceptions?
- c. What have been your experiences with religious communities?
  - i. Can you tell me about any positive experiences you've had with a religious community?
  - ii. What would you say are some benefits of being affiliated with a religious community?
- d. In the demographic questionnaire, you noted engaging in various religious activities. Considering your relationship with the religious community, why do you engage in these activities? What do they mean to you?
- e. What are your perceptions of Black same gender loving men who also identify as religious?
  - i. Where do you think these perceptions come from? What have been your experiences with Black same gender loving men who also identify as religious?
- f. Considering the messages about same sex love that come from religious institutions, what do you think keeps Black same gender loving men practicing religion and involved in religious communities?
5. What do some of your social spheres consist of (in what spaces do you interact with other people—be it home, work, social groups, etc.)?
  - a. What has been your experience with navigating your sexual identity in your social spheres?

- i. What is the hetero-to-non-hetero ratio of your social groups?
    - ii. How do these ratios affect your experiences of how your sexual identity is perceived within your social spheres?
    - iii. How have these ratios impacted the way you express your sexual identity, and interact with others, in these groups?
  - b. How do you believe your social groups perceive your sexual identity?
    - i. What do you think have influenced these perceptions?
    - ii. If possible, please share your story of how you came out and who you revealed your sexual identity to.
  - c. Code-switching is defined as the changing of one's presentation to fit a specific environment. Describe your experiences with social code-switching, in relation to your racial and sexual identities.
- 6. Describe your life at work.
  - a. How do you believe your coworkers and boss would perceive, or do perceive your sexual and racial identities—both independent of each other and together?
    - i. Where do you imagine these expectations come from?
  - b. Describe your experiences with code-switching at work, in relations to your racial and sexual identities.
- 7. Tell me about a positive same sex relationship you've had. It does not have to be romantic.
  - a. How did this relationship influence your expectations, or perceptions, of the ways you could interact with other men?
- 8. What comes to mind when I say *internalized homonegativity*?
  - a. Internalized homonegativity has been defined as dislike or prejudice directed inward anything associating oneself with homosexuality. What has been your relationship with internalized homonegativity?
  - b. What is your relationship with internalized homonegativity currently?

- i. How does internalized homonegativity come up in your life?
- ii. How do you know when it is affecting you most?
- iii. Who can you talk to about internalized homonegativity?
- iv. What happens when you talk to others about it? How do others react or respond? Can you give some examples?
- v. How has internalized homonegativity contributed to your decisions to come out in various contexts of your life? Can you give some examples?
- c. How have the experiences with family, friends, religion, work, etc. affected your sense of homonegativity in positive or negative ways?
  - i. Can you provide examples?
- d. How has internalized homonegativity influenced your dating or romantic pursuits?
  - i. Can you provide an example or two of how it has or has not?
- e. How has internalized homonegativity influenced your romantic and/or sexual relationships with partners?
  - i. Can you provide some examples?
- 9. How are your experiences with internalized homonegativity unique as a Black man?
  - a. How do you think your experiences with internalized homonegativity would differ if you were a White man?
  - b. How do you think your experiences with internalized homonegativity would differ if you were a Black woman?
- 10. Resilience is defined as one's ability to recover from, or progress in spite of, difficulty. How has your sense of resilience affected your life?
  - a. How has it helped you through situations in childhood (home, school, etc.)? What about in adolescence or adulthood? Can you give me some examples?
- 11. Privilege is defined as a special right, or advantage, granted to a particular person or group. What privileges do you possess as a Black, same sex attracted man?

- a. In what ways have these privileges impacted your experiences with internalized homonegativity?
12. What was it like for you to reflect on your experiences as a Black, same gender loving, man?
- a. What recommendations would you have for other Black same gender loving men experiencing internalized homonegativity?
  - b. What recommendations do you have for family members or friends of other Black same gender loving men experiencing internalized homonegativity?
  - c. What recommendations do you have for therapists that treat Black same gender loving men experiencing internalized homonegativity?

