

HERSTORY: EXPLORING THE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY EXPERIENCES OF BLACK
WOMEN WITH NARRATIVE METHODOLOGY

by

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(Under the Direction of Pamela Orpinas)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate Black women's physical activity experiences from elementary to high school with the goal of helping health promotion practitioners and researchers develop programs to prevent the decline in physical activity among Black adolescents. The following research questions guided the study: 1) What factors in the community shape physical activity for young Black women? 2) How does being Black and female shape attitudes and engagement concerning physical activity from elementary to high school? The researcher employed a purposive and snowball sampling technique to select nine Black women, who ranged in age from 20 to 26 years. Participants included in the study self-identified as Black women, were not currently pregnant, and had attended middle and/or high school in a metropolitan area in the Southeast. The researcher used a semi-structured interview guide to gather data. Participants also completed a demographic survey and the International Physical Activity Questionnaire, a 7-day physical activity recall. Interviews lasted between 1.5-2 hours. Using

biographic qualitative methods, and constant comparative methods to identify the major themes in the study, the researcher arranged each participant's interview data in narrative form, chronologically, and in first person to keep true to the voice of the participants. Seven factors emerged as salient to Black women's physical activity experiences: 1) having physically active role models during childhood encouraged participants to become involved in active and structured play activities such as walking, soccer, cheerleading, and basketball; 2) living in close proximity to parks and recreation centers facilitated physical activity; 3) providing physical opportunities for girls served as a convenient and inexpensive way to participate in physical activity programs; 4) as the participants entered high school, perceiving that peers expected them to behave in appropriately "feminine" ways caused participants to engage in less vigorous forms of physical activity; 5) participating in physical activity with same sex peers became salient to physical activity engagement in high school; 6) taking long bus rides home through the Minority to Majority bus program discouraged physical activity participation after school; and 7) managing priorities and other adult responsibilities, such as preparing for college and pregnancy, decreased participants' interest in physical activity. To conclude, physical activity of most participants declined between the ages of 13-17, several factors in the community shaped participants' physical activity to enhance or buffer that decline, and race—when examined in context with socioeconomic status and gender—interacted in unique ways to limit physical activity opportunities and contribute to physical activity decline. Implications for practice, education, and research are discussed for increasing physical activity and preventing its decline.

INDEX WORDS: Adolescents, African Americans, Black Women, Health Promotion
Narrative Analysis, Physical Activity, Qualitative Research

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WITH NARRATIVE METHODOLOGY

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DEDICATION

This dissertation study is dedicated to my loving parents, Apostle Ulysses and Pastor Deborah Tuff. You inspire me to never accept less than God's best.

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“Trust in Him with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths.”

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to investigate Black women's physical activity experiences from elementary to high school, with the goal of helping health promotion practitioners and researchers develop programs to prevent the decline in physical activity among Black adolescents and add to the current body of knowledge on chronic disease prevention in adolescence. Research indicates a steep drop in physical activity during adolescence for Black women. This decrease is associated with an increased risk for the development of certain chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. At present, little is known why Black women become inactive during adolescence. This chapter is composed of three sections. Section one outlines the significance of the problem of physical activity decline. Section two delineates the purpose and major research questions of the study. Section three describes the contributions and benefits to the field of health education that are expected to come from the study.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Black women living in the United States have the lowest prevalence of physical activity when compared to women in other ethnic groups. Figure 1.1 illustrates the prevalence of physical activity in U.S. women. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey (2007), only 36% of Black women living in the United States met Healthy People 2010 physical activity objectives trailing behind Hispanic women (41%), women classified as other race (47%), and White women (50%).

Research suggests that patterns of inactivity begin early in life and adolescence appears to be a sensitive period for activity in Black women (Kimm, et al., 2002; Taylor et al., 1999). Figure 1.2 depicts the results of the longitudinal NHLBI Growth and Health Study in which 2400 Black and White girls were prospectively followed for 10 years to determine how their physical activity participation changed over time (Kimm et al., 2002). For both groups physical activity declined significantly between the ages of 13-17. However, the decline for Black girls was much steeper than the decline for White girls. Even as activity participation rose slightly by the age of 18 years for White participants, Black participants remained steadily inactive (Kimm et al.). The dramatic decrease in physical activity during adolescence is cause for concern because it is associated with increased morbidity and the development of obesity and type 2 diabetes (Epstein et al., 2000; Webber et al., 1996). Furthermore, health experts have proposed that sedentary patterns established in childhood may persist into adulthood (Telama et al., 2005). Sedentary adults have increased risk for conditions such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and certain cancers (Must et al., 1994). At present little is known regarding the reasons why Black women become inactive during adolescence (Kimm et al.). Eyler, Brownson, King, Donatelle, and Heath (1997) proposed sociodemographic variables such as race, lesser education, and low socioeconomic status (SES) as markers for inactivity. In light of the mixed findings of studies concerning the relation between SES, race, and physical activity, further investigation of the influence of demographic and sociocultural factors on physical activity behavior is needed (Must, 1994).

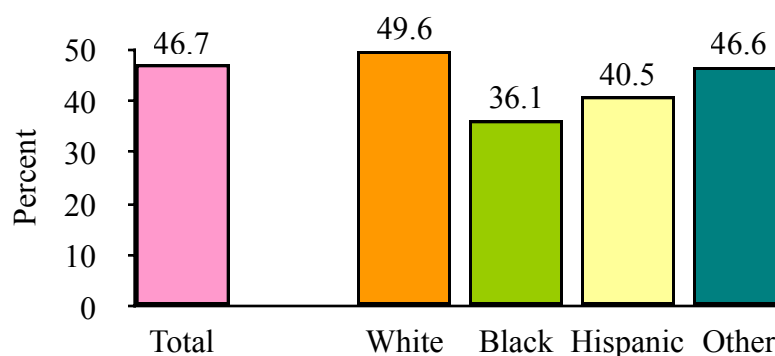


Figure 1.1: Prevalence of regular physical activity among U.S. Women (CDC, 2007)

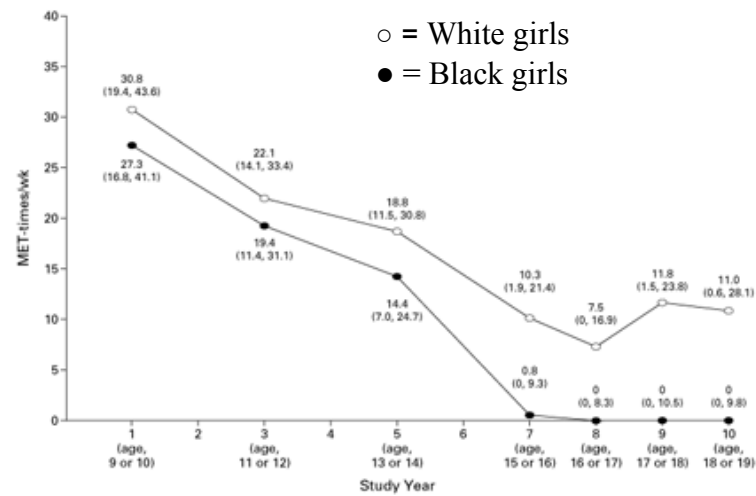


Figure 1.2: Physical activity decline in Black and White girls over a ten year period, NHLBI health and growth study (Kimm et al., 2002)

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate Black women's physical activity experiences from elementary to high school. The following questions guided the inquiry process of the study:

- What factors in the community shape physical activity for young Black women?
- How does being Black and female shape attitudes and engagement concerning physical activity from elementary to high school?

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study has the potential for theoretical and practical contributions to the field of health promotion. *Healthy People 2010*, the national initiative that established health objectives for the first decade of this century, includes participation in physical activity as one of the nation's 10 leading health indicators (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001)

Developing interventions to help Black women attain the recommendations for physical activity has proven difficult for health practitioners because there are major gaps in our understanding of why they become inactive during adolescence. Because adolescence is known as a period of transformation, it is an ideal time not only to identify and address but also prevent potential health disparities commonly found in adults. Few studies acknowledge the way in which Black girls, in particular, experience physical activity. Examining the physical activity patterns of Black women from an emic perspective may be particularly useful for researchers by revealing the complex aspects of their reality obscured by more traditional approaches. Thus, an in depth analysis of the lived experiences and beliefs of Black women surrounding physical activity was thought to be necessary. Based on the results of this study, recommendations will be made regarding the prevention of the development of sedentary behavior in Black female adolescents. Table 1.1 defines the key concepts used in this study.

Table 1.1 Definitions

Concept	Definition	Source

Concept	Definition	Source
Community	A group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings.	(McQueen et al., 2001, P. 1929)
Culture	The shared values, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and language use within a social group that are at the core of group life and identity.	(Guy, 1999, p.7)
Environment	Any aspect of the physical (natural) environment or the urban or constructed environment that unconsciously or consciously relates to an individual and their physical activity behavior.	(Foster & Hillsdon, 2004)
Femininity	A socially constructed standard for women's appearance, demeanor, and values.	(Krane et al., 2004)
Intensity	How much work is being performed or the magnitude of the effort required to perform an activity or exercise.	(CDC, 2008a)
Irregular Physical activity	(1) Those who engage in moderate intensity activity on less than 5 days of the week for a total of 30 minutes per day. or (2) Those who engage in vigorous activity on less than 3 days of the week for at least 20-60 minutes per session.	(CDC, 2008a)

Concept	Definition	Source
Metabolic Equivalent of Task (MET)	MET refers to metabolic equivalent, and 1 MET is the rate of energy expenditure while sitting at rest. It is taken by convention to be an oxygen uptake of 3.5 milliliters per kilogram of body weight per minute. Physical activities frequently are classified by their intensity using the MET as a reference.	(CDC, 2008a)
Minority to Majority Program	A busing program implemented in 1972 as a tool to enhance racial integration in schools.	(Bhargava et al., 2008)
Physical Activity	Any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that result in energy expenditure.	(Caspersen et al., 1985)

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to investigate Black women's physical activity experiences from elementary to high school. This chapter reviews relevant literature from health promotion, public health, exercise science, and women's studies. The chapter is divided into four sections. Section one outlines the importance of physical activity for health and quality of life. Section two describes the prevalence and consequences of physical activity. Section three states the Healthy People 2010 goals for physical activity. The final section explains physical activity facilitators and barriers.

2.1 Physical Activity and Health

Twelve years ago, the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) proposed that "Every US adult should accumulate 30 minutes or more of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week". The intended purpose of the recommendation was to encourage appropriate engagement in physical activity so that people could live healthier lives. Since that time, additional information regarding the biological mechanisms by which physical activity provides health benefits has been added to researchers' current body of knowledge so that the 1995 physical activity guidelines could be clarified (Haskell et al., 2007). The updated guidelines provided by CDC specifically declare that adults aged 18-64 years engage in 150 minutes of moderately intense aerobic activity every week, and/or vigorously intense aerobic activity 75 minutes a week

to achieve health benefits. Children and adolescents aged 6–17 years are urged to engage in 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day, including vigorous-intensity activity in the 60 minutes on at least 3 days a week. Furthermore, muscle-strengthening activities have now been incorporated into the physical activity recommendation. Every adult should perform strength-training exercises of the major muscle groups at least 2 days a week while children are encouraged to do muscle and bone strengthening activities on at least 3 days a week (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008).

Epidemiological investigations, clinical trials, and laboratory research have provided solid empirical evidence that compliance with the physical activity recommendations has numerous beneficial effects on physical health, psychological well-being, and overall quality of life (Sparling et al., 2000; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996). Many of the protective effects of physical activity on premature morbidity and mortality are related to its positive impact on hypertension, diabetes mellitus, and obesity (Agurs-Collins et al., 1997; Kesaniemi et al., 2001). Physical activity also reduces rates of heart disease, colon cancer, breast cancer and some psychological problems such as anxiety and depression (Irwin, 2006; Kesaniemi et al., 2001; Wolin et al., 2007). For example, through physical activity caloric expenditure and lean body mass are increased to prevent overweight and obesity; muscles of the heart become stronger and pump blood through the arteries with less effort, decreasing the heart rate and blood pressure; and high density lipoproteins that carry plaque and other harmful substances away from the arteries of the heart are increased to prevent strokes and heart attack. Furthermore, regular physical activity increases the ability of people with specific chronic disability conditions to perform activities of daily living by increasing flexibility in the joints.

Physical activity also prevents osteoporosis by decreasing the loss of calcium that normally occurs with age thus increasing bones mineral content and bone density. Consequently, regular physical activity can enhance the quality of life among all populations. The highest risk of death and disability is found among individuals not participating in physical activity; therefore, engaging in any amount of physical activity is better than none.

2.2 Physical Activity Prevalence and Consequences

Despite the abundance of information documenting the role of physical activity in health and quality of life, this information alone has been insufficient in promoting active lifestyles among U.S. adults. A majority of adults remain sedentary or are physically active at levels below the threshold to reap substantial health benefits (Barnes & Schoenborn, 2003). In 2007, approximately half (50.8%) of U.S. adults did not meet physical activity recommendations. Regular physical activity is also low among youth (Gordon-Larsen et al., 2004). As illustrated in Figure 2.1, results from Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) indicate that approximately 25% of high school students in grades 9-12, did not meet physical activity recommendations in 2007. Figure 2.2 shows that in the same year, Black adolescent females had a lower prevalence of meeting the physical activity recommendations than other female adolescent groups. Furthermore, the prevalence of not meeting physical activity recommendations increased as participants aged (CDC, 2008b).

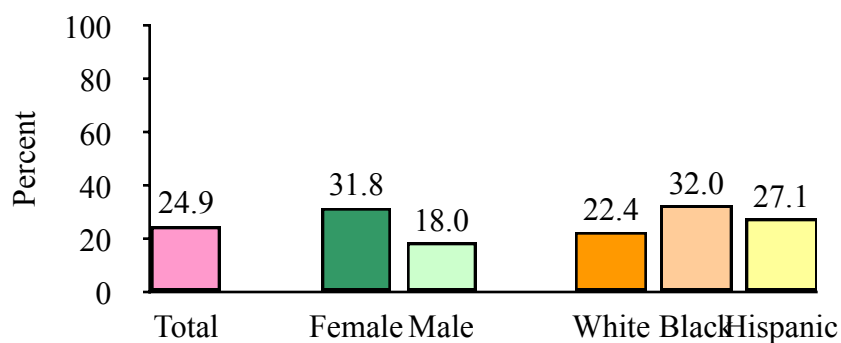


Figure 2.1: Percentage of High School Students Who Did Not Participate in 60 or More Minutes of Physical Activity on Any Day, by Sex and Race/Ethnicity, 2007 (CDC, 2008b)

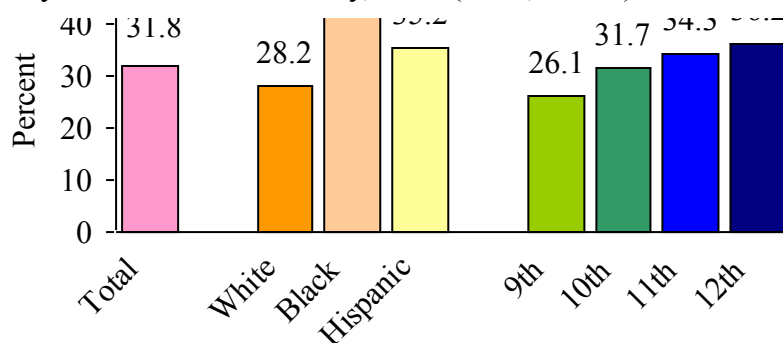


Figure 2.2: Percentage of Female High School Students Who Did Not Participate in 60 or More Minutes of Physical Activity on Any Day, by Race/Ethnicity and Grade, 2007 (CDC, 2008b)

Physical inactivity and unhealthy eating habits have contributed to an unprecedented epidemic of obesity that is currently plaguing the entire U.S. population. Results from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) for the years 2003-2004 indicated that an estimated 66% of U.S. adults were either overweight or obese (Ogden et al., 2006). Results from the same survey indicated that approximately 14% of children aged 2-5 years were overweight, 19% of children aged 6-11 years were overweight, and 17% of adolescents aged 12-19 years were overweight; these rates have tripled since 1980 (Hedley et al., 2004; Ogden et al., 2006).

Black children and adolescents are disproportionately affected by overweight when compared to the general population. Specifically, 21% of non-Hispanic Black children aged 6 to

19 years are overweight. In contrast, 14% of non-Hispanic White children the same age are overweight (Freedman et al., 2006).

Black females who were overweight in childhood and adolescence suffer from immediate and long-term health consequences (Must, 2003). The most immediate consequences are psychosocial. In a society that values thinness, overweight children and adolescents are often targets of early and systematic social discrimination. Neumark-Sztainer and colleagues (1998) explored the issue of weight-related stigmatization among 55 overweight African-American and Caucasian adolescent girls and found that, regardless of ethnicity, girls endured teasing, joking, and name calling in home, school, and peer contexts due to their overweight status. Stern and colleagues (2006) studied 39 Black adolescent girls who were participating in an obesity treatment program and found high rates of self-reported stigmatization and poor overall psychosocial functioning, which interfered with their quality of life.

The psychological stress of social stigmatization can cause low self-confidence and may consequently impede academic success and social interaction (Schwartz & Puhl, 2003). Judge and Jahns (2007) found that overweight children in the third and fourth grade had lower reading and math assessment scores, lower interpersonal skills, and more instances of problem behavior than normal weight children in the same grade. Overweight children were more often minorities and from low SES backgrounds.

Several reasons may explain the negative relation between overweight and academic performance. First, it may be that poor academic performance causes higher body weight. This may be the case if, for example, adolescents choose to overeat to psychologically compensate for doing poorly in school. Second, obesity could cause a decline in academic performance. This

could occur if adolescents become depressed due to their overweight status and in turn are unable to study productively (Anderson et al., 2007). Finally, body weight and academic performance may not be associated, but rather the association is explained by unobserved individual-level characteristics. For example, it may be that those students with the least personal discipline expend the least amount of effort exercising and the least amount of effort studying.

In addition to immediate psychosocial problems, Black girls and adolescents who are overweight experience long-term consequences as they become overweight or obese adults (Must, 2003). Specifically, Black girls develop risk factors for cardiovascular disease (CVD), including high cholesterol levels, high blood pressure, and abnormal glucose tolerance (Cruz et al., 2005). Obesity beyond 12 years of age develops into adult obesity in more than 80% of cases (Dietz, 2004). An overweight 10-year-old child runs a 22-fold greater risk of persistent adult obesity than a child not considered overweight (Dietz, 1998). An estimated 47% of Black women aged 20–39 years are obese (i.e., $BMI \geq 30$) (Hedley, et al., 2004). Obese women often suffer from chronic diseases that severely reduce their quality and duration of life. Black women who are obese suffer from chronic diseases to a greater extent than the general population. For example, 46% of Black women living in the United States have one or more types of cardiovascular disease. In contrast, 33% of White women and 32% of Mexican American women have cardiovascular disease (American Heart Association, 2009). Additionally, more than 53,000 Black women died from complications associated with cardiovascular disease in 2004 (American Heart Association).

Moreover, sedentary behavior and its associated medical conditions are responsible for major health and economic cost in the United States. In addition to an increased risk of

premature mortality—an estimated 300,000 attributable deaths per year—the estimated cost of overweight and obesity in 2001 dollars was \$117 billion dollars, \$61 billion dollars in direct costs and \$56 billion dollars in indirect costs (Wolf & Colditz, 1998) . Direct costs include preventive, diagnostic and treatment services such as physician visits, pharmaceuticals, ambulance services, rehabilitation services and hospital and nursing home care. Indirect costs refer to wages lost through illness, disability or death. Since regular physical activity helps prevent disease and promote health, it would be possible to reduce both indirect and direct health care costs through physically active lifestyles. Pratt and colleagues (2000) analyzed medical expenditures and found that physically active people had, on average, lower annual direct medical costs than did inactive people. They also reported that physically active persons had fewer physicians' visits, fewer hospitalizations, and filled fewer prescriptions. An increase in regular moderate physical activity among the more than 88 million inactive Americans over the age of 15 years at the time would have reduced the annual national direct medical costs by as much as \$76.6 billion in 2000 dollars (Pratt). The cost savings were consistent for both genders, for those with and without physical limitations, and for smokers and nonsmokers. In a more recent study, Wang and colleagues (2005) conducted a cost-benefit analysis of using bike/pedestrian trails in Lincoln, Nebraska. They determined that every \$1 investment in trails for physical activity led to \$2.94 in direct medical benefit costs.

2.2.1 Physical Activity by Demographic Characteristics

Disparities in physical activity participation exist between some U.S. populations. Women, older persons, socio-economically disadvantaged persons, ethnic minorities, and those living in southern states show more sedentary lifestyles and thus most often experience

disparities in most aspects of health (Crespo et al., 2000; Felton et al., 2002). According to the CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (2005), men (51%) more often met recommendations for moderate and vigorous physical activity than women (48%). Younger people were more likely to be active than older people. Specifically, 57% of youth aged 18-24 met recommended amounts of physical activity compared to 46% of adults aged 45-64 years. Those with a college degree were more physically active (54%) than high school graduates (46%) and those with less than high school education (38%). For all adults, there was an inverse relation between income and physical activity status. The prevalence of those meeting physical activity recommendations increased from 39% among those with incomes of less than \$15,000 per year to 58.7% among those with incomes of more than \$50,000 per year. Among ethnic minorities, Black Americans (40%) had the lowest prevalence of people who met physical activity recommendations when compared to non-Hispanic Whites (52%), other racial and ethnic groups (45%), and Hispanics (42%).

2.3 Healthy People 2010

The importance of physical activity is substantiated by its selection as one of the Leading Health Indicators for Healthy People 2010 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). Developing strategies and action plans to address one or more of these indicators can have a profound effect on increasing the quality of life and the years of healthy life and on eliminating health disparities.

Healthy People 2010 objectives are in place to encourage American adults and adolescents to make physical activity a part of their everyday lives (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). The objectives for adults are:

- (22-1) Reduce the proportion of adults who engage in no leisure-time physical activity.
- (22-2) Increase the proportion of adults who engage regularly, preferably daily, in moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes a day.

Furthermore two objectives have been established for adolescents:

- (22-6) Increase the proportion of adolescents who engage in moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes on 5 or more of the previous 7 days.
- (22-7) Increase the proportion of adolescents who engage in vigorous physical activity that promotes cardiorespiratory fitness 3 or more days per week for 20 or more minutes per occasion.

2.4 Physical Activity Facilitators and Barriers

When examining prevalence rates collectively, certain groups may be at a disadvantage for maintaining a physically active lifestyle. In particular, the literature is generally consistent in reporting a higher prevalence of sedentary behavior and lower level of total habitual physical activity, as ascertained by questionnaire, in Black women (Whitt-Glover et al., 2007).

The most commonly reported barriers to physical activity for Black women are lack of time, unaffordable childcare, reduced access to convenient facilities, and unsafe environments in which to exercise (Nies et al., 1999). Culturally determined gender-based responsibilities, such as the priority placed on the needs of the family at the expense of personal needs has also been cited as a significant barrier to activity for Black women (Wilcox et al., 2002).

A growing body of literature identifies factors, or determinants, that promote physical activity participation or may act as barriers to physical activity participation (Dishman et al., 1985; Nahas et al., 2003). Theoretical constructs derived from social cognitive theory and the

transtheoretical model provide frameworks for examining predictors of physical activity or inactivity by examining influences on behavior. Psychosocial, cognitive, and emotional determinants have been identified for the general adult population and for adolescents (Dowda et al., 2004; King et al., 2000). One of the strongest psychological determinants of future activity is exercise self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the degree of confidence that one has in her ability to successfully be physically active in specific circumstances. Bandura (1977) maintains that individuals with high confidence in their ability to perform a given task will be more likely to engage in that task. Self-efficacy theory proposes that girls who have confidence in their capability to be physically active will perceive fewer barriers to physical activity or and be more likely to enjoy physical activity (Dishman et al., 2005) and motivational readiness for physical activity participation. Accordingly, self-efficacy has been shown to be positively associated with the adoption and maintenance of physical activity behavior. For example, self-efficacy has been highly associated with vigorous activity such as running, jogging, and playing basketball (Dowda, 2004).

Increased efficacy alone is not enough to increase physical activity. A number of studies have successfully employed behavioral modification and cognitive strategies such as relapse prevention, restructuring plans, and realistic goal setting to influence the uptake and maintenance of physical activity (Chen et al., 1998). These strategies have been used with encouraging results (Banks-Wallace & Conn, 2002) .

Enjoyment has also been cited as a determinant of physical activity. Longitudinal studies show that enjoyment is often influenced by the amount of exertion required by the activity. In a longitudinal study examining the change in and intensity of activities from childhood to

adolescence female children as they grew older reported more sedentary activities and preferred activities with low levels of exertion such talking on the phone and walking. This preference was significantly associated with pubertal status. Girls with more advanced pubertal status reported more sedentary activities than girls who were less developed (Bradley et al., 2000).

Although basic principles of behavior apply universally to humans, some principles of behavior maybe more salient to specific groups because of their position in different locations, culture, and social contexts. Literature reviews of physical activity correlates emphasize the need for a broad perspective that includes individual (e.g., intrinsic motivation), as well as contextual variables (social and environmental) (Stokols et al., 1996). The need for supportive environments has been deemed just as important as the development of personal skills in changing activity behavior.

One way of conceptualizing the interdependence among people, their behavior, and their environment is through social ecological models (Richter et al., 2002; McLeroy et al., 1988). Rather than having a traditional sole focus on intrapersonal factors, social ecological frameworks are unique in the interactive relationship between individuals and environments, and emphasize the need to address behavior at multiple levels of influence for fostering the adoption and maintenance of physical activity (Fleury & Lee, 2006).

Figure 2.3 illustrates a typical social ecological framework. The ecological model is characterized by the six principles (Grzywacz & Fuqua, 2000):

1. Individual and community well-being are dependent on multiple aspects of the person and/or population, as well as multiple dimensions of the environment.

2. Individual behavior and well being are related to diverse conditions in the socio-physical environment in a reciprocal fashion.
3. Health is an outcome of the person-environment fit.
4. Specific environmental conditions place an unequal amount of influence on health and well-being.
5. The physical and social environments are interdependent.
6. Multidisciplinary approaches result in a comprehensive understanding of health.

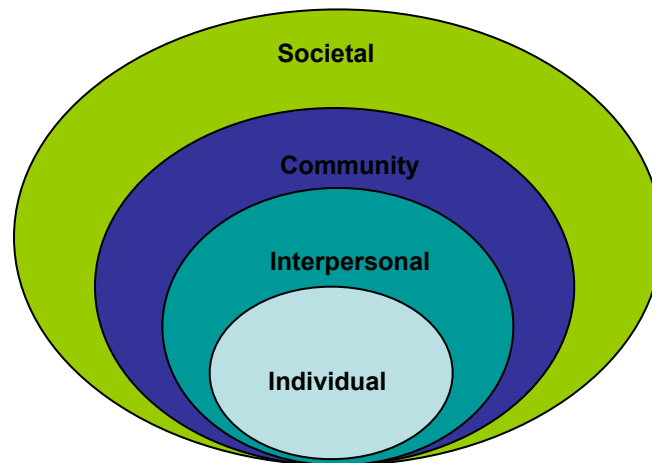


Figure 2.3: Social Ecological Framework

McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckeler, and Glanz (1988) proposed an ecological model for planning health interventions that addresses specific levels and targets of change that include: intrapersonal, interpersonal, organizational, community, and factors related to public policy within a given community. Cohen, Sribner, and Farley (2000) proposed a more recent model that emphasizes the structural nature of health behavior. The authors suggest that health behavior is

influenced by the attributes of individuals and the conditions in which they live. Four categories compose the model: (1) availability of protective or harmful consumer products, (2) physical structures or characteristics of products, (3) social structures and policies, and (4) media and cultural messages. Cohen and his colleagues also discussed the social distribution of environmental factors, risk behavior, and adverse health outcome making the argument that socioeconomic disparities in health are largely attributable to differences in the material conditions of people's lives.

Although the social ecological model has been praised for its broad and inclusive perspective, it has also been critiqued for its complexity (Stokols, 1996). Because improvements in the individual–environment fit can be achieved from changes at either the intra-individual or extra-individual level, there are multiple levels of influence and points of intervention. For this reason, critics of the social ecological model often face difficulty in prioritizing the very complex and interconnected facets of the model. Stokols suggested that researchers identify leverage points in the model which have the greatest possibility for influencing change at other levels.

Overall, social ecological theories suggests that health interventionist need to recognize how the disposition and resources of the individual contribute to health problems and are likely to influence the effectiveness of intervention strategies. Interventions that incorporate a social ecological perspective are likely to assist individuals maintain physical activity behavior. Generally, researchers have found that the following individual, social, and environmental determinants influence physical activity in Black women: sex and gender; race, ethnicity, and culture; and socioeconomic status and neighborhood characteristics. Each of these topics is explored further in the subsequent sections.

2.4.1 Sex and Gender

Sex is commonly defined as the biological and physiological characteristics that define man and woman (World Health Organization (WHO), 2009). Gender, a social construct, specifies the culturally prescribed roles that men and women should follow (The Boston Women's Health Book Collective, 2005). Research indicates that both sex and gender impact physical activity in terms of pubertal development and physical activity socialization.

Pubertal Development

Changes in body composition during puberty may have a significant impact on adolescent female activity (Henderson et al., 1996). Contrary to the development of muscles in boys during puberty, adolescent girls have increased levels of estrogen that promote increased levels of body fat. An average sized 8-year old girl has 16% body fat but this percentage increases to 22% by the time she is 14. This value will rise to between 24% and 30% by the time she is 35 years old (Lohman, 1992). This increased fat load may prove difficult to transport during weight-bearing physical activity and young girls may tend to avoid physical activity. This tendency in turn, results in increases in body fat and diminished physical fitness (Troost et al., 2001).

In a longitudinal study examining changes in physical activity intensity of 656 girls in grades three through ten, Bradley and colleagues (2000) found that girls with more advance pubertal status reported more sedentary activities than girls who were less developed.

Researchers found similar results in a study that assessed the activity levels of 137 adolescent girls, ages 11 and 13 years. At age 11, girls' pubertal development was assessed based on their breast development, which was directly examined by a nurse practitioner. At age 13,

girls reported the number of minutes per day they spent in moderate to vigorous activities such as brisk walking and jogging. Girls with advanced breast development at age 11 participated in 6.88 fewer minutes per day and 48.16 fewer minutes per week of moderate to vigorous physical activity than later maturing girls.

Some researchers suggest that as a female grows and develops sexually, parents become increasingly concerned over the type of leisure physical activity in which she engages, as well as the location that leisure physical activity takes place. A particular concern of parents at this time is to prevent their child from becoming sexually active or becoming a “tomboy,” two factors that are considered socially unacceptable. The female child is monitored closely, typically advised to stay away from boys and encouraged to build relationships with same sex peers (Henderson et al., 1996). Because parents are also concerned with the safety of their female child and preventing harm, girls are usually confined to leisure inside the home and encouraged not to engage in leisure designated to be “for boys only.” At an early age boundaries for the female child’s activity are defined. Girls are socialized away from activities that call for exploration, independence, or ‘rough housing’ and are encouraged to engage in activities considered to be more passive and nurturing such as ‘playing house’ so that the ultimate socialization becomes clear: Most males become involved in physical activity and most females do not (Henderson, 1996).

Physical Activity Socialization

Research suggest that girls may be socialized at an early age into sedentary activities (Fredrickson & Harrison, 2005). At a young age, girls often do not have the opportunity to develop the fundamental motor skills to take up certain physical activities. Therefore, some girls

find it hard to learn new body movements and develop anxiety around appearing awkward to others. By the adolescent period, females and males have different levels of physical skill and are interested in different activities. Girls are less likely than boys to participate in vigorous physical activity such as strengthening activities and sports (Dishman & Sallis, 1994; Neumark-Sztainer et al., 2003). Girl adolescents are most likely to participate in sedentary or moderate physical activity. For example, Bradley and colleagues (2000) found that reported activities for seventh and eighth grade girls were talking on the phone, walking, dancing, and bicycling compared to the more competitive sport preferences of boys in the same grade such as playing basketball, football, or soccer. These data suggest that adolescent girls are less likely to play on school athletic teams or teams provided by other organizations. Adolescent females' involvement in organized team play activities though is a key method to maintaining high levels of physical activity in a social setting (Bradley). During the elementary and middle school years, youth involvement in community sports such as soccer, swimming, and baseball has, in fact, permitted large numbers of otherwise athletic-unskilled girls to become physically active. During the high school years, however, limited "everybody plays" programs exist. They are typically displaced with highly competitive programs designed to encourage those who are sufficiently skilled to join the team (Bungum & Vincent, 1997). In turn, this may discourage adolescent girls who are typically less motivated by competition and recognition, from engaging in activity all together and cause them to choose more sedentary pursuits.

Researchers attempting to understand female interest and socialization into vigorous physical activities have examined the impact of cultural ideals of femininity on women's physical activity participation (Guiliano et al., 2000). Femininity is "a socially constructed

standard for women's appearance, demeanor, and values" (Krane et al., 2004). Westernized characteristics of femininity include being emotional, passive, dependent, maternal, compassionate, and gentle, which stand as a counterpoint to masculine traits such as, competitiveness, assertiveness, confidence, and independence (Krane et al.). Theories of gender regarding femininity suggest that women attempt to portray a "socially desirable female-appropriate image" that include positions of "doing girl," "being girl," "resisting girl," and "subverting girl" where girl refers to "perfect femininity" that is structured within the boundaries of heterosexual sexuality and romance" (Krane et al.) Through a variety of social mechanisms women become aware that feminine women are more valued (Krane et al., 2004). For this reason, girls may perceive that it is socially unacceptable to be strong and physical because this is associated with the characteristics of boys and men. An invalid but particularly persistent and long-standing belief is that the physically active girl is more likely to become lesbian (Krane et al.). Although there is no basis for this speculation, it leads some girls to avoid physical activity. According to Cockburn and Clarke (2002) the forces that shape femininity are so "powerful, compelling, and menacing" (p. 656) that resistance from these forces is "hard won" (p.657). Young women may experience alienation from people around them because they do not fit into the "socially and publicly sanctioned category" for their gender (p. 657). As a result young women seeking to belong "are coerced into physical passivity" and actively choose "to avoid participating in or displaying any physical competence" (p.658).

An aspect of femininity that appears most salient as a barrier to physical activity for Black women and girls is hair care (Krane et al, 2004). Among Black women, straight hair and European hairstyles have not only been considered more feminine, but also implies one's

standing in the social hierarchy. “Good hair” has long been associated with the light-skinned middle-class, and “nappy hair” with Blacks who are less fortunate (Krane et al.). For Black women who supposedly have “nappy hair,” trips to the beauty salon are common place. Black women may choose to either get their hair pressed with a straightening iron or receive a chemical relaxer for longer lasting straightness.

In one study Black women discussed the difficulty of paying for a hairstyle then messing it up shortly thereafter by sweating at the gym. Women in the study would often miss exercise sessions to enjoy their hairstyles. The women’s comments suggested that they were aware of their decision to choose “between their health and their appearance” (Harley, 2005, p.96). The women created several methods to alleviate the problems associated with hair care including “wearing a bandana during exercise to absorb some of the sweat” or “to wear their hair in a style less susceptible to deterioration such as braids or a ‘natural’ style.”

In another study investigating adoption of healthy behaviors, almost half of the Black women participants stated that hair care issues affected when and how long they exercised (Krane et al., 2004). Even among African American girls as young as 11 to 14 years of age, the perception that exercise spoiled their hairstyles and make-up was seen as a serious deterrent to gym class participation (Taylor et al., 1999).

2.4.2 Race, Ethnicity, and Culture

Race is a social construct used to categorize people into groups based on physical characteristics (Johnson-Bailey, 2002). Due to its sociopolitical history, the construct of race has acted as a prominent factor in the lives of Black Americans (Thomas, 2004). During the era of de jure segregation, skin color, for example, was often used to grant differing social and/or

economic treatment to individuals and determined educational, economic, and occupational opportunities for Blacks, with greater opportunity existing for lighter-skinned Blacks (Russell et al., 1992). During the mid to late eighteenth century, scientists often expended large amounts of energy on the study of hair, facial structure, and skull size in the belief that these morphological features were permanent and reliable ways to support race inferiority and racial differences in susceptibility to disease (Kawachi et al., 2005). Although earlier scientific theories of race inferiority have been discredited, some still question how much genetics plays into the development of certain health conditions (Payne, Jr. et al., 2007). The causes of health inequities are numerous relating not only biology, but to also to societal and cultural values (Payne et al.). So, instead of studying race alone, researchers are encouraged to study the impact of culture and ethnicity on health behavior and differences in health outcomes.

According to Guy (1999) ethnicity can be defined as shared values, attitudes, norms, behavior, and language used within a social group. Social norms reflect standards for behavior that may offer women specific values, motivation, and skills to engage in physical activity.

In recent years, it has become more common to consider ethnicity as a contributing variable to the area of body image because it has been shown to relate to cultural values (Flynn & Fitzgibbon, 1998). Several authors have examined adults' and adolescents' attitudes towards weight in populations of different ethnic groups and have found ethnic and cultural differences in body satisfaction. Generally, White girls develop increased dissatisfaction with their bodies and consistently include images of fashion models in their description of the ideal body image. Conversely, Black girls report high levels of self esteem even when they are considered overweight by medical standards, which may indicate that Black girls have an aesthetic

preference and tolerance for larger body sizes (Padgett & Biro, 2003). Perceptions of body image may extend into adulthood so that Black women may not perceive a need for additional activity. In a study conducted by Anderson and colleagues (Anderson et al., 2002), obese and overweight Black women were more likely than White women to report satisfaction with their body size.

2.4.3 Socioeconomic Status and Neighborhood Characteristics

Socioeconomic status (SES) refers to differential access to social and material resources and is often based on income, education, and employment status. In the United States, race and socioeconomic status are intertwined so that a greater percentage of Blacks than Whites live in poverty, have limited educational options, and are underemployed. Differential access to income is referred to as income inequality. According to Kaplan, Pamuk, Lynch, Cohen and Balfour (1996) as cited by McNeill and colleagues (2006) “income inequality is defined as the proportion of aggregated household income held by households whose income is below a specified centile (i.e. 90th percentile) on the distribution of household income.” (p. 1014). Research suggests that health outcomes are related to inequalities in income among the population (McNeill et al). Of particular importance is a gradient in the relation between SES and health: Each level of the hierarchy exhibits less morbidity and mortality than lower levels (McNeill, 2006). Individuals at higher levels of income are more likely to adopt health promoting behavior and to avoid risky health behavior. Is not well understood how income inequality impacts health outcomes, but a number of studies have examined their association with physical activity. For example, epidemiological researchers have noted a positive relation between income and physical activity (McNeill). A typical hypothesis is that wealthier individuals have more disposable monetary income to engage in physical activity (i.e. paying gym membership fees or buying fitness

equipment). Other research suggests that differences in activity level among income groups are likely due to the distribution of physical activity resources in neighborhoods. The built environment can be structured in ways that give people more or fewer opportunities and choices to be physically active. The characteristics of the built environment that facilitate physical activity include ready access to parks and trails that encourage walking for exercise; community centers that enable safe participation in extracurricular activities; and sidewalks and mixed-use development that are important to encourage walking for local shopping and other utilitarian purposes. Lack of these positive characteristics in the built environment constrains physical activity. Individuals with low income often live in socially disadvantaged neighborhoods that deter physical activity due to a deteriorated physical condition. Furthermore typical characteristics of low-income neighborhoods—drug trafficking, violent crime, littered sidewalks, and limited provision of public services such as police protection—impact individuals' perception of safety and discourage outdoor physical activity other than necessary trips (McNeill et al., 2006). For example, Wilson, Kirtland, Ainsworth, and Addy (2004) used a Geographic Information System (GIS) to identify trails, sidewalks, public recreations facilities and violent crime incidents and their relation to perceptions of access and safety for high income and low income residents. In addition to having substantially fewer neighborhood trails, and not engaging in ACSM recommendations for physical activity, respondents from low SES (66.5% Black) reported higher perceptions of neighborhood crime, unattended dogs, unpleasantness of neighborhood, untrustworthy neighbors, less access to public recreation facilities. Also having trails in the neighborhood significantly predicted physical activity for low income residents but not for high income residents.

Perceptions of neighborhood safety are particularly salient among women, who are from racial or ethnic minority groups, and those residents in lower-income urban setting. Wilbur and colleagues (2002) engaged low-income, urban African American women aged 20 to 50 years in focus groups to identify cultural, environmental, and policy determinants of physical activity. Findings reflected the influence of a culture of poverty and the importance of environmental safety and community support. Specifically, participants expressed the opinion that Black women were not provided the same protection (i.e. police services) to exercise freely in their communities as women in the dominant culture. They also cited being reluctant to leave their front porch due to crime filled neighborhoods.

In another study, Bennett and colleagues (2007) collected exercise frequency based on 5 day pedometer, self-reported perceptions of neighborhood safety, and self efficacy to walk from 1,180 adults living in metropolitan Boston. The composition of the study population included women (73%) and ethnic minorities (44% Black). They found that women reporting their neighborhood as unsafe during nighttime hours had significantly fewer steps per day than those viewing their neighborhood as safe (4,302 vs. 5,178). They also found that feeling unsafe decreased women's self efficacy for physical activity.

Griffin, Wilson, Wilcox, Buck, and Ainsworth (2008) conducted focus groups with twenty-seven African American adult residents of a low-income, high-crime neighborhood in a suburban southeastern community and asked them questions about perceptions of what would help them, their families, and their neighbors be more physically active. Participants offered three suggestions for creating a safe environment for physical activity increasing law enforcement, community connectedness and social support, and structured programs. Findings

suggest that safety issues are an important factor for residents living in disadvantaged conditions and that the residents know how they want to make their neighborhoods healthier.

Women's perceptions of an unsafe neighborhood could impact their child's participation in physical activity (Weir et al., 2006). While living in neighborhoods where crime flourishes, mothers may experience increased anxiety and prohibit their children from walking or traveling far from home. In these instances, snacking, playing videogames, or watching television at home television may replace other active leisure pursuits.

Although watching television has not been shown to directly impact decreased levels of physical activity in adolescents, lack of activity due to increased screen time is a strong predictor of obesity in adolescents. Research suggests that every hourly increment of screen time is associated with a 2% increase in the prevalence of obesity (Kohl, III & Hobbs, 1998). Black youths are substantially more likely to use screen media (e.g. television, videos/DVDs, and movies) on any given day and spend more time with screen media than either their Hispanic or White counterparts. Specifically, Black youth on average watched 40 to 60 minutes more minutes per day than Hispanic youth, and 20 minutes more than White youth (Kohl III & Hobbs). This pattern was also evident for African American adolescent females. Similarly, in one study researchers found that African American adolescents reported watching 30 more minutes of television than White adolescents (Dowda, 2004).

Although several researchers have hypothesized an inverse association between the perception of unsafe surroundings and physical activity, empirical support for the association has been inconsistent (Dowda, 2004). The literature cites an inverse relation between perceived neighborhood safety and physical activity in adults and adolescents (Kohl & Hobbs, 1998). One

such study conducted by Ross (2000) on adults found that residents of socially disadvantaged neighborhoods, both men and women, walked more, not less, than residents of more advantaged neighborhoods despite their fear of being victimized.

The purpose of this study is to investigate Black women's physical activity experiences from elementary to high school. In summary, the literature review indicates individual, interpersonal, cultural, and social factors predict physical activity behavior in women. Among these factors gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic position are inextricably linked in ways that affect physical activity participation for girls and women. Limited research that examines how these factors may contribute to physical activity decline from adolescents to young adulthood, particularly from the perspective of Black women. The following chapter details the methods for obtaining such information.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the study's research methods and is composed of seven sections. Section one states the research questions. Section two describes narrative inquiry, a type of qualitative research design that was used in the study. Section three explains participant selection. Section four outlines the data collection procedures. Section five identifies my subjectivity. Section six summarizes the criteria used to establish validity of analysis. The final section outlines the data analysis procedures.

3.1 Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate Black women's physical activity experiences from elementary to high school with the goal of helping health promotion practitioners and researchers develop programs to prevent the decline in physical activity among Black adolescents. The following research questions guided the methodological design of this study:

- What factors in the community shape physical activity for young Black women?
- How does being Black and female shape attitudes and engagement concerning physical activity from elementary to high school?

3.2 Study Design: Narrative Inquiry

This study used narrative inquiry as a methodological tool to obtain the stories of nine Black women aged 20-26 years regarding their personal experiences with physical activity from elementary to high school. Narratives are "first person accounts by respondents of their experience"(Reissman, 1993). The appeal of narrative lies in its familiarity, as narration is a

frequently used tool for human communication. From an early age, people learn to tell stories about past events (Reissman, 1993). These stories are organized in terms of life phases (when I was in elementary school, before my mother died,) general events (pep rallies, football games), and event-specific (my 16th birthday, my first dance) (John et al., 2008). For this reason, stories in the form of narratives are easily understood by various audiences and a comfortable way of giving and receiving information. Narratives, however, are not merely a way of telling about one's life. Narratives are the means by which people "link events" and address the "question of why in a story something happen[ed] because of something else" (Richardson, 1997). Through the process of telling a story, the narrator orders events and establishes significance to each event (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Through reflection, the narrator begins to understand her life (Johnson-Bailey, 2000). Bruner states that, in this way, "... narrative is most appropriate for the study of change, the life cycle, or any developmental process." (p. 153)

Narrative inquiry has been particularly useful to feminist researchers in illuminating the "multilayered texture of Black women's lives" (Etter-Lewis, 1991). Specifically, Etter Lewis suggested that narratives often highlight that Black women are affected by issues of race and gender:

Black women's experiences are influenced by their multiple social roles, which are acted out simultaneously. They do not have the privilege of only being women, or of only being Black Americans in particular situation. Instead, their roles are melded. Usually they must wear both hats at the same time (p.56).

Class issues, in particular poverty, also affect Black women and interact with race and gender to place Black women at a unique standpoint. Thus, an important feature of narrative is that it

distinguishes Black women from larger groups under which they are often subsumed in research and statistics.

Narrative inquiry is best suited for the goals of this study, as it examines the totality of Black women's lives, within the broader framework in which they live. Documenting and analyzing the narratives allowed me to view each participant "in relation to the history of [her] time, and how[she] is influenced by the various religious, social, psychological and economic factors currently present in [her] world" (Shah, 2006). Cole and Knowles (Cole & Knowles, 2001) support this position:

Lives are never lived in vacuums. Lives are never lived in complete isolation from social contexts. [...] To be human is to experience 'the relational,' no matter how it is defined, and at the same time, to be shaped by 'the institutional,' the structural expressions of community and society. (p.22)

By thematically stringing together events, happenings, and actions of each participant, this study examined how their physical activity behavior between elementary and high school was shaped by a host of individual, interpersonal, societal factors.

3.3 Participant Selection

I recruited participants using purposeful and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling uses the judgment of the researcher in selecting information rich participants (Merriam, 1998). This type of sampling allows selection of a sample based on the researcher's knowledge of the population and the nature of the research aims. Snowball sampling was used to identify information-rich cases from key informants, as well as to increase the likelihood of locating an adequate number of participants in a short amount of time.

I chose respondents based on the following criteria: (1) self-identified as Black women, (2) aged 18-26 years; (3) not currently pregnant, and (4) attended middle and/or high school in the Georgia. The criteria for exclusion were women who: (a) had a past or existing heart condition or physical disability that would prevent them from exercising or playing, and (b) had never been physically active in childhood (i.e. never played a sport or never participated in structured/unstructured play activity due to a physical disability).

Within the stated criteria, women in the study were diverse in age, occupation, SES, physical activity status, and level of education. Participants for the study were recruited through personal and professional contacts at beauty salons, university campuses, and community centers. Nineteen people expressed interest in participating in the study. Each study candidate engaged in a brief screening questionnaire by phone (Appendix B). The screening questionnaire saved managerial time, eliminated unlikely candidates, and allowed me to determine if the candidate's gender, age, race, resident history, activity behavior and physical health status were congruent with the goals of this research project. Out of 18 interested individuals, ten women were eligible to participate in the study. One woman later declined to participate in the study. Prior to the interview I mailed each participant (1) a cover letter explaining the study (Appendix C), (2) two copies of the consent form (Appendix D), (3) a demographic survey (Appendix E), and (4) a 7-day physical activity recall questionnaire (Appendix G). Participants were reminded about the date and time of their interview with a phone call. To protect their identity, participants used a pseudonym during data collection, which was also used in the data analysis and this publication.

3.4 Data Collection

Interviews were conducted between July 1, 2008 and October 30, 2008 at either the home residence of the participant or at a mutually agreed upon location. The interviews' length ranged from 1.5 to 2 hours. I used an interview guide (Appendix A) with semi-structured questions to gather the data (Bodgan & Biklen, 1998). The semi-structured interview guide ensured that all topics were covered with every respondent. To establish a more natural and conversational atmosphere, in some cases, I adapted the sequence and wording of the questions to the context of the actual interview. Participants were given a \$50.00 incentive for their participation.

After asking each participant for some background information, I opened the interview with the statement, "Describe for me your favorite activity as a child." This introduction gave the participant the opportunity to describe all the activities that she preferred, and allowed me to determine how women prioritized physical and sedentary activities as children. I probed in depth when I needed more information related to a particular point of discussion. In "depth-probing" allows the interviewer to pursue all points of interest with follow-up questions such as "Tell me more about..." "What do you mean...?" "Can I say ...?" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). These probes allowed the participants not only to restate their views but to expand them as well. Capturing the words of each participant is a valuable and integral component of this study. Thus, each interview session was audio taped and later transcribed into printed text. Kvale (1996) pointed out, however, that transcripts "are not the rock-bottom data of interview research, [but] are artificial constructions from an oral to written mode of communication" (p.163). Thus, to improve the interpretation accuracy of the transcribed interview data, I wrote field notes before, during, and after each interview session (Spradley, 1980). According to Lofland (1971) as quoted

by Patton (2001), “Field notes are the most important determinant of later bringing off a qualitative analysis... if [the researcher] is not doing them, [the researcher] might as well not be in the setting” (p. 302). Poland and Pederson (1998) concurred and suggested that it is important to immerse oneself in the context of the interview setting because what is not said in an interview setting is just as important as what is said. To develop field notes, I used Spradley’s (1980) recommended four part system which includes a) taking notes during the actual interview; b) augmenting the original notes by adding impressions and observations not noted during the interview; c) including a personal journal to track my feelings, questions, hunches, and findings; and d) incorporating a separate subset of notes to be part of analyses and explanations. The purpose of this multi-level system of field notes is to enhance the process of narrative analysis, as it helps the researcher to recall the interview nuances, such as body language, eye contact, tone of voice, and hand and facial gestures.

In addition to the qualitative interviews, all participants completed two self administered questionnaires: (1) demographic survey and the (2) International Physical Activity Questionnaire, a 7-day physical activity recall.

Demographic Questionnaire. Each participant in the study completed a two-page demographic questionnaire that assessed their age, weight, height, number of children, educational background, parents education background, physical activity preferences, current employment status, and annual salary (Appendix E).

International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) Current physical activity levels for each participant were assessed using the self administered short form of International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) (Appendix G). Responses to the instrument items provide

separate scores for times spent in walking, moderate- and vigorous-intensity physical activity.

Three levels of physical activity are proposed by the IPAQ to classify populations: low, moderate, and high. Calculating the scores for the short form required aggregation of the duration (in minutes) and frequency (days) of walking, moderate-intensity and vigorous-intensity activities. The criteria for these levels have been established considering that IPAQ assesses activity in all domains of daily life (e.g. work, transportation, leisure, etc). It yields greater median MET-minutes estimates than are would normally be estimated from leisure-time participation alone.

For walking, moderate, and vigorous physical activities an average MET value was used: (1) walking = 3.3 METs, (2) moderate physical activity = 4.0 METs, and (3) vigorous physical activity = 8.0 METs. MET values were based on research conducted during a reliability study of the questionnaire. The MET values were used to create three physical activity categories. The criteria for the three categories are included in Table 3.1. Participant activity categories are provided in Appendix H.

Table 3.1 IPAQ Physical Activity Level Criteria

Level of Physical Activity	Criteria for Physical Activity Levels
High	Vigorous activity on 3 or more days of the week and also accumulating 1500 MET minutes per week OR 7 or more days of any combination of walking, moderate or vigorous intensity activities accumulating at least 3000 MET minutes per week

Moderate	At least: 3 or more days of vigorous activity of at 20 minutes per day OR 5 or more days of moderate-intensity activity and or walking of at least 30 minutes per day OR 5 or more days of any combination of walking, moderate intensity or vigorous intensity achieving a minimum of at least 600 MET minutes per week.
Low	No activity reported OR Some activity is reported by not enough to meet the above categories.

3.5 Researcher Subjectivity

Because the researcher's perceptions play a major part in the interpretation and portrayal of findings, it is important to attend to the idea of subjectivity. As the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, this section serves to make public my subjectivity, experiences, personal views, and background because it will affect data collection and analysis (Pillow, 2003). Peshkin defined subjectivity as "the quality of the investigator that affects the results of observational investigation" (1988, p.17). He pointed out that an individual's subjectivity is not something that can be removed, and it is therefore something researchers need to be aware of throughout the research process. In support of this argument, Strand (2000) stated, "the researcher's values, experiences, and personal points of view are as much a part of the research process as those of the people studied, and they should be discussed and acknowledged" (p. 91).

My interest in the physical activity patterns on the health of Black women stems first and foremost from being a Black woman. As a Black woman, I have a unique and genuine concern for the health and overall well-being and success of the Black community. Based on personal experience it is my belief that Black women play a very vital role in the health and stability of

the Black community. Beginning with their enslavement and the splintering of their families, the contemporary experiences of Black women that still endure include being the most underpaid demographic group in the United States and carrying a disproportionate public health burden in almost every disease category when compared to other women. In the face of these realities, we have continued to work the fields, nurse both ours and others children, maintain the home economically, and assume major responsibilities in religious and civic organizations. The consequences for this century's long burden have taken their collective toll on the physical and psychological health of Black women. I too, have struggled since adolescence in developing and maintaining a physically active lifestyle and healthy weight. As an adult I now understand how this struggle has affected my life. I can remember at the age of eight running outside for hours until my face was flushed from playing hide-and-go-seek with my father and siblings. As I grew older and the stress of daily life increased, my priorities and responsibilities changed as did my prioritization of regular physical activity. I hear similar stories from the women in my life, and I think it is important to hear and understand the stories of other women my age and younger regarding physical activity and health. The absence of physical activity is linked to a large number of chronic diseases (e.g. diabetes, cardiovascular disease, obesity, etc). Physical activity as much as anything is a lifestyle issue, an issue that is often nurtured during youth and yet has implications throughout the lifespan. As I watch my sisters in spirit at home, church, workplace and society struggle with being physically healthy, it seems that only in understanding their stories in their voice can we find some of the answers we so desperately need and deserve.

3.6 Validity Checks

To lend credibility to the findings, I incorporated a variety of validity procedures. Evaluating the quality and credibility of a qualitative research study is based on three factors: (1) how appropriate the research design is for the research problem, (2) how well the research process facilitates credible and rigorous findings, and (3) how useful the research study is to the community.

3.6.1. Appropriateness of the Research Design

For the inquiry to produce meaningful results, Lincoln & Guba (1985) highlighted the importance of congruence among three elements: the problem being investigated, the inquiry paradigm, and the context in which the research is conducted. As explained earlier, I contend that the research design is appropriate for this study because the issue under investigation, the theory that underpinned the research questions and the research paradigm are congruent.

3.6.2. Demonstration of Rigor

Rigorous research is both documented and explicit. In other words, researchers should be able to describe to their colleagues and other audiences what they did in clear, simple language. To increase rigor, Creswell and Miller (2000) stated that researchers should be diligent in their efforts to establish trustworthiness and credibility. The researchers should ask themselves, “How can I persuade my audience that the findings of my study are worth paying attention to?” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I enhanced the trustworthiness of the interpretation of these findings by implementing the following four strategies: (1) triangulation, (2) peer debriefing, and (3) member checks.

Triangulation. Triangulation is a strategy for establishing and improving the internal validity of research study. In conceptualizing internal validity, I follow Miles and Huberman (1994), who stated that internal validity refers to the following questions: “Do the findings of the study make sense? Are they credible to the people we study and to our readers? Do we have an authentic portrait of what we were looking at?” (p. 278). Basically, triangulation in social science research refers to a process by which a researcher verifies a finding by showing that independent measures agree with it or, at least, do not contradict it (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Miles and Huberman (1994) distinguished five kinds of triangulation in qualitative research: (1) triangulation by data source (data collected from different persons, times, or places); (2) triangulation by method (observation, interviews, documents, etc.); (3) triangulation by researcher (comparable to interrater reliability in quantitative methods); (4) triangulation by theory (using different theories, or researchers from different disciplines, to explain results); and (5) triangulation by data type (e.g., combining quantitative and qualitative data). The type of triangulation chosen depends on the purpose of a study. In this study, I used triangulation by data source and triangulation by theory to lend internal validity to my study results. I employed data source triangulation by engaging in intensive reading across the 12 narrative interviews. A sort of constant comparative method was used to explain how knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes about physical activity are constructed and how these constructions, whether similar or dissimilar, may have shaped changes in activity from elementary to high school.

Peer Debriefing. Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined peer debriefing as “a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the

inquirer's mind" (p. 308). The peer-reviewer for this study was Dr. Juanita Johnson-Bailey. Johnson-Bailey works extensively as a qualitative researcher and narrative methodologist and teaches qualitative methodology for the College of Education at the University of Georgia. I spoke with her frequently with her throughout the course of the study, discussing data interpretation.

Member checks. Member checking is a process through which respondents verify the data collected and its interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Each participant received, via postal mail, a copy of their demographic profiles, individual interview transcripts, and study findings for review and clarification. All data was verified through this process.

3.6.3. Usefulness of the Research Study

The last factor used to determine the quality of this study is the practicality of the results. For a qualitative study to be useable, the researcher conducting the study must provide a thick description to enable the reader to understand the methods and ascertain the quality of the findings. As Shulman (2007) asserted,

Research begins in wonder and curiosity but ends in teaching. The work of the researcher must always lead to a process in which we teach what we have learned to our peers in the education community. Our work is neither meaningful not consequential until is it understood by others. (p.6)

Furthermore, the research data, particularly in health promotion research, should further human understanding, so that the quality of health promotion practice can be improved. The research premise for this study is to further understand physical activity decline in Black women, that is,

to inform the development of physical activity interventions for young Black women. As such, the conclusions section includes guidelines to assist practitioners when developing interventions.

In summary, I contend that this study represents quality research for three reasons. First, the research design was congruent with the research focus, enabling flexibility and permitting the issues to unfold in a naturalistic setting. Second, rigor was achieved through the establishment of trustworthiness. The trustworthiness criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were operationalized by the following three activities: triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checks. Third, given the magnitude of the health problems related to lack of physical activity of Black women, this research is a useful contribution to the health promotion and exercise literature.

3.7 Data Analysis

Frank (2000) points out that people tell stories, but narratives come from the analysis of stories. Therefore, the researcher's role is to analyze the stories to interpret the core narrative that the participant voices (Riley & Hawe, 2005). Analysis involves methodically searching and organizing the interview transcripts, field notes, and other information to get a more holistic perception of the participant and the meaning that they attribute to their behavior (Bodgan & Biklen, 1998). The approach taken in this study first relied on analyzing each interview with Alexander's (1988) principle of salience. This analytic approach involves "reducing the text to manageable portions" (Alexander, p.268). It also involves searching the text for passages that are important in the participant's story. The nine identifiers of salience are: primacy, frequency, uniqueness, omission, negation, emphasis, isolation, error, and incompleteness (Alexander, p.269).

Primacy refers to the first idea a participant mentions in her narrative that may provide a key to what item the speaker felt was the most important issue. The primacy of a narrative component typically shapes the structure and course of the narrative.

Frequency, as the term indicates, refers to instances when the participant references certain aspects of her life repeatedly. Frequency highlights the importance or salience that could be embedded in the repetition.

Uniqueness is indicated by an unusual occurrence in text and can be identified when the narrator frames part of the text with words like, “It was the most unusual thing that I ever went through” (p. 271). The researcher paid particular attention to these moments in the text because this unique situation could potentially change the course of the participants’ life. Clear departures from the language and stories with unexpected and unexplained endings also are indicators of uniqueness.

Omission indicates the issues the participant wants to hide and is typically demonstrated by an obvious lapse in the logic or flow of the narrative. It is not easy to recognize omission unless one is aware of the participant’s personal or cultural standards. For example, naming all family members and not mentioning interaction with one member is an example of omission (Alexander, 1988).

Negation may be used by a participant to communicate the importance or non significance of an event. For example, a participant negates something when she says, “Let’s move on to something else” or “I don’t want to talk about that.” A participant could also indicate negation with terms such as, “it’s not that,” as in the example, “It’s not that I don’t like running, it’s just really hard to do,” which may mean, “I don’t like to run”.

Emphasis refers to certain aspects of the narrative that the participant deliberately brings to the attention of the interviewer. For example, the participant says, “A critical event in my life was_____” (p. 272).

Isolation is offered by the participant who refers to several isolating events (perhaps isolation in the school environment) or numerous feelings of isolation.

Error is marked by a slip in speech, such as Freudian slips, or as an obvious distortion in fact.

Incompletion, is frequently exhibited in two ways. It may appear as an abrupt end to a story or an illogical outcome to a story.

After finding salient units, Alexander (1988) suggests asking the data a question. In this method, “the criteria for selection are derived directly from the question posed” (p. 285). Since [refer here to the goals of your study] in factors that shape activity patterns from elementary to high school, I identified sequences in their narratives that led to an increase or a decrease in physical activity.

In addition to Alexander’s identifiers of salience, I employed Denzin’s (1989) biographical method. Denzin notes that narrative texts are often discussed in the frame of one’s “family beginnings” and by the “influence and importance of gender and class” (p. 18). Turning points and “epiphanies” are also evident in narrative texts (p. 22). According to Denzin

...the notion that lives are turned around by significant events what I call epiphanies, is deeply rooted in Western thought... this means that biographical texts will typically be structured by the significant turning point moments in a subject’s life. (p. 22)

After proceeding through the aforementioned methods of analysis, I identified major themes across the interviews using a constant comparative method to grasp “...an understanding of people and settings being studied” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). To engage in constant comparative analysis, I read the transcripts to identify patterns and similarities in the participant’s stories. I then associated a code to sentences, paragraphs, or sections of text. These codes represented a theme or idea with which each part of the data was associated. The codes were written on hard copies of each document next to the related section. When possible, the actual theme was drawn from words used by participants when describing their experience. The major themes and the data pertaining to each theme were grouped and analyzed.

After coding the hard copy of each interview, each coded section was copied and pasted into a new document with the title code, the pseudonym of the participant, and the line numbers from the original transcript. This process helped me to trace quotes and codes back to the original document to provide further contextual details that might have become necessary as I proceeded through data analysis. One hard copy of each coded transcript was retained, in addition to the electronic copy. Frequently emerging categories across interviews formed the basis of the overarching themes presented in this study.

During the last phase of analysis, I constructed narrative summaries for each participant by removing the interview questions from the body of the transcript. After removing the questions, the text resembled a cohesive first person statement. To increase the readability and flow of the statements, at times it was necessary that I add transition sentences or statements that bridged one thought to the next. The narratives were arranged according to the major themes (i.e. turning points, epiphanies, and points of primacy) identified in the first three phases of analysis.

After analysis of the interviews, all digital recording of interviews was destroyed.

This chapter described the research design, recruitment and selection process, data collection and analysis procedures, researcher subjectivity, and concerns for validity and reliability. The methodological processes described were used to investigate a specific time period in Black women's lives—between elementary and high school—and the narratives they construct around their physical activity experiences. Narrative summaries for each participant are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

PARTICIPANTS' NARRATIVES

This chapter provides participant profiles and narrative summaries of the nine Black women interviewed for this study: Peace, Jordan, Claire, Tracie, Rita, Yvonne, Roberta, Tiffany, and Ginger. Each narrative summary outlines the participant's past and current activity behavior and the turning points that may have shaped changes in her patterns of physical activity.

Narratives proceed chronologically to illustrate each participant's development from a young girl to a woman. Though the intended purpose of the interviews was to focus on the period between elementary and high school, some participants discussed and emphasized their college experiences. Some narratives detail this information. Each narrative is written in first person to keep true to the voice of the participant. As written, the narratives create the illusion that the participant is telling her story directly to the reader, as it happens. This allows the reader to develop an increased intimacy with the participant experience.

Participants' age ranged from 20 to 26 years (mean age = 24 years). Their educational level ranged from less than high school to graduate degrees. The professional background of the nine participants included: three teachers, four college students, and two unemployed stay-at-home mothers, one of which has been certified as a nursing assistant. Table 4.1 details the participants' demographic information including name, age, marital status, number of children, highest degree earned, employment status, occupation, annual salary, and level of exercise.

Table 4.1. Participant Demographic Information

Name	Age	Marital Status	Children	Highest Degree Earned	Employment Status	Occupation	Annual Salary	MET min/week	Exercise Level*
Peace	26	Single	0	Graduate	Full Time	Teacher	\$40,000-\$49,000	238	Low
Jordan	24	Single	2	< High School	Unemployed	Not employed	<\$20,000	753	Moderate
Claire	26	Married	2	Graduate	Full Time	Insurance Claims	\$30,000-\$39,000	848	Moderate
Tracie	26	Single	0	Graduate	Full Time	Teacher	\$40,000-\$49,000	1398	Moderate
Rita	26	Single	2	High School Certified Nursing Assistant	Unemployed	Not employed	\$20,000	1370	Moderate
Yvonne	23	Single	0	High School (College Student)	Part-time	Student/Nurse Intern	<\$20,000	1836	Moderate
Roberta	24	Married	0	Technical Degree	Full Time	Patient Care Hairstylist	<\$20,000	2226	Moderate
Tiffany	20	Single	0	High School (College Student)	Part-time	Retail Sales	<\$20,000	5100	High
Ginger	25	Single	0	College	Full Time	Teacher	\$40,000-\$49,000	3900	High

**NOTE: Low, Moderate and High categories derived from IPAQ, Guidelines for Data Processing and Analysis of the International Physical Activity Questionnaire, Short and Long Forms (2005) Available at: <http://www.ipaq.ki.se/scoring.pdf>
“Low” = Participant reported no or limited moderate-to-vigorous activity; “Moderate” = participant reported five or more days of any combination of walking, moderate intensity or vigorous intensity achieving a minimum of at least 600 MET*

minutes per week; “High” = participant reported seven or more days of any combination of walking, moderate or vigorous intensity activities accumulating at least 3000 MET minutes per week

4.1 Peace

Although 26 years of age, Peace has a very youthful appearance and looks to be between the ages of 19 and 21. Standing at approximately 5’4 and 115 pounds, she has a chocolate brown skin complexion and a slim body frame. She wore her relatively fine and relaxed hair in chin length bob. She arrived to the interview shortly after leaving work and thus was dressed in business casual attire including a pink button-down silk top and black slacks. Peace possesses a very bubbly personality, speaks rather quickly, and often giggles at her own jokes.

Peace described herself as “busy constantly” with work activities. In addition to working at the mall, the young woman is a recent graduate student and kindergarten teacher. She is very active at church participating on the hostess committee, educators mentoring program, and the choir. She attributes her active work and church life to the role model of her father. Her father, who worked as an electrical engineer for a well known electricity company and earned “a lot of money” was described by Peace as a “workaholic” that was “very active” in the church as a head deacon and loved cut the grass as “stress relief”. Peace has endured a strained relationship with her mother from since the age of 12. During Peace’s childhood, her mother worked as a paralegal, claims examiner, and at the airport until she hurt her back carrying luggage.

In the narrative below Peace discusses early play experiences and her parents’ divorce both of which significantly influenced her physical activity participation as she matured.

Narrative

I was born and raised in Georgia. I was the only child for like 16 years so I was spoiled and I had every toy. I had a whole Barbie play set. I had the Barbie dream house and the Barbie

mobile, and the pool, and the corvette—I had everything. I had a lot of friends in the neighborhood so everyone was always over my house playing Barbie; even the boys came over and played Barbie. They were Ken. I had three areas around the house; one was the cooking area. For some reason my parents put the kitchen stuff on the back porch. I guess because my friends and I were making mud pies and quote unquote cooking with whatever we could find. It was like my own little house.

Probably around the age of 4 or 5, I didn't like to be outside at all. I was like "no don't put me in the grass!" It was a joke of the family. My uncles used to throw me in the grass. I don't know why I didn't like grass. It was like itchy. I didn't like being itchy. At my house we had a long side walk with manicured bushes. I was walking by it one day and bee flew out and stung me behind my ear. It came from no where. I just made a big "Whoa I'm dying!" kind of fuss about it. That's when I stopped liking to play outside. I was just really girly, girly, girly. My dad made an area in the garage with that green, I don't know what it's called, but that green stuff you can put down; it was my grass. It was all set up in the garage which was outside for me. Upstairs in the playroom were my cabbage patch dolls. We had all the clothes for all different occasions. I had the twin bunk beds for my baby dolls and the changing table and we changed clothes and we just played and played and played. We played the roles of our parents. We mimicked whatever we saw; who is mom today and who's the daddy?

My parents divorced when I was in 2nd grade at Burbank elementary. My dad stayed in the house and my mom moved out of the house. You would never know because I saw them both equally. My parents wanted to keep everything as stable as it could be. Although I lived with my

mom, both of my parents lived in my elementary school zone so I still came to my dad's house afterschool and played with my friends.

When I got a little older, like 4th or 5th grade, we got out of the Cabbage Patch and Barbie dolls and we did a lot of riding bikes, playing tag, and racing in the street. My parents wanted to put me in something else so I remember I went to boys and girls camp one year. That camp really just didn't have a lot going on. So the next summer and the following summers until I was old enough to stay home by myself I went to the YMCA which was much more fun. We swam everyday. That's where I learned to swim. That's where I raced a lot too. Girls against boys, girls versus girls. Whoever won a race raced the next person; it was two at a time. I got many, many, of nicknames during summer camp like 'Speedy' and 'Cool Breeze'. One day when I raced a lot of people I might have had a shirt or something that had "Cool Breeze" on it. Some boy, I know a boy, was teasing me and the name just kind of stuck. They would say, "Peace you fast like a breeze" or something. I remember being in high school and going to Golden Glide one night and I heard somebody call out "Cool Breeze" and I looked around like "who is calling me?" It just kind of stuck.

One year, I got a cool bike, a 10 speed, which I loved. I never really learned how to change the speeds but I rode it a lot. I still have a scar from that 10-speed-bike; my only scar from when I was a child. I was standing over the bike and the bike fell over. The gear tore my leg to the white part of my muscle. It really hurt. Oh god. That is something I really remember. I also remember my friend Camille and I were outside playing with her brother's skateboard. I don't know if I was on my bike or if we both were on the skateboard. He told us to leave the skateboard alone but she fell and knocked her two front teeth out. She damaged her upper gum

area really badly. When her two front teeth came in they really were messed up and grew in crooked. She got braces and she's beautiful now but I always felt like it was my fault because we were playing.

After that, playing outside kind of phased away. I got older you know I didn't want to play outside. Me and my friends just walked and kind of moseyed around the neighborhood. Also, in 4th grade every time my mom's apartment lease was up she moved. First we lived in the same area with my dad. Then we lived in four different places when I was in 5th or 6th grade. That pretty much had an impact with me playing outside too because when I got home I had to do my homework and by the time my dad would take me home or my mom would pick me up it was no time to go outside and play. So after homework I was leaving. No outside time. I don't ever remember playing outside really a lot then because in the complex there are cars constantly coming through.

I started the Minority-to-Majority program when I was in 7th grade. When I started doing the M-to-M thing I didn't live in the neighborhood with my friends so we just had the phone. After school I would stay on the phone with my friend until my dad got home at 7:00 PM never hanging up. That was when three-way was in. So we would call somebody else for a little while and then they would hang up. My parents started giving me "TV days" and "Phone days". I could watch TV but I couldn't talk on the phone and vice versa. Then I had to be in the bed early between 8:00 or 8:30 PM. When the Cosby Show came on I was in the bed. I used to be in the bed like, "Oh I want to watch Bill Cosby and *A Different World*." That's probably why I love *A Different World* now. I will stay up and watch it all night cracking up laughing.

In high school I ran track because I was used to running all the time in the neighborhood and summer camp. I ran track in 10th and 11th grade and I did the 200 and 4 x 1. When I started track my best friend ran track and talked me into it. I was like, “Oh I can’t do this!” The conditioning was so hard. We started practice with two warm-up laps around the track, and then we did a series of sit-ups, push-ups, and crunches. We’d begin with a lot of two people warm-up activities and then we’d get into practice and our routines. Twice a week we had weightlifting and everyday we did weight conditioning. We had to run to get that endurance up. Run, run, run, run, and run. Pre-season conditioning was a lot of work and I just was like, “I’m never going to be able to do it,” but I did it, and it just got to be easier I guess, because I saw everybody else doing it, and I was like, “I can do it too.” I just had to get over the hump of doing it, it just came easier but I really, really, enjoyed it once I got into the regular season except the long distance, ‘cause I didn’t like long distance. I only did it for like one year though in high school because I’m a Seventh Day Adventist and we go to church on Saturday. As a 7th day Adventist, you might have been interested but you couldn’t participate because of when the events fell. Sun up to sun down between Fridays at sunset to Saturday at sunset we weren’t suppose to do any activities, a whole day really for 24 hours. So practice might have been okay but the actual events fell on a Friday or Saturday morning. A lot of the big track meets were on Saturday and I couldn’t go. So I stopped running track.

In high school life was just busy. I had to wake up early in the morning, and I didn’t get back until late. It was momma’s house, daddy’s house, momma’s house – it was just a lot of moving. My time was so short, at my dad’s, and my mom’s, at my dad’s, and my mom’s, back and forth, back and forth, that I had to make the most of that time, so I just, learned how to do

that. I loved high school. I was probably teacher's pet in high school. Gym class was fine. I took it in 8th grade and 9th grade; I guess it would be elective after that. I just didn't like changing clothes in the bathroom. I hated that I didn't enough time to dress in and out. They tell you that you have time to take a shower and blow-dry your hair but you don't. I didn't like taking showers there.

When I was 16, my mom moved again and I didn't want to change high schools so my dad got custody of me. He was a very good protective daddy but conservative a lot of times. Two of my cousins and one of my best friends got pregnant. We were the same age, so I really went on lock down. I couldn't ride with friends and I didn't date in high school probably until senior year. My father just really kind of monitored my activities. My dad didn't want me to have any free time. A lot of my time, right after school time, was on the bus. I didn't have to go to work until 5:30 but we got out of school at 3:00. For an hour and a half, I was on the bus, you know, switching around, with the M-to-M program. So he would make me ride the bus from Lakeside to the shuttle which would bring me right home. He knew going to the shuttle and coming home would take up all that free time. So as soon as I got back home I would put my book bag down and go right back out. On days when I didn't work when I got home it was homework and then after that, on the phone, watching TV. Now, I'm thankful for it. I couldn't imagine having a nine year old right now. Even now, when I'm making a big decision I'm like, "daddy what do you think?"

I was teased because of my size and shape. I was small. The girl that teased me was big. She wasn't really girly feminine and she used to come up with any kind of name to tease me. I think one was bulldog. She used to get on my nerves a lot. I got teased when I was in elementary

school about being little and having a big forehead. That was always the thing and I just kind of ignored people. I never really had the whole dark skin complex because I always got so many compliments about it.

In college I was thinking, “Yes freshman 15! I am going to finally gain some weight!” I probably gained freshman one. I gained one pound. I started taking birth control which helps some to people gain weight but that did not happen to me. Nothing gained. Nothing helped for gaining weight. I was small and I didn’t look my age so that started really affected me. In college I always felt that my appearance affected guys trying to approach me because they thought I was young. Even at work sometimes the teachers have to double take if I’m running down the hall because they think I’m a child. But it is what it is. I really have been blessed by the lucky small gene of my family. Everybody is really petite but I don’t really have to work out. It’s terrible but one day my metabolism will catch up with me. So now I appreciate not having to work out being small. I am really, really, really active with work. I’m on everything for example, when I was in grad school I was always the speaker on every group project. Now, I work at the mall and I’m very active at church. I’m on the hostess committee, I do the educators mentoring program, and I am in the choir right now-- we’re nominating for new officers for the next two years so I’m on that committee also. Anytime the church calls me to do something, I pretty much do it. I am just busy constantly so when I get home I’m not doing anything.

4.2 Jordan

Standing at approximately 5’5 tall and 110 pounds, Jordan is 24 years old with a slender build and a raspy voice. As a single and unemployed mother of two children, ages one and eight, Jordan raises her children with the help of her mother

Raised by her high school educated parents, Jordan is the youngest of seven of her siblings— two sisters and five brothers. During her childhood, Jordan’s described a day in the life of her mother as one of “hard work because she used to work at night at the hospital.” Her father was an after school sport referee and “handyman.” Although Jordan’s parents are currently separated and she did not grow up in the same house with all of her siblings (four brothers and an older sister were born of and raised by different mothers), Jordan described her relationship with her parents as good and stated that her family upbringing was fun, often “rapping,” “watching television,” and frequenting the neighborhood park or community with her father, siblings, and cousins.

As a child, Jordan’s parents strongly supported her decision to engage in physical activity and bought her everything she needed to participate. Despite this support, Jordan’s interest in physical activity began to wane around the age of 15 “when everything changed.” With “nothing else to do,” Jordan’s began to “hang around the wrong crowd” and date in the ninth grade which led to two pregnancies, one of which ended in abortion and the other in her disinterest to become involved in physical activity.

Jordan currently receives welfare but is actively seeking opportunities to obtain a GED against the recommendations of her case worker who thinks that she’s too old. Jordan is currently moderately physical active. She reported “running around with her children,” “cleaning up the house,” and “walking around the neighborhood” as her primary forms of physical activity.

Rita, Jordan’s cousin, served as a conduit to our formal introduction. In a prior conversion Rita stated that her cousin was involved in physical activity as a child and would be

an ideal candidate for the study. Through Rita, I was able to make connect with Jordan and explain to her the nature of my study.

After establishing rapport, and setting a time and place for the interview, Jordan informed me that she did not own personal transportation. Without hesitation, I agreed to pick Jordan up for our interview. She asked that I pick her up from a neighborhood community center she frequented.

My interview with Jordan occurred on the afternoon of July 14, 2008. Prior to our in person meeting, I called Jordan to inform her of what I was wearing so that she could easily identify me upon entry into the building. When I entered the lobby area of the community center I noticed a dark brown skinned, small framed woman sitting on a bench watching a child run around her in circles. I approached the young lady and asked her if she was Jordan. She said yes and greeted me with a warm smile. She identified the young child as her daughter, Simone, as she took her daughter by the hand to lead her to my car.

Jordan dressed comfortably for the interview. With her hair pulled back in a loose and slightly messy pony tail, she wore no make-up; a white, loose fitting v-neck t-shirt, and khaki shorts. I thought that it might be difficult to conduct the interview with Jordan's daughter, because her daughter appeared very active. I decided to dismiss my reaction to the potential distraction and appreciated Jordan's efforts to interview with me. Our interview was held in a nearby medical school conference room. After having some small talk and offering Jordan and her daughter refreshments, I invited Jordan to sit across from me at a rectangular wooden table to begin the interview.

Narrative

I started cheerleading at 10. I was probably in the fourth or fifth grade. My cousin was a coach for a cheerleading squad. She just asked me if I wanted to do it by saying “I want you to get on my squad.” I used to watch cheerleading on TV. On ESPN, they had all the cheerleader competitions. It looked like fun to me so why not go try it? I wasn’t doing any at the particular time. So I told her yeah. So that’s how I got started in cheerleading. I liked to do it. My mom used to work at night at the hospital. She’d be so tired from cleaning up and then having to work and cook. So my older cousin took me to all of my games. She lived down the street from me. Basically all my aunties and relatives stay right there by my house. I can just go right down the street and I have two aunties down the street. Both of my aunts on my dad’s side and my mom’s side stayed up the street. I didn’t have to walk to the recreation center. I walked sometimes and other times I rode the bus or those vans. It would drop me off at home if I had a game.

The cheering, the crowd, the game, the trophies, and coming in first place all the time that’s what I liked. We had uniforms with the matching bags, matching our bows with the shoes. I was proud of that, and then we were traveling too. Not out of town, but to different recreation centers in Georgia. We went to different fields to compete against cheerleaders. There was a whole bunch of cheerleaders going against one another. We’d dance and cheer and win first place all the time. We stayed good to where we actually made it through to the finals. You know how you go to a high school and they have a national championship? If we would have had good money and raised more money, we probably would have been on TV.

I did cheerleading for about four years. As I got older, it wouldn’t fit me no more because I was past the age limit. Fourteen was the age limit for cheerleading at the recreation center so I started playing basketball. The sister of a girl on my cheerleading squad had a boyfriend that

actually had a basketball team. He had a little older group for girls ages 14 and under. We had just got through doing a competition and he asked me if I wanted to play for him. It just came up at the last minute. I guess he didn't have enough girls to play. So I told him yes. After the cheering game, we had a basketball game. I had to change from a uniform to the shorts and get back on quick. Back then, I was young so I had energy like that. And then it kept me busy being a young girl. But it didn't last long. I joined the team right before the season was getting ready to end. I played a couple of games. I did get me a trophy out of it.

I really liked playing basketball and trying to learn how to play because after I stopped playing on the team, I did start playing with my brothers and my cousins until my arm got broken. My brothers and cousins went to the park every day. It was just right down the street from my house. When they get off work and the sun went down, they went to the park. It was just something that we'd do every day: go down to the park and do a little game. That's where all the basketball games were going. They'd go down to the park and I'd want to play too. They drew a lot of people which made it more interesting then. They had a park full of people of people everybody playing basketball and just having a really good time. When I would see all those girls at the park that were way older than me playing basketball, I said, "Alright. Okay. Yeah, I want to do that." They're looking at me and I'm thinking, "Okay. We can play this sport too." You see a lot of those females out here nowadays playing basketball really good. That was something that I wanted to try to be like, you know, play ball real good. I wanted to be like the girls at the park I guess because everybody was looking at them. They were doing what the guys were doing. They'd always say, "Girls can't play this," but the girls we proved it. I used to hear

my cousins when they'd be messing with the girls. They would say, "Y'all can't do this. We are boys. We do it. Girls are meant to be at home."

I was in the gym one day and signed up for [softball]. I just signed up for it. I'd sign up for anything just to keep myself busy. I signed up for it and started playing there for a couple of months and that was it... it was just something to do. I wasn't too good like the rest of the girls were. I didn't know how to catch with a glove. I didn't know how to catch. I did know how to hit, but I always got out. I didn't play it very long. It was probably about a month, because I think the coach quit or he got fired and nobody took over. And they didn't have another coach.

I know one day we had a game and we were sitting in the gym wondering where the coach was. In the end, we had to forfeit the game. Come to find out, we were waiting because he had been fired. They didn't tell us at all. Not going to have girls' softball any more. So there were other people who didn't play either because of that... eventually everybody quit at the same time. And right to this minute, they still ain't got softball. All the softball they got is for boys. That's the only baseball team they got now is for boys. They still don't have a girl's softball team.

A lot of things changed when I got in ninth grade. The things that I wanted to do when I was in elementary school, when I got to high school, it wasn't in me like it no more. You know how you get. Things start changing and you start to do other things. Cheerleading wasn't my thing in high school because I got stiff and I couldn't move the way I could move when I was younger. Doing cartwheels back then it didn't bother me. But in high school it did bother me. Because when you stop cheering for them over time, it's like you don't have the moves. They had a track team for girls but I didn't want to do track. All that running and then being out in the

sun. We had gym class but eventually we didn't have gym. It was just a class that teaches about health, like health education. You're either in junior ROTC or you're in the health. I was just in junior ROTC. I didn't have health education on my schedule.

At that time I was getting bad. I started talking back to the teachers. I had to go to an alternative school. I started hanging around with a bad crew, The Richards.¹ They're the group of girls I used to hang with. Their last name was Richards. All of them were close. They lived at the end of the street from me. When you see them you think of me.

I got pregnant in ninth grade. One day me and my boyfriend decided to cut school and we made it back to the school before school was out. Then about a couple of weeks later, I was sick. I was sick at school. And I was throwing up a lot. I asked them could I go home because my mama told me I could go home. I thought it was the mayonnaise I ate. And my mama looked at me like, "You're pregnant." Then I had an abortion. But I still kept my education going. But then messin' around again, by my tenth grade year, I found out I was pregnant again with my eight year old son now. After I had him I was still living with my mom and dad. I had help in raising my children. My son's father helped. My mom and dad helped. I started my eleventh grade year and I was still going to school. So it really didn't stop me from doing that. I had passed all my tests and everything and I ended up passing to the eleventh grade. I guess I just hung around the wrong crowd at the time because I ended up not going back to school. I just didn't go back. You know how you get older and stuff. You don't want to wake up and then when I did wake up, I just stayed at home and took care of my baby.

¹ Pseudonym

There's really nothing I can do right now. But I am working on trying to get my baby back to school. If I'm not doing anything, I'm at home in the house and near the TV or either cleaning. If I'm not at the welfare office, I'm really trying to get into the GED program. But everybody keeps coming up telling me that I'm too old to try to get my GED. Like my caseworker with my welfare stuff, my food stamps caseworker. I was telling her I wanted to get into a program to get my GED. She's said, "You're too old to get the GED. So I'm going to put you in a job program." That's why I carry this folder around but I'm like I'm not trying to work yet. I could get a job where or I could still just go and pick up another trade behind but I'm working on trying to get my GED. Normally I'd have a piece of paper showing that I didn't finish my education. We know how a piece of paper is. It's going to become harder just to go rush in and get a job if they ask about my school.

I think my health is okay because I am eating right. I don't eat too much greasy food because it bothers me. I should probably slow down on the cigarettes. I think I started like at 16 going on 17 and now they bother my windpipe. I run down the hall and I'm tired. When playing with my children my son wants to race me and I'll say "I bet I'll beat you." He's like, okay, whatever. By the time I get up to race I'm ready to sit down. When I was younger I couldn't tell a difference but I see it now, how I get tired and breathe. You breathe like you (weigh) about 200 pounds. It's the cigarettes.

4.3 Claire

Claire is a 25-year old mother of two who works as an insurance claims adjuster. Standing at approximately 5'9 and weighing 175, in her spare time on at least two days a week she participates in vigorous activities such as kickboxing and boot camp videos, and another two

days on the elliptical trainer. Claire was raised in a very large and tight knit family that spent large amounts of time together fostering skills to actively participate in sport. Due to these early childhood experiences, Claire developed a love and passion for volleyball and soccer. During her interview, she described the constraints and complications she encountered in developing an identity as a physically active teenage girl and young woman in various social and peer contexts.

Narrative

I'm from Decatur GA and grew up in a little house on Dolly Rd. We lived in a yellow house, two parent home with six kids—three boys and three girls. We were always active. My parents firmly believed we should not be in the house all the time so we had to go outside during periods of the day. There was no question you just had to go out there. But I really think [my parents] just needed us out the house so we wouldn't drive them crazy. They wanted us to be active to burn off some energy so that we would get tired and be more manageable. So we were always playing different things in our yard. So I've always been active in some way even if it was just through childhood games or something. You know childhood games back then required activity versus now its TV so back then you were playing "hide-and-go-seek" or "red-light-green-light" or something where you had to be moving.

We always had fun because it was a lot of kids and we could play our own sports together. We didn't necessarily need to have so many other people to come along and have fun. Everybody could just play with each other we had our own little team basically. So we really didn't need the other kids to play with us. We could make our own teams. We had all our siblings and a parent. So that's kind of how we did that. We played against each other. My younger siblings and I played soccer so we always played together. My parents bought us the cones and

we'd make us a little goal and make shift nets and we'd practice our drills and so we didn't need many of the other kids in the community. We just kind of stayed in our own yard and put up volley ball nets and do the boys against girls or played dodge ball or O-U-T out. So we just had our own little... all the kids games we just played by ourselves in our yard. Sometimes we would have people come over and play with us but we didn't necessarily need them. Like some of the other kids would go knocking on doors and wait for kids to come outside. We didn't have to do that. We didn't know all the kids in the neighborhood very well because we never had a reason to venture out and play with the other kids. I did meet some of the kids because I went to the girls club, but I wasn't really close with any of them. We did everything ourselves.

One time in private school me and some of my classmates were outside playing O-U-T out and I hit somebody on their leg and they flipped over. She was crying. The teacher made me come inside like I did it on purpose and she spanked me on my hand with the ruler like one time. My feelings were hurt so badly. I mean the hit didn't hurt. It was just the fact that somebody felt the need to discipline me. I didn't think I had done anything wrong. At home you just pellet your siblings. They don't care. You just try to move and jump. But at school you can't do that because they aren't used to that sort of thing. To them it hurts versus at home you're used to that because of the older siblings. If you didn't want to get hit by them you just move. So I just learned that was one of the things I couldn't do. I can't throw as hard as I want to throw.

I didn't change anything because of my size or because the boys picked on me, not in private school. But public high school was different because the girls would pick on me because I could do stuff. I didn't know that existed until I got in high school because girls didn't make fun of me in private school that's just what everybody else did. So when I went to public school

it was kind of awkward. I felt like an outsider. I didn't have my siblings. In private school my siblings and I all went to the same school and my mom taught there. But when I went to public school it was like I had nobody. I really didn't have any friends. During 9th grade my friends were still in private school. One of the girls that I was close to, her grandmother lived down the street from me so we always hung out on the weekends. Other than her, I just didn't really talk to too many people. I just couldn't do the things that they did. I mean they went to parties and you know was getting involved in drinking. That was not something I wanted to do nor was it something my parents allowed me to do. So I wasn't into some of the same things that some of the other kids were in and so I didn't have a connection with them and I didn't necessarily try to make one.

So public school was really awkward for me. I felt that I was different than the other students. For one, private school was all African American maybe some individuals were interracial but that's it really. I had never really gone to school with White kids before. It wasn't as if that was a problem. I just never had gone to school with White people before. So when I went to public school there were more Whites than Blacks. It wasn't a 50/50 ratio of Blacks to Whites, but you know it was close. I just didn't know how to describe it. It was just different. I don't think that made me shy. It just led to me usually acting shy around other people. Since I didn't feel like I necessarily fit in with the other class members I just stayed to myself and did my work. I didn't talk much in class. I didn't want to have extra attention because I felt different. I felt awkward. I didn't look like the class. The way the White girls acted was just strange to me. I played soccer with them and they were very different for me. Like soccer. We played the sport. I was more serious. I really wanted to win. They were just out there laughing and stuff. That

bothered me. I was kind of shocked about these white girls because I didn't understand them. In the locker rooms they would run in naked and sit on each other while they were naked. That kind of stuff is weird to me. I had never seen that before because in private school everybody tried to cover up discreetly. You just don't really show nudity. They just were running through laughing and playing and rolling around on the ground and all this stuff while they were naked. And I'm just like, *what are you doing?* I'm over here behind the pole trying to change my clothes, not wanting everybody to see me. These girls were in the shower at the same time. And that's not something I was used to.

Another thing was that made me feel different was the fact that Black people didn't really play soccer. You either played basketball or track and since I didn't do either one of those that was another reason why I was different. People were always like, "What do you do?" "Do you do this?" "You're tall. You can run fast and you should do this". People kept trying to get me to run track or play basketball and that just was not something that I was not interested in. So that was just sort of weird for me because that's what all the other black girls did was run track. But I just didn't look at sports the same way as some of the other girls. I wasn't a frilly person I could get dirty and play. But in track you run in your little whatever you're going to run and you still have your hair all nice and pretty. Playing basketball was the same thing. You can somewhat maintain your hairstyle while you play the sport. It was just different for me. I guess I really didn't see it that way. I did not have to worry about my hair because in soccer you can't really do that. I got sweaty when I had to. When you are running all day long you don't have time to make sure your hair bow is on correct. You just don't do those sorts of things. You're supposed to get dirty that's a part of the sport. Getting dirty was not as a concern for me. That wasn't. I mean

some of the other kids were starting to wear makeup. I know some of the girls that ran track would still have their lipstick on afterwards. But I still don't wear makeup so that definitely is not a concern for me. So you know things like that. That was just one way I felt different from the other kids. But I don't think it really stopped me. I think what I did was when I was with girls I just didn't do as much stuff.

I used to play Athena soccer; basically it's a club team. So I started to play on the club team because I knew where I fit in. It was okay for me to be athletic. So after that, kids just knew that's what I did. I played soccer. So when I was in 10th grade I had more friends because another black girl joined the soccer team. Also another girl I met, her grandmother lived down the street, so we used to walk home together. So we all started doing things together because we lived in the same area. In the 11th grade a black girl worked with me and we saw each other every day and so we started hanging out. That was really it. Those were the main people that I talked to then. So I had somebody I was doing things with. Other than that I really didn't have friends and I didn't necessarily go around and try to make friends because I already had the friends that I hung out with anyway. I didn't necessarily have to have them at school with me. You go to school to do your work you don't go to school to play. So it wasn't like it really mattered. You know I went to school, did my work, played soccer, and came home.

In college, I knew I had to transform some things about myself in order to fit in somewhat. I didn't want to be like everybody else but I had to have some friends. So I was ready for the change because in college there was suppose to be something totally new about me. I was more interested in making friends than I was in high school. In high school I didn't care. But I didn't have my family in college so I had to make friends with somebody because I couldn't just

go home and be with my family. I didn't have anybody else. So my roommate and I became really close. We were roommates all through college. In the dorm we would make friends all through the hall and we would stay up and play spades all night. That was a big thing. We would get movies in the common area watch movies and play cards make popcorn and pretend we were cooking something but we didn't know what we were doing. You know order pizza. So it was easier to be friends with a lot of people. We would all go to those sponsored events or we would stay up all night playing UNO and other games, talking, laughing, and telling jokes.

College was fun. Now I have to say I was a little more outgoing in college than I was in high school and I still wasn't out there partying all the time either so I was still pretty reserved compared to some students. I did go to some of the parties um I went to the step shows. That was big for me I went to movie nights. I loved movies. So I would do all that. When comedians would come to the campus I would do those events. So I did a lot of the college events and I would do all the sponsored parties so it wasn't really an individual thing. Now I don't think I went to too many parties that people just had in their apartment. I did go to this club one time that they had in this shack I forgot what it was called and it was a hole in the wall... there were actually holes in the wall. So I decided that was not the best event for me. And those were fun I did do those sorts of things. But it was fun even though I wasn't really a partying type.

Now as far as my activity level it dropped off drastically when I started going to college. Before it was just my family and I usually stayed active in sports with my siblings. I didn't have my close friends that I had before because I had moved to another city [for school]. The people that I used to hang around weren't there you know? I didn't have them there and participating in sport was not just something that everybody did. But I had to have some kind of social contexts

some friends or something. So in college it was different. I was more outgoing in fact I would try to hang out with more people, but sport just wasn't something that everybody did. I mean it was like nobody did anything. Instead you laugh, you watch movies, you play cards. So then my second year at school people start exercising. And my third year it was kind of the same thing. I got on intramural teams. At first you didn't really know how to get on those teams, but my roommate and I started coaching and refereeing volleyball and then I realized "oh we can do our own team," so we did intramural volleyball and intramural soccer. My roommate played soccer too. So we did intramural soccer together and we played some sports together but it was nothing like it was in high school. We decided that we didn't want to be active so we started going to the school gym.

For some reason it became popular to go the gym and take aerobics classes. That may have been a way to see the guys. That may have been why it became so popular. That was just the thing but it really was not big a deal for me. My 4th year I didn't do as much because I was working with the football team and the time I had I didn't have time. The time I had, I had to do homework because I was also doubling up on my classes, taking the maximum amount of classes each quarter. That really didn't leave much time if I wanted to have fun too so I chose to play cards versus going to the gym.

I really didn't start going to the gym consistently until the end of my fourth year in school when I started dating my husband because that it was he did. We were friends before we started dating but when he said, "Oh y'all should go to the gym and I can show you how to use the machines" that was kind of how we got into that. So even to this day he and I work out together. After having my children I struggled a little bit with keeping my weight down but he was very

supportive. He is a personal trainer so he's helped me to get down to the size that I want through working out and eating healthier.

4.4 Tracie

Tracie is a 26 year old teacher with a bachelor's degree in technical communications. Tracie is moderately active. Her primary form of physical activity comes from rehearsing dance routines with a Christian step team in her community once a week. Tracie grew up as the only girl of three children to her parents whom are both professors and doctors at a state university. As a child, she often spent time in physical activities such as dance and tap after school due to her parents' hectic schedules as graduate students. At about 5'0 and 110 pounds, Tracie wore a red and white velour jogging suit and a Delta Sigma Theta key chain around her neck to the interview. She has a medium brown skin complexion, wears glasses, and sports her hair in a short pixie cut. During her interview, Tracie describes the particularly important role her mother played in helping her family develop healthy lifestyles. She also describes how a memorable incident in her childhood and high school and college preparation impacted her desire to play and remain physically active.

Narrative

I was the only child until I was two. I am the oldest of three. I have two younger brothers. One is two years younger than me and the other is seven years younger than me. My mother always said I was to myself reading, writing, singing, or watching TV. I wanted to do what I wanted to do. So when I was three I did gymnastics. My mom put me in it to socialize. She just wanted me to get out of the house. It was something she encouraged. I'm sure if I didn't want to do it, I wasn't going to do it. So I probably said something like I want to do tumbling.

Gymnastics school wasn't too far from the pre-school I attended at the time. It was fun and I enjoyed that. At that age, you learn how to skip and do the balance beam and how to do a correct cart-wheel. I didn't stay in it for long because when I turned 5, I left that preschool and I went to another school. When I got a little older I got involved in dance classes and I did that for about four or five years. I started with ballet and tap and then made sure I did tap and jazz and then I did jazz and ballet. It was basically jazz and tap but jazz, that I did the most. I think I preferred jazz cause I wanted to be a FLYY girl like J-LO. That's what I wanted to do. I enjoyed ballet at times. And even now I'm thinking about going back to ballet school. There's a ballet teacher at the school where I work and I asked her if she taught adults. So I'm thinking about doing that but this time it will be more ballet and inspirational type dancing.

I never thought of myself as a dancer before I started doing dance. My mom had asked me if I wanted to do something after school and I told her I did. Dance wasn't connected to the school it was just something that I wanted to do. I enjoyed it. It was a good way of exercise for me because besides PE at school, I really didn't do anything else besides ride my bike. It was good socially too. I noticed that I could do things that the other kids in the class couldn't do. Even at a young age I would teach them how to do certain dances. I don't I think I had more rhythm but they didn't know how to do certain dances. I lived in a predominately white neighborhood and I was basically in a predominately White school and being a black woman in that age they used to always ask me, "How do you do that dance?" Sometimes it bothered me and sometimes it didn't. It only got uncomfortable if we had a get together and I would feel out of place sometimes but I would find a way to entertain myself if it was a problem. So that was fun.

When I was little, my parents were working on their PhD's around the same time. I guess that's another reason why they would try to get us into activities after school because they needed us out of the house so they can concentrate or to make sure we were somewhere while they were working elsewhere. My mother definitely encouraged physical activity though especially because she is very health conscious. She is always the one trying to watch out what we're eating and you know making sure we're doing something for exercise. If it seemed like we were overeating she would make sure that we would go outside and play. I can't ever really remember my dad encouraging us to do any physical activity unless we got on his nerves. Then he would tell us to go outside. Other than that he was the one encouraging the bad food and the greasy food. So in that way they are very different. He didn't do too much exercise. At one time he saw an exercise machine and he would probably be on for like two weeks and it would become furniture. So no he wasn't really physically active. My mom had to let my dad know there needed to be a change and we needed to eat right and exercise because we have diabetes on both sides of the family. I guess my dad was a little rebellious at that time but he also knew that we needed to do better. My grandmother passed when I was in the 4th grade. She suffered and passed from diabetes. One of my father's brothers passed from either a heart condition or diabetes. He wasn't eating right and he wasn't physically active. So that changed a whole lot. The most dramatic change for me was when they changed the food thing. Because I'm just used to there being a lot of, even though it's not healthy, I understand that, but there is usually something always tasteful and filling in the house. It might be a little greasy. But they would always do vegetables they would put ham hocks in the greens. It's just different. They eat a lot more grilled foods and they eat a whole lot more fruits and vegetables. Now I cry when I go

home because they eat all this healthy food and no red meat. I'm like, "Wait a minute. We were raised on fried chicken why is this boiled chicken here?" I'm like, "What is this?" That's just real dramatic for me when I would come home and there are turkey burgers or turkey lasagna. I mean my dad would make sure it was still tasteful but it was just different. I would look for snacks like potato chips and popcorn and all that other stuff we used to eat but it's not in the house. Unless it's like a lot of low fat stuff or food without taste it's not in the house and I'm like you all really eat this? But you know whatever works for them. They have both lost a lot of weight.

Other than afterschool dance, like every once in a while I might go outside and play basketball with my friends or whatever or ride my bike—yeah that was one thing I loved to do was ride my bike around the neighborhood. Growing up my mom and I were always together because we were the only two females in the house. Well my mom used to walk around the block all the time. That's all she did. She walked at 6:00 in the morning and sometimes she would wake me up. If she didn't walk in the morning she would do it in the afternoon and if it was raining, she did an exercise tape inside. Sometimes I just didn't want to walk so I'd ride my bike and eventually it got to the point where she would let me ride by myself. So as a child, everyday after school I would ride my bike before I did homework just to get that out or to get my time alone or whatever. I played basketball just as much as I rode my bike. We played horse, and basketball, make it take it and hide and go seek. That was fun. That's one thing everybody liked to play. Besides just regularly being a kid and going outside with my friends, I didn't do too much you know physical activity. Mostly everybody in my neighborhood, if we knew them, we knew that they would be outside playing somewhere a lot of boys riding bikes and playing baseball or basketball. A lot of girls they play pretend outside, 'this is my house'. I used to make

my brothers do it if there was no one else was out there. There were three trees in our front yard that we could actually climb. I used to my brothers say this tree is your house; this tree is my house that tree is your house. My brothers and I couldn't go past certain boundaries of our neighborhood. Our neighborhood was in the u-turn and we stayed on the curb of the u-turn so we couldn't go past maybe two houses to the left and three houses to the right. My neighborhood was predominately White. I don't remember any childhood friends in that neighborhood that were of another race besides White. The neighborhood was very quiet. My parents only knew the people that lived around us and my mother knew a lot more people because she walked around the neighborhood. But she didn't know everybody. It wasn't the kind of neighborhood where everybody was sociable. Everyone did their own thing. Some people spoke some people didn't. So they were very protective of us in that neighborhood so they needed to make sure that if they walked outside they would know what house we were going to and we had to let them know who's house we were going to before we went. I guess it was because our neighborhood was a few miles, I'd say 5 miles away from the prison. My parents wouldn't let us out especially when they found out someone would try to escape from the prison. We had neighborhood watch and there were two police that ended up living in the neighborhood. It was strange that both of them lived on both entrances of the neighborhood so that made my parents feel somewhat safe but they still didn't let us roam the neighborhood until we got much older. When I was in third grade, we used to play with the kids that lived across the street. There was a family that lived next door to us. They were a Black family. We were very close to that family. Back then my mom believed if one person gets it everybody gets it and her family was the same way too. We were that close where the parents understood that if you raise my child, I'll raise yours. One day,

I'm not sure what was going on in that family, but one day the mother took one of the daughters to the grocery store and she was snatched up and they found her body later on. So that stopped, "You can go this way with this friend". That's probably why my mom stopped letting us go outside. Cause we didn't after that. At that time it didn't hit me but now it registers why she was so protective of us because something like that happened to somebody that was that close to us and that could have happened to anybody.

As I got older I just thought the sun made no sense, especially since I was in Georgia. It was hotter out there so I just chose to do more inside things after that like reading, writing, watching television, hanging out with my friends, movies and skating. That happened probably around the age of 10. Because my mom used to have to beg me to come inside and then I noticed that my brothers used to beg me to come outside and I didn't really want to go. I would read every night from the age that I was five. But on my own probably eight or nine just finding different things to read or whatever and when the book fair came I would buy a lot of books. If we weren't watching the Cosby show I just would read. I guess at that age reading let me use my imagination more.

I guess high school is when I could see a turning point in me growing up. Before then I was really shy and I didn't associate with kids who weren't in my grade. In high school you're kind of thrown in that. I got into a few more clubs or activities. I still didn't do any sports but I did mostly social clubs. I was in the Beta Club and FBLA. I was also in a Christian Club I think FCA. I was in a health and physical education class. In health we learned about nutrition. We might have to do some type of exercise so that we could learn about breathing patterns and things of that nature. There was physical education everyday which was mostly running every

once in awhile and we'd play some type of game like basketball or something like that. I liked tennis that was different because I had never played tennis before. Tennis was just different. I wasn't always good at it, but that running had a purpose and it was fun trying to get the ball and whenever we played like um baseball or any type of relay game I like that too. I enjoyed volleyball a lot too.

If it wasn't PE I wasn't really doing anything sports related in school or physical activity related because I had stopped dancing by then. I wasn't doing too much of anything except for my books because that is what was stressed. I was getting ready for college. Both of my parents are professors so of course they always stress education and stress that I should make sure all of my work is the best. I'm still dealing with this now. People expected me and my brothers to be like our parents. They put us at this level where we are supposed to act a certain way and do things a certain way. It was just a lot of pressure. If I came home with a "C" I would feel bad. I would tell my friend you just don't understand people are going to be disappointed because I made a "C". Even the teachers in the class would me to have A's and B's or she better. It was just a lot of pressure people trying to force me to fill their shoes and that's not necessarily the path that I wanted to take. "Oh you gone be little Dr. (name) but no I just want to be Tracie" Just, I mean, their pressure in everything like the fact that I couldn't get a job I had to sit and work on my studies when I was already making A's and B's I mean what else do you want? I guess it was like you know they would pressure me 'cause you need to get a scholarship blahzay, blahzay. I understand that. So in high school my parents wanted to make sure that I taking PSAT and going to study groups. If I wasn't being tutored, I was tutoring somebody else. That's a lot of what I did during high school was studying. I also wanted more independence at that age so I wanted to

work in high school but my parents didn't want me to work so I just helped other people out. They claimed that they didn't want me to lose focus in my classes but I was only taking two main classes and the rest were electives. I didn't have anything else to do and I could have worked the rest of the school time and still been at home at a decent hour. After school, if I stayed after school, it was to do something with a club or to study or to tutor somebody else. If not, then I went get back on the bus go home eat my snack eat dinner and then watch whatever little TV I wanted to and then go to bed. College years were difficult and my freshman year in college was not what I was expecting. I started the Engineer (to DIC Programming) program and didn't like it. My GPA Fell below a 3.0 and I lost Hope Scholarship which was bad because my brother was coming into school right behind me. My parents thought that I was playing and I questioned whether I even wanted to be in college that year. So my sophomore year I thought about going to military. My mother thought my thinking was irrational. My first weekend back I signed up for ROTC and got a real taste of the military. We did PT at 5:30 AM. The Physical aspect of it was awful but I got an A and I enjoyed it. I enjoyed it so much I signed up for another year. I really enjoyed it because I found something physical to do and I needed to do it. I was in a Christian campus ministry and joined step team. We practiced for hours every other weekend. It became like me a family away from home. Stepping prepare for a performance one time per month. Have four practices in a month, one time per week. You had to be in shape to step. If I wasn't in shape wasn't going to work. So in addition to step, I signed up every semester for PE and did some physical activity before or after dinner. I had a workout partner Diana and another one of my girlfriends and I ran twice a week.

I want to live until I'm 100 I have never seen anybody 100 still doing for themselves except for my paternal grandmother who lived to be 102. My maternal grandparents are 81 and 82. My maternal granddaddy is still active taking care of pigs and hogs. So as I get older I think it is very important to watch the foods that I eat; especially since diabetes and heart disease is in my family. I also need to get into some type of exercise outside of stepping which is an obligation. I haven't joined a gym yet because want to be sure that I can fulfill a commitment outside of stepping.

4.5 Rita

Rita is a 26 year old mother of two toddler aged sons. She was born and raised by her two high school educated parents who worked as a stay at home mother and an after school referee. Standing at approximately 5'4 and 235 pounds, she dressed casually for the interview wearing a black T-shirt and khaki shorts. Although trained as a certified nursing assistant (CNA), Rita is currently seeking employment in her field. At the time of the interview she had recently lost her job at a party supply warehouse. Without mobile transportation, Rita's current and primary form of leisure physical activity is walking around the neighborhood with her sons or walking the neighborhood to run errands. While employed she often lifted boxes of party supplies. In interview, Rita described her preference as a child for engaging in play activities at local parks with her family and dislike for playing with children in her neighborhood. She also discussed her brief involvement in cheerleading and the factors that played a role in her disinterest to become involved in structured physical activities during and after high school.

Narrative

When I was younger I stayed in a mostly Black neighborhood. We stayed right down the street from where I used to go to elementary school on Farmington. It had real nice houses, big houses. Peoples had gardens. It was a nice, peaceful neighborhood. There was a park down the street where kids go play and a little part where water runs down like a small river.

There was a mixture of people in my neighborhood—half had jobs and half didn't. The kids would start up fights with me because my mother and daddy used to work for the city. They used to get mad and say "You think you are all of that because your daddy and mother got a job." I used to always get ran home from school all the time.

My least favorite activity was being outside a lot. When I was, maybe like 8, I didn't like to go outside a lot, especially in the summer time. I liked to stay in the house and play games and stuff. My dad and mom loved to get rid of us; they wanted us to play all the time. They just wanted us to go outside and have fun with the kids. My dad used to always try to make me go outside and play with the regular kids, kids in the neighborhood but I didn't want to be in the same neighborhood with the rest of the kids I go to school with. I was a little chubby and they used to always pick on me a lot. That's why I really didn't like going outside, because they used to have jokes about fat kids. The boys, you know how boys are. Usually my momma used to always take me down to the parents' house and talk to them, and be like, "Can you tell your kids to quit picking on my daughter?" My momma used to tell them, "My baby comes home crying every day." The parents sit up there looking at their child like, "Did you pick on her?" And they would say, "No, we didn't do that."

The only way I'd go outside is that I got to be on the back of my daddy's truck. My dad used to work for the city. When he worked at the Board of Education, we used to go to the

stadium to set up for the baseball and football games that the high school might have. I would go to work with him I might help run the concession stand and help my daddy bring water to the team members. I used to always like to hang up under my daddy. I'm a daddy's girl...it's still like that now. Every time when you call me, I am with him. We just go out and have fun, he is always there. He does everything. Now he has his own business, he does construction work, landscaping, everything, he can do it all. That's why I basically hang with him because I'm always learning something. Everything that he knows how to do I know how to do, like lay concrete.

When I was little, he used to teach us stuff like how to catch the ball. We used to always play. We used to play outdoors, my daddy and little sister. We would play dodge ball or kickball, and we used to always play softball—although it wasn't like an every day thing. My dad played football and basketball in high school so he used to want me and my sister outside catching the football. He used to think we were some tomboys for real. He really did. We used to say, "Daddy, we don't want to play no football, we are not boys!" But that was just something he liked to do.

One year we did the marathon walk, I don't know what year, but we did that one year. It was just a family thing. My oldest sister is still very active. It's like everything that she does involves exercise. She has always been into sports. She likes to do activity and aerobics and workout classes. When we were little, we were always on the chubby side. But when she got older, up in high school she was a cheerleader and stayed in a lot of activities. In middle school, up to high school and college years she has always been involved in cheerleading. She was a cheerleader and she was flag girl. She was captain of her team; that was something that she always wanted to do. And now she is in a sorority.

I sort of followed in her steps. When I was in little I loved to be a cheerleader. I stayed involved in cheerleading through middle and high school. It lasted for like 3 years. It was fun. It was just to have fun with my friends and have fun with the females, the people I hung around with. It was a good experience. You know something that I just really enjoyed doing. The cart wheels, the flips, the skirts and the little bitty shorts, doing just everything. We just had fun.

I remember when the old skating rink was right there on Clinton I used to love that skating rink. I used to always go there around about the age of 8 or 9. My daddy used to take all of us up there and drop me and my sisters off, and we would skate and he would come back and pick us up. I used to love skating. When I did go with summer camp, it was good 'cause I ain't too many times go down there, but when I went, it was good.

Family day was when we went down to the park and cooked out. My daddy was a cook; he used to be the one cook on the grill. My cousins, my mother, my daddy, and my uncle... all my cousins came around, sat around, just talked, and we played on the playground. That was basically it. We would just, sit around and have fun. My daddy and them, they would sit around and just talk, and the grown folks, they sit around and drink they beers, wishing I was able to do it when I was that age. We went to the park maybe, once a month. We always tried to do something once a month, or either, like around my birthday or my uncle's birthday.

My mom was the Sunday dinner person—Collard greens, corn bread, turkey wings, sometimes ribs, depends how my momma feel. There will always be that chicken on the side. There was going to be some fried chicken—baked, fried, boiled, it don't make no difference, it was chicken. She always cooked good meals. When my daddy be at home during the weekday, he'd make us sit down at the table and eat. We sat down and ate as a family.

When I was around 11 years old, my daddy was going through his drug stage. That's when he and I kind of like separated. When he went to drug rehab and it was just me, my little sister, and my momma. He was going through this stage and I learned that as I got older.

Then it was a situation with my momma. My momma, she was back on drugs again, and I was basically just tired of just being there. So I moved out, and I went to one of my friends houses. I left home at an early age; I left home at 13. We went to Terry Middle together. I stayed with her grandmamma, she raised me. I moved with her for a minute. And then, after that, I was able to find a job. I started working at a restaurant when I was 13 years old. It was fun. It was my first job. I was working, I was doing stuff and I had my own money. My daddy found me my first apartment when I was like 14. So I moved in my own apartment, and I've been living on my own ever since then; that changed a lot. Once I moved out from my parents, I was basically on my own. And I was doing the womanly thing, as a woman just taking care of myself and being responsible. Staying strong, that's the only thing that I really just focused on. So when I moved out, I stopped cheerleading. I didn't want to do it anymore; I got tired of doing it. I just didn't want to do it. It was just something that I just stopped doing after I started hanging out and being with older people. I was always hanging with people older than me. I just went to adult phase and started working.

When I got in middle school I started slimming out a lot. It wasn't like I was always on the heavy side. When I was young I had that body weight but when I got older it kind of faded away. I walked a lot. I stayed active. I was always doing something to keep my heart rate moving. I walked a lot to school, home, my friends' house, to the mall.

From 9th and 10th grade I went to Franklin High. It was like equal Black, White, Mexican. We had all sorts [of races]. Our mascot was the eagle. I liked my graphing class. I used to like my graphing class. You know, we would go in and do stuff on the computer, we make artwork and stuff on the computer. I used to like that class. I liked math because it was dealing with money. I always had to keep that. I struggled with taking tests. I used to always think negatively about them. PE was OK. I used to do nothing and sit around and watch everybody else playing basketball, jumping rope, and all that crazy little stuff, like running back and forth, and racing; I didn't want to get involved in it. I would just sit down and watch everybody else do it. They just had some weird activities, they just did stuff that I didn't want to do. I just didn't like it. It was my PE teacher, that's what it was. I just used to always want to be a knucklehead. That's why I got an "F". You get graded if you participate, which is why I never did. You can participate or you don't. If you don't participate, you got an "F." That's why I always got an "F," because I never did anything in class. We had a truck where you can sit down and talk to your friends. My friends, the same ones that I used to hang with in cheerleading. I didn't like anything else. I usually caught the bus, or the train to get to school. I walked to school as well, but every time I say I'm going, when I get there, I change my mind and come back. I went to school, on certain days, maybe. Out of 7 days of the week, I say I went to school 3 or 4 of those. The peers that I used to hang around...I used to hang with one of my cousins, and 3 of my best friends. We were the same crew from when I was in middle school. We used to cut class all the time. I might see them in the morning time, say, "Y'all want to skip school?" It would be one of those days that we decide that we don't want stay. If they had pep rallies or something like that, we might stay. But if it's a boring day, we just won't stay. We just go off, and do things that we didn't have any

business doing at my friend's house, guys were there. It was just like a little cool house. That's what we called it: Cool House. Where you got people in there smoking; you got folks that are drinking, sitting around, and playing cards. During school hours, that was the best time. When my friends' mommies go to work, that's when we'd come. When her mommy came back home, that's when we went back, though. I didn't stay in high school that long, because I was really just one of those children that you couldn't control. I had a bad temper when I was in high school. After I got to the age where I was like 13, then I thought that I was just grown and able, and wouldn't listen to nobody. I was like that with my mommy and my daddy. There was a whole lot that I couldn't control when I was in high school. Then I got kicked out for being bad. I got kicked out for fighting a teacher. She called me a B-I-T-C-H. She was a substitute teacher and she was one of those, she had to be around 25-26. She was not like one of those teachers up in the age, but the age where they talk to people's children in any kind of way. She was one of those that nagged and just kept going and wouldn't stop.

Afterwards I went to a home program from a school in Connecticut. It was a home school. Through the home program, I did complete my high school diploma.

In my future, I'd like to lose 30-60 lbs at the most. At the community center in my neighborhood they have an aerobic station at the gym. The elderly people come out and workout and members of the police department do a lot of walking but mostly see a lot of people out there walking. It's both men and women. They both do it. I enjoy walking too. I just put my son in the stroller and let him and his brother out so they enjoy the outside. I also want a good steady job so I don't have to keep being stressed out about not having a job because my nursing assistant certification license has expired. I need to get my license renewed. That's one thing I need to

work on now. I want to have a better living environment for me and my two kids. It's basically a lot of drug related activity. It's not a good healthy environment that I'd like to raise my kids in. It's a lot of shooting and a lot of things that occur that don't need to occur. The apartment I stay in is not a good place to have kids that like to go outside and play because anything can happen. It's just not a safe environment. I have to be out there constantly trying to make sure that nothing happens. Like one month ago, a car came and scraped through our yard. The car could have hit one of my kids or my little cousin if they were out there playing. It was an inch from our building. If he had made a wrong turn it could have been in my living room or my kids' bedroom. It doesn't impact me though as far as activity. I know anywhere you go anything can happen so I just pray. I don't want to keep my kids inside. I want them to be able to play and do other things.

4.6. Yvonne

Yvonne is a 23 year old college student who spends most of her time studying, tutoring, and "walking the halls all day" as a nurse intern at area hospital. She stands at approximately 5'7 inches tall and weighs approximately 210 pounds. As a child her mother worked as a nurse and her father worked as a truck driver. For the interview, we met in her dorm room for the interview which was surrounded by books, papers, snack foods like Debbie snack cakes, and pink and green sorority paraphernalia. She dressed comfortably for the interview in a T-shirt and jeans. As a child Yvonne spent time playing kickball and jump rope with her cousins outside. As she grew older her activity began to wane as pressure as 1st generation college student began to increase.

Narrative

As a child, I was just a little normal kid. I enjoyed going outside and playing with my cousins around the neighborhood. You know back in the day when it was cool to go outside. There were about 11 of us. We were all within like three or four years of age of each other. When we would take pictures they would line us up in height. It was only two guys. The rest of us were girls. We would do what the guy cousins wanted to do. We'd do little soccer games or we'd run around and play tag or kick ball. When I was with my female cousins we'd play girl games like punchinella. When I was with everybody, we would go to my grandma's house and ride around in the back and play tag and just kid games just trying to have fun or we would all play kickball.

I stayed in the city. It was a typical neighborhood. We had a candy lady that everybody knew about. It was a duplex. Our backyards weren't that big. They kind of went into the forest so I was kind of scared going back there. We did have sidewalks and a little front area and a front space where the cars could park. I could kind of play there in the street, in the circle too. The most memorable aspect of my neighborhood was just all the kids. My girl friends in the neighborhood and I would do like hopscotch or double-dutch. I wasn't like a basketball player, but my dad put a goal outside. Where he would, or even family members, or the neighborhood guys would play basketball. Sometimes I would like to play, but I couldn't play. Just like a lot of guys used to like to play basketball or be outside more. My girlfriends and I would be somewhere having our Black Cherry Club meeting. I don't even know what the club was about but it was just us group of girls and we just had a club. We didn't really do nothing, but we had a club.

I couldn't play after dark. I had to be in the house before that street light came on. I didn't think my parents liked the girls around so they would try and limit the people who were around

me. They didn't want to expose me to certain things and they tried to shelter me. They thought some of the girls were fast which some of them were. But, it's life. It happens, you know? My mom, really, her words to me were, "you need to stay inside and study and read your books." My mom gave me books to read so in my spare time when I was younger I used to read and play with my Barbie dolls. I used to have the house, the dollhouse with the convertible and I used to make up my own little stories. And I used to have my own little fun! Sometimes my neighbor's daughters, who would come over to play with me, but for the most part I was by myself. I preferred reading to being outside. I was into the Babysitter's Club and girls stories but not necessarily the scary stories. I read so many things. I guess I loved the stories. I typically read in my room and even when I started school I would take a book and read it in school. I loved them so much because they let me use my imagination; being an only child that's probably what I imagined.

I have five siblings. We all don't have the same mother. I'm the youngest sister, and I have three older sisters. My other sister is six months older than me, she's 23. I have another one whose 25. I have another one whose 25 as well. They are 7 months apart. I have a brother that is 22 years old with me but he turns 23 after me and I have a younger brother whose 21 years old. We didn't really have contact with each other until about four years ago. Me and my youngest brother are the one's where we're like the only child. My sisters are my best friends and sometimes we have good days and some days we don't talk. My sisters, I guess they get mad at my dad. They think about it, and they are like when they were growing up they struggled. And they told him that he didn't help. So, when they say things I get mad because I grew up with my dad and I have so much love for him. I saw how hard he worked. They just come and look at me

and think that my life is just perfect because I grew up in a house with him. I it wasn't perfect. They always say, "She get what she wants" and dah, dah, dah but I've been working honestly since I was 16 years old. So, I don't want anyone to sit up and say most of the things I have, I haven't earned it. I was spoiled when I was growing up, but that was a long time ago! They also call me a white girl. People always tell me, oh you talk like you're white. I have this in-between kind of accent. My mom is from New York so when I was growing up if I said anything country my mom would correct me. My sisters say I don't be black enough because of how I react to situations. Now that I'm in college, its not that I'm trying to be White, I'm just trying to be intelligent because my future is important and some things are just not that serious.

My elementary school was majority White. I was on the M to M program. I had to go there because the neighborhood school in all honesty was 500 percent Black. I did experience a little racism, while I was there. I remember the White students being very proud of the confederate flag and doing this little dance. They were kids they didn't know any better. Even like to the point where most kids learn about Black History Month, we didn't learn about it in some classes. Typical. We had gym everyday. We had an Olympics day too. I remember the little balloon thing Busting somebody in the head with the balloon. The little tires we used to run through. You could go and get something to drink, use the bathroom, but you could not go in. I also looked at attending the school as an opportunity because there weren't many other Black kids and because of that we were all in competition to do better. We were always in competition.

In high school I was just really focused. My parents emphasized studying and education so with my family it was just pressure to succeed. They pushed me really hard. When I was growing up, one my cousins, she was a year or two older than me, got cancer and died in the

summer she was about to go to Georgia State. So, everybody put the ball in my court and my family puts a lot of pressure on me to succeed. I was involved in several activities in high school. My freshman year, I was a choral magnet—Chorus. The magnet bus came to pick me up at five in the morning. I would get up early and walk to the bus because our bus stop was up the street and I would catch the bus on the corner. My bus ride was about an hour because I lived so far out. We'd get to school and sit in the cafeteria and then when the bell rang I would go to my classes and start my day. During the day I was there just to attend my classes and then everything else I had to do after school. So when school let out we would be like, there 2 hours after practicing singing music. They would have the Magnet bus after school as well because you know, a lot of us stayed after school late. We'd have too. I was often very tired. I'd come home, do my homework, and then go to bed.

From my eighth grade summer until I graduated I was in a college-prep, college-based organization. It's always at a college. There was one in and that's the one I went to. After school, we would go there and do four hours of tutoring until 8 or 9 every night. We went during the summer too. During the Summer time we took classes that we were going to take the following year like Algebra. We also did college tours to show us different colleges in and in Georgia to see what our interests and just kind of help us. And all of us were pretty much first – well, that's apart of getting in the sub-program you have to be a first generation college student. So, they were just trying to encourage us to go to college.

Starting my 11th grade year, I was inducted into the National Honor Society. I was also in the environmental club, and I was a student representative. I don't remember much about P.E. in

high school but I do remember in P.E. we walked the track, if it was anything more than that if there was anything extra, I probably didn't like it.

Now, I am a 5th year Senior, in the um nursing program, currently. I'll be graduating in May with my bachelors in nursing. I work part-time as a nurse ex-tern at a local hospital. I'm very involved on in my sorority.

4.7 Roberta

Roberta is a 24 year old online college student. As a child her mother did not work outside of the home. Similar to her father who served as a captain in the army reserves, Roberta is married to an officer in the military whom currently resides in Washington. With her hair in a messy pony tail, Roberta wore a baseball cap, a black t-shirt, and jeans and no make-up to the interview. She has a very small frame standing at 5'2 and about 105 pounds. She speaks in a very soft and timid voice. During her interview, Roberta describes the role her family, particularly her brothers, had in her love for physical activity. As an adult Roberta is moderately active. Without a car, she spends a lot of her time walking to and from her destinations. She also sometimes plays tennis with her aunt or participates in Tae Bo using an exercise tape at home.

Narrative

I'm 23, married no kids, been married 3 years, my husband is in the military. In elementary school I really liked jump rope, hop scotch, and kickball. It was just something that the people I went to school with, my neighborhood and my cousins did. It was fun; singing songs, playing, and jumping rope. It was just something we did. I normally played kickball outside with the kids in neighborhood. It was either girls against the boys, or me and my sisters and brothers against my neighbors. I was a little competitive.

In middle school, I ran track, played softball, and I swam. I tried basketball, but it didn't really work out. But I tried. I don't know if it was my aim, or just something about trying to get that ball in that hole was not working out for me. Plus, I'm so little, it wasn't working out. My parents just kind of put me and my siblings in stuff so we'd have stuff to do. I always did some kind of activity, some kind of camp. Then, after knowing that it existed, it was just stuff that I just wanted to do, or I tried it and I liked it. My parents really wanted me in some activity so that I had something to do. I don't think it was more so the exercise of it just so I had something to do besides sitting in the house. Activity kept us out of the house and out of trouble. They didn't have to enforce it so much because we were always looking for something to do. So I don't think it was just, "y'all need to get up." I think we were really active. There were not really any activities that I didn't like. It's just that during middle school, basketball was just something that I wasn't good at. It wasn't so much that I didn't like it, but it seemed kind of hard and it wasn't girly enough for me. The other things I did were more girly. The basketball team was just so hard. The girls who play softball or ran track were a little more girly than the girls that played basketball. They just have different personalities. It's a different crowd. The girls that played basketball were a little rougher. The majority of the girls that swam were all slim, and lean, and kind of prissy. The girls that played basketball was more athletic, like their build was more athletic and they were more defensive. Swimming is competitive but with basketball you have to go up against the team. While swimming, you just have your lane, you just, go against the clock. While playing basketball I didn't like being up close against other team members. To me, basketball's just different. Even when playing softball, we had teams and we played against them, but it wasn't so, in your face.

There's a recreation center right down the street that we frequented a lot. I just did whatever was available. If I didn't participate in an activity it was because it wasn't there. Either that or it was too far out. We all did one or the other it was sports or cheerleading at the recreation center. The majority of the kids in my neighborhood went there for the summer to Camp Close Knit. That's where we did everything—swam, played football, and softball. If we weren't playing at school, it was there. All the kids in the neighborhood went to the same camp. We were either doing something through school or either some type of activity. My sister and I tried ballet and tap. I tried piano and a lot of different activities that either my friends were trying or my sister or brothers were trying that I wanted to try.

Besides sports, we played Monopoly, every holiday. Every time everyone was there that was like my generation, we played Monopoly. We played cards and video games. Because there was so many in my family, my sisters, brothers, and I didn't really have friends, we just had us. We didn't really need any extra friends, there was always enough of us to play game. We played video games every so often, if it was raining or if it was an instance when we had to be inside, that's when we would do things like that. When it wasn't raining, we were outside playing.

I have a very close knit and big family. There are seven of us. I fall right in the middle. I have three older, and three younger. There are four boys and three girls. The oldest should be 27 or 28. And then the one that's in Kansas is 26, the one in Florida is, I think he just turned 26, or he's still 25. And I'm 23, I'll be 24. My sister is 23, and my little brother is 15, and then the baby is 2. My cousins fall in between us, so I we all went to the same school. It was always at least 2 of us in the school, no matter what. Elementary to high school, I remember it was like, one of us in every grade. We did everything together. It was good because I was never alone. I've always

been close to my family. We've always been a close family so that was nice. The bad part is that alone time is very seldom. I played foot-ball with my brothers. I played any sport with them. Whatever they were playing, they felt like I could play, I could do it. I wrestled with them, everything. Oh my god. I was a man. I think the first time I got my nails done and some heels was like my prom. Before that, I did everything they did. Just because they felt like I could do it, and they encouraged it, and I felt like, "I wanna try it." I was going to play with them. I think I might have tried just about everything. Having four brothers brought a lot of variety. I've been tackled and all of that. My sister doesn't really do that much stuff. Growing up, she did a lot of writing. She just graduated from school from um, in Los Angeles. She wanted to be a screen-writer. She did a lot of writing in journals and diaries and a lot of little cute stuff, girly stuff. But she did run track though. She wasn't as willing to try, I think because I came first, and I was closer to them, and my brothers just kind of pulled me into their activities. When my sister was born she kind of pulled me back towards, "I need a sister. I need a sister." I was so used to having brothers. I didn't mind wrestling with them, she did. She didn't want to get dirty; she didn't want none of that. But she didn't do as much. She wasn't as willing to try everything. She was not going to get tackled. She was not going to wrestle. She was not going to do all that. She did what she liked. Like, she had her nails done before I did. I was worried about getting them done and it breaking while I was playing so I always kept them short. She wasn't worried about all of that. I guess she didn't like to play as much as I did. My mom and I had times when we would do stuff with my sister, like go get our nails painted, go to the mall, and all of that. And then we would have times where she would ask her if she wanted to do an activity with me just to keep it fair. My dad played a lot of videogames. He played football with the boys and basketball sometimes,

but a lot of video games. My mom was more hands-on with us. She worked when we got older but when I was younger she stayed at home. She played kickball with us and she played baseball with us. She cut up news for bingo and she did everything we did. She was there and real hands-on.

When we were younger, we played outside more. Then in middle school it kind of went down. We didn't have as much, I guess. We didn't have anything of our own to go to, as far as responsibility. Then middle school, we had activities that we wanted to do, that we participated in, where we had either practice or another activity that we chose. I started doing more. We had to decide what we wanted to do and how we were going to spend our time. How much time we did this, or how much time went to that. Things like that, managing our time. I was still swimming and doing track but softball stopped and I started different things. The activities I was doing at school weren't as physical I guess. I just chose activities that I liked. Then in high school, everybody just started branching off into things that they liked and that they really wanted to do, as opposed to just doing a variety of sports activities together all the time. We got older, my sister worked more my brothers did the football, and basketball. The activities I was doing at school changed. I joined health occupations and I joined FBLA. I also joined the chess team.

My parents were strict about grades and school. If grades weren't right, can't do anything. My brother, the brother that's two older than me, he got a "C" on one of his report cards in middle school, right over by Crawford Long, and, he didn't want anybody to turn in their report card (laughter), because he got a "C" on his report card. He knew if somebody, if one person got a report card, everybody got a [incomprehensible] report card. Oh my god (laughter).

And I was like, “are you serious?” “ ‘cause I was proud of my report card (laughter). I was ready to show mine. And he was like, “No. Y’all have to wait a week.” And I was looking, I was like, a “C” is really not that bad, looking at it now. When I got to college, and I was like, that “C” really wasn’t that bad. But back then, just how he was acting about that “C,” I was like “oh my god” (laughter). Um no they had to stay in the house. My parents used to make us do book reports and um read the encyclopedia. If our homework wasn’t neat we had to rip it up and they’d make re-write it. We couldn’t write on the back of our paper we have to write all only the front. We had to use a new page. It was...I don’t think it was too strict. It wasn’t crazy or anything like that. It was just how they felt things should be. We had to do well in school. All of us were in the gifted program. We did well in school.

My high school was majority Black but it was more separated by class and by income as opposed to race. It was, different. Nobody was really the same. At my high school, no matter what I was doing, be it the chess team the science club, or whatever, everybody was different. As opposed to in my neighborhood everybody is pretty much the same. There was just variety because another area high school mixed with mine so it was really just a mixture of students from different places. Then the magnet program allowed students to come from different areas, so a lot of kids were there for their math and science program. Everybody really just had different backgrounds; how they dress, the kind of car they drove, how they talk or the things that they liked to do. A lot of the kids that played chess were real nerdy, and usually lived in the higher end of the neighborhood. I don’t think we separated ourselves, It just kind of happened. You had some students that had a grill on their car, and they drove a Chevy, or a Crown Victoria. Then you had those students that dressed preppy and they drive Range Rovers in high school!

We had those that worked for their cars, and those kids whose parents bought their cars, so it was really just, different. I think my family fell in the middle. We did alright, my family did alright. You know, the things that we needed, we always had. Any type of fees my parents always paid. But extra stuff, we worked for things like that. I had to work for what I wanted.

We had this program at our school where you start to work when you were like 15, and then by the time I turned like 16, 17, I had completed the majority of what I needed to graduate from high school. I started working at Six Flags when I was 15 so I stopped playing softball because I didn't have enough time. I worked at Six Flags from 15 until I graduated high school because I wanted a car. So, my time started going into things like that. It wasn't the best car, but it was mine, and I was proud of it, I worked for it. And it made me appreciate it. I worked weekends, and then Friday nights and any other time that we had off I worked. I also worked during the summertime. A lot of people that I went to school with worked at Six Flags. Everybody I knew worked at Six Flags. Me and all my friends worked at Six Flags. I had a few friends that stayed at home. The ones that were out in Range Rovers, they didn't work at all. I don't know if their parents just wanted them focused more on school, or they just felt they didn't have to work I don't know. For whatever reason, they just didn't. I liked my job because I felt like I had my own money, and my own little income, you know, things like that. I didn't have to do any extra little stuff, like at home. I didn't have to wash extra dishes because I had to go to work. Plus, I liked Six Flags. I got free tickets. I didn't mind working at all.

In 12th grade I took health occupations and that required some activity. We had to learn how to do CPR. So, it was kind of hands-on. I just did everything that really just on the agenda but we had a lot of free time. I just did whatever was scheduled for that day. They had a lot of

stuff to do, like volleyball, and they always played basketball. I didn't really play that, but they always had it available. My friends and I would walk around the track, just talk, really. We would just be walking. If we were outside, sometimes we had jump ropes or we would play 4-square and we played tetherball, and that's pretty much it. But most of the time we just kind of walked and talked because if it was indoors we would always have basketball, and I don't really do basketball so we would just walk around the track and gossip or do some class work if I didn't finish something, I had time to complete it. I didn't really even like the class. I felt like it was a waste of time because we didn't really, I didn't feel like there was that much structure to it. It was just free time. There wasn't really that much sense to do it.

At college I didn't really do anything. I think my schedule was so tight, that is why I didn't do any physical activities. My activities as an adult have changed. I don't know why, it just did. It kind of shifted over. I'm still active; it's just that stuff changed. I walk to work. I walk to the library. I walk to the store. I do a lot of walking. I don't mind the walking. I walk when I have free time. I just recently started tennis last year when I went to Washington with my husband who's in the military. So now, I'm doing tennis and walking. The tennis I do because I like it. I like the fast pace. The walking I do to just clear my mind. When I was in Washington, I also was doing kickboxing. When I was in Washington, I joined the military spouse program. It's just for military spouses. The women ages ranged from 17, I think the oldest lady was probably like 40-something, 50 maybe. It was just something for us to do, really because a lot of women stay at home, so, we just meet up. We had meetings on Thursday and we'd eat cake and have discussions. If anybody was having a problem or needed help finding or handling something, or if they were new to the army base, the spouse program was like a support group they just offered

a variety of things. A lot of the women there were just doing different things. When we met we'd pick what we want to try the lessons in and vote on it. Then we have fundraisers to raise money to pay them to come out and teach us. It was fun. That's how I got to the kickboxing, and I've tried yoga and I've tried Pilates. I've tried a lot of stuff that the women brought to the group like belly dancing. We'd just do a lot of things in groups. I'm still doing tennis because I normally go to a park or something because my aunt plays tennis.

Now I'm not on a schedule. I just moved back from Washington and I'm trying to put everything else in place. I go to school online because I'm still registered in Washington. I do that in the middle of the night. I work 11 to 7 most of the time. Then I go to sleep a couple of hours and wake up call to Washington to see what my husband is doing. I'll either go the library or go to the mall. I haven't really been doing anything. I do the Tae Bo on TV do some sit-ups and that's about it.

4.8 Tiffany

Standing at approximately 5'1 and 125 pounds, Tiffany has a chocolate brown complexion wears her hair in a smooth medium length bob. As I waited for her to arrive in the Borders Seattle's Best café, she approached me, smiling, carrying two shopping bags of clothes. Tiffany appeared to be very stylish yet comfortable in a black t-shirt with silver cursive writing, grey crop jacket, grey washed skinny jeans and oversized flat grey boots. As she handed me her demographic forms for me to review, she apologizes for running late and talks about completing the forms in the car on her way. After reviewing the forms I briefly engaged in chit chat to establish rapport. With bright eyes and a bright smile, Tiffany has a bubbly personality and appears to be very at ease about the process we are about to go through. I met Tiffany through a

mutual friend who indicated that Tiffany was active during her youth and might be a good candidate for the interview. After several phone conversations and text exchanges we agreed to meet. Tiffany is a Louisiana native but moved to Georgia with her single mom and older sister during her elementary school years. Tiffany has limited engagement with her father as a child, but stated that he worked as a mechanic. After moving, her mother worked at a local park as apart of the janitorial crew. As a child and adolescent, Tiffany enjoyed dancing but often faced difficulty participating in structured dance opportunities because of her mother's limited finances. To date, Tiffany attends the gym approximately two times a week with her boyfriend and runs on the treadmill for 2 hours while he plays basketball. When she's not at the gym Tiffany walks around the mall shopping and walks back in forth helping customers in a retail clothing store.

Narrative

I like to dance. I remember seeing videos of me as a two year old child just dancing, dancing, dancing, at my cousin's birthday party. All of my life I liked music and I liked to dance and move. Growing up, I watched Beyonce a lot and Destiny's Child was my favorite group. I loved Destiny Child so much. I was also always into music videos and seeing girls dance. I don't even know of anyone else in my family that really liked to dance so I don't know where I get that from. I guess it's because I like to stay in shape. I've always wanted to have this model image body. Television had a lot to do with it. I used to always say "I am going to be a video girl." You know, when you are a young child you look up to people like "I want to be like them when I grow up." So when I was younger I would say, "I want to be in music videos. I want to be in music videos" until I realized video girls don't make no money.

I never got into structured dance until my 7th or 8th grade year. After school, my little sister used to go to an after school program. I used to pick her up at the end of the day. Sometime she was not ready to go so I would just watch the dance team that practiced there. The dance squad was so talented. Eventually people started to notice my face because I was up there a lot the coordinator saw me watching them everyday and asked me if I danced and if I wanted to try out for the team. It was no cost or anything like that so eventually I went up there one day, learned the routine, and started practicing with them. We danced at different talent shows and different high schools and we practiced three days a week after school Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday around 6-8:30 PM. Sometimes we stayed later, but practice always started between 6 and 6:30 though 8-8:30 or 9:00 PM. I think I could have gone far with the team but eventually I quit the team because the coordinator was way too much. I felt he was like... perverted a little. He just wasn't my cup of tea. If somebody else was over the team I would have stayed on but some of the little comments he made to the girls—some people may have brushed it off but me I just didn't want to do it anymore. When we practiced we were in tights and our body shapes were showing I just didn't want to do that no more with him as coordinator.

After I quit the dance team at the center, I used to volunteer to help the program staff out at the front desk. The lady at the front desk with me, Ms. Annie, was over the cheerleading squad. One day she just asked me if I had ever cheered and if I knew some cheers. Although I never was on the cheerleading squad, I knew cheers just because I used to walk around the house cheering and because I used to go to games. So, I started cheering up at the center for a couple of months. Eventually I stopped because I felt that I was older than everybody. I was in 7th or 8th grade, but it was like, I was much older than them. Most of the kids that were at the center in the

afterschool program were in middle school. Some high school students would go but they would go up there just to use the computer. But the kids on the cheer squad were like in elementary school. They were all ages. They were elementary kids. Some of them were like 5th, 6th, I know like 4th through 6th. They weren't any younger than 4th graders. They didn't [divide the squad by age group]. It was like one big squad and they wanted me to be captain but I didn't actually want to be apart of their squad. Ms. Annie wanted me to be a part of the squad but I just couldn't do it. I said no because I was in 8th grade! In middle school they had cheerleading but I didn't have the money to participate in it so I just started helping Ms. Annie with the little kids at the center. I was like her little assistant with the squad.

My first year in high school I didn't participate in anything. My mom kept telling me, "you better start participating now" but I never wanted to. She always feels like you shouldn't just sit out and nothing. Participate in things. Go out and do something. I think the reason I didn't want to participate in things was because financially we wasn't really financially stable. You see, I grew up in a single parent family. My family was me, my mom, and my sister. When I was in first or second grade my mom decided to move. My grandmother passed away, my moms mother. After that she said there was nothing else in New Orleans for her so she just did a spontaneous move. I didn't know she didn't have money. We moved and stayed in hotels for years and eventually we went back to Louisiana when I was in 4th grade because things were rough. We came back to Georgia when I was in the 6th grade. My mom got pregnant with my little sister and we moved here to be with my sister's father. We've been here since. My mom joined this program; I forget the name of it. I think it's the Initiative for Affordable housing or something like that. She had to take budgeting classes and she began working at a local park.

While she was in the program, they required that she keep a strict budget. They used to basically budget all of our money. She couldn't have cable. They said that it wasn't a part of your budget. Air conditioning was not part of the budget so we had to place fans in the window. I mean we hated it, but it was okay because it allowed her to get a home. I think that played a big part in why I didn't want to participate in a lot of stuff, because I thought what if I want to do it, and my mom doesn't have the money for it? I never wanted to be disappointed. Coming up we were moving back and forth so much and the way we were situated and living and stuff like that I knew we were not financially unstable. But when I was in high school she did always say participate in this participate in that but I knew that it would be a dip in her pocket and I just didn't want her to like... she probably would have sacrificed it for me but I was just like I'd rather not. I didn't want to be the one to make the squad and then be late with my payments. So I just decided not to do anything my freshman year. And I mean I don't know I went to games I always went to things, I just didn't want to participate in nothing.

Tenth grade year I tried out for the cheerleading squad but I made the junior varsity team. The captain told me that I was like two or three points from making the varsity team because I couldn't do a split. But I felt that if I was that close I didn't want to be on JV. I am very picky. I didn't want to be on JV. Once I tried out and found out I made JV, I never went back. I just didn't want to do it. So, I started this class at school that allows high school students to get jobs. The mentor in the program started me into this big sister little sister program like mentoring other little girls at the schools, hanging out with them, keeping them out of trouble and stuff like that. I did things like that my 10th grade year. My 10th grade summer is when I tried out for dance team at school. I had a class with the teacher at the school that was over the dance squad also, one of

my real close friends so happened to be one of the girls that danced on the dance team as a ninth grader. One day she asked me, “Why don’t you want to be on the dance squad?” I told her that I didn’t have the money for it. It was \$988 dollars—that included your uniform, your bag, and the food that they supply to you. It was a lot of money. My teacher said to me, “you have the cutest little shape and I can see you on the dance team” so eventually they pressured me into doing it. At first my mom was like I can’t afford that and she wanted to know if they had payment plans and stuff like that but by that summer before practice began you had to pay that \$988 dollars before you could dance at the game. Then a lot of times you had to pay your money early because you had to see if your uniform fit or not. If not, then they would have to send it back. My friend and my teacher pressured me into doing it. The teacher was like she wanted me on it so bad that she would help pay. It was kind of shocking because I didn’t want to be treated like a charity case. I called my god mom and she gave like \$500 and my mom was able to pay the rest. That’s how I did it. At first I was kind of nervous, but then I tried out and I made it and I danced my 11th grade and my senior year.

After high school I was working and my first year I didn’t go to college. I was going to go, but my mom was in financial distress again. She got fired from her job and for some odd reason didn’t work for 8 months but still had the mortgage. So I was working and helping to pay bills. I remember asking my boyfriend at the time, “What would you do if you were me? Would you just leave and go to school or would you help at home?” He said, “I’m a guy. I think guys should always stay home and help out they mom.” I felt like since my mom doesn’t have boys, I should just stay and help with her. After working that first year I went to college. My college didn’t have a dance squad I looked for it last year but my college didn’t have a dance team. They

didn't have a football team. They had a cheerleading team and it was free I could have done it. It just wasn't what I was looking for. I mean a lot of people used to always tell me you can cheer you are so loud and you got the body for it. You're in shape. But really, I always wanted to only dance. I always thought cheerleading was too preppy for me. When you cheer you have to work out. You have to lift girls in the air. When we were in band camp we just practiced dancing which is a physical activity because I lost weight, but in cheerleading they might come in for a week during camp, just wake up, and workout. In dance camp we didn't have to do that. We just danced. Plus, cheerleading is more quirky than dancing. Cheerleading is more like "Ready? Okay!" While I was there I had gained my freshman 15 and I'm too little to have a pudgy. Since my college really didn't have activities me and my friends used to work out all the time. We used to go the gym every night from 9-10PM during the weekdays to workout and I lost the weight. I look back at my pictures and think how fat my face was.

I attended college for one year I started working at Philips Arena after that. And ever since then I started working. While working there, I tried for an NBA basketball league dance team I didn't make it so after that it was kind of like whatever. I didn't do any more dance, dancing like routines. I mean I dance in the club but I didn't do any more structured dance. Now I'm trying to get back in school and I work all the time.

4.9 Ginger

Arriving to the interview dressed in a turquoise V-neck shirt and black shorts, Ginger entered the room in all smiles. Ginger and I were not total strangers. We have a mutual friend and were thus somewhat familiar with one another. Ginger is a 25 year old school teacher. Standing at 5'7 and 170 pounds, her facial features revealed mixed ethnicity—shoulder length, silky black

hair, small nose and lips, and tan dark brown skin complexion. In her spare time, Ginger participates in several vigorous and moderate physical activities such as kickboxing and step aerobics at the gym and walking. Although Ginger grew up in Minnesota during her grade school years, she often visited and spent most of her adolescent and adult years in Georgia beginning at the age of 12. She attributes her love for physical activity and healthy eating to her family members particularly her maternal aunt and cousins. Her story also revealed that struggling with overweight during childhood and young adulthood continues to motivate her to stay physically active.

Narrative

I spent half of my life in Minnesota. I lived in Minneapolis. Not exactly downtown, but much more urban than what we could consider the outskirts of the city, and definitely within the city limits. My neighbors were White, Black, Asian. It's just a melting pot, in Minneapolis it was. But, you go further out and it's all White. I lived in North Minneapolis. They kind of separate them by north and south there at the time, one side was considered [to be high class].

My mom and my biological father split up when I was two, and my mom remarried when I was four. A lot of everything I did was wrapped up in what was going on with church. We were there every single day because my mom was the church secretary. All of their friends were through church. If they were hanging out with anybody, there would be all the church people. If the church friends had kids then we would do things together, up until I was maybe ten or eleven; that's really how I remember spending most of my time. The downside of that was—I don't know if you can relate, but at church people eat a lot and we don't always eat healthily. At every function we're eating, and I just slowly started to see people gain weight. I know around that

time is where I started to associate socializing with food. We had Sunday school but after church they'd have a big lunch or it was always a big like sit down dinner and heavy food. We had this lady at church. Her name was Mamma Mary and she would bake these cakes. Oh, she was off the chart! She made the cakes from scratch. At church functions there would always be these cakes and pies and I mean I blew up literally in like two years. I don't really know how to explain it. I just remember going to visit my mom's parents one summer when I was eight and my grandfather weighing me outside. They had this little thing on the tree. Me and one of my other cousins—like a couple of us. I weighed 95 pounds. I was eight! I have pictures from when I was six and I was a skinny little kid. So, I know it was somewhere in that timeframe, I gained a lot of weight. I remember just one time this one boy saying, "You have blubber on your stomach," or something like that but, the teasing was never just constant. Then about that time, my step-dad was working at Pillsbury. All the new products they would get, he would bring them home. You know when they first started doing those frozen pancakes? We had them in our house every day. I also remember with my step-dad—I mean, he's my dad, just so you understand—the whole clean your plate mentality coming up. He didn't have the button that says, "OK, she's six, seven, or eight, she's not going to be able to eat as much as a man or even like a grown up like my mom." He would make our plates and they would be huge and it was like, "You have to eat all your food." So, I think that's when I actually learned to overeat. I remember one time eating so much spaghetti like I literally threw up. I think I was eight when that happened. Then once you start doing that, then you start to think that feeling completely stuffed or close to it is how you're supposed to feel.

My biological father is Ethiopian, and I think in that culture to be thin is very important. He's always picked on me, since I was a little kid. So when I was first putting on weight he would call me names and make me feel bad about things. That made my image of myself change too. He would come pick me up, on the rare occasions that he did pick me up for the weekend, and we would go walking for miles walking the lakes. He would come pick me up and that's what we would do, we would go walk. Really he did not want me to be fat. As much as he would not want me to be heavy and want me to eat right, he would have his moments where he'd be like, "Let's go eat pizza." Okay, but you're giving me mixed signals, dude. So, either you want me to be healthy or you want me to be human.

I always had to go outside and play. I mean, really my parents didn't really have to make me, especially if it was warm and nice outside. You couldn't keep us in. I was one of those kids like, "Oh my God, the street lights are on already?" Most of the time we'd be outside building little forts and cooking dinner in the mud. I had bikes and roller skates and things to promote physical activity. But I don't ever remember like my parents just saying, "OK, honey, let's go for a walk together," or, you know, that kind of thing. I mean, they would come out and watch me ride my bike or whatever, but not on a consistent basis, let's go as a family and exercise or go walk together. But my mom used to tell me and my cousins get out of here. Y'all have got to go. Y'all are making me crazy. So, there was kind of the mentality, go outside and play. Things are so different now. It was safer then. You could just go outside and play now there are certain limits.

I loved to play basketball. I was totally a basketball fanatic. It just was so much fun to me. That was my thing. It was so amazing to me then. Then basketball was just so exciting. I

think everybody was kind of really into that at that point in life. If my cousins would fly up from Georgia to Minnesota, we'd be out playing basketball. I was all about my boy cousins and playing basketball in the front yard. And, I was a pretty decent player. I would play football with my cousins, but it was not the same as basketball, not at all. Plus, I wasn't into getting tackled either. I learned to play basketball from just playing around. Once I started practicing, my dad would sometimes play with me or just playing with kids in the neighborhood. I was not always the last person picked. I was the only girl.

I grew up in the whole Jordan era: Larry Byrd and Magic Johnson. I had a Nintendo game with Larry Byrd versus Jordan, Jordan versus Byrd. I used to just want to be just like Michael Jordan. I didn't really think that I was a girl and that couldn't happen. That's just how I got so into it. When I got a little older, I was maybe 10 or 11, I was like, "One day there's gonna be a professional league for the women," but, I never would have thought by the time I was 19-20, there really would be a team. You know a real league. So, it's pretty cool.

I never played for like a team-team except my seventh grade year. I played one year. A lot of people join the basketball team at the recreation center in elementary school and then in middle school but, it's really expensive to play sports and your parents have to pick you up from practice. So, I did one year. I played guard. It was cool. It was kind of frustrating. I remember, well, before I moved here, I went to a private school. And, it was all White. I'd say out of K through 12, there probably were 10 to 12 Black kids. Since it was a Christian private school, the kids whose families were really involved, went to the church, always got parts in the play. You know, like major roles. I also sang in the choir. I'd see the same child every time getting parts to sing and same thing with cheerleading. I never tried out for cheerleader, but my friends who did,

went through the same thing. Girls who probably would have made it at another school, like my friend who's been cheering and dancing outside of the school for years, they're really good, don't make it or they have some minor role. So, that's how I felt when I tried out for basketball. The playtime was based on who the people knew. So, I would sit on the bench a lot because they always played favorites. That's just how they did everything. I would always see some pastor's kid get put in because they were there all the time. My parents and I went to a completely different church than the school I went to so I never started. I would play but just not a major role on the team. I knew from playing in gym and being around the girls, you know, I was a little more skilled than they were. I knew that I could hang with my boy cousins. I'd be outside playing with their friends and, if I was that bad, I would not be getting picked over other boys on the court. That just doesn't happen. So, that solidified it with me. They had to do what they had to do, and I just had to let it go. I don't want to say they picked White people over us. It's just we were so outnumbered. That and I was really the only Black girl on the team anyway. The way my parents raised me, I never really saw that difference. I was literally one of those kids who were raised to be color blind. A lot of what I understand now is me being a grown up. And, it really comes back to me. I'm reflecting and I'm like, "Oh my gosh, I cannot believe that this and this happened." I mean I was just an innocent kid. It was not until I really moved to Georgia that I understood racism and how separate it was.

I moved to Georgia when I was 12. I was just so shell-shocked and awestruck. I moved here and everything that I thought was cool was so lame. And, I talked different. Now, they think I'm country in Minnesota. But, still people here think I have a weird accent. It's that Midwestern twang, I don't know. It's never going to go away, I guess with the southern mixed in. The first

thing I see when we get out of Hartsfield-Jackson Airport, there's people with confederate flags. So, I'm totally like, "Oh my God!" We pull up in Evanwood, which is so funny this house is owned by a black family now, but they've got all these flags flying in the yard. They have their propane tank painted as a rebel flag and everything. Then my cousin starts telling me the stories about how the KKK will march from time to time. And, I'm like what have we gotten ourselves into? And, I mean, you know, now Evanwood is so different. But, back then, I was like, "Oh, Lord!" Every kid in my neighborhood was Black. I started going to Stone Chapel Middle School Junior High. Everybody was Black. Everybody. There had to be one or two White teachers that was it. I am normally in a school always around all White people. My neighborhood was always completely diverse and mixed up. Entering high school I didn't know about Polo and Tommy Hilfiger then I get to high school and that's all kids talked about. They'd ask me, "You don't have this shoe or you don't have that shoe?" My parents had no money. So I was picked on about my clothes and I talked like a white girl. I wore glasses, so I was a nerd. I was just so much in culture shock and then I was so far academically ahead of them too. The only thing I was a little bit behind in was math.

We moved here the end of February. I spent the first probably three or four months absolutely miserable. I hated Georgia. I never wanted to be here. I couldn't stand it. I mean, it's funny because we moved here and I moved in with an aunt who was super into being fit and healthy. So, we would go walking. That was the first experience I remember as a family when we would go walk the track together. My aunt taught us how to cook light; no more ground beef. We ate turkey products. You know, baking things and just being healthier and actually liking it. The only other flip side was during my summer visits to Minneapolis. I was living with my grandma

and my great aunt. They were constantly feeding me not so healthy food so I was gaining weight. Even though I was heavy, I was always physically active just maybe not as much as I need to be to counteract it all.

I went to a high school in eighth grade. I loved my high school. I started at Wesley and went there one year. Just eighth grade and then they changed it to a middle school Shadowbrook and Wesley. They kind of threw us all together. Whew! I graduated from Riverside. My high school was half White and half minorities. It was very diverse. So, that was the first time I felt back at home in Georgia where I saw White kids, Asian kids, and everybody together. To me, that is just the world and that's how it should be. I think everyone should have the opportunity. We lived so far away from it. I had to M-to M to go out there. I was on the bus like forever at six o'clock in the morning. That sucked because my mom didn't want to drive all the way to Locaville Road. So if she had to come out there it better be important. And, then if you did stay, if you ride that shuttle, that's not going to get to my neighborhood until like 6:00 or 6:30 in the evening. It just doesn't make you want to do a whole lot after school. I mean I would still go outside and play, but it definitely dampened my spirits towards wanting to join a team for another practice. I loved to play basketball but how was I going to really deal with practicing everyday and getting home from Wesley like every day? The shuttle was there, but can you imagine? That would be so miserable to get home. Also, I thought, oh my God the basketball coach really horrified me. Oh, I was just terrified of her. She is White and she had this fiery red hair. She's 5'6", 5'7", not really stocky, but not a thin woman either and, she just had a scowl on her face. I do not remember that woman hardly smiling ever. I thought, "Oh, no. She is going to eat me alive for looking at her the wrong way." Then, [Other students] tell you awful things. All

the kids would say, “Yeah, that lady’s crazy!” So I was like, “maybe I’ll just rethink this whole [basketball] thing.” The first week of school she was relentless but now being a teacher I understand exactly why she was the way she was. I mean, she never let up. She was so hard on those kids. But, they learned so much from her.

I was totally a basketball fanatic until I’d say eight or ninth grade, because then I wanted to be a girl. Then, I was around one of my cousins who at the time was graduating from high school. She was like ultra glamour queen. She was in all the pageants, and she was just so beautiful. So, that was kind of like, OK, being a tomboy is kind of getting old. We had to take PE. I thought, “You want me to get dressed down and get stinky...?” I know I took it in eighth grade at Wesley and I took it in the ninth grade at Riverside. I think that I fulfilled my high school PE requirements and health requirements in those two years. Beyond that, students did not take PE unless they were an athlete or they needed to boost their GPA because I went to a school that was big on academics. Unless you were an athlete and that was your thing, once you got those [PE] credits in ninth grade, you were done.

I really liked boys ever since I was eight or nine you know thinking a boy was cute and having a crush or somebody on TV. In eighth grade, girls I knew were seriously, well even in seventh grade at Chapel Hill, were really starting to have boyfriends. I was just thought, I’ve got to have a boyfriend too because everybody else is doing it. But I wore glasses and I’m not talking about designer glasses. I mean coke bottle glasses. Also, I wasn’t like the perfect figure. You know, I’ve always been since that initial weight gain, teeter tottering on the edge, you know, still wasn’t like people would look at me and be like, “Oh, wow.”

When I was in eighth grade, I met this guy who lived in my apartment complex. I think he like asked me my bra size and I freaked out. So I stopped dating him. Then once I started going to Riverside, all my new friends at Riverside, they kept telling me about this guy name Chris. I guess he was real popular then. We were just smitten with each other That was in ninth grade You know what I mean, I wasn't allowed to go anywhere with guys. And, they let him come over. So, and we talked all the time. I used to get in trouble all the time. My parents would go to bed, and we'd be calling. And, they'd say, "Are you on the phone?" "No, I'm in my room talking to myself." Well, of course, he starts cheating on me. So, he'd be walking me to like first period. And, then he'd walk this other girl to the next class. Oh my gosh, and you know like honestly it's taken me a long time, even going into adulthood, to really be able to keep my insecurities in check. But, I think then I was just so devastated. I remember when we first broke up, I like cried for an entire day at school. It was just awful. People would walk by and say, "She's still crying."

It was difficult in high school because a lot of people were not familiar with my background. I've gotten older and now I hear, "Oh my God, you're so beautiful" compared to then when people would say "You are so weird looking". There is a stigma with being African even though I consider myself American, because my American mother and father raised me. I don't dislike being Ethiopian. I just wasn't raised in the culture. I guess people now notice it in a more positive way. Then, the kids would be like, "Oh you from Africa? Oh my God!" That was the thing so I wanted to change my name. That was one of my pet peeves. Not because my name was Ethiopian but just the fact that my name was never normal. People would always say, "Oh my God, Ginger?" I would have given anything to be like Jessica or like Katie or just somebody

with an easy name to pronounce so they're not going to ask me 100 times how to say it. The only comfort I had was getting a little older and realizing my name is common in Ethiopia. So, it's just like being Katie and Jessica there. So, I was like, well, at least over there I have a common name.

After my eighth grade year, of course the summer I went to Minnesota and my uncle totally changed my life. They got me contacts. No one could tell me anything after that. That opened up a whole new door for me because I was so used to being behind those thick ugly glasses, like you couldn't even see my face. I never even thought I was beautiful at all because I still always struggled with feeling beautiful to myself. But, after I got contacts, I was like, "oh my gosh" but still kind of a little bit on the heavier side. I was like an 11/12. So, I wasn't super big, but I definitely was not skinny. Being a little bit different, looking a little bit different, was always, hard for me at the time. And, not realizing that there are a lot of great features about me. Wasn't until I got a little bit older and it was like, OK, wow. So, it's never like I was just like, whoa, but just, you know, and I started buying more feminine clothes to a degree. Unfortunately, my parents' budget did not allow for the cutest of clothes and my mom was always trying to buy me clothes. I always hated them.

It was one year in high school, I feel like I really gained a lot of weight. Because, like I said, at the time I may have been an 11-12 and sometimes I'd go down to 9-10. I remember at one point, I felt like I'd gained so much that I just looked disgusting. It was when I started to wear jeans. I was working at Subway and I often closed the store. Of course, you know, I've got to eat dinner. But, I wouldn't even be eating like a horrible thing, but eating a sandwich at 12:00 at night and going to bed. OK, clearly you're going to put on some weight. So, I remember like, I

was just like, this is ridiculous. I am not going through this. And, I started doing diet pills and basically just not eating anything and I end up losing weight. But, it's just not healthy. So, I quit doing that and then of course you sometimes gain back more than you lost in the first place. So my senior year, I always watched Days of Our Lives. I know this is so crazy – but one of the girls on the show, the one who does Biggest Loser, she went on this sugar free thing. That was the thing in 1999-2000. Everybody was on this sugar free diet. So, I did it and I mean I probably dropped like 25 pounds. I mean, everybody was like, “Oh my God.” You know, and I still ate what I wanted. That was the crazy thing. I was just like it just is coming off. No candy. No sodas. I really, I don't remember eating a lot of fruit. I did eat some fruit, but just not a lot. Basically anything with sugar in it, I just wouldn't eat it and the weight just melted off. I still did exercise. I would always go out and walk or whatever. ‘Cause, you know, if you want to lose, there's only so much you can do. My apartment complex was really big so, I liked to walk all through it. I remember even when I couldn't do that, I would go in my room at night and I would run around in circles listen to Mariah Carey. I would put on my Mariah Carey and I would run laps in my room and do all kind of stuff just to make sure that I was constantly moving. I had a really good teacher that said that in eighth grade at Henderson. You never could have told me I would have run a mile. ‘Cause when I first started, it took me so long. I remember I had only gotten my mile down to like 11 or 12 minutes. You know, you couldn't tell me anything. Now, it'd take me like a hour. But, then I still hated running. But, I had the confidence to do it.

I'm tried to keep up the balance because when I got into college, you know how that goes. I gained a lot of weight up until 2004 at Freeman State College. You're drinking, you're eating late at night. Your mom's not there to tell you anything. I just gained a lot of weight. By

the time I was 21 or 22, I weighed almost 200 pounds. Now, I already went through the miserable phase where I can't buy clothes anymore. I had never been that big in my life. Yeah. And, sometimes I would teeter towards 13-14, but never past that. I mean, like I remember when I was 167, oh my God. Now, I look back and I am like wait a minute I was small then and I weighed 163. That was like three or four years. That was crazy So, I said, "That's it" and I just took control of my life and I started going to the gym every single day. And, I had one of my best friends, she went with me. It wasn't so much about just cutting out carbs and eating protein. People go on extremes. It was just calories, watching how much I actually took in and I made a food journal. I started writing down everything I ate. So, that's what happened and it just fell off. Over the course in a year I lost like 45 pounds. I've gained like 12 back I guess I just had to learn how to balance things.

In adulthood, I would say physical activity is the most important element in my life. Well, OK, especially now where I'm teaching which is like a very low income for a black neighborhood. And, I don't live far from my school. I live like on the border of being in that area. I kind of notice that either I'm pushing the kids to play like football, baseball, or basketball or they're not doing any physical activity at all. The girls may be in softball or play basketball or they don't do anything at all. A lot of the kids like are just, you know, getting extensively overweight. I mean, like big. You're in fourth grade and you weigh how much? I was in this thing last year with a group of fourth graders and dealing with data analysis and teaching them how to make glass. We weighed them and one girl, I felt so bad, a fourth grader weighed 142 pounds. At that time, I think I was like 150. She was nine. One hundred and forty two pounds and doing nothing about it. I've also noticed that either mom is just naturally thin or mom is morbidly

obese. I see so many obese parents. Of course the dads, for whatever reason, a lot of men, especially black men, just don't gain a lot of weight. So, it's not that they're in all this activity it's just their genetic makeup or something So, really I don't see a lot of black women, not even the teachers doing physical activity in my neighborhood. I've never been around so many overweight black women who don't have – it almost disgusts me sometimes. And, that's my biggest pet peeve about teachers. People are always – not as much in high school as like in other schools. But, they always want to bring you food. Yes, it was excessive. It was ridiculous. So, I see people go up, get three slices of pizza. OK, that's their dinner. That's what I'm thinking pretty much. It's 3:00 in the afternoon. It's a little early. I wouldn't do it but whatever. They go back for two more slices of pizza. They wash it down with one or two cokes or sprites. I understand it gets like that when you're busy so sometimes it's OK to eat, every once in a while, you have to live. That's my new thing. But, they are big and they're not getting any smaller.

If anything, it's like motivation because I don't want to end up overweight, sick, taking blood pressure medication. A healthy lifestyle incorporates physical activity every day. Eating whole grains as much as possible. Also, a healthy lifestyle is eating more fruits and vegetables, leaner meats, and less wine. I just always try to keep in mind that I need to be physically active because it is just so important. It's important what you eat. I'm not saying you can't eat like anything. But, if you can burn more than you take in, then that's just always going to be the equation. That's the cure.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

This study illuminates the lives and physical activity experiences of young Black women living in Georgia. Research indicates an increase in the prevalence of physical inactivity for Black females with increases in age, particularly those living in southeastern United States. At present, little is known about the socialization factors that facilitate or pose challenges for Black female adolescents interest and participation in physical activity. Hence, the purpose of this study is to investigate factors that shape changes in physical activity among Black women from elementary to high school. To achieve this purpose, the research questions of this study are:

- What factors in the community shape physical activity for young Black women?
- How does being Black and female shape attitudes and engagement concerning physical activity from elementary to high school?

The results are is organized into two sections: The sections are: 1) Black women and physical activity: Socialization in the community and 2) Black women and physical activity: Race and gender considerations. Each section identifies themes found in the interviews, which help to answer one of the research questions of the study.

5.1 Black Women and Physical Activity: Socialization in the Community

Health promotion researchers recognize that models of physical activity that focus exclusively on individual characteristics—demographic, biologic, personality, or behavioral factors—are insufficient to explain the complex set of factors that contribute to physical activity participation. Physical activity outcomes of individuals are influenced by the community

environments in which they live. The stories shared by the participants illustrate this point.

Several aspects present in the participants' communities shaped physical activity participation including the presence of physically active mentors and role models and living in close proximity to parks and recreation centers. These two aspects represent the broad topics that emerged from the participants narratives. Each of the factors is presented below.

The Presence and Availability of Active Mentors and Role Models

In general, women in the study reported participating in a variety of play and organized sport activities during their early childhood years. These activities included dance, gymnastics, basketball, cheerleading, kickball, and bike riding. The participant's interviews indicated that mentors and role models within the community played an influential role in their interest and initiation in physical activity as children. Specifically, compared to girls in the study who were not very involved in physical activity as children, women who were highly involved in physical activity as children received more encouragement and unstructured play opportunities from family members. Family members encouraged participants to engage in physical activity by enrolling them in an organized sport, such as cheerleading or soccer, or by modeling active behavior. For example, Tracie discussed her tendency to be independent and desire to participate in more sedentary activities such as reading and watching television. However, as the only daughter in a home with three brothers, Tracie spent a lot of time with her physically active mother and, as a consequence, became involved in several play and sports activities:

When I was 3, I did gymnastics and I enjoyed that. When I got a little older I got involved in dance classes- ballet, tap, and jazz and I did that for about 4 or 5 years...I guess it was something that my mother just wanted, to just get me into something because

I was very independent. I would sit and do whatever I wanted to do and that would be reading or something like that. So she just wanted me to get out.

In addition to dance and gymnastics, Tracie also loved to ride her bike as a child. Her story revealed that she developed a love for bike riding as a result of her mother's participation in physical activity:

Well, my mom used to walk around the block all the time. If it was raining she would do an exercise tape inside. That's all she did. She walked every morning like around 6:00 and sometimes she would wake me up. And sometimes I just didn't want to walk, so I'd ride and eventually it got to the point where she would let me ride by myself. So as a child, everyday after school I would ride my bike before I did homework just to get that out or to get my time alone or whatever.

In a similar story, Claire talked about her parents involving her in many outdoor activities because of their belief that children need to "burn off energy":

I've always been involved in something. As soon as I was able to be involved in a sport I was trying to do that. Cause we always played different things in our yard. I mean we were always active. Our parents firmly believed that we should not be in the house all the time so we had to go outside some time during the day. There was no question you had to go out there...I assume they wanted us to be active because they wanted us to burn some of the energy off to be tired and just more manageable. They did encourage us to be in sports...but I really think they just needed us out the house so we wouldn't drive them crazy.

Whether Claire's parents encouraged physical activity simply out of a need to stay sane or because they thought it was beneficial for children to play, their encouragement fostered a team spirit in Claire that facilitated her love for sports participation.

There were six of us. My father and mother always took us to the park on the weekends. My dad played basketball in high school so he'd buy us tickets on the weekends and we'd play basketball together. We had all our siblings and a parent. So that's kind of how we did that. We played against each other. And my younger siblings and I played soccer so we always played together. My parents bought us the cones so we'd make us a little goal and like the make shift nets and we'd practice our drills ... they would put up volleyball nets and do the boys against girls and we played dodge ball or O-U-T out or however you want to call it....we didn't necessarily need to have so many other people to come along

and have fun. Everybody could just play with each other we had our own little team basically.

Ginger stated that her parents did not allow her to engage in sedentary activities “like kids now” and, thus, she grew a love for playing basketball, kickball, and other outside activities:

I loved to play kickball. I just liked to be outside. We’d play any kind of game—outside tag, hide and go seek. We just always wanted to keep moving. I wasn’t allowed to stay in the house quite as much as kids are now.

Ginger’s biological father also encouraged her to engage in physical activity:

He is Ethiopian and, I think in that culture to be thin is very important. So he would come pick me up, on the rare occasions that he did pick me up for the weekend, and we would go walking for miles.

Roberta discussed the way in which her brothers influenced her to participate in sports:

I played football with [my brothers]. I played any sport with them. Whatever they were playing, they felt like I could play, I could do it. I wrestled with them, everything. Oh my god, I was a man! I think the first time I got my nails done and wore some heels was my prom. Before that, I did everything [my brothers] did just because they felt like I could do it, and they encouraged it. I felt like, “I wanna try it,” I was going to do it with them.

In addition to parents, participants’ stories revealed that members in their extended family (i.e., aunts and cousins) encouraged participation in sports and physical activity logistically or explicitly. For example, Jordan stated that her cousin was the most influential in her participation in cheerleading, basketball, and softball:

My cousin was a coach that’s how I got started in cheerleading. She just asked me if I wanted to do it so I told her yeah. She took me to all of my games. She helped with softball and she carried me to all my basketball and cheerleading games.

After moving, Ginger’s maternal aunt helped her to become physically active and more nutritiously conscious:

I moved in with an aunt who was super into being fit and healthy. So, we would go walking. That was the first experience I remember as a family we would go walk the

track together.[My aunt] taught us how to cook light...you know, baking things and just being healthier.

Ginger recalled often playing basketball with her cousins:

I was totally a basketball fanatic. If my cousins would fly up to Minnesota, we'd be out playing basketball. When I moved here, I was all about my boy cousins. Playing basketball in the front yard. I was a pretty decent player.

Jordan also remembered playing basketball with her cousins at the park:

I played basketball with my cousins at the park. We went every day when they got off work and the sun went down. It was just something that we'd do every day—go down to the park and they would do a little game. They did draw a lot of people to the court which made it more interesting. They had a park full [of people watching them play]; everybody playing basketball just having a good time really.

Research indicates that mentors and role models who influence children and adolescents tend to change over time. Early in life, young children refer to their immediate family members, to provide positive attitudes and behaviors with parental influences having the greatest impact. As children age, principal role models may shift from family members to teachers, athletes, television stars, and movie stars (French & Pena, 1991). This rings particularly true for Jordan. At the age of 14, Jordan visited the park often with her male cousins but admired the older girl athletes that played basketball:

You see a lot of females out here nowadays play basketball real good. That was something that I wanted to try to be like—play ball real good. So when I would see all those girls that were way older than me playing, I said, "Alright. Okay. Yeah, I want to do that. We can play this sport too! I used to hear my cousins when they'd be messing with the girls saying to them, "Y'all can't do this. We [are] boys. We do it. Girls are meant to be at home." I guess because they were doing what the guys were doing. They would always say "Girls can't play this!" but the girls we proved it. It was really like, "You know what? I can do this just like a guy can". So I started though playing basketball with my dad and my brothers and [cousins]. They'd go down to the park and I'd want to play too.

Ginger's father served as an early influence on her physical activity participation, but between the ages of 9 and 11, male athletes such as Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, and Larry Bird greatly influenced her desire to participate in basketball:

I was totally a basketball fanatic I think 'cause my dad really liked basketball a lot and I grew up in the whole Jordan era—Larry Byrd and Magic Johnson. It was so amazing to me then and I just loved it from then on. I had a Nintendo game with Larry Byrd versus Jordan, Jordan versus Byrd. I used to love that game. I used to want to be just like Michael Jordan. I didn't really think about the fact that I was a girl and that couldn't happen.

Tiffany's desire to dance to stay fit began with a desire to have a similar body as women in music videos. She recollects:

I watched Beyonce a lot and Destiny's Child was my favorite group. I loved Destiny Child so much. I was always into music videos and seeing girls dance. I don't even know of anyone else in my family that really liked to dance so I don't know where I get that from. I guess it's because I like to stay in shape. I've always wanted to have this model image body. I used to always say I am going to be a video girl. You know when you are a young child you look up to things like I want to be like them when I grow up. So when I was younger I would say, I want to be in music videos, I want to be in music videos until I realized video girls don't make no money. But I guess that's where I got it from body images on television had a lot to do with it.

Tracie also aspired to dance like a popular movie star: "I think I preferred jazz cause I wanted to be FLY girl Yeah like J-LO. That's what I want to do."

During the latter years of the adolescent period and into adulthood, peers who exhibited active behavior, rather than adult role models, were important in several participants' decision to engage in physical activity. Although men appeared to have more of an influence in younger years, same sex peers played an especially valuable role in encouraging physical activity participation during later adolescents. Roberta shares the importance of physically active peers as a young adult:

I joined the military spouse program and a lot of the women there were just doing different things. That's how I got into the kickboxing. I've also tried yoga and I've tried pilates. I've tried a lot of stuff. I tried the things that they tried, and were bringing to the group like belly dancing and just a lot of things.

Claire recalled the benefit of engaging in physical activity with her roommate in college:

In college...my roommate and I became really close. We would take classes together purposely so that we...had a support system basically. We started coaching and refereeing volley ball games and then we realized, "oh we can do our own team" so we did intramural volleyball and intramural soccer together.

As Claire continued her story, she indicated that her participation in sports and physical activity "dropped off drastically" in college and was taken up by differing interests, similar to those in her context, such as going to fraternity/sorority step shows, playing cards with friends, and going to the movies.

[My roommate and I] played some sports together but it was nothing like it was in high school...as far as my activity level it dropped off drastically when I started going to college because I guess the people that I was around wasn't there, and I usually stayed active in my other sports with my siblings. I didn't have them there and it just wasn't something that everybody did. You laugh, you watch movies, and you play cards... In the dorm we would make friends all through the hall and we would stay up and play spades all night. That was a big thing. We would get movies in the commons area, watch movies and play cards, make popcorn and pretend we were cooking something but we didn't know what we were doing. You know, order pizza. So it was easier to be friends with a lot of people and then we would all go to those sponsored events or we would stay up all night playing Uno and other games, but I forgot the name of it, but we would stay up all night long playing that game, talking, laughing, and telling jokes.

Claire recalled participating in activity again when it became "popular" for her friends and she started to date her now husband in college.

All of sudden the people I was around was like, "Oh we have to go to this aerobics class. We have to do this and that." It may have been a way to see the guys that may have been why it became so popular. That was just the thing... I really didn't start going to the gym consistently until I started dating my husband because that it was he did... He was like

“Oh ya’ll should go to the gym and do this and do that and I can show you how to use the machines” so that was kind of how we got into that.

Peace, who ran track briefly in high school, commented on the role her friend played her decision to join the track team:

...in high school when I started track my best friend ran track and she talked me into it. I was like, “Oh I can’t do this!” The conditioning was so hard. Pre season conditioning was a lot of work. But I really, really, enjoyed it once I got into the regular season.

Rita, who cheered from elementary to middle school, recalled receiving an F in PE for lack of participation and talking to her friends. :

PE was OK. I used to do nothing but just sit around and watch everybody else. I might sit around and read a book because I did enjoy reading. Playing basketball, jumping rope, and all that crazy little stuff, like running back and forth, and racing—I didn’t want to get involved in it. I would just sit down and watch everybody else do it that’s why I got a “F.” I just didn’t like it. It was my PE teacher, that’s what it was. I just used to always want to be a knucklehead. They just had some weird activities and they just did stuff that I didn’t want to do. In PE in high school, we had a truck where you can sit down and talk to your friends. You get graded if you participate, which is why I never did. You can participate or you don’t. If you don’t participate, you got an “F.” That’s why I always got an “F,” because I never did anything in class.

When I asked Rita to whom she spent her time talking during PE class she stated: My friends, they the same ones that I used to hang with in cheerleading, same ones.

Although Jordan did not attend college or complete high school, she discussed the patterns of physical activity she saw in her community which did not encourage her to be active.

Like the children. I see them at the park. They be playing. The adults, they be walking around or sitting out talking, playing chess, whatever, or even dominoes; You’re going find people out playing chess and dominoes. You’re going to basically see all the kids playing at the park. You can find the women playing dominoes with the guys or especially they’re sitting around just talking.

When I asked if the patterns she saw amongst those in her community shaped her choices for physical activity she responded: “Yes...especially like when I just see them out sitting out talking and playing dominoes, it makes me want to sit there and play too because it’s just something to do. It’s fun.”

Availability and Proximity of Parks and Recreation Facilities

Another key finding identified in the interviews is the availability of physical activity programs in recreation facilities and parks. The participants’ took part in park and recreational programs after school and during the summer that were walking distance from their home, and offered a variety of sports and age-tailored organized activities. Tiffany recollected that she began to dance as a result of visiting the recreation center in her neighborhood:

My little sister used to go to this after school program in our neighborhood and I used to have to pick her up. Sometimes I would go to pick her up and she was not ready to leave so I would just go watch the dance team practice. The coordinator of the team saw me watching them everyday so he asked me if I danced and if I wanted to try out. He told me that it was no cost so I eventually went up there one day, started practicing and learned their routine and I started participating. We danced at different talent shows and different high schools.

Roberta remembered participating in several sports after school and during summer break at a nearby recreation center:

There is a recreation center right down the street, the southeast recreation center. The majority of [the kids in my neighborhood] went there for the summer. That’s where we swam, played football, and softball. That’s where we did everything. If it wasn’t at school it was there. All the kids in the neighborhood went to the same camp.

Rita shared how she particularly enjoyed going to the skating rink, one of the many the field trips available through the neighborhood summer camp she attended.

Around about the age of 8 or 9, I went to summer camp...when I did go, it was good because, I used to always go when we would go on trips. The skating rink, I used to love the skating rink. I used to always go there just to go out there and have fun.

Peace recalled going to the recreation center during the summer through the 7th grade.

During this time she participated in swimming and developed a love from track and racing.

I ran a lot...when I went to summer camp. I went to the YMCA and to the Boys and Girls club...one summer but my parents really didn't like that one. I went to the Y up to 7th grade, which had the most activities. They had swimming everyday that's where I learned to swim. That's where I raced a lot...

To summarize, participants' activity engagement was shaped by encouragement from family members and role models between elementary and high school and by same sex peers during high school. Living in close proximity and walking distance to neighborhood recreation centers and participating in summer camps during the summer also provided ample opportunity for the participants to be physically active during their youth. Lack of opportunities for girls in their community, due to limited funds and personnel, in some cases, participation age limits impacted participants' ability to be physically active.

5.2 Black Women and Physical Activity: Race and Gender Considerations

Although the extensive literature on physical activity participation verifies that encouragement and social support and access are important to physical activity participation, it is imperative to consider factors other than support and access to more fully grasp the circumstances that shape Black female physical activity experiences. The physical activity socialization process for Black women may be influenced differently and indirectly by race, SES, and gender-role stereotypes in early in childhood. Several participants in the study shared stories of instances of when their gender, race, and class intertwined to shape the unique circumstances that shaped their physical activity participation including: 1) gender socialization, 2) lack of

sporting opportunities, 3) participating in minority to majority school bus programs, and (4) managing adulthood responsibilities.

Gender Socialization. As children, Peace, Yvonne, and Rita preferred to engage in indoor, small group, solitary, and non-challenging or competitive activities such as reading, “playing Barbie,” and watching television. Rita recalled:

My least favorite activity was being outside a lot. When I was, maybe like 8, I didn’t like to go outside a lot, especially in the summer time. I was a little chubby and [kids in the neighborhood] used to always pick on me a lot. That’s why I really didn’t like going outside, because they used to have jokes about fat kids particularly the boys, you know how boys are. I liked to stay in the house and play games and stuff. I read a lot when I was little, as well. You know, I did that in my spare time, I might sit around and might read a book, but I did enjoy reading

Yvonne recounted how she had her own little fun playing with Barbie dolls and making up stories:

I used to read and play with my dolls. I loved playing with my Barbie dolls. I was actually spoiled growing up. I used to have the house, the dollhouse with the convertible and I used to make up my own little stories. I used to have my own little fun! Sometimes my neighbor’s daughters would come over to play with me but for the most part I was by myself.

Peace remembered that she also thoroughly enjoyed playing with her dolls:

I was spoiled and I had every toy. I had three areas around the house; one was the cooking area. For some reason my parents put the kitchen stuff on the back porch I guess because we were making mud pies and quote unquote cooking with whatever we could find. It was like my own little house. I had a whole Barbie play set. I had the Barbie dream house and the Barbie mobile, and the pool, and the corvette. I had everything. I had a lot of friends in the neighborhood so I played outside all the time or everyone was always over my house playing Barbie; even the boys came over and played Barbie. They were Ken. My dad made an area in the garage with that green, I don’t know what it’s called, but like that green stuff you can put down so it was my grass. It was all set up in the garage and then upstairs in the playroom were my cabbage patch dolls. We had all the clothes for all different occasions. I had the twin bunk beds for my baby dolls and the changing table and we changed clothes and we just played and played and played. We just played the roles of our parents. We mimicked whatever we saw. Who was the mom today who’s the daddy.

Although women's participation in sports has increased dramatically in the past three decades, certain physical activities are still perceived by some as "masculine" and others as "feminine" (Koivula, 2001). Just as femininity has stereotypically come to be associated with traits such as gentle, nurturing, compassionate, and graceful, sports labeled as feminine are those that are less aggressive and emphasize aesthetics (Koivula). Evidence gleaned from the interviews of several participants suggested that they were aware of the cultural contradiction between femininity and being physically active. Peace stated, "When I was really young I didn't like to be outside at all. I was like no don't put me in no grass. I was just really girly, girly, girly. So my uncles used to throw me in the grass".

In elementary school, Claire describes her first experiences with the physically active/feminine dichotomy:

The thing was, I was really big for my age and I was stronger than some of the other kids. For the longest time I was the only child that was big as I was. Not really weight size but height was the issue. Then, in third grade another boy came and he was the same height as I was and we kind of stayed with each other throughout the rest of the years. We used to play volleyball. The net was only so high for kids and I could jump and hit it down but the other kids couldn't do that because they weren't tall enough. So when I spiked it on one of the boys you know of course the boys felt inferior or whatever so they started joking and calling me SHE-RA. Back then HE-MAN and SHE-RA were big cartoons. So that didn't really sit to well with me. When they first started calling me that I was embarrassed because I was like "I don't understand why they're calling me this. I just did what I learned to do at home." But I guess I learned again that some things you learn at home don't necessarily translate to school. For a while it kind of hurt my feelings.

Although Peace and Claire learned of the cultural contradiction between femininity and being physically active at an early age, other participants' comments suggested that they became

aware of the contradiction during their middle school years. For example, Ginger told the story of the reason she wanted to stop playing basketball:

I was totally a basketball fanatic until I'd say eighth or ninth grade, because then I wanted to be a girl. I was around one of my cousins who, at the time was graduating from high school, she was like ultra glamour queen. She was in all the pageants, and she was just so beautiful. So, that was kind of like, OK, being a tomboy is kind of getting old.

Roberta made a similar reference as she contrasted the girls that played tennis and girls that played basketball:

During middle school, the basketball thing... seemed kind of hard, or it wasn't girly enough for me... It's just that the girls who played on [the swim and tennis] teams were a little more girly than the girls that played, like, basketball... just different personalities... it's a different crowd.

When asked to elaborate on the differences between girls that played basketball and girls that played other sports such as swimming, Roberta commented:

The majority of the girls that swam were all slim, and lean, and kind of prissy. The girls that played basketball were more athletic... their build was more athletic... [they] were more defensive. Swimming, it was more competitive, as opposed to, basketball, you have to go up against the team. With the swimming, you just have your lane, you on the clock. To me, with the basketball, I didn't like the up close against them... to me, basketball's just different, because with the softball, we had the teams, we played against them, but even then, it wasn't so, in your face...

Yvonne made a similar contrast as she recalled how she chose the activities and games she participated in as a child:

I felt like as a female growing up, that basketball was so masculine, double-dutch was so feminine, and kickball was something neutral. Girls, typically girls at my schools especially, are really more so feminine and don't want to get dirty. Guys are not afraid to get dirty or sweat. That's not to say that I haven't played a fun game of basketball, but I was just playing around. Basketball as a sport, it's intense, that's why I say it's so masculine. Double-dutch is feminine because you just jump up and down and you're still looking cute to society. [When I was younger], I would have been like, "why is he doing this girly game? Could he be gay?" Society telling me, 'go play have fun'—not that I

could not have necessarily played basketball but all the girls in the neighborhood did double-dutch, so that's what I did. Kickball is neutral, I guess, because when I was growing up me and my boy cousins played kickball.

Although Yvonne suggested that girls don't want to get dirty, Claire constructed herself as different from most girls. As she told her story, Claire identified the difference in the activities Black girls in her school chose and the activity (e.g. soccer) that she chose:

[Track] was just not something I was interested in doing... that's what all the other black girls were in. It was still different because you run your little [race] and you still have your hair all nice and pretty and in soccer you can't really do that. You don't have time to wonder if your hair bow is on correct. I just didn't look at sport the same as other girls...I realized I could play and I could hit the ball farther than some other people...I could play flag football because I could run and some of the other girls were too prissy to try to run they didn't want to get sweaty. I didn't care. I was used to [getting sweaty]...Appearance was not as a concern for me. Some of the other kids were starting to wear makeup and stuff, I still don't wear makeup so that definitely is not a concern for me

Lacking Sport Opportunities. A few of the participants commented revealed ways that sexism impacted their ability to participate in physical activity. Specifically, their communities actively supported activity for boys but not for girls. For example, Jordan remembered the reasons she stopped participating in softball:

I was in the gym one day and signed up for [softball]. I just signed up for it. I'd sign up for anything just to keep myself busy. I signed up for it and started playing there for a couple of months and that was it... it was just something to do. I wasn't too good like the rest of the girls were. I didn't know how to catch with a glove. I did know how to hit [the ball], but I always got out. I didn't play it very long. It was probably about a month because the coach ...quit or he got fired and nobody took over. They didn't have another coach. There were other people who didn't play either because of that. One day we had a game and we was just sitting in the gym and we was wondering where the coach was. In the end we had to forfeit the game. Come to find out, we were waiting because he had been fired. I guess it was something that happened. I guess he got fired or he quit, one. They didn't tell us at all just not going to have no more girls' softball no more. Right to this minute, they still ain't got no softball. All the softball they got is the boys. That's the only baseball team they got now is for boys. They still don't have a girl's softball team up.

Claire shared that her private school did not initially have sports opportunities available for girls. Only after staff at her school “realized” that girls in the school also wanted to participate in sports and created a team, was she able to begin playing soccer.

[My sister and I] went to a private school and soccer was kind of the only sport they had. Your option was soccer or um uh basketball. And basketball hadn't gotten too developed because most of the people in the school system that wasn't the sport they did. They knew how to coach other people to play that soccer. So it was mostly just the boys playing and then they realized that most of the girls wanted something too so they started having a girls team. So that's how that got started. We wanted something to play and that was our option so our parents put us in it. Either that or ballet and we didn't want to do ballet so we ended up in soccer.

Participating in Minority to Majority Bus Programs. A few participants' stories revealed the complexities of participating in the Minority to Majority (M-to-M) bus program in middle and high school. The M-to-M bus program is one of many school integration attempts that grew out of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown versus Board of Education* when many schools were still *de facto* segregated due to inequality in housing and racial segregation in neighborhoods (Bhargava et al., 2008). As a part of the program the federal forced mandatory busing of students on cities nationwide at an attempt to further integrate schools. As revealed in a few of the participants stories attending schools that were in some cases many miles away from their' homes, often presented problems and negatively impacted their ability to participate in physical activity programs. Ginger recalled,

My high school was half [White] and half [minority]... We lived so far away from it. I had to M-to M to go out there. I was on the bus like forever at six o'clock in the morning. That sucked because my mom didn't want to drive all the way to Locaville Road. So if she had to come out there it better be important. And, then if you did stay, if you ride that shuttle, that's not going to get to my neighborhood until like 6:00 or 6:30 in the evening. It just doesn't make you want to do a whole lot after school. I mean I would still go

outside and play, but it definitely dampened my spirits towards wanting to join a team for another practice. I loved to play basketball but how was I going to really deal with practicing everyday and getting home from Wesley like every day? The shuttle was there, but can you imagine? That would be so miserable to get home.

Managing Our Priorities. Socialization into young womanhood, approximately between the ages of 15-18, brought many challenges and shaped the participants interest in physical activity. Preparing for college, desiring independence, attaining a job, and getting pregnant were obstacles for the women in the study as these issues became priority during their young adult years. Roberta explained:

When [my siblings and I] were younger, we played outside more, and then in middle school it kind of went down, and then we got older and started getting jobs, and, everybody just started branching off into things that they liked, that they, you know, they really wanted to do, as opposed to just doing a variety of things all the time...In elementary, [my siblings and I] were always outside more. We didn't have as much, I guess, we didn't have anything of our own to go to, as far as responsibility. Then middle school, we had activities that we wanted to do, that we participated in, where we had practice and then we started working, and we had to decide what we wanted to do and how we were going to spend our time. How much time we did this, or how much time went to that... managing our time...I stopped playing softball in high school because I didn't have enough time. I started working at Six Flags when I was 15. I worked there from 15 until I graduated high school. Then I started doing more... the activities I was doing at school changed. I joined the chess team. I joined health occupations and I joined Future Business Leaders of America. The activities changed...The activities I was doing at school weren't as physical I guess.

Tracie recounted how activities such as FBLA and after school job opportunities became her primary interest in high school:

In high school I got into a little more clubs or activities or whatever. I still didn't do any sports. I did mostly social clubs. I was in the beta club and FBLA...some Christian Club I think FCA. If it wasn't PE, I wasn't really doing anything sports related in school. My books were my priority at the time. That is what was stressed because I was getting ready for college. [My parents] wanted to make sure that I was taking the PSAT and going to these study groups. If I wasn't being tutored, I was tutoring somebody else. That's a lot of what I did during high school was studying. I tried to work but my parents didn't want

me to work so I just helped other people out. I guess I wanted to work in high school, because I wanted more independence at that age.

Peace remembered the difficulty in balancing work responsibilities and after school physical activity opportunities such as track: “I got a job it might have been 11th, 12th grade. I remember I got a job, and it interfered with practice. I just knew I wouldn’t be able to do the big track meets, so I just stopped.

After moving out of her parents home at the age of 13, Rita recounted how adult responsibilities impacted her interest to participate in former play activities such as cheerleading:

See I went to high school and then I thought I was grown. I left home at an early age. I left home at 13. When I moved out, I stopped cheerleading. It was a situation with my momma. She was back on drugs again, and I was basically just tired of just being there so I moved out, and I went to one of my friends houses. We went to Parks Middle together. I stayed with her grandmamma. I moved with her for a minute and then, after that, I was able to find a job. I started working at a restaurant when I was 13 years old. I I was working, I was doing stuff and I had my own money. My daddy, he found me my first apartment when I was like 14. I moved in my own apartment, and I’ve been living on my own ever since then. I just didn’t want to do [cheerleading]. It was just something that I just stopped doing after I started hanging out and being with older people. I was always hanging with people older than me. Once I moved out from my parents, I was basically on my own. I was doing the womanly thing, as a woman just taking care of myself, and just being responsible, that was it. Staying strong, that’s the only thing that I really just focused on.

With a lack of sport opportunities for girls her age, Jordan took up other recreational activities in high school. She stated,

In 9th grade, I did get myself a little boyfriend. One day we decided to cut school and ooh la. We made it back to the school before school was out. Then about a couple of weeks later, I was sick. I was sick at school and I was throwing up a lot... I messed around and got pregnant. I was in tenth grade. I was still with my mom and dad so I was still going to school. I was still going to school and I ended up passing to the eleventh grade so it really didn't stop me from doing [school] 'til you know how you get older. You don't want to wake up then I just stayed on at home and took care of my baby.

Yvonne recalled being pressured by her family members to be successful. She also recites a list of college prep and other after school activities in which she participated,

My high school period was really involved and just focused....Cause my family puts a lot of pressure on me to succeed. I was a choral magnet at [my school] when I was a freshman. Chorus. Singing. Music. We had after school practice as well as during the day too. You have your day time class and then after school let out we would be there 2 hours after school practicing...When I was in chorus, there were different people that we had to perform for like the Mayors, and the Black Caucus. We did do a lot of performances and we were well known. That's what I used to do all the time. I was also in a college-prep, college-based organization from eight grade summer until I graduated. It's always at a college. After school, we go [to the college] and have to do 4 hours of tutoring to 8 or 9 every night. We went during the summer too. During the summer time we took classes, like classes we were going to take the following year. We also did college tours to see what our interests were and just kind of help [us].All of us were pretty much first – well, that's apart of getting in the sub-program you have to be a first generation college student. They were just trying to encourage us to go to college. Starting my 11th grade year, I was inducted in the National Honor Society. I was also in the environmental club, I was a SGA representative.

In conclusion, seven factors emerged as salient to Black women's physical activity experiences: 1) having physically active role models during childhood encouraged participants to become involved in active and structured play activities such as walking, soccer, cheerleading, and basketball; 2) living in close proximity to parks and recreation centers facilitated physical activity; 3) providing physical opportunities for girls served as a convenient and inexpensive way

to participate in physical activity programs; 4) as the participants entered high school, perceiving that peers expected them to behave in appropriately “feminine” ways caused participants to engage in less vigorous forms of physical activity; 5) participating in physical activity with same sex peers became salient to physical activity engagement in high school; 6) taking long bus rides home through the Minority to Majority bus program discouraged physical activity participation after school; and 7) managing priorities and other adult responsibilities, such as preparing for college and pregnancy, decreased participants’ interest in physical activity.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to investigate Black women's physical activity experiences from elementary to high school with the goal of helping health promotion practitioners and researchers develop programs to prevent the decline in physical activity among Black adolescents. Two research questions guided the study: (1) What factors in the community shape physical activity for young Black women? (2) How does being Black and female shape attitudes and engagement concerning physical activity from elementary to high school? To answer these questions, I used a qualitative inquiry approach because the nature of the research questions warranted an inductive method of analysis. Nine Black women, who ranged in age from 20 to 26 years and lived in Georgia, participated in narrative interviews.

In response to the first question—*What factors in the community shape physical activity for young Black women?*—this study unveiled several factors in the community that shaped participants' physical activity experiences between elementary and high school. I defined community as “a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings.” (MacQueen et al., 2001, p.1929). This study found that certain groups of people living in the community, particularly family members and peers increased participants' physical activity adoption and maintenance. There is substantial evidence that physical activity adoption and maintenance is positively associated with social support. Results from this study demonstrate that Black girls and adolescents may also benefit from social support. Types and sources of social support for promoting physical activity have been discussed by Springer, Kelder, and

Hoelscher (2006); and Trost and colleagues (2003) . Similar to each authors discussion of social support, decisions to adopt and maintain physical activity in this study were shaped by three types of support 1) involvement in activity (i.e., the extent to which those in their social network model behavior); 2) encouragement (i.e. the extent to which those in their social network encouraged participants to be active); and 3) facilitation (i.e., enrolling participants in sports and driving them to events). Two sources of social support, family and peers, were important to study participants. This finding is consistent with research conducted by Sallis and colleagues (2000). Family members were important sources of social support in early childhood through elementary school, and friends and same sex peers became more important agents of social support during adolescents and in into young adulthood. The family was the primary and most essential socializing agent for physical activity during childhood. Each of the participant's narratives revealed how they were socialized by immediate and extended family members as children and how these models greatly influenced their lives. It is in the family that girls were validated, learned about gender roles, and learned about the importance (or lack thereof) of physical activity and proper nutrition. Distinguishing influences from within the family (parent, siblings, aunts, cousins etc.) could be an area to explore further. Promoting physical activity programs that enhance social interaction among girl peers and centers on their specific activity needs may prevent activity decline during the middle and high school (Salvy et al., 2009). Additionally more research is needed to study the influence of same sex peers on physical and sedentary activities.

Certain geographical locations and settings in the communities in which participants lived also shaped physical activity. Parks and recreation centers have been discussed in the

literature as valuable settings for physical activity (Cohen et al., 2006). For example, in one study physical activity was higher among girls who lived within one mile of parks and the highest level was among girls who lived less than one-half mile from a park (Cohen et al.). The availability of neighborhood facilities for physical activity may be particularly relevant for Black girls who do not have transportation, live in crime filled neighborhoods, or are limited by their parents on the distance they can travel from home. Research should examine the features that make parks an attractive place for physical activity, particularly in low-income neighborhoods.

Based on comments from Ginger and Peace, another community setting that may be important to physical activity participation is the church. The church is often viewed as a particularly relevant institution in southern Black communities (Drayton-Brooks & White, 2004; Giger et al., 2008; Rubin et al., 1994). In a study of adult, church-going Black women, physical activity programs at a church significantly increased women's ability to engage in recommended amounts of moderate to vigorous physical activity (Bopp et al., 2007). Churches hold promise for helping African-American adolescent girls become more active, as was attempted in *Go Girls!*, a church-based nutrition and physical activity program designed for African-American girls (Resnicow et al., 2005).

School is also an important setting for physical activity. Participants faced difficulty managing school afterschool responsibilities or adult responsibilities such as pregnancy and work. Attempting to manage and prioritize these responsibilities led to physical activity decline during high school. As one participant noted, "When we were younger, we played outside more... we didn't have as much responsibility." She further states the change that occurred as she got older, "...then in middle school it went down... we had to decide what we wanted to do

and how we were going to spend our time.” The participants comments reflects that that adolescents do not just all of sudden become inactive, increasing responsibilities as one ages, such as graduating, completing homework, tutoring, and in one case becoming a mother, take priority over “having fun” through “play.” Due to difficulties in managing their time and the necessity to manage their priorities, participants reported not engaging in any structured activity outside school physical education (PE). Even when opportunities to join a sports team in high school occurred, attempting to fit a sports team practice with other school activities proved difficult. Additionally, participants reported that after 8th or 9th grade—where physical activity is required—they are not required to take PE. Concerns over raising academic standards and standardized test scores in schools, extracurricular courses like PE courses are being replaced with more time in the classroom. As Ginger stated, “Beyond that, students did not take PE unless they were an athlete or they needed to boost their GPA because I went to a school that was big on academics. Unless you were an athlete and that was your thing, once you got those [PE] credits in ninth grade, you were done.” Other studies have highlighted similar issues of time management negatively impacting adolescent activity (Dwyer et al., 2006; Robbins et al., 2003; Sleaf & Wormald, 2001). The results speak to the need for schools to mandate physical activity opportunities. Policies that allow for brief 5-10 minutes physical activity bursts or exercise breaks in class maybe helpful. After five to six class periods, students would accumulate 30 minutes of activity in a day. In some cases, such as students participating in minority to majority bus programs, this may be one of the few opportunities for adolescent girls to be physically active. Furthermore, short burst of exercise may be helpful for girls that enjoy less vigorous forms of exercise.

Children who may be naturally active at young ages learn and adapt certain behavior based on the common perspectives shared by those in their community (Franzini et al., 2009). Through a variety of socialization influences girls may learn to adapt gender specific roles that influence sedentary patterns of living as they are socialized at young ages to choose passive activities over those that require physical exertion (Guiliano et al., 2000). This socialization is often demonstrated in toy commercials (e.g. Playskool Rose Petal Cottage) and through the toys that parents purchase for their children (Giuliano et al.). Although this research has not been applied to physical activity socialization as such, it does have implications for the way that girls learn societal stereotypes for their gender (i.e. passive, inactive, cute, etc.). For example, Peace's statement, "We mimicked whatever we saw" highlights the importance of parents in shaping activity behavior at an early age. Peace's choice for play activity was shaped not only by the sedentary behavior she mimicked from others in her social context, but also the toys that her parents introduced to her as a child. Both Peace and Yvonne were given dolls, such as Cabbage Patch and Barbie, and doll paraphernalia such as cars, diaper changing tables and twin beds. Peace even states that her father placed imitation grass in the garage because she hated playing outside. Less overt and hidden messages that female adolescents receive to "act like a girl" may prevent physical activity as there is a cultural imperative for girls to engage in girl behavior and to behave differently than boys. For example, around the age of thirteen or fourteen, Ginger told herself, "I've got to have a boyfriend too because everybody else is doing it." Also, in the midst of pageants and an "ultra glamour queen" she decided she wanted "to be a girl" because "being a tomboy was getting old." Bordo (1993) and Krane (2004) would have suggested however that Ginger's choice "to be a girl" was not entirely a independent choice. Krane stated,

“...if the only women privileged are those who conform to ideal femininity and a woman wants to garner social acceptance, then the only option is to conform to the ideals of feminine behavior as there are consequences for not performing one’s gender correctly.”
(p.317)

In Ginger’s case being socially accepted is having the ability to obtain a boyfriend like the other “privileged” adolescent girls in her high school. Consequences to not performing one’s gender correctly and are exhibited in the stories of Jordan and Claire. Both girls attempted to resist the often overt, sometimes subtle, and powerful standards of femininity they faced by skillfully playing basketball, kickball, and volleyball in the midst of teasing from male counterparts, other classmates, or in Claire’s case, discipline from a teacher. Their experiences fall in line with research that suggests that boys are intimidated by active girls (Vu et al., 2006). These norms also may act to influence behavior in adulthood as can be noted through Jordan’s comment regarding the differences in activity between men and women and children and adults in her community.

Some researchers have suggested that messages from society that Black girls receive about hair may act as a barrier to physical activity in young girls (Taylor et al., 1999; Greiser et al., 2006). In this study, however, hair did not emerge as a deterrent to physical activity during childhood, adolescence, or adulthood. This result may suggest that women in this study found creative ways to deal with their hair care issues. More Black women in recent years wear their hair in natural styles that are less likely to be disturbed during exercise (e.g. braids, dreadlocks, or afros).

Past research has demonstrated that media images play a considerable role in how women feel about their bodies (Strahan et al., 2006). Current standards for beauty often cast through media in this culture inordinately emphasize the desirability for thinness; an ideal accepted by most women but one that is unrealistic and unattainable. Some research indicates that Black women and girls are less susceptible to ideals of thinness and document a preference for larger body size, which is often supported by positive reinforcement from adults (Padgett & Biro, 2003; Wolf, 1993). Unexpectedly, the stories from participants in this study showed otherwise. Participants received varying messages through media, family, and peers and responded to these messages in different ways. Peace was teased for having a small frame and wanted to gain fifteen pounds in college to be more attractive to men, which corresponds to findings from previous studies, but was less concerned about engaging in physical activity as she got older because of the “small gene” that runs in her family. In other words, she is not overweight and expected that she was not going to gain weight in the future, so she put little value in physical activity. For two of the participants, Ginger and Tiffany, images of women models in videos and messages caused various responses. For Ginger, messages caused her to be dissatisfied with her body, and she tried several fad diets. As seen from these examples, when Black girl adolescents live in a culture that values thinness, it influences them to perceive overweight negatively (Adams et al., 2000). Although desire to decrease overweight may pose short term benefits to health, increased preoccupation with appearance and dissatisfaction with body images increase the risk of extreme behavior to help control weight, such as extreme dieting and exercise compulsion. In this regard, physical activity should be promoted as a way to maintain health versus to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight. Too often people confuse being skinny with being healthy, which is

not necessarily true, especially for Black girls and women with larger bone density. Health practitioners should educate girls on proper nutrition and should create awareness of the negative societal messages about body image that girls receive through media.

In response to the second question—*How does being Black and female shape attitudes and engagement concerning physical activity from elementary to high school?*—this study found that race—when examined in context with socioeconomic status and gender—interacted in unique ways to limit physical activity opportunities and contribute to physical activity decline. For example, participation in the Minority to Majority (M-to-M) bus program illustrates one way in which race and SES interacted to shape some participants' physical activity. The way that gender and SES interact to shape physical activity can be illustrated through Jordan's story. She lived in a predominately Black and economically disadvantaged neighborhood, relied solely on free physical activity opportunities (e.g. softball) provided through the recreation center in her neighborhood. According to Peace, due to financial strains at the center, the center could not afford to hire another coach for the team, and the girls' softball team was dismantled. Although I was not able to obtain information to determine if the coaches for boys' teams are paid, the interesting part of Jordan's story is that, 10 years later, a softball team for girls still does not exist; however, a boys' softball team still exists, along with other activities catered to boys. Similarly, Claire recalled a story about the initial lack of soccer opportunities for girls at her school. Economic conditions and institutional barriers limited physical activity for several women in the study. Their stories illustrate the persistent social and economic barriers that disproportionately Black affect females. The cultural prominence of men's and boys sport and disproportionate lack of opportunity for girls to participate in school and community physical

activity shortchange girls in their pursuit of physical activity. More research is needed to examine how race impacts physical activity opportunities for Black girls living in low socioeconomic communities. Without considering the way that race, class, and gender intersect, physical activity programs will be designed assuming that individuals are free to make decisions and choices about their health. Black women who do not exercise may be viewed as lazy or lacking will power. Since the existence of the Black women in America has been characterized as a struggle, it should be acknowledged that priorities in Black women's lives are not always organized so that they can choose active leisure. Lack of discretionary income, poor transport, long hours of necessary work, and obligations to family contribute to the ways women set priorities and make decisions. By examining the intersection of race, gender, and SES and their impact on health, practitioners and researchers can have a broad and more complete understanding of the complex social processes that influence physical activity.

In addition to the responses to each research question, the study found that the physical activity of most participants declined between the ages of 13-17. This finding is consistent with previous research by Kimm and colleagues (2002) which showed an accelerated decline in physical activity during the middle and high school years. Between the tender ages of 13 and 17, Jordan became pregnant; Rita moved into her own apartment; Ginger became influenced by less overt pressures to be feminine; and Roberta, Yvonne, Peace Tiffany, and Tracie obtained jobs which shifted their active lifestyles as children. Making physical activity a priority in the midst of these barriers proved difficult for the participants. Health promotion practitioners should encourage Black girls to take advantage of incidental and work related physical activity (Tremblay et al., 2007). Responses provided through the IPAQ, indicate that participants may

already be reaping the benefits of incidental activity because they appear to be highly active as a group. Their moderate to high exercise levels could be the result of the way in which the IPAQ short form assesses total physical activity. Total physical activity is assessed across four domains (leisure, domestic, work related and transport related activity) and three specific types (walking, moderate, and vigorous) of activity which results in a higher MET/min per week scores than if only “leisure time physical activity” had been calculated. With salaries at approximately \$20,000 or less or year many of them did not have cars and thus their primary means of travel was walking. Although some women in the study did not engage in formal or structured leisure physical activity, they often walked to the store, park, bus station, and other destinations in their neighborhood to meet their daily needs. Additionally, several of the participants’ occupations (i.e. hairstylist, retail sales associate, nurse) were less sedentary and required a lot of “walking back and forth” so it appears as if they are sufficiently active.

Limitations

The results of this study must be considered in light of its limitations. First, the use of narratives relies on the participants’ memory of past events. The way that these events are relayed to the researcher can be influenced by several contextual factors such as the participant’s current state of mind, emotional or physical well-being, and the power dynamics between the researcher and the participant. According to Denzin (1989) “A life lived is what actually happens... A life as told... is a narrative, influenced by the cultural conventions of telling, by the audience, and by the social context” (p. 30). Since external factors can influence the way narratives are told, some may question the researcher’s ability to present “true” stories or past accounts of events. However, Riessman (1993) helped clarify this limitation by stating, “personal

narrative is not meant to be read as an exact record of everything or even what actually happened in the person's life" (p. 64). Furthermore, Atkinson (1998) states "Historical truth is not the main issue in narrative; telling a story implies a certain, and maybe unique, point of view" (p.60). To correct for this limitation, member checks encouraged participants to reflect on the information presented in their narratives. Second, there could be bias due to self selection into the study. It is possible that women more interested in health and physical activity were more likely to consent to participate in the study than those who were less attentive to in that regard. Third, the small sample of participants included in the study limits its generalizability. However, the goal of this study was to not to generalize results to a larger population of Black women, since Black women in this country are not a monolithic group, but to highlight meaningful factors that influenced participants' physical activity. Thus, in-depth description of individual subjective experiences was chosen.

Implications for Further Research and Practice

The results in this and previous studies exploring the transition from activity to inactivity represent a useful foundation for further research and programmatic areas in the field of physical activity and health promotion. Findings from this study provide valuable information and an additional information on how the interplay of race, class, and gender on the transition from childhood to adulthood in Black girls and adolescent. This study has provided informative lessons for health promotion practitioners, policy makers, and public health researchers, and school educators. In particular, policy makers can help school create new guidelines and adopting curricula that address physical activity. Health promotion practitioners can lobby for financing for neighborhood parks, recreation centers, and church facilities in Black

underprivileged, neighborhoods. These community facilities can enhance provide opportunities for Black girls and adolescents to increase physical activity. Further, these facilities can incentivize adults in the neighborhood to be mentors and role models. Additionally researchers should:

1. Differentiate the different types of influences from within the family (mother vs. father, extended vs. immediate, male vs. female cousins) on physical activity and examine how the quality of that relationship mediates that influence.
2. Identify the features that make parks an attractive place for physical activity, particularly in low-income neighborhoods.
3. Examine how race and gender impacts physical activity opportunities within a cohort of Black girls living in low, middle, and high socioeconomic communities.
4. Conduct a meta-analysis to evaluate the impact of physical activity on education achievement or standardized test scores.
5. Untangle the complex interaction of race, gender, and SES and its impact on physical activity.
6. Track and compare, from elementary to high school, the physical activity practices of Black, Hispanic, and Asian girls and adolescents to identify critical turning points and social environmental influences.

Practitioners and school educators should:

1. Encourage families to support their daughters' sports and physical activity participation through supporting participation in PE and sports, facilitating those activities, or modeling active behavior during elementary school.

2. Promote physical activity programs in middle and high school schools, neighborhood recreation centers, and churches that enhance social interaction among girls and centers catered to girls specific activity needs. Create educational opportunities for girls and adolescents that will help them to learn to balance school, workloads, and extracurricular activities with some leisure pursuit
3. Encourage incidental physical activity and create policies that allow for 5-10 minute classroom physical activity burst, as this may be the only time that some girls have to engage in physical activity.
4. Include curriculum in physical education classes that help students dispel myths about gender-specific physical activity behavior.
5. Ensure that those responsible for providing sport and recreation opportunities in community deliver an equitable range of opportunities and learning experiences for girls.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
RECRUITMENT FLYER

Black Women's

Atlanta, GA

Health

TAKE PART IN AN IMPORTANT EXERCISE STUDY!

Are you an Black American woman?
Are you between the ages of 18 and 25 and not pregnant?
Have you been a GA resident for at least 10 years?

If you answered

YES

to these questions,
tell your story &
receive

\$50

**Participate in this study and help contribute to the health
of Black women in Atlanta, Georgia.**

The purpose of the study is to learn what helps Black women maintain physically active lifestyles. This study is being conducted by the Department of Health Promotion and Behavior at the University of Georgia.

If interested, please contact Raegan Tuff at
rtuff@uga.edu or (678) 446-7366 for more information.

APPENDIX B
PARTICIPANT SCREENER

Participation Screener

Screening Criteria:

1. **Black American woman**
2. **Between the ages of 18-25 years.**
3. **Have lived in Georgia 10 or more years.**
4. **Not currently be pregnant**

Hello. Thank you so much for your interest in my project. I'd like to ask you a few questions, but before I do, allow me to introduce myself and provide you with background on the project. I am a graduate student in at University of Georgia. The main purpose of my work is to promote optimal health for Black women across the life span- physically, mentally and spiritually. Research indicates that exercise is a great way to do that. So my project is solely for the purpose of determining the types of exercises in which young Black women typically participate and the settings in which those activities normally occur. Are you still interested in taking part in the project? May I ask you a few questions to determine if you are eligible?

1. Are you between the age of 18-25?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No (Thank and terminate the call)
2. In what year were you born?
3. Are you currently pregnant?
 - a. Yes (Thank and terminate call)
 - b. No (Proceed to next question)
4. How long have you been living in GA?
5. Do you exercise right now?
 - a. If so, how much do you exercise right now?
6. In what type of exercises do you normally engage?
 - a. Light (walking slowly, gardening/pruning, dusting, vacuuming, chasing the kids around)
 - b. Moderate(e.g. walking briskly, dancing, tennis, scrubbing floors, washing windows, bicycling]
 - c. Vigorous (running, basketball, track, swimming laps, running, bicycling more than 10 mph)

Invitation:

Thank you for answering my questions. You are eligible to participate in the interview about women's exercise. You will be asked to participate in an interview sessions that will last about 1.5- 2 hours. You may be asked to participate in a 30 minute interview follow-up. You will be reimbursed a total of \$50 for your time and effort. The interview will include questions about family, friends, neighborhood, and your behavior from elementary to high school, and include questions on physical activity

The interview is solely for the purpose of examining the types of activities that in which Black women typically participate. The results will hopefully lead to the development of health programs designed specifically for Black women.

The interviews will be held the week of _____ at _____.

Please provide me with a day and corresponding times during that week that are convenient for you:

(1) _____ at _____ AM/PM

Thank you very much for agreeing to interview with me. In the next week, I will send you a packet that contains the following items:

- A confirmation letter explaining the study
- Consent form
- IPAQ survey
- Demographic questionnaire

Can I have your address so that I may send the packet?

You will receive a reminder phone call 2 days before our scheduled interview. What is the best phone number I can use to contact you on those days?

Phone Number: _____

Thank you so much and we appreciate the time you have taken to talk with me.

APPENDIX C
COVER LETTER

Cover Letter

Date

Participant Name

Address

Dear _____:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in my doctoral research project entitled, Herstory: Exploring the Physical Activity Experiences of Black Women. The purpose of this study is for me to learn directly from young Black women who are willing to share and reflect on their lives what will help Black women maintain physically active lifestyles across the lifespan. It is my hope that this study will demonstrate the importance and the need for more physical activity programs that cater to the needs and cultural values of Black women in the southeast.

I have enclosed a consent form for you to read. I will have copies of the consent form at the interview for you to sign. Also enclosed is a reminder card with the day, time, and location of your interview. Your interview will take place over two days. Each day the interview will last two hours and be audio recorded for accuracy. Refreshments will be provided.

At the end of your interview you will receive a \$50 money order to thank you for your time. I will send you a copy of your interview transcript and a summary of your story to verify that I did not misrepresent what you stated. In the event that I need to clarify any statements made during your interview, one 30-minute conversation may take place via phone.

I will call you two days before the day of your scheduled interview. If, for any reason, you are unable to attend your interview please call me at 678.446.7366. If you wish to have more information or have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me or my advisor, Dr. Pamela Orpinas, at 706.542-4333. Thank you again for your interest in this very important study.

Sincerely,

Raegan Tuff
Department of Health Promotion and Behavior
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30606

Enclosures, (IPAQ survey, demographic survey, consent form)

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Dear (Name of Participant):

You are invited to participate in a study called Herstory: Exploring the Physical Activity Practices of Black Women. The goal of Herstory is to learn what helps Black women maintain physically active lifestyles. This project is led by Raegan Tuff under the direction of Dr. Pamela Orpinas at the University of Georgia (UGA).

About your participation in Herstory

If you decide to participate, you will take part in one interview session that will last between 1.5 to 2 hours depending on how much you have to say. The interview will include questions about family, friends, neighborhood, and your behavior, including questions about physical activity.

- Your participation is voluntary. If at any time, or for any reason, you do not want to continue, you can stop with no negative consequences.
- I will audiotape the interview to make sure she heard clearly all that you said during the discussion. When the study is finished, I will erase all tapes.
- The report of results will not include any information that would reveal who you are. A pseudonym of your choice will be used for recording the interview and this name will also be used in the final report.
- You may be asked to participate in a 30-min long follow-up session via phone in the event that I need to clarify any statements you made during the interview.
- I don't anticipate that the interview questions will cause you stress or worry.
- You may not benefit directly from the study but your participation will help me understand how to better help Black women obtain optimal health throughout their lifespan.
- If you have a question at any time, please call or email me, Raegan Tuff (678-446-7366; rtuff@uga.edu) or Dr. Pamela Orpinas, my academic advisor at the UGA School of Public Health (706-542-4372; porpinas@uga.edu).

Participant Agreement:

I understand the project described above. My questions have been answered and I agree to participate in Herstory. I have received a copy of this form.

Your Name

Your Signature

Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to Chris A. Joseph, PhD Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 606A Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu

APPENDIX E
PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Participant Demographic Survey

1. What year were you born? _____
2. In what city do you currently live? _____
3. Please provide the name and city of your elementary middle and high schools:
 - a. Elementary School Name _____ City _____
 - b. Middle School Name _____ City _____
 - c. High School Name _____ City _____
4. How tall are you?
 - d. _____ ft _____ in
5. How much do you currently weigh?
6. What is your current marital status?
 - a. Married
 - b. Single
 - c. Cohabiting
7. How many children do you have?
 - a. What ages are your children?
 - b. How many currently live with you?
8. If you have children, is there anyone living in your home that helps you to care for your children when you are away?
9. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?
 - a. Employed full time
 - b. Employed part- time
 - c. Unemployed, seeking work
 - d. Student
 - e. Full time homemaker
 - f. Other (please specify) _____

10. If you are currently working, what is your approximate annual salary?
- a. Less than \$20,000
 - b. \$20,000-29,999
 - c. \$30,000-39,999
 - d. \$40,000- 49,999
 - e. \$50,000-\$59,999
 - f. \$60,000-\$69,999
 - g. \$70,000 or more
11. When you are at work, which of the following best describes what you do? Would you say—
- a. Mostly sitting or standing
 - b. Mostly walking
 - c. Mostly heavy labor or physically demanding work
 - d. Don't know / Not sure
12. If you are currently working, what is your occupation? What type of work do you do?
13. In what types of physical activities do you enjoy participating?
14. What is your highest degree or diploma earned? (Check one)
- a. No Diploma
 - b. GED
 - c. Technical degree
 - d. High School
 - e. Associates degree
 - f. Bachelor's degree
 - g. Master's degree
 - h. Other _____
15. Please describe your parents highest educational level below:
- | | |
|---|---|
| <u>Mother or other guardian (check one)</u> | <u>Father or other guardian (check one)</u> |
| No diploma | No diplomas |
| High School or GED | High School or GED |
| Some college | Some college |

Associates degree
Bachelors degree
Master's degree or higher
I don't know

Associates degree
Bachelors degree
Master's degree or higher
I don't know

Thanks for your responses!

APPENDIX F
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Guide
Herstory: Exploring Physical Activity Patterns
Using Life History Methodology

Raegan A. Tuff, University of Georgia
November 6, 2007

CHILDHOOD

1. Describe for me your favorite activity as a child.
 - a. PROBE: What about X was so enjoyable to you?
 - b. PROBE: What other activities did you enjoy?
 - c. PROBE: What was your least favorite childhood activity?"
 - d. PROBE: Did any of your childhood activities involve physical activity?"
2. What were your favorite childhood games?
 - a. PROBE: With whom did you play?
 - b. PROBE: How often did you play?
3. Tell me about your family. What was your family like when you were little?
4. Looking back to your childhood, how would you describe "a day in the life" of your mother?
 - a. PROBE: What sorts of things did she do with her time out side of work?
5. How would you describe "a day in the life" of your father?
 - a. PROBE: What sorts of things did he do with his time outside of work?
6. In what sorts of activities did your family participate together?
7. Where did you live as a child? Describe the neighborhood you grew up in.
 - a. PROBE: What was most memorable about your neighborhood?

ADOLESCENCE

8. What was your high school period like for you?
9. Describe your high school.
 - a. How did you get to school?
 - b. What was the racial composition of your school?
 - c. What did you like most about high school? What did you like least about high school?
10. Describe a specific event from your high school years (13-18) that stands out as being especially important or significant. It may be a positive or negative memory.

- a. PROBE: What happened? Who was involved?
 - b. PROBE: What were you thinking and feeling?
 - c. What impact has the event had on you? Why is it important?
11. What was your favorite subject in high school?
12. What was your least favorite subject in school?
13. Did any of your high school subjects include physical activity, sports, or physical activity?
- a. PROBE: If yes, describe the class for me.
 - b. PROBE: What did you like most about the class?
 - c. PROBE: What did you like least about the class?
14. How do you think your fellow classmates from school remember you best?
15. Were there any fads during your youth that you remember vividly?
16. Did you and your friends have a special hang-out where you liked to spend time?
- a. PROBE: Where was it and what did you do there?

ADULTHOOD

17. Now that you have told me a little bit about your past, I would like you to consider the future.
- a. PROBE: Describe a positive future. That is, please describe what you would like to happen in the future for your life story regarding your overall health.
18. Can you describe for me what you think a healthy life style is?
- a. Of the lifestyle elements you described, which of these do you think are most important in your adulthood life?

APPENDIX G
INTERNATIONAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY QUESTIONNAIRE
(SHORT FORM)

INTERNATIONAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY QUESTIONNAIRE

I am interested in finding out about the kinds of physical activities that people do as part of their everyday lives. The questions will ask you about the time you spent being physically active in the **last 7 days**. Please answer each question even if you do not consider yourself to be an active person. Please think about the activities you do at work, as part of your house and yard work, to get from place to place, and in your spare time for recreation, exercise or sport. Please indicate the name of the activity next to each question.

Think about all the **vigorous** activities that you did in the **last 7 days**. **Vigorous** physical activities refer to activities that take hard physical effort and make you breathe much harder than normal. Think *only* about those physical activities that you did for at least 10 minutes at a time.

1. During the **last 7 days**, on how many days did you do **vigorous** physical activities like heavy lifting, digging, aerobics, or fast bicycling?

_____ **days per week**

☐

No vigorous physical activities ➡ **Skip to question 3**

2. How much time did you usually spend doing **vigorous** physical activities on one of those days?

_____ **hours per day**

_____ **minutes per day**

☐

Don't know/Not sure

Think about all the **moderate** activities that you did in the **last 7 days**. **Moderate** activities refer to activities that take moderate physical effort and make you breathe somewhat harder than normal. Think *only* about those physical activities that you did for at least 10 minutes at a time.

3. During the **last 7 days**, on how many days did you do **moderate** physical activities like carrying light loads, bicycling at a regular pace, or doubles tennis? Do not include walking.

_____ **days per week**

☐ No moderate physical activities ➡ **Skip to question 5**

4. How much time did you usually spend doing **moderate** physical activities on one of those days?

_____ **hours per day**

_____ **minutes per day**

☐ Don't know/Not sure

Think about the time you spent **walking** in the **last 7 days**. This includes at work and at home, walking to travel from place to place, and any other walking that you might do solely for recreation, sport, exercise, or leisure.

5. During the **last 7 days**, on how many days did you **walk** for at least 10 minutes at a time?

_____ **days per week**

☐ No walking ➡ **Skip to question 7**

6. How much time did you usually spend **walking** on one of those days?

_____ **hours per day**

_____ **minutes per day**

☐ Don't know/Not sure

The last question is about the time you spent **sitting** on weekdays during the **last 7 days**. Include time spent at work, at home, while doing course work and during leisure time. This may include time spent sitting at a desk, visiting friends, reading, or sitting or lying down to watch television.

7. During the **last 7 days**, how much time did you spend **sitting** on a **week day**?

_____ **hours per day**

_____ **minutes per day**

☐

Don't know/Not sure

This is the end of the questionnaire, thank you for participating

APPENDIX H
PARTICIPANT ACTIVITY CATEGORIES

PARTICIPANT	INTENSITY	MET LEVEL	MINUTES	DAYS/ WEEK	MET MINUTES/ WEEK	LEVEL OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
PEACE	VIGOROUS	8.00	0	0	0	LOW
	MODERATE	4.00	10	1	40	
	WALKING	3.30	60	1	198	
JORDAN	VIGOROUS	8.00	0	0	0	MODERATE
	MODERATE	4.00	30	2	60	
	WALKING	3.30	30	7	693	
CLAIRE	VIGOROUS	8.00	38	2	608	MODERATE
	MODERATE	4.00	30	2	240	
	WALKING	3.30	0	0	0	
TRACIE	VIGOROUS	8.00	120	1	960	MODERATE
	MODERATE	4.00	30	2	240	
	WALKING	3.30	20	3	198	
YVONNE	VIGOROUS	8.00	0	0	0	MODERATE
	MODERATE	4.00	0	0	0	
	WALKING	3.30	80	5	1320	
RITA	VIGOROUS	8.00	0	0	0	MODERATE
	MODERATE	4.00	60	6	1440	
	WALKING	3.30	20	6	396	
ROBERTA	VIGOROUS	8.00	60	1	480	MODERATE
	MODERATE	4.00	30	3	360	
	WALKING	3.30	60	7	1386	
TIFFANY	VIGOROUS	8.00	0	0	0	HIGH
	MODERATE	4.00	120	1	480	
	WALKING	3.30	200	7	4620	

GINGER	VIGOROUS	8.00	35	3	840	HIGH
	MODERATE	4.00	60	7	1680	
	WALKING	3.30	60	7	1386	

Example Calculation:

Walking = 3.3 METs

Moderate Intensity = 4.0 METs

Vigorous Intensity = 8.0 METs

$3.3 \times 30 \times 5 = 495$ MET-minutes/week

$4.0 \times 30 \times 5 = 600$ MET-minutes/week

$8.0 \times 30 \times 5 = 1,200$ MET-minutes/week

TOTAL = 2,295 MET-minutes/week

Total MET-minutes/week = Walk (METs*min*days) + Mod (METs*min*days) + Vig (METs*min*days)