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A critical race perspective on the mental health characteristics of nursing, psychology, and social work students

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This study examined the mental health characteristics of African American students from 43 different fields of academic study to determine if there was a relationship between student mental health concerns and their selected major. Additionally, this study considered the possible impact of racialized stress on the development of African American collegians' mental health concerns. Holland's theory on career choice was examined as an explanation for career choice decisions and critical race theory was explored as the reason Black collegians might experience certain mental health concerns. Students from the professions of nursing, social work, and psychology represented 33% of the students seeking mental health counseling, suggesting common experiences as a factor in career choice decisions. Study results suggest the need to attend to the early warning signs of possible mental health concerns and referral on the part of faculty.

Biography

Livingston has a PhD and MSW in social work from Norfolk State University. She is an assistant professor and the MSW Admissions Director for the School of Social Work. Her fields of interest include student mental health, poverty, racial oppression, single female-headed families, and professional well-being. Dr. Livingston has more than thirty years experience in the field of social work and has worked with a variety of populations including substance abusers, survivors of domestic violence, at-risk, pregnant and parenting teens, and SNAP recipients. Dr. Livingston has published in a number of professional journals and presented at regional and national conferences.

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