

## BACKGROUND

- It is well documented that youth organizations make important contributions to adolescent's health and development (e.g., Mahoney, Vandell, Simpkins, & Zarrett, 2009)
- For African American youth, emerging literature emphasizes the importance of cultural resources (e.g., ethnic-racial identity) for their health and development (e.g., Neblett et al., 2012)
- However, few studies have investigated how urban community-based youth programs promote positive development among African American youth specifically

## OBJECTIVES

1. Examine how urban CBOs universally support positive development
2. Explore the culturally-specific ways that urban CBOs support positive development

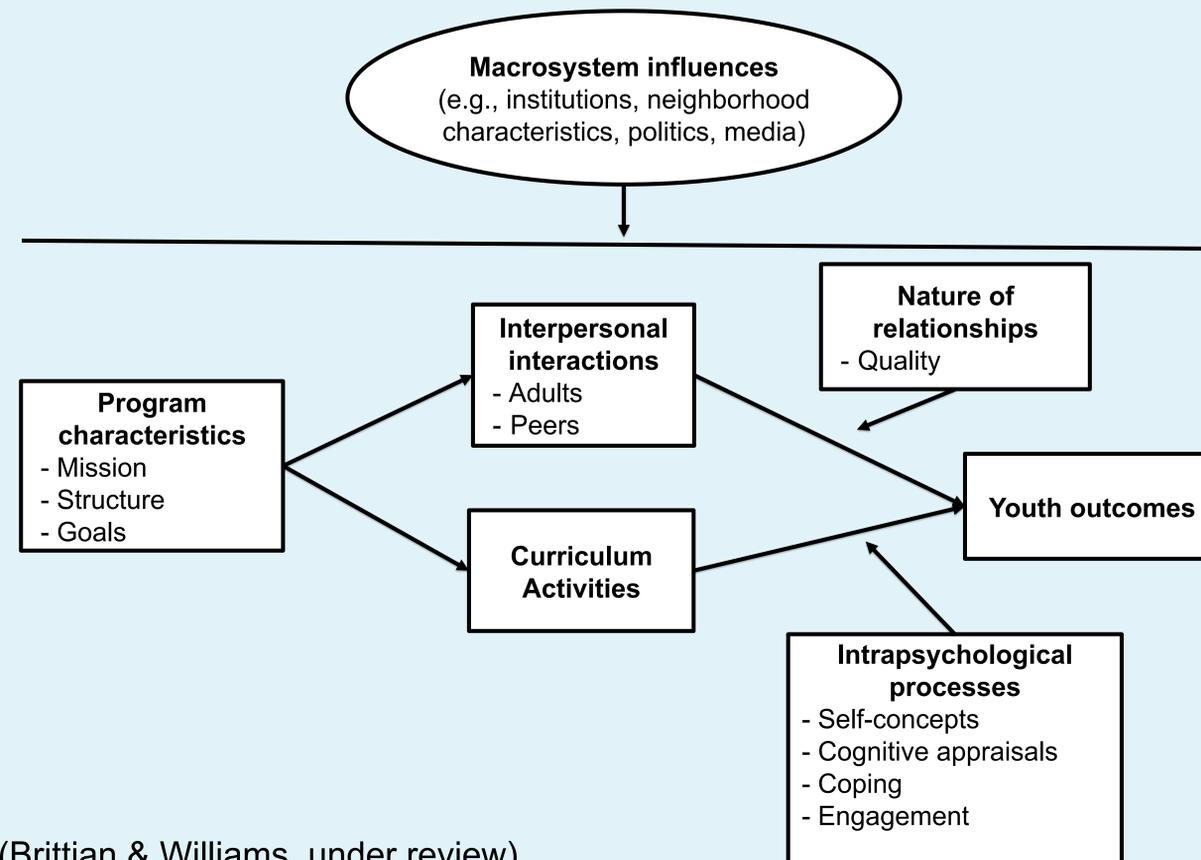
## METHODS

- Data for this presentation represent one component of a mixed-methods study on the racial and cultural environment in urban youth programs
- We conducted in-depth interviews with three program directors in urban community-based organizations (CBO) in predominantly African American neighborhoods
- Data were analyzed for common themes in a manner consistent with grounded theory methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1990)
  - In the first stage, coders performed substantive coding (sections of text) with a list of study questions and available codes but allowed for new codes to emerge
  - In the second stage, we used axial coding to link individual codes to each other to create themes

## RESULTS

	Objective 1	Objective 2	
	Themes	Topics	Themes
Youth outcomes		academic achievement, college and career readiness, creative and performing arts	Preparation for racial bias
Prevention		substance use, violence prevention, sexual health	
Safe space		physical and psychological	
Dedicated staff		committed to youth, similar backgrounds to youth	Promotion of racial pride
Structured activities		intentional curriculum	
Multi-organization partnerships		health agencies, juvenile justice (court diversions)	
			Representative quotes
			"[We talk about] <i>what's it like to go to an all white suburb and represent the [neighborhood].</i> "
			" <i>Society tells them you're a black male; you're going to end up like this. You're a black female; you're going to end up fighting like them housewives on TV and pregnant and stuff like that. And that's why I tell my kids here. You don't let anyone else write your life story. You write your own life story. And if you write it, how would you write it?</i> "

FIGURE 1 Adolescent development in youth programs



(Brittian & Williams, under review)

## CONCLUSIONS

- Consistent with prior literature, urban CBOs reported providing the basic resources that support healthy adolescent development
- In addition, the directors that we interviewed reported culturally specific practices (e.g., preparation for racial bias)
- Future activities will include preparation of a youth-practitioner report to share best practices among research participants
- Future research will focus on best practices/recommendation that support positive racial/ethnic identity development among urban youth of color

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