# The Initial Development and Validation of the Racial Socialization Competency Scale: Quality and Quantity

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*Objectives:* The present study investigated the reliability and validity of the Racial Socialization Competency Scale (RaSCS). As posited by the Racial Encounter Coping Appraisal and Socialization Theory (RECAST), the RaSCS consists of 3 factors representing 3 novel dimensions of racial socialization competency present in families (e.g., stress, skills, and confidence). *Method:* Responses to the RaSCS were collected from 361 self-identified Black and African American parents and primary caretakers across the United States. *Results:* After factor analysis, three scales and 27 items were maintained. Evidence was consistently found for 2 subscales within the stress dimension, namely "Call to Action" and "General" racial socialization stressors. Dimensions were also related to their respectively hypothesized constructs, including overall stress, racial socialization frequency, and self-efficacy. *Conclusions:* Future directions and recommendations on the measure's use, particularly in the context of interventions, are also discussed.

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**Public Significance Statement**
Raising children is a challenging task for any caregiver, however, it takes additional confidence and skills to competently raise Black children in a society plagued with racial strife. This study advances a new way to measure "racial socialization" (or racial communication and actions between caregiver and child) through a lens of competence, including confidence, skills, and stress. A competency perspective allows families to engage in racial socialization with an improvement-oriented framework and will also be useful in interventions seeking to improve familial confidence and skills while reducing stress over time.

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Racial socialization, or the process by which parents and caregivers convey implicit and explicit messages about the meaning of race as well as messages about how to cope with racial discrimination (Gaskin, Jones, Lee, & Neblett, 2013; Hughes et al., 2006; Neblett, Rivas-Drake, & Umaña-Taylor, 2012; Stevenson, 1997), has been described as the most critical parenting practice undertaken in Black families to safeguard the well-being of children (McAdoo, 2002). Spanning over four decades, the focus of racial

socialization research has shifted from conceptual (e.g., overarching worldviews from which racial socialization operates; see Bowman & Howard, 1985; Boykin & Toms, 1985; Peters, 1985; Thornton, Chatters, Taylor, & Allen, 1990) to prescriptive investigations (e.g., specific types of messages and modes of transmitting these messages; Hughes et al., 2006; Lesane-Brown, 2006). Racial socialization message content (e.g., cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust, egalitarianism; see Hughes et al., 2006 for an in-depth review) and frequency has predominated the extant empirical literature. Both cross-sectional and longitudinal research has noted that racial socialization is generally associated with positive outcomes for Black youth (see Evans et al., 2012; Gaylord-Harden, Burrow, & Cunningham, 2012), including: academic performance and engagement (e.g., Brown, Linver, Evans, & DeGennaro, 2009; Grills et al., 2016); improved psychological well-being (e.g., Davis & Stevenson, 2006; Neblett et al., 2008); decreased problem behaviors (Caughy, O'Campo, Randolph, & Nickerson, 2002; Elmore & Gaylord-

Harden, 2013); positive parent–child interactions (Frabutt, Walker, & MacKinnon-Lewis, 2002); and positive racial identity (Neblett, Smalls, Ford, Nguyên, & Sellers, 2009; Peck, Brodish, Malanchuk, Banerjee, & Eccles, 2014; Stevenson, 1995). In addition, racial socialization has been found to lessen the deleterious impact of racism-related stress (e.g., DeGruy, Kjellstrand, Briggs, & Brennan, 2012; Harris-Britt, Valrie, Kurtz-Costes, & Rowley, 2007).

However, some findings about the role of racial socialization are mixed. Some studies find that certain messages (e.g., preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust) are associated with less optimal outcomes based on gender or contextual designation (e.g., Smith, Atkins, & Connell, 2003; Stevenson, 1997), suggesting that it is important to consider the multidimensionality of racial socialization. And, despite the proliferation of empirical findings, very little theory on racial socialization exists which leaves many questions unanswered (for exceptions, see Boykin & Toms, 1985; Thornton et al., 1990; Yasui, 2015). While four decades of research have yielded advancements in racial socialization knowledge and measurement, most of this work agrees that the function of racial socialization is to cope with racism toward healthy outcomes. Unaddressed in this function and rationale of "why racial socialization?" is "how does racial socialization promote this coping?" Furthermore, a looming cloud that overhangs measurement research is this: given the history of racial turmoil in American society, schooling, and politics, how emotionally difficult is it for parents to decide if, when, why, and how they should to talk to their children about race? A central question for the future will not rest primarily upon racial socialization frequency, beliefs, or content but rather *competency*. Specifically, we must begin to ask, how competently can families transmit and how competently can children acquire and use intellectual, emotional, and behavioral racial socialization-based skills to successfully negotiate racial encounters?

## Racial Encounter Coping Appraisal Socialization Theory

The Racial Encounter Coping Appraisal and Socialization Theory (RECAST; Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; Stevenson, 2014) aims to answer such questions by elucidating the mechanisms of change in the racial socialization process which includes the identification of, emotional regulation through, and decision-making during racially stressful encounters. RECAST is rooted in the traditional stress and coping frameworks (i.e., Transactional Model of Stress and Coping [TMSC]; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and similarly argues that a stressful situation requires a series of cognitive and behavioral actions to resolve the harmful, threatening, or challenging stressor. The TMSC and other stress models stipulate that one's initial appraisal of the stressful situation or environment is critical to the way that one resolves that stressor. The efforts to control the demands placed upon oneself by employing internal or external resources is considered coping. While the TMSC conceptualizes the person-environment interaction as a precursor to the appraisal process, less focus on environmental factors renders the theory largely acontextual. The context of racism constitutes unpredictable dynamics and interactions which consist of unique, racial stressors which have been found to differentially impact varying populations (e.g., Clark, Anderson,

Clark, & Williams, 1999; Harrell, 2000; Major, Kaiser, O'Brien, & McCoy, 2007; Outlaw, 1993). As such, RECAST is an intervention-focused theory proposing the necessary effectiveness of racially specific coping strategies to address and resolve racial stress (see Anderson, Jones, Anyiwo, McKenny, & Gaylord-Harden, 2018; Greer, 2011; Stevenson, Reed, Bodison, & Bishop, 1997). Racial socialization not only represents a lens or worldview that interprets the meaning and leads to decision making (assessing and problem-solving) during racial interactions with potentially positive social and cultural outcomes: RECAST proposes it as an intentional and primary intervention framework for reducing the stress of racial discrimination for youth and adults (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019).

Similar to TMSC, RECAST posits that Black youth, adults, and families can engage in healthy coping processes and behaviors to reduce the stress caused by racism. However, RECAST identifies racial socialization as both a unique and supplemental component of general coping socialization given its additive contribution to youth coping behaviors (Anderson, Jones, et al., 2018). Additionally, RECAST makes note of the quality of processes involved in racial socialization (e.g., competencies) rather than an accumulative quantity of messages (e.g., frequency). The skills and confidence comprising one's racial socialization competency involve key assumptions regarding the application and effectiveness of this coping process. RECAST assumes that a more effective assessment tool would be in the evaluation of the stress, skills, and confidence undergirding one's racial socialization transmission, delivery, and reception, particularly over time. The model's developmental approach provides flexibility for those who may use strategies infrequently but do so efficaciously and skillfully or, on the contrary, for those who frequently socialize but do so ineffectively. As such, no matter the frequency of socializing, RECAST posits that one can gain competence in racial socialization processes through stress-reduction, coping, and decision-making, the acquisition and practice of skills, and improved confidence.

In particular, RECAST assumes that the racial socialization between a socializing agent (e.g., parent, adult, competent peer) and child is dyadic, supportive, and strengthened through (a) the bolstering of efficacious confidence and (b) skill-building and preparation. As such, the core components of competence and mastery (e.g., attitudes, knowledge, and reduction of problem behaviors; Frydenberg, 2004) help to shift racial socialization transmission and acquisition processes from "The Talk" to "The Walk." That is, "If how children competently negotiate stressful racial encounters is the goal, how well did the family prepare for those encounters with efficacious thinking and skill-building psychoeducation?" However, as with any active coping process, it is critically important to first understand the perceived or experienced stress that accompanies a demand. Thus, in an attempt to identify elements necessary for behavioral change in racial socialization practices, three dimensions of malleable competence are proposed by RECAST: perception and experience of stress, skills, and confidence in ability. While other elements are certain to impact the racial socialization practice of a parent (e.g., event-related and environmental conditions), the three proposed elements are hypothesized to be mechanisms for sustained improvements over time with continued practice (Stevenson, 2014).

## Stress

The burden and import of preparing children to successfully cope within a racialized society—a task analogized to the regulatory functions of illumination and clarity that the iris provides to the eye (Stevenson, 2014)—obviates the assessment of parent's feelings of stress as related to competency. Racial socialization can be highly stressful for parents (Bentley, Adams, & Stevenson, 2009; Hamm & Coleman, 2001) and can be difficult for reasons that are personal (e.g., parents' traumatic past experiences with racial discrimination and received racial socialization). Contextual (e.g., unavoidably traumatic witnessing of the public societal dehumanization and physical harm of children of color and the complexity of parenting in racially heterogeneous environments) factors can contribute to the perceived stakes of these conversations and how parents might worry that they may fail during the execution of "The Talk." Given the immense stress parents may feel at the notion of these family discussions, it is easy to imagine they might find themselves engaging them in an inconsistent and stuttering fashion or wanting to avoid them altogether (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019). Conversely, a parent may provide racial messages with some frequency and confidence, but still feel highly stressed and question if their execution of the conversation was effective. Thus, to work toward competence, and indeed to elucidate avenues for intervention, it is imperative to assess perceived parental stress before, during, and after racial communication.

## Skills

Once one is aware of the stress of socialization, one requires skills to reduce the stress and improve in their practices. Racial socialization competency skills refer to the degree to which a socializing agent understands and is prepared through repeated exercise to engage in racial socialization with a child. Preparation can and *should* precede a racial encounter, such that the development of skills to face a racial encounter is not reliant solely on the climate or context faced by a Black child, rather, a practiced and recognizable skillset established through bidirectional communication with a socializing agent. It is hypothesized that the magnitude of preparation would be most predictive of a child's applied behaviors in-the-moment, and, subsequently, relate to optimal outcomes (e.g., psychological, academic, and identity-related factors). Desired skills can be developed through a pedagogical process (e.g., identifying knowledge gaps, setting a goal, learning about and cultivating strategies; Zimmerman, 2000) and applied means. As practice is one of the means by which desired skills are developed, preparation is thought to be a dynamic factor that can be especially sensitive to age of child, context, environmental occurrence, and the agent's accurate primary stress appraisal.

## Confidence

Similarly, a reduction in stress through the acquisition of skills is believed to be related to a caregiver's confidence in their ability to socialize effectively through repetition. The confidence dimension of racial socialization competency refers to a parent's positive beliefs about their racial communication with their child. It is the awareness that without a process-oriented conceptualization of competency, a caregiver may consider themselves confident but

lack skills in effectively socializing their child. Likewise, a caregiver may have copious skills but lack the confidence to manage the stressful conversation. However, through the RECAST process-oriented approach, we posit that an initial reduction in stress, as bolstered by skills, leads to greater confidence. Inherent in the understanding of confidence is that there are two concerns facing socializing agents: whether (a) they are able to effectively communicate socialization strategies to the child and (b) the message will be effective at making change in a racial encounter. Confidence and skills are related such that the more preparation an agent has, the more confidence he or she is anticipated to have. On the other hand, the more confidence one has in him or herself, the less likely he or she may desire future preparation. For the sake of argument, however, we are proposing that racial socialization competency is a function of how well caregivers manage their stress before acquiring and practicing transmission skills and building the confidence to talk and teach clearly and explicitly to children how they can effectively recognize, emotionally regulate, and problem-solve racially stressful interactions.

### The Racial Socialization Competency Scale

Taken together, the Racial Socialization Competency Scale (RaSCS) was created to assess the three dimensions comprising the racial socialization competency construct of RECAST (e.g., confidence, skills, stress). Unlike the two most prominent dimensions of racial socialization at present (e.g., frequency and content), the RaSCS conceptualizes racial socialization processes as dynamic occurrences that require adjustment and adaptation over time. RaSCS can shift the literature and applied practice on racial socialization, particularly for Black families, by providing avenues for researchers and practitioners to better understand racial socialization practices from a longitudinal and developmental perspective rather than a static or retrospective account. This novel assessment strategy allows users of the tool to be more precise and predictive in their estimation of racial socialization practices and how elements within the practice interact (e.g., through person-centered examinations of all three factors). Finally, in response to calls for greater theoretical grounding and measurement advancements in the field of racial socialization (Hughes et al., 2006), the introduction of the RaSCS may help to usher in a new era of practical tools to help the research and practice-based community to move our understanding of racial socialization processes forward. As such, the contribution of RECAST and RaSCS bridges gaps previously witnessed in assessment, observation, and practice while also attempting to resolve the equivocal findings within the literature. The current study describes research conducted with Black and African American parents and caretakers across the United States to examine the reliability and validity of the RaSCS. We examined the construct and predictive validity of the RaSCS through an examination of the factors within the RaSCS scales and their factor structure, as well as through tests of other racial and general measures related to competency.

### Relationships Between RECAST and RaSCS

Regarding the interrelationship among RaSCS dimensions, although confidence and skills are conceptualized as unique aspects of racial socialization competency, we expected a positive corre-

lation between the two. In contrast, we expected that to the extent that parents believe in their ability to provide racial socialization to their children, and feel more prepared to do so, they will endorse less stress. Thus, a negative correlation between stress and confidence and stress and skills was expected.

## Relationships Between RaSCS and Self-Efficacy, Racial Socialization Frequency, and Overall Stress

The RaSCS is also expected to be associated with several related constructs. First, since racial socialization competency is a form of racial self-efficacy, we expected it to be associated with measures of general self-efficacy (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001). Second, given that RECAST hypothesizes that competency can be achieved regardless of the frequency of traditional racial socialization messages, as well as our assertion that the number of messages delivered does not necessarily connote racial socialization skills, we expected that while a relationship might exist, it would be small in magnitude. Finally, although racial socialization stress is expected to be related to overall stress, we expect a low to moderate correlation.

## Method

### Participants

The sample consisted of 433 self-identified Black or African American (henceforth Black) caregivers of children under the age of 18. After approval was granted from the Institutional Review Board at the host institution, parents were recruited nationally through three methods. First, a subsample of caregivers ($n = 113$) were recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Second, a subsample of caregivers ($n = 48$) were recruited through the authors' professional listservs that had Black or childhood issues as a focus (e.g., EmbraceRace; Society for Research in Child Development). Lastly, a final subsample ($n = 272$) was recruited using the Qualtrics' Panel Management Software. Of the amalgamated sample, a number of participants were excluded from analyses. First, six participants were missing responses for all the measures of interest and were deleted from subsequent analyses. Additionally, 68 participants were excluded due to inconsistent responding. Inconsistent responding was defined as answering two items of the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI; i.e., *Overall, being Black has very little to do with how I feel about myself* and *Being Black is an important reflection of who I am*) extremely in the same direction (i.e., either "Strongly Disagree" or "Strongly Agree"). In sum, the final analytic sample consisted of 361 caregivers.

The analytic sample was 72.3% female, with a mean age of 37.8 ($SD = 10.33$) and a range of 19–68 years. Notably, although the vast majority of respondents were mothers (67%), caregivers also included fathers (25.5%), grandmothers (2.8%), and stepparents (2.5%), as well as other relationships (aunts/uncles, guardians; 2.2%). Most caregivers were married (44.9%) or living with a partner (17.2%), while 28% of them indicated that they were single and 8.3% indicated that they were separated or divorced. The median reported family income was between $50,000 and $74,999. Approximately 29% of caregivers reported their highest educational level as high school, with a similar proportion (28.3%)

reporting having a bachelor's degree. Of the remaining caregivers, 14.4% indicated having community college or an associate degree, and about one fifth indicated either a Masters (13.0%) or Advanced Professional degree (e.g., MD; 6.6%). Slightly more than half of the target children were male (51.8%), with an average age of 9.49 years ($SD = 5.13$; range $= 1$–18 years). With regard to demographics, chi-square tests indicated a significant difference in education level and annual household income among the three subsamples. Specifically, these analyses indicated that the education and household income of the subsample from professional networks was significantly higher than the other two subsamples ($ps < .001$). In addition, education level was significantly higher for the MTurk subsample compared to the Qualtrics subsample ($p = .046$). One-way ANOVA analysis also indicated that the Qualtrics subsample caregivers were significantly younger than the MTurk caregivers ($p = .025$). Lastly, One-way ANOVAs revealed a number of differences in endorsement of the various RaSCS items as a function of subsample membership. The general trend was that individuals in the Qualtrics sample tended to endorse items less strongly than the other two subsamples.

### Measures

**Scale construction of the RaSCS.** The RaSCS is a theoretically derived instrument based on the constructs within the RECAST. Candidate items for the measure came from a related, but distinct item of individual assessment of racial self-efficacy, that is, the Racial Encounter Appraisal & Decisioning Scales. As a result, the original RaSCS was a 28-item measure of the most relevant items from the Racial Encounter Appraisal & Decisioning Scales which were revised to map onto a parental perspective. Notably, for each item, participants were given three prompts, corresponding to confidence (*I believe I can*), skills (*I am/would be prepared to*), and stress (*I am/would be stressed to*). The scale had endorsements in the first column and a drop-down option for each of the three prompts. The instructions read: "Parents may have conversations with their children about a variety of topics. For column A, read "I believe I can" and then read the statement. Click the drop-down menu and select the answer that best indicates your belief in that statement. Repeat for column B . . . and column C . . . ." As an example, item 1 would read: "I believe I can" "share my emotions about my experiences of negative racial encounters." All items were measured on a 5-point Likert-scale, with the lowest endorsement corresponding to the least confident, prepared, and stressed. For the above example, a score of 1 would correspond with "I do not believe I can," whereas a 5 would correspond with "I greatly believe I can."

**General self-efficacy.** The New General Self-Efficacy Scale (NGSE; Chen et al., 2001) was developed to provide a measurement of an individual's proneness to view the self as capable of meeting the demands of tasks in various contexts. The scale is related to, but also distinct from, self-esteem and self-efficacy in different situations. This was established through validation studies done by the authors of the New General Self-Efficacy Scale, and the internal consistency reliabilities of the scale were determined to be between .85 and .90. The Cronbach's alpha reliability index for the cross-validation sample was .94.

**Parents' racial socialization practices.** The Racial Socialization Questionnaire-Parent Version (RSQ-P; Lesane-Brown, Scot-

tham, Nguyen, & Sellers, 2009) is a 26-item, parental self-report measure that assesses the frequency with which parents give the target child race-related messages. The 26 items of the RSQ-P comprise six subscales that measure the extent to which a primary caregiver has engaged in racial socialization activities with a child in the past year. The *Racial Pride* subscale consists of four items measuring the extent to which primary caregivers emphasize Black unity, teachings about heritage, and instilling positive feelings toward Black people (e.g., "Told the target child that s/he should be proud to be Black"). The *Racial Barriers* subscale consists of four items measuring the extent to which an awareness of racial inequities and coping strategies are emphasized (e.g., "Told the target child that some people try to keep Black people from being successful"). The *Egalitarian* subscale consists of four items measuring the extent to which messages regarding interracial equality and coexistence are emphasized (e.g., "Told the target child that Blacks and Whites should try to understand each other so they can get along"). The *Self-Worth* subscale consists of four items measuring the extent to which messages emphasizing positive communication about the self are conveyed (e.g., "Told the target child that s/he is somebody special, no matter what anyone says"). The *Negative* subscale consists of five items measuring the extent to which messages are conveyed that disparage Black people (e.g., "Told the target child that learning about Black history is not that important"). The *Socialization Behaviors* subscale consists of five items measuring the frequency of various socialization activities or behaviors related to Black culture (e.g., "Bought the target child books about Black people"). Parents were asked to respond to each item using a 3-point rating scale (0 = "never" to 2 = "more than twice") to indicate how often they have communicated each message or behavior to the target child in the past year. Subscales were calculated by averaging across each of the items such that higher scores indicated a greater frequency of the particular message or behavior. Reliabilities ranged from α = .80 (*Egalitarian*) to α = .88 (*Negative*).

**Perceived overall stress.** The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1994) is the most widely used psychological instrument for measuring the perception of overall stress. It measures the degree to which life in the past month has been experienced as unpredictable, uncontrollable and overwhelming (e.g., "In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and stressed"?) on a 5-point response scale (0 = "never," 1 = "almost never," 2 = "sometimes," 3 = "fairly often," 4 = "very often"). A total score was obtained by summing all 10 items. Higher scores indicated a higher level of perceived stress. The scale demonstrated good reliability for the cross-validation sample (α = .86).

## Results

### Exploratory Factor Analyses

Given that there was no theoretically presumed structure for the items, we first conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) as a means of choosing the optimal number of factors and items. To do so, the larger sample was randomly split into two subsamples: the exploratory factor analytic subsample consisted of 172 participants (6.14 subject to item ratio), which is considered reasonable for EFA (see Osborne, Costello, & Kellow, 2008). Several steps were taken to assess the factorability and assess the optimal

number of factors for retention. First, we employed Bartlett's test of sphericity to examine redundancy between variables, which was statistically significant for confidence, skills, and stress ($ps < .001$). Small $p$ values suggests that data reduction (i.e., factor analysis is appropriate). Second, we used the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin test to measure sampling adequacy, which indicated values between .93 and .94 for all three constructs. Using the criteria of Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), values greater than .60 are required for factor analysis. Third, we utilized an integrated R-SPSS program entitled *R Factor v2.0*. This program, outlined in Courtney (2013), performs five modern techniques to determine the number of factors to retain: Parallel Analysis, Minimum Average Partial, Optimal Coordinates, Acceleration Factor, and Comparison Data. These techniques have been recommended in lieu of more traditional factor retention guidelines (i.e., Eigenvalues greater than one; Scree plot; Courtney, 2013). Notably, for the Confidence subscale, the Minimum Average Partial, Optimal Coordinates, and Parallel Analysis techniques suggested a two-factor solution was optimal, while the Acceleration Factor and Comparison Data techniques suggested a single factor. For the Skills items, all but one technique (Minimum Average Partial) suggested that a one-factor solution was optimal. For the Stress subscale, all but one technique (Acceleration Factor) suggested a two-factor solution was optimal. Of note, Acceleration Factor is traditionally stringent (Courtney, 2013), and suggested a one-factor solution.

With these recommendations in mind, we next conducted an EFA using weighted least squares mean and variance adjusted estimation (WLSMV) in MPlus Version 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). Weighted least squares mean and variance was used rather than Maximum Likelihood estimation, given that Likert-style items such as those in the RaSCS are often better categorized as ordered categorical, and weighted least squares mean and variance is more robust for these data with regard to multivariate normality (Brown, 2014). Given the assumption of interfactor correlations, an oblique Geomin rotation was employed in which one-, two-, and three-factor solutions were estimated for each of the three domains of the RaSCS. Between one to four observations were missing across the RaSCS items. In WLSMV, missing data are treated using pairwise present analysis, meaning that all available observations are used for estimation of correlations.

**Confidence.** For the Confidence scale, the one-, two- and three-factor solutions all demonstrated adequate to good model fit: one-factor: $\chi^2(350) = 642.92$, $p < .00$, RMSEA = .07, CFI = .97, TLI = .97, and SRMR = .07; two-factor: $\chi^2(323) = 493.77$, $p < .00$, RMSEA = .06, CFI = .98, TLI = .98, and SRMR = .05; three-factor: $\chi^2(297) = 447.76$, $p < .00$, RMSEA = .05, CFI = .99, TLI = .98, and SRMR = .05. Notably, the two-factor solution showed statistically improved fit from the one-factor solution, and the three-factor solution showed statistically improved fit from the two-factor solution. However, the three-factor solution produced an uninterpretable factor structure (i.e., no items that fit robustly and uniquely on the third purported factor). The two-factor solution suggested that nine items loaded onto one factor, with 18 items loading onto the second factor. Notably, two items ("*teach my child to engage rather than walk away from a negative racial encounter with another person*" (item #14) and "*teach my child the way we should or should not trust people from different races*" (item #28)) had high residual variances ($> .70$) despite loading decently (i.e., factor loadings above

.30) onto the second factor. In addition, one item #20 ("*teach my child to resolve a negative racial encounter with their peers*") loaded onto both factors. The authors examined the two proposed factors to make conceptual sense of the items, but did not identify a theoretical basis for the proposed structure. Nevertheless, the one- and two-factor solutions were carried forward for CFA analysis.

**Skills.** The pattern of findings for Skills were similar to those for Confidence in that each subsequent factor structure (one vs. two vs. three) fit better than the previous. Moreover, the two-factor (but not three-factor) solution evidenced interpretability: $\chi^2(323) = 561.50$, $p < .00$, RMSEA = .07, CFI = .97, TLI = .97, and SRMR = .05. Specifically, the two-factor solution suggested that four items loaded uniquely onto one factor, with 22 items loading uniquely onto the second factor. Notably, two items ("*share my emotions about my experiences of negative racial encounters*" (item #1) and "*share my emotions about my experiences of positive racial encounters*" (item #2)) did not load strongly nor uniquely on either factor. The authors examined the two proposed factors to make conceptual sense of the items and were likewise unable to make a theoretical argument for the proposed two-factor solution. Again, item #14 demonstrated a high residual variance.

**Stress.** Results of the EFA for Stress similarly revealed that a three-factor solution showed the best fit. Notably, the one-factor solution demonstrated poor fit, $\chi^2(350) = 922.87$, $p < .00$, RMSEA = .10, CFI = .91, TLI = .90, and SRMR = .08. The two-factor solution demonstrated adequate fit, $\chi^2(323) = 648.40$, $p < .00$, RMSEA = .08, CFI = .95, TLI = .94, and SRMR = .06, with an interpretable factor structure. This solution suggested that seven items loaded on one factor with 19 items loading on the other. Notably, two items did not load strongly and uniquely onto either factor. The authors again discussed the conceptual and practical significance of the proposed solution. This time, it was determined that the two-factor solution made conceptual sense, with the seven items in Factor 1 being associated with "Call to Action" items (e.g., teach child to speak up in a cross-racial situation) relative to those items in Factor 2, which were associated with "General" racial socialization stress (e.g., teach child to notice racial discrimination). Given that the three-factor solution did not produce an interpretable factor solution, we retained the two-factor solution for CFA analyses. See Table 1 for complete factor loadings from EFA analyses.

## Confirmatory Factor Analyses

**Confidence.** The cross-validation sample ($n = 189$) was used to compare the one- and two-factor solutions. Notably, the one-factor solution showed adequate fit, $\chi^2(350) = 736.93$, $p < .00$, RMSEA = .08, CFI = .96, and TLI = .96. Exploring the model results revealed that item #14 had very high residual variance (.84). In addition, significant Lagrange multipliers indicated that allowing the errors between items 1 and 2 to correlate would improve model fit. We chose to include this post hoc modification, given that items 1 and 2 asked roughly the same question, but had different valence (e.g., "negative" vs. "positive" racial encounters). The model was then rerun with item #14 removed. These modifications improved model fit, $\chi^2(323) = 624.28$, $p < .00$, RMSEA = .07, CFI = .97, and TLI = .96. The two-factor solution

showed comparably good fit $\chi^2(274) = 615.20$, $p < .00$, RMSEA = .08, CFI = .96, and TLI = .95. However, modification indices suggested freeing residual variances between six of the items across factors, which has been associated with model misspecification (B. Muthén, personal communication, November 07, 2018). Given this, combined with a lack of theoretical grounds, the authors decided to retain the one-factor, 27-item measure for *RaSCS-Confidence*. Notably, this measure showed good reliability ($\alpha = .97$).

**Skills.** For Skills, the one-factor solution initially fit poorly, $\chi^2(350) = 966.69$, $p < .00$, RMSEA = .10, CFI = .90, and TLI = .89. Again, item 14 demonstrated a high residual variance (.72). In addition, modification indices indicated that allowing covariance between item 1 and item 2; item 3 and item 4; item 5 and item 6; and item 25 and item 26 would improve fit. Again, these items were written with similar stems, but had different valences. A revised model with these modifications showed improved fit $\chi^2(320) = 730.22$, $p < .00$, RMSEA = .08, CFI = .93, and TLI = .93. The two-factor solution showed comparably good fit, once similar modifications were made (e.g., correlated errors between items 5 and 6 and 25 and 26) $\chi^2(296) = 662.26$, $p < .00$, RMSEA = .08, CFI = .94, and TLI = .93. Again, correlated errors were suggested for items across factors, leading the authors to retain the one-factor, 27-item measure for *RaSCS-Skills* ($\alpha = .96$).

**Stress.** The cross-validated sample continued to demonstrate poor model fit for the one-factor solution, $\chi^2(350) = 975.06$, $p < .00$, RMSEA = .10, CFI = .91, and TLI = .90. The initial two-factor solution demonstrated poor fit also, $\chi^2(298) = 695.33$, $p < .00$, RMSEA = .09, CFI = .94, and TLI = .93. Modification indices again indicated improvement in fit by allowing the same items previously mentioned to covary. This respecification was associated with somewhat improved model fit $\chi^2(295) = 626.33$, $p < .00$, RMSEA = .08, CFI = .95, and TLI = .94. Thus, the two-factor solution was retained for *RaSCS-Stress*. The 7-item, *Call to Action* subscale and the 19-item *General* subscale both showed good internal consistency ($\alpha$s = .87, .94, respectively).

**Measurement invariance approximation.** Given the observation that there were some mean differences in endorsement of items on the RaSCS by subsample (e.g., Qualtrics, MTurk), it was important to examine whether differences might also exist in the factor structure. Although the sample size precluded a full examination of measurement invariance (i.e., Multiple-Group CFA), separate CFAs were run for each RaSCS dimension by two subsamples ("Qualtrics" and "MTurk & Network")[1]. Examination of these CFAs by subsample revealed comparable to improved model fit, and factor loadings were similar both across the subsamples and compared to the total original sample. As an example, for Confidence, Item #1 loaded at .664 for the total sample, .665 for Qualtrics, and .696 for MTurk & Network (see Supplemental Tables 1 and 2).

**Interdimension correlations.** The top of Table 2 shows the correlations between factors for *Confidence*, *Skills*, and *Stress*, as well as the means and standard deviations. Unsurprisingly, the two

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[1] Given the small representation of individuals from the Network subsample, combined with the fact that the differences in item endorsement was between Qualtrics and the other two subsamples, we made a decision to combine the MTurk and Network groups for these analyses.

Table 1
*Summary of Factor Loadings for RaSCS Dimensions Through Exploratory Factor Analysis (N = 172)*

| | Factor | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Confidence | Skills | Stress | |
| Item | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 1. Share my emotions about my experiences of negative racial encounters. | .68 | .74 | **.50** | .27 |
| 2. Share my emotions about my positive racial encounters. | .67 | .65 | **.71** | −.07 |
| 3. Teach my child to speak up if they are racially mistreated by a non-authority person (e.g., peer, an adult, family member) of the same race. | .88 | .79 | .16 | **.66** |
| 4. Teach my child to speak up if they are racially mistreated by a non-authority person (e.g., peer, an adult, family member) of another race. | .90 | .84 | .11 | **.77** |
| 5. Teach my child to speak up if they are racially mistreated by an authority figure (e.g., teacher, police) of the same race. | .83 | .79 | −.00 | **.81** |
| 6. Teach my child to speak up if they are racially mistreated by an authority figure (e.g., teacher, police) of another race. | .82 | .79 | −.08 | **.90** |
| 7. Teach my child to share their feelings about the history of racism and slavery. | .79 | .72 | **.63** | .08 |
| 8. Teach my child to share their feelings about police shootings of people of color. | .81 | .78 | .19 | **.52** |
| 9. Teach my child to listen to a peer or partner who has been racially mistreated. | .75 | .73 | **.66** | .10 |
| 10. Teach my child to correct a friend's racial stereotyping of others. | .74 | .76 | **.60** | .23 |
| 11. Teach my child to know what to say and do if they get stopped by police while walking or driving. | .74 | .69 | .10 | **.59** |
| 12. Teach my child to speak up if they witness peers being racially mistreated. | .77 | .69 | .42 | .38 |
| 13. Teach my child to notice other people's stressful reactions during a negative racial encounter. | .83 | .62 | **.68** | .10 |
| 14. Teach my child to engage rather than walk away from a negative racial encounter with another person. | .43 | .49 | .10 | **.58** |
| 15. Teach my child to discuss the history and contributions that their culture and race have made to society. | .78 | .71 | **.87** | −.19 |
| 16. Teach my child to notice when negative racial encounters have occurred. | .71 | .77 | **.78** | .03 |
| 17. Teach my child to openly share how they feel about their racial background. | .83 | .78 | **.96** | −.26 |
| 18. Teach my child to notice lies and stereotypes of racial matters in media and information outlets. | .76 | .73 | **.95** | −.16 |
| 19. Teach my child to express the styles, languages, and communications of their culture in school. | .77 | .76 | **.77** | .01 |
| 20. Teach my child to resolve a negative racial encounter with their peers. | .75 | .78 | **.60** | .26 |
| 21. Teach my child to notice how stressed they are during a negative racial encounter. | .73 | .76 | **.55** | .28 |
| 22. Teach my child to initiate a conversation about race with peers. | .71 | .73 | **.59** | .21 |
| 23. Teach my child to ask for help when they are stressed from a negative racial encounter. | .79 | .80 | **.64** | .25 |
| 24. Teach my child to use relaxation strategies to reduce their stress during a negative racial encounter. | .75 | .65 | **.78** | −.06 |
| 25. Teach my child to speak up if someone of the same race uses a skin color slur against them. | .81 | .79 | **.55** | .31 |
| 26. Teach my child to speak up if someone of a different race uses a skin color slur against them. | .85 | .82 | .41 | .41 |
| 27. Teach my child how to respond to "colorblind" statements. | .80 | .75 | **.59** | .27 |
| 28. Teach my child the way we should or should not trust people from different races. | .52 | .57 | **.45** | .27 |

*Note.* RaSCS = Racial Socialization Competency Scale. For Stress, values in boldface indicate the highest factor loading.

*Stress* factors were highly correlated with each other ($r(180) = .77$). Both the *Call to Action* and *General* factors for stress were negatively and significantly related to *Skills* ($r(180) = −.33$, $r(182) = −.38$, respectively) and *Confidence* ($r(180) = −.21$, $r(182) = −.35$, respectively). There was a strong positive correlation between *Confidence* and *Skills*, $r(182) = .72$, $p < .001$.

**Construct validity.** We used Pearson's correlations to explore the relationships between the RaSCS factors and potential general correlates (see Table 2). Specifically, there was a moderate positive correlation between *RaSCS-Confidence* and general self-efficacy (i.e., NGSE Scale; $r(116) = .43$). Interestingly, the *RaSCS-Skills* scale demonstrated low to moderate correlations with the most common racial socialization messages (i.e., RSQ-P subscales). Lastly, both *Call to Action* and *General RaSCS-Stress*

subscales demonstrated low but significant correlations with perceptions of overall life stress (i.e., PSS; $r_{Call\ to\ Action}(180) = .22$; $r_{General}(182) = .30$).

## Discussion

The results indicate that the RaSCS is a reliable construct and valid measure of RECAST's depiction of racial socialization through a lens of competency. As hypothesized, the results suggest that the RaSCS measures three unique yet related constructs, as opposed to a single construct. These empirical constructs are in step with RECAST's positing of racial socialization as an interrelated blend of stress, skills, and confidence. Factor analyses indicated that *Skills* and *Confidence* scales can be maintained as single

Table 2
*Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for RaSCS Dimensions and NGSE, RSQ, & PSS*

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| RaSCS: Confidence | — | | | | 4.15 | .81 |
| RaSCS: Skills | .72** | — | | | 3.75 | .76 |
| RaSCS: Stress 1 | −.21** | −.33** | — | | 2.69 | .92 |
| RaSCS: Stress 2 | −.35** | −.37** | .77** | — | 2.48 | .81 |
| NGSE | .43** | .63** | −.10 | −.14 | 3.92 | .81 |
| PSS | −.29** | −.38** | .22** | .30** | 1.72 | .76 |
| RSQ-RP | .29** | .32** | .01 | −.10 | 2.32 | .59 |
| RSQ-BM | .19** | .22** | .10 | .03 | 2.05 | .58 |
| RSQ-RB | .19* | .16* | −.04 | −.09 | 1.99 | .64 |
| RSQ-EM | .12 | .17* | −.03 | −.10 | 2.17 | .63 |
| RSQ-NM | −.34** | −.35** | .09 | .25** | 1.29 | .49 |
| RSQ-SW | .37** | .38** | −.03 | −.18* | 2.54 | .57 |

*Note.* RaSCS = Racial Socialization Competency Scale; 1 = "Call to Action"; 2 = "General"; NGSE = New General Self-Efficacy Scale; PSS = Perceived Stress Scale; RSQ = Racial Socialization Questionnaire; RP = Racial Pride; BM = Behavioral Messages; RB = Racial Barrier; EM = Egalitarian Messages; NM = Negative Messages; SW = Self-Worth.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

dimensions, while the construct of *Stress* is best depicted through two factors, that is, the sorting of items into *Call to Action* and *General* stress subscales. Although the results indicated that the behavior of parental racial socialization has multidimensional components, the evidence also suggests that these processes and emotions are interrelated.

In addition to identifying a valid factor structure through our analyses, these initial tests also indicate that the RaSCS demonstrate other indicators of construct validity, namely convergent and divergent validity. The individual scales were related to their hypothetically associated correlates: for parents who reported more overall stress, the stress associated with an action-oriented and broad type of racial socializing was likewise greater. Arguably of greatest import was the relationship between the most frequently assessed measurement of racial socialization through the lens of frequency and Black parents' socialization skills. Five of the six subscales (with the exception of *Racial Barriers*) of parents' frequently provided messages were positively related to parental preparation for racial socialization. Finally, parents who had greater confidence in their ability to racially socialize also had higher self-efficacy.

Regarding stress, the findings suggest that the *Call to Action* and *General* subscales were negatively related to *Confidence* and *Skills*. Even if parents believe they are capable of engaging in racial socialization, the stress findings are consistent with research signifying the unique contribution that discrimination has on parental stress (Anderson et al., 2015). Additionally, the PSS did not strongly relate to the stress associated with racial socialization, indicating that racial socialization strategies may require unique and additional strategies for parents to enlist beyond general coping strategies (e.g., Anderson, Jones, et al., 2018). As such, it will be critical to revisit what elements of stress (e.g., the application of skills or the impact of the socialization on child outcomes) are most relevant for socialization agents.

The strong association between *Confidence* and *Skills* is also of interest in the current study. Although there are psychological

distinctions between what someone believes they can do and what they have the skills to do (e.g., contingency and control-related beliefs; Weisz, Rudolph, Granger, & Sweeney, 1992), the correlation between these two constructs were among the highest of those evaluated in the study. And, while there may be an argument to aggregate the two scales for the purpose of reduced participant burden, there may be reason to suspect that the novel way of thinking about these particular functions may avail themselves more in a longitudinal context relative to a cross-sectional approach. That is, a participant may initially believe that they can effectively engage in racial communication with their child, however, new or shifting parent-adolescent communication may beg whether or not they have the skills to actually engage in these behaviors over time.

In addition to further testing the *Confidence* and *Skills* scales, subsequent research would provide more information on how RaSCS performs with varying populations. Although there was great variability in the population demographics, targeting the specific underrepresented subsamples (e.g., paternal figures, low income, grandparents) would offer insight as to how differing groups respond to the measure. Additionally, disaggregating responses based on child age (e.g., toddler, young childhood, middle childhood, early adolescence, and late adolescence) would be of great value and import, particularly in establishing whether *Confidence* and *Skills* are highly associated over each developmental period. Regarding participant burden, we attempted to reduce the number of questions and organize them in a fashion to reduce redundancy, including a drop-down response list for each of the three stems associated with the endorsed item. As a result, the visual representation of this measure was distinct from other measures which may have solely asked one question from left to right in a more traditional format. Further survey administration will clarify whether this task is cognitively challenging for some participants or shows patterns across and between scales indicating repetition in responses.

Although future studies would provide additional insight about the RaSCS measure, several things are worth noting about the strengths of the current study. In particular, racial socialization is a multifaceted construct that not only has varied tenets, but can also be measured through various dimensions. In revisiting the iris analogy posited by RECAST, the various components of racial socialization may be like a pair of glasses, in which the amount of time in which we wear them may be theorized as the frequency and the content may be seen as the frames, but the lens by which we look through them—and ultimately what creates acuity for a refracted iris—may be best understood as the competency. Can we gain improved clarity from a racial cue if we better know the prescription of the lenses? The findings of this study suggest yes - we can ascertain the frequency with which parents socialize and the different content areas in which they communicate *and* gain more information about their socialization stress, skills, and confidence to form a more holistic understanding of how competently they may engage in socialization. As with a host of other parenting strategies, employing improved quality over the functions of racial socialization may be a worthwhile consideration moving the field beyond the sole consideration of quantity.

As such, future directions that include quantitative, qualitative, and observational components will be of exceptional value in moving forward with the competency perspective of racial social-

ization. For example, it would be instructive to know which parental (e.g., racial identity), child (e.g., gender), and broader contextual (e.g., experiences with racial discrimination) factors are associated with the various dimensions of racial socialization competency. To illustrate, one area that is sorely lacking within the current racial socialization literature is specification regarding immigrant and generational status for parents and their children, factors certain to impact both the strategies used and stress experienced by the family. Furthermore, multiple methods would be useful in differentiating between *Confidence* and *Skills* scales by evaluating from the lens of self-report, observational coding, and qualitative narrative. In intervention work in particular, various methodologies over time would provide an advantage of understanding how competent parents feel when racial socialization skills are explicitly targeted. For example, in the Engaging, Managing, and Bonding through Race (EMBRace) intervention (Anderson & Stevenson, 2016), racial socialization competency is assessed throughout the intervention, in addition to the pretest and posttest evaluation. This competency is also theorized as the mechanism of change for the intervention, thus, an evaluation of stress, skills, and confidence in a multimethod format is central to the predictive validity associated with parent and adolescent well-being at the conclusion of EMBRace (Anderson, McKenny, Mitchell, Koku, & Stevenson, 2018). Disaggregating confidence and skills will be crucial to our understanding of what impedes and improves confidence in racial socialization practices; moreover, the former concern may be particularly impactful to assess change over time. Thus, cross-sectional, longitudinal, and cross-lagged relationships may have differential correlations and predictive associations.

Additionally, a corresponding child assessment of their parents' and their *own* socialization confidence, skills, and stress will be important for multiinformant validation. As raised in recent research on the transactional nature of racial socialization processes between parents and adolescents (Smith-Bynum, Anderson, Davis, Franco, & English, 2016), youth response, as well as the relationship between parent and child, are important elements of the transmission of racial socialization communication. Other important future measurement considerations include utilizing item response theory to identify crucial items that can be given in every interaction with participants in an intervention to reduce participant burden. Until those analyses are conducted, however, we recommend that researchers and practitioners administer all 27 items across the three constructs to participants for future use. Although one item did not load onto a stress factor, the information gleaned from that item in the two other factors will likely outweigh the burden of answering one additional question given the unique format of the survey (e.g., three columns with drop-down options). Lastly, future studies, with larger samples, should explore measurement invariance of the RaSCS across meaningful groups (e.g., gender) to ensure that the measure is assessing constructs in a similar manner.

In conclusion, raising a child to navigate daily a world that may perceive them as dangerous and dehumanizes their behaviors and aspirations in intentional and unintentional ways is a nightmare for many parents. This research illuminates and unpacks the elements that make up this turmoil. The present findings suggest that the RaSCS shows promise in the measurement of three of the dimensions of RECAST-conceptualized

racial socialization competency for Black parents. The RaSCS will be a useful tool for researchers and practitioners to better understand the relationship within the dimensions of socialization competency and between associated constructs, with additional work focusing on predictive ability of wellbeing indicators for parents and children. The results from the present study are a springboard by which subsequent study can develop and continue the investigation of this novel conceptualization of racial socialization competency.

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