
Discrimination: How It Affects Health and What Can Be Done to Cope With It!

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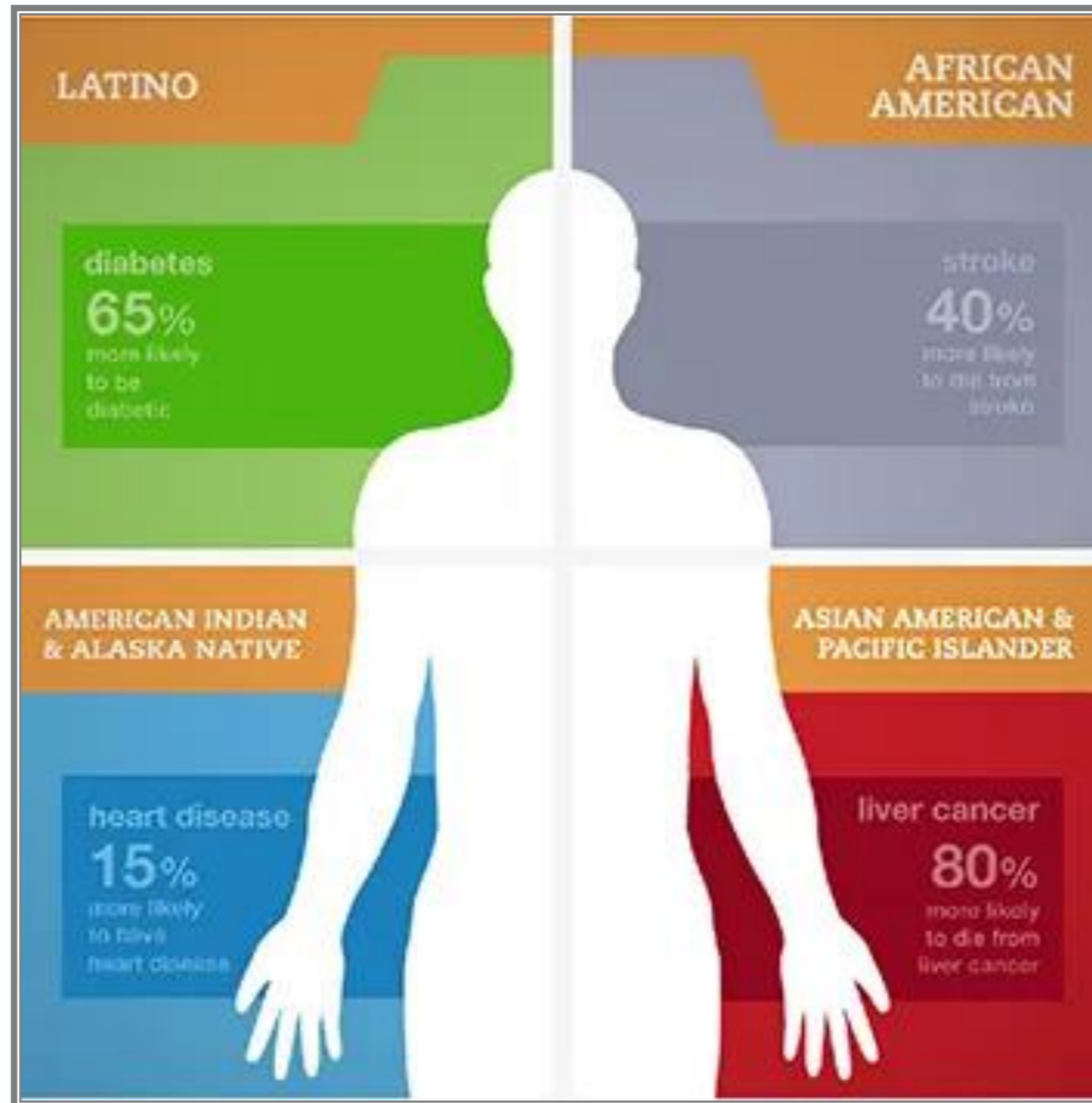
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Disclosures:

NONE

Social Inequality in Well-Being



Group-Based Social Stress & Well-Being

Contending with group-based social stress (e.g., stereotype threat, perceived discrimination) shapes cognitive, psychological, behavioral, and physiological outcomes

**How Does Discrimination
Affect Health?**

**What Are Strategies That
Physicians Can Use To Help
People Cope With
Discrimination?**

Part I: Discrimination and Health



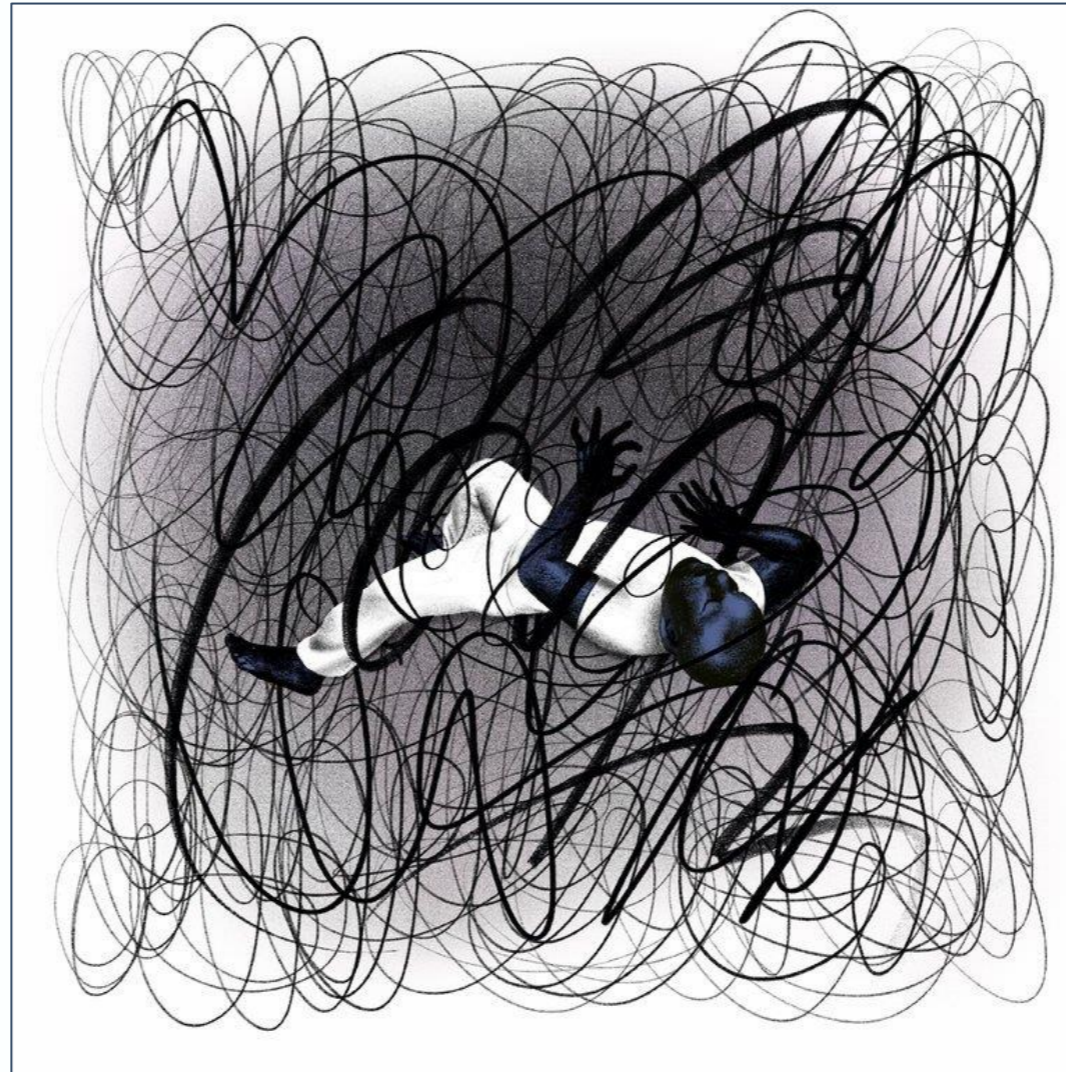
Part II: Strategies to Help People Cope with Discrimination



Discrimination

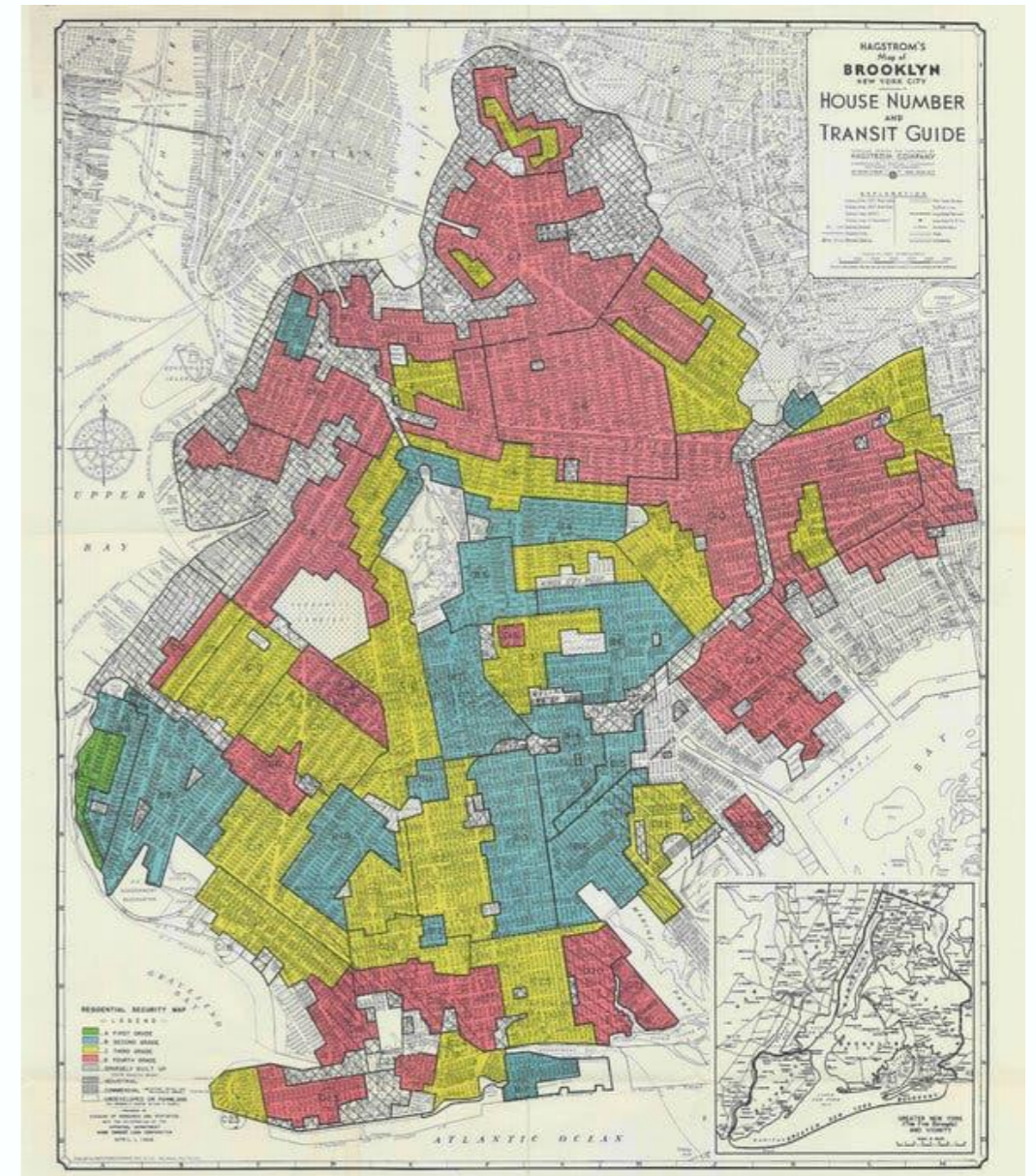


We're Sick of Racism, Literally



Institutional Discrimination

- ❖ “The range of policies and practices that contribute to the systematic disadvantage of members of certain groups” (Pager & Shepherd, 2008, p. 197).
- ❖ Racial residential segregation associated adverse health outcomes (Morello-Frosch & Jesdale, 2005)
- ❖ State-level policies impact the mental health of stigmatized group members (e.g., Hatzenbuehler et al., 2009)



The 1938 Home Owners' Loan Corporation map of Brooklyn. National Archives and Records Administration, Mapping Inequality

Discriminatory Violence



What are the Consequences of Perceived Discrimination?

- ❖ Discrimination is a stressor
- ❖ Discrimination leads to poor:
 - ❖ Psychological well-being
 - ❖ Physiological well-being
 - ❖ Cognitive well-being
 - ❖ Behavioral choices

Discrimination Shapes Psychological Well-Being

- ❖ Discrimination is related to :
 - ❖ Poor general psychological well-being (e.g., anger, self-esteem, life satisfaction; Pascoe & Smart-Richman, 2009)
 - ❖ Increased probability of manifesting clinical levels of mental illness (e.g., generalized anxiety disorder, depression; Brown et al., 2000)
 - ❖ Higher rates of posttraumatic stress disorder (McLaughlin et al., 2010)

The Impact of Police Killings on Psychological Well-Being

- ❖ Exposure to anti-Black violence is related to poorer mental health among Black Americans
- ❖ Rates of anger and sadness increased among Black compared to White Americans the week following George Floyd's death (Eichstaedt et al., 2021)
- ❖ Black but not White Americans reported poorer mental health in weeks when two incidents of anti-Black violence occurred and when national interest was higher (Curtis et al., 2021)

Discrimination Shapes Physiological Well-Being

- ❖ Discrimination is related to :
 - ❖ nighttime blood pressure (Beatty & Matthews 2009, Brondolo et al. 2008, Tomfohr et al. 2010)
 - ❖ dysregulations in cortisol (Zeiders et al. 2014)
 - ❖ poor sleep quality (Thomas et al. 2006, Tomfohr et al. 2012)

Discrimination Shapes Cognitive Well-Being & Behavioral Choices

- ❖ Discrimination is related to :
 - ❖ impairments in cognitive task performance (Barnes et al., 2012)
 - ❖ reduced self-control (Gibbons et al., 2010)
 - ❖ substance use (Gibbons et al., 2010)

Part I: Discrimination and Health

- ❖ Discrimination is a stressor
- ❖ Discrimination undermines psychological and physical health



Part II: Strategies to Help People Cope with Discrimination



Strategies to Help People Cope with Discrimination

- ❖ Emotion Regulation
- ❖ Social Support
- ❖ Values Affirmation
- ❖ Racism Countermarketing

Emotion Regulation

Emotion Regulation & Discrimination

Emotion regulation strategies can either attenuate or exacerbate these adverse negative outcomes



Emotion Regulation

“Emotion regulation involves controlled or automatic processes “by which individuals influence which emotion they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions.”

Rumination

- ❖ Focusing on events from a first person perspective
- ❖ Constant re-living of an event
- ❖ Amplifies psychological and physiological distress



Suppression & Discrimination



(Gross & John, 2003; Hatzenbuehler et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2010)

Emotion Regulation & Discrimination

Rumination

- ❖ Self-immersion
- ❖ Constant re-living of an event
- ❖ Amplifies psychological and physiological distress

Suppression

- ❖ Response modulation
- ❖ Hiding or controlling emotional experiences
- ❖ Amplifies psychological and physiological distress

Cognitive Change

Cognitive Change

Cognitive change pertains to reappraisal strategies that are aimed at reducing the emotional impact of an event

Reappraisal of an Emotional Response

- ❖ Accept emotional reactions and view emotions in a new way
- ❖ Mindfulness; being nonjudgmental about one's emotions
- ❖ Promotes psychological and physiological well-being



Reappraisal of an Emotional Event

- ❖ Positive reappraisal: focusing on the potential positive outcomes that can follow (or have followed) a negative event
- ❖ Benefit-finding; attending to the potential benefits of adverse life situations
- ❖ Promotes psychological well-being

Reappraisal via Perspective-Taking

- ❖ Focusing on events from a third person perspective
- ❖ Adaptive self-reflection
- ❖ Relative to rumination, associated with more positive physiological and emotional well-being



Examining the Effects of Positive Reappraisal

- ❖ Women (N=453; 71% White) from MTurk recalled a time when they were the target of sexism
- ❖ Participants reflected on their experiences using self-immersion, self-distancing, or positive reappraisal

Rumination

Recreate an experience with discrimination from a 1st person point of view

Relive the situation as if it were happening to you all over again. Replay the interaction as it progresses in your mind's eye.

Reappraisal via Perspective-Taking

Recreate an experience with discrimination from a 3rd person point of view

But first, take a few steps back . . . Move away from the situation to a point where you can now watch it from a distance . . . Watch the situation unfold as if it were happening all over again to the distant you. Replay the interaction as it progresses in your mind's eye.

Positive Reappraisal (Redemption Narrative)

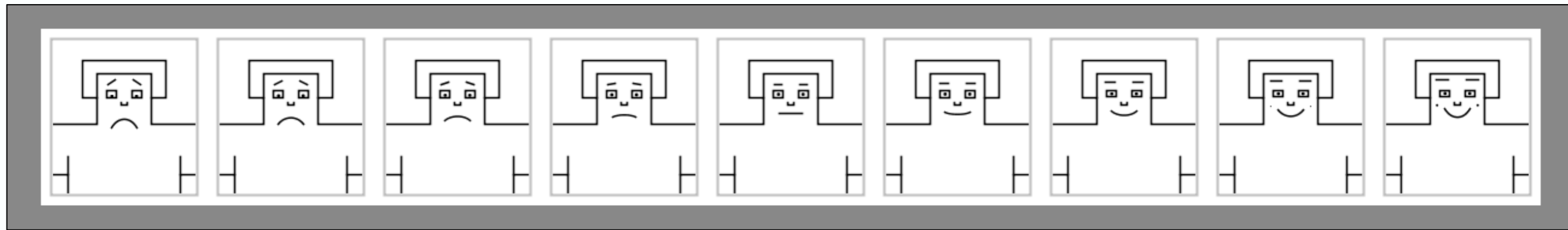
As you write about your experience, please think as much as possible about how you have grown, or lessons you have learned from it.

Examining the Effects of Positive Reappraisal

- ❖ Women (N=453; 71% White) from MTurk recalled a time when they were the target of sexism
- ❖ Participants reflected on their experiences using self-immersion, self-distancing, or positive reappraisal
- ❖ Participants completed the Self-Assessment Manikin

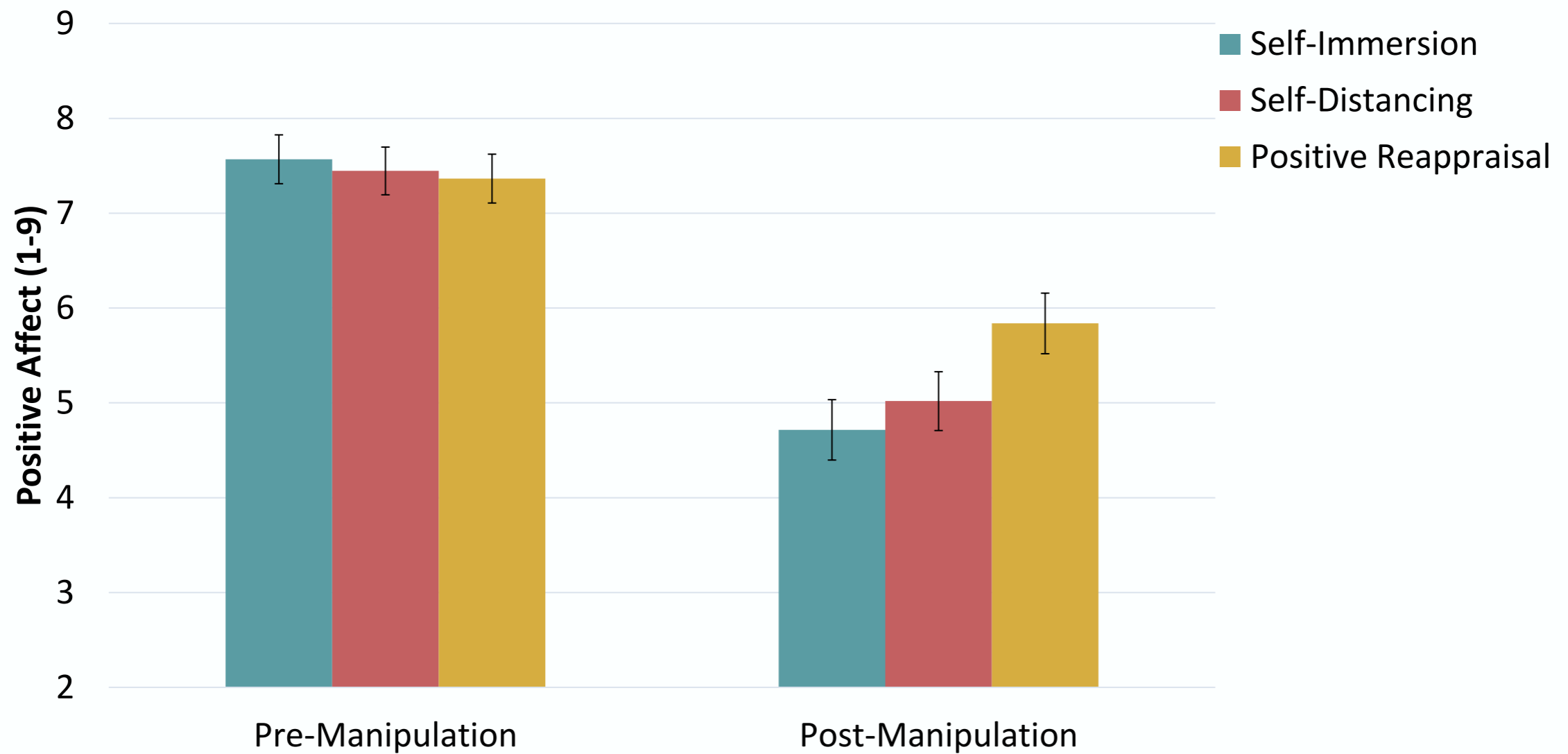
Emotional Experiences

- ❖ Self-Assessment Manikin (SAM)



- ❖ Using the scale, please indicate how you feel right now (1 unpleasant – 9 very pleasant)

SAM: Positivity



Note: Error bars are 95% Confidence Intervals

Time Point: $F(1, 450) = 758.38, p < .001$
Interaction: $F(2, 450) = 22.07, p < .001$

Social Support

Social Support

- ❖ Religious engagement (attendance, church-based social support) reduces the negative impact of discrimination on mental health (Bierman 2006; Ellison et al., 2008)
- ❖ Emotional support from family members and peers mitigates the impact of discrimination on physical health (Brody et al., 2014)
- ❖ Instrumental support also attenuates the negative effects of discrimination on psychological distress (Ajrouch et al., 2010)

Values Affirmation

Values Affirmation

- ❖ Involves exercises where people can write about their most important value and why it is important to them (Cohen et al. 2006; 2009)
- ❖ Enhances psychological resilience (Cook et al., 2012; Sherman & Hartson 2011)
- ❖ Reduces hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis and sympathetic nervous system reactivity to stress (Creswell et al. 2005, Sherman et al. 2009)

Racism Countermarketing

Racism Countermarketing

- ❖ Racism in the US is unseen or denied; Beliefs in individual work ethic perpetuated
- ❖ Internalized racism might emerge in targets of racism who are not aware of systemic racism and believe that their unfair treatment is deserved
- ❖ Acknowledging structural inequality and raising awareness about racism may promote positive health outcomes

Part II: Strategies to Help People Cope with Discrimination

- ❖ Emotion Regulation
- ❖ Social Support
- ❖ Values Affirmation
- ❖ Racism Countermarketing



**How Does Discrimination
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Discrimination?**

General Recommendations

Essential to examine multiple
outcomes in the wake of
discrimination.

Be Flexible! Different contexts may
require require coping strategies.

Consider the dynamics of the situation when communicating with patients.

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