Researching, Learning, and Healing Within the Master's House:
A Collaborative Autoethnography

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Abstract. This paper tells the story of resistance and efforts to work and mend within an anti-Black institution: higher education. Through a collaborative autoethnographic approach, seven Black academics connected to the Action Research Collective team (a group focused on supporting graduate students and cultivating equitable campus climates), explored how doing research as a team served as a mechanism for healing from the trauma of anti-Black racism. This paper illustrates how researching, learning, and healing can manifest within research teams by emphasizing visibility, shared experience, authenticity, and community.

Keywords: Blackness, collaborative autoethnography, research team

"For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house."
(Lorde, 1984, p. 112)

The Backdrop: Introduction

Whether the master's tools manifest as strategic diversity plans, officers, committees, or book clubs, Black people within the academy know all too well that such devices will not spur the revolution necessary to fully value and protect Black lives. Black people know such performative expressions of institutionally espoused values—which ultimately amount to aesthetically appealing documents, videos, and websites—will not lead to structural change, and these actions are not enough. They are not enough to prevent a student from being called the n-word when going to buy groceries in their college town, and they are certainly not enough to ensure students' voices will be heard when they march in protest against racism. Listening sessions, town halls, and diversity plans do not undo or adequately address the pain, isolation, and dehumanization of existing as a Black person at a historically and predominantly white institution that communicates in obvious and understated ways their continued disregard for Black lives.

Paradigmatic shifts in every arena (from research and teaching to advising and accounting) are necessary to truly transform institutions of higher education into more just, equitable, and anti-racist spaces. Given the current sociopolitical environment that reinforces neoliberalism and maintains the cis-hetero white

supremacist imperialist patriarchal regime, Black folks must find pockets of reformation (as we always have) within predominantly white institutions to creatively resist, subvert, heal from, and undo oppressive systems. This paper tells the story of such resistance and efforts to work and attempt to mend within. In particular, we (a team of seven Black academics) who worked collaboratively as part of the broader Action Research Collective (ARC), reflect on our collective research experiences as Black scholars within ARC to answer the research question: How can the act of doing research serve as a healing space for Black people?

GP Are You with Me?: About the Action Research Collective (ARC)

During the wake of local and national anti-racist activism in the Fall semester of 2016, ARC formed at Clemson University to engage in conversations about access and equity specific to the experiences of Graduate Students of Color (GSOC). What started as a space for authentic discussion and a mechanism to support graduate students' scholarly identities and research capacities, grew into a community of research partners (faculty, students, administrators, etc.) who engage in critical scholarly inquiry for positive and sustainable change at Clemson and other predominantly white institutions (PWIs). The goal of the ARC team's initial research study was to explore the experiences of GSOC at Clemson University and understand their needs, obstacles, support, and ability to thrive at a PWI using a critical participatory action research design rooted in photovoice (Bowers et al., 2020; Dillard, 2020; Latz, 2017). Participating in critical participatory action research allows members to reclaim their agency "as they seek to promote greater self and social change" (Dillard, 2020, p. 48). A major objective of the ARC team was to serve as a counter-space for GSOC. Counter-spaces are sites where "deficit notions of people of color can be challenged and where a positive collegiate racial climate can be established and maintained" (Solórzano et al., 2000, p. 70). Situated within an emancipatory research counter-space model "where students experience socialization processes of interaction, integration, and learning within an environment dedicated to inquiry that embraces emancipatory pedagogy, community, intersectionality, and critical praxis," ARC members organized the space to resist hegemonic ideologies of researching and collaborating (Phelps-Ward, 2020, p. 260). Given this manuscript's space confines, we refer readers to readings by Bowers et al. (2020) and Phelps-Ward (2020) to learn more about the contours of the ARC team's history, organization, and maintenance.

For Us, By Us, About Us

We want to be up front about our positionality as the authors of this manuscript. We are a group of seven Black scholars brought together through our work within the Clemson ARC team. This work centers our experiences to encourage more Black scholars, educators, and graduate students to create and find spaces that honor Blackness. This paper is quite simply, for us, by us, and about us. As a way to resist traditional writing norms that tend to place value in an objective third person, we use "we" throughout to refer to ourselves as a group of authors, employ songs from Black culture as manuscript headings, and provide a playlist for readers to heighten their somatic engagement with our narratives. Further, we use Black

sitcom character pseudonyms in place of our names as we remain acutely aware of the potential negative consequences that often befall Black academics when they speak their truths. The following paragraphs provide brief introductions for each of us.

Maxine Shaw

I am a Black woman educator. I was familiar with ARC, but thought it was only for students. During one of my conversations with Gina, I mentioned I wanted to be engaged in more research, so she invited me to an ARC meeting. After that meeting, I joined.

Fresh Prince

I am a Black man, a Christian, husband, father, son, and brother. ARC was one of my saving graces during my transition to Clemson. I was invited to this space by upper-level graduate students who became like guardian angels to me while at Clemson. ARC was family, community, and my village.

Khadijah Winslow

I am a Black, womyn, mother, scholar, and doctoral candidate. My first semester at Clemson I struggled adjusting to the subtle culture of anti-Blackness, and I strongly considered transferring. During one of my lowest moments as a student I was introduced to ARC, and I had a meeting with Gina Payne to learn more about it. After attending my first meeting, I knew I had found a home within the walls of the PWI. This community became my saving grace.

Dwayne Wayne

I am a Black man and full-time educational leadership doctoral student at Clemson University. Fresh Prince introduced me to the ARC organization and invited me to attend a meeting. After attending the meeting, I immediately wanted to be involved as a teammate and help with projects while serving as a research partner. My involvement with ARC has enhanced my team leadership skills and love for research.

Moesha Mitchell

I am a Black womyn, educator, counselor, and doctoral candidate at Clemson University in P-12 educational leadership. Fresh Prince invited me to an ARC meeting. I quickly realized the benefits of being on a research team with people who looked like me.

TJ Henderson

I am a Black man and full-time doctoral student in educational leadership. Gina Payne was the person who invited me to this space after knowing I wanted to

explore more work that involved Students of Color as well as explore more areas of research. ARC appealed to me as an avenue to make meaning of the concepts I was learning and the conversations I was having in class, as well as a way to put into practice what I began to learn from my assessment class in the previous semester.

Gina Payne

I am a Black feminist, woman, mother, and assistant professor of higher education. I arrived at my work with ARC at the nexus of feeling isolated as a Black woman in a predominantly white department, experiencing the cultural taxation of supporting several graduate students with minoritized identities at Clemson University who (like me) finally had enough of the institution's racism, and interested in taking advantage of a Graduate School internal grant to support graduate students' professional development. I created ARC alongside graduate students for "us."

Back Stabbers: Anti-Blackness in the Ivory Tower

In academia, a system built on white supremacy (Wilder, 2013), anti-Blackness is pervasive. In today's society, Black scholars experience racism and oppression through the policing of Black bodies on university campuses (West, 1993), the African American education debt (Ladson-Billings, 2006), and the commodification of Black bodies as a source of university income (Dancy et al., 2018). For example, during the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter Movement (in the summer of 2020), after police officers murdered Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and a slew of additional Black people, college students protested across the country insisting on systemic change within the justice system and on their campuses, but in some cases Black students and athletes had to decide not to voice their opinions or experiences and risk losing university-funded scholarships and/or other benefits (see Frederick et al., 2017). This is not new. Historically, the ivory tower has been a place of silencing, trauma, assault, unpaid labor, and multi-level racism for Black faculty, staff, and students (Dancy et al., 2018; Kelly et al., 2017; Volpe et al., 2021). As Dancy et al. (2018) put it, "universities were created to educate the offspring of colonizers" (p. 182). As Black people continue to create coalitions and forge communities in a system that was not designed for us, we partake in a social exchange that reifies anti-Blackness. We make conscious decisions about how we will engage *in* and *with* this oppressive system. We can decide to give in and or we can decide to resist. ARC is a space we created through conscious resistance efforts of organizing and meeting outside of the confines of a formal classroom setting, working collaboratively on a research project to address campus racism, and centering our daily experiences of anti-Blackness through storytelling, reflective writing during meetings, and fellowship through social gatherings.

Who Can I Run To?: Black Healing

Black people in academia contend with more than racial trauma, we also face an assault on our humanity stemming from trauma rooted in anti-Blackness (Fairfax, 2020). While many scholars write about healing from racial trauma, a paucity of

research addresses healing from the trauma of anti-Black racism. To address Black healing, we need to situate how scholars have analyzed racial trauma and anti-Black racism. Only then can we begin to conceptualize how healing from the trauma of anti-Blackness manifests in academic spaces.

Racial trauma impacts people on a psychological and physiological level through symptoms similar to post-traumatic stress disorder such as flashbacks, hypervigilance, avoidance, headaches, and heart palpitations (Comas- Díaz et al., 2019). Ways to cope with racial trauma include addressing racism, avoiding internalizing racist ideologies, and seeking support (Chioneso, 2020 et al.; Truong & Museus, 2012). The field of mental health and psychology highlights the necessity to move beyond just coping and on to healing. Healing from racial trauma is the unlearning of internalized racial stereotype messages about one's own socially constructed race and race of others through actively working to stop participating in the system of racism (Singh, 2019). The trauma of anti-Blackness goes deeper than racial conflict; it is "an irreconcilability between the Black and any sense of social or cultural regard" (Dumas, 2016, p. 13). Black people may collectively heal from anti-Blackness trauma by maintaining memories of African spiritual traditions, practicing sacred rituals, and engaging with social organizations (Fairfax, 2020). In the spirit of *Sankofa*, Black people may return to African culture to understand what it means to heal. Defined through an African-centered lens, healing is collectively shifting the mind, body, and spirit from suffering to repairing by maintaining a harmonious balance between the physical and spiritual realm (Myers, 2013). Scholars in P-12 education highlight the importance of critically altering their classroom pedagogical practices to promote spirit healing (Hines & Wilmot, 2018; Love, 2016). Professors in higher education can use critical pedagogical approaches such as intentional praxis, interdisciplinarity content, and courageous transparency (see Tuitt et al., 2018) to help students begin the collective healing process by creating spaces for students to unlearn internalized Blackness and restore harmony within.

Started from the Bottom: Research Teams

Although research remains a mainstay of life in the academy, fueling the publish or perish mentality, hunt for grant dollars, and competition within the network of colleges and universities with very-high research institution goals and aspirations, few who lead large research projects gain instrumental education experiences to lead such research teams. In this paper, we define a research team as any group of three or more people working collaboratively on an empirical study. This definition includes all methodologies across disciplines, fields, and foci (e.g., humans and non-human related research) and the various configurations of parties who comprise the research team (e.g., faculty, students, staff, community members, etc.). In addition to minimal literature focused on the socialization and formal education about how to organize and manage research teams (Kim, 2018; Krockover et al., 2001; Schmidt et al., 2012), a relatively small body of scholarly literature focuses on how such teams may serve as sites of support, community-building, and activism, particularly against anti-Black racism.

We explore what might it look like for more graduate faculty to lead initiatives in which they teach about the work of building emancipatory research counter-spaces (Phelps-Ward, 2020). Such research teams socialize graduate students, faculty, and staff to engage in critical scholarly inquiry and serve as spaces of healing and respite. Further, we aim to discuss implications for ways to shift narratives of research for productivity to research for community-building, belonging, and healing. Ultimately, we inquire about the possibilities and benefits for everybody Black when community-building is centered and prioritized within the research process.

This is How We Do It: Methods

In an effort to carve out counter-spaces (Solórzano et al., 2000) within the racist academy, we (a group of seven Black people holding varying identities and roles as faculty and doctoral students) helped develop a research team for Graduate Students of Color (GSOC) and, ultimately through this collaborative autoethnographic (CAE) study (Chang et al., 2013), began examining our own experiences of healing from racial trauma and our experiences as ARC members. We decided to engage a CAE methodological approach given its self-reflection orientation and opportunity for us to engage in solo and collective work. We engaged in a multi-step process of individual journaling, group discussions, and coding to answer the following research question: How can the act of doing research serve as a healing space for Black people?

Data Collection and Analysis

Participants for this collaborative autoethnographic study included seven Black researchers who also served as members of the ARC. Three of us are faculty members and four are doctoral students (at the time of authoring this manuscript). CAE refers to a collaborative, autobiographical, and ethnographic research method that places researchers in the dual role of researchers and participants (Chang et al., 2013). CAE emphasizes situating the autobiographical data in a sociocultural context to understand the meaning of societal and cultural experiences and perspectives. For this study, we engaged in two rounds of self-reflection through written narratives in response to a set of prompts designed to elicit narratives about our experiences in ARC (i.e., How did you enter the ARC team? What was it like to participate? What did you learn? What did you gain? How did ARC serve as a healing space?). Such prompts led us to reflect about how and why we became involved in ARC and what ARC meant to us.

We used a multi-step data collection and analysis process to analyze our written reflections. First, we met to discuss our responses to an initial set of reflective prompts about our overall experiences; we each talked about what we wrote and why. We video-recorded our discussion to assist us with triangulating data in the analysis phase. Our discussion led us to identify additional prompts centered on healing and anti-Black trauma given that our conversation gravitated toward the healing nature of the space. We returned to solo-writing for another round of self-reflection before engaging in a second group discussion. After reviewing each

person's written reflections (a total of 27 written pages) and the first video-recording of our group discussion (a total of two hours), we gathered for a third virtual meeting to share initial insights and build a plan for data analysis. We decided to pair nascent qualitative researchers with a more experienced researcher to code each participants' written reflections. Each pair was responsible for analyzing two participants' written reflections (neither of which were their own) using Charmaz's (2006) process of initial line-by-line coding noting specific words, phrases, incidences, and actions in participants' narratives. After reviewing all of our initial codes within a collaborative, cloud-based, electronic spreadsheet, we each created researcher memos to support the development of larger axial codes across the data. Finally, we reconvened as a research team to discuss our axial codes to collectively synthesize, categorize, and build themes.

Never Would Have Made It: Findings

Four major themes emerged from the analysis in regard to our research question: How can the act of doing research serve as a healing space for Black people? Through our analysis, we found ARC served as a healing space for us as Black people by providing opportunities for visibility, recognizing shared realities, being authentic, and being in community. We discuss each of these themes next with excerpts from our written reflections.

Visibility

Conducting research collaboratively created a space for us to feel seen, heard, valued, and appreciated. Outside of ARC, navigating the research environment at an institution where not many people shared our identities or cultural values was difficult. During our engagement with ARC's research and each other, we developed a psychological sense of connection to our campus community as we worked to transform it. Visibility showed up in two ways during the study: through shared Blackness (i.e., apparent cultural similarities) and having a seat at the research table as a valued contributing member of the ARC team.

ARC members expressed being able to walk into research meetings and events excited about seeing other Black people and being "unapologetically Black." The Fresh Prince stated, "I felt like people heard me and cared about what I had to say. People in that space honored my Blackness and didn't try to tell me that I wasn't professional, or I should act like this or that." In essence, members of the team appreciated being seen for who they were. Moreover, ARC provided a space where social cues are recognized and valued. For example, Khadijah described the feeling of belonging by stating,

> It's like how Black people walk past each other and give each other "the nod" no matter what, but we're doing that in a physical space. It's like saying I see you; I feel you; it's going to be alright.

These shared cultural experiences in ARC provided enthusiasm toward conducting research collectively in a campus environment where Black people are typically invisible.

Participating in collaborative research also helped us feel like we belonged as a contributing member of the team. This level of comfort helped us develop appreciation for various perspectives, opinions, and voices of other teammates. Maxine and The Fresh Prince (respectively) described the feeling of visibility as,

> ARC allowed me to show up as a collaborator and a resource, not only for research but for the other projects within ARC. I got over me "just being an administrator," and I feel that my knowledge and contributions to the space are valued and respected. (Maxine)

> As time went on, ARC became a safe space both for me personally and academically. I was able to ask questions during the meeting and not feel ashamed or that my questions were dumb. (Fresh Prince)

Team members viewed themselves as research partners whose ideas and suggestions were important and heard. Ultimately, we felt we had a proverbial seat at the table. As Moesha described, "I was not hoping for a seat at the table. Instead, I was the table. We were the table."

These conditions of visibility shaped how ARC members viewed themselves and each other. Moesha explained, "ARC is a sacred place that encompasses many wonders." In this sacred space, Black people were seen, heard, and appreciated.

Shared Realities

The theme of *shared realities* refers to the ways doing research collaboratively helped us witness and experience shared emotions, stories, and experiences. Through the process of recognizing our shared realities, we were able to reflect on similar experiences of trauma from anti-Black racism. Together we received validation and understanding of our experience.

We expressed viewing ARC as a space to connect with others about the realities of living through traumatic anti-Black racial situations in academia. Dwayne articulated, "Storytelling manifests as a vehicle for healing by allowing me to reflect on my emotions about my current environment." Sharing personal stories allowed us to reflect and connect with others who may have felt similar emotions. Fresh Prince shared, "Being able to share my experiences with other students was a freeing experience for me. I felt as if I was able to unload burdens and negative energy that I had been carrying for so long."

Although we each held different roles within the university, we were able to support each other and be transparent about our personal experiences. Gina expressed:

On days when I would come from department meetings or interactions exhausted, worn out, overwhelmed, overlooked, invalidated, and undervalued, I would go to ARC and connect with people who understood what I was going through ('cus they experienced it too, just in another role, maybe as a student, maybe as a staff member), cared about my presence and well-being, and were willing to offer advice and support.

Gaining support from others in different roles helped foster opportunities for healing. Members also expressed the notion that Black people cannot rely on the oppressors for their healing. For example, while the university may create associations, trainings, and forums, these opportunities seldom provide counter-spaces where we can genuinely and openly express ourselves with minimal surveillance, filtering, or code-switching. Khadijah shared,

We heal each other by seeing each other where we are and relating to each other. We tell stories, share our experiences and connect on levels that are more than academic…And I think that's how we heal as a race. We must heal ourselves because the oppressors aren't going to do it for us.

Collectively, we also shared stories of triumphs as a reminder of our abilities to conquer anti-Blackness. We were able to "see" ourselves and each other. Khadijah reported growth when she said, "I honestly feel like I'm a boss…I can look back on those comments from my professor and my early feelings of inadequacy and imposter syndrome and laugh because I know how capable I am."

Authenticity

"Coming into a space where I could be my authentic self and be loved and valued is healing." – Khadijah

As Black people at a PWI, we often have to "put up a front," use code-switching, and employ other means to survive the campus environment. Within an oppressive space, Black people often express feelings of discomfort and invalidation. ARC allowed space for various forms of Black expression to collectively engage, share experiences, and conduct research with a spirit of authenticity. Gina explained this occurrence:

What kept me going is knowing I had a space to be myself, to laugh, to experience and to not worry about the pressures of being uncomfortable, exploited, or misnamed that I typically had in other spaces on campus.

Authenticity refers to a representation of a preferred state of being or set of qualities that people in a particular time and place have come to agree represent an ideal (Vannini & Williams, 2009). In the context of ARC, authenticity reveals the ways researching collaboratively allowed us to have a space to exist and engage in research as our full selves. ARC made us feel comfortable enough to remove our walls and be ourselves. TJ stated, "In this space, ARC breaks down those barriers

and fears and provides students with the opportunity to express their full selves and receive validation."

ARC is a space where the survival mechanisms rooted in anti-Blackness were less needed in the ARC environment given a sense of comfort and the promotion of authenticity. As researchers and scholars, ARC made it easier to embrace our Blackness. Moesha shared,

> In ARC, my language is scholar-appropriate, but I do not have to exert extra energy to code-switch into a way I would speak in a research group that does not aim to hear all voices. I could reference something from Black culture such as the phrase "Black Girl Magic" and the ARC members would know exactly what I am referring to.

The ability to be authentic, be in community, feel supported, and experience validation promoted individual and collective healing for ARC members. Less energy was directed towards "putting up a front" and more toward being one's authentic self and appreciating Blackness.

Community

Forging communities of resistance in anti-Black spaces has historically been a way Black people strive toward healing and thriving despite oppression (Johnson & Lubin, 2017; Lorde, 198; Spencer, 2016). Through our research, we found that ARC served as a community of both physical and emotional support for Black members. The experience of "doing it together" and engaging in collaborative research that had the potential to subvert anti-Blackness within the academy allowed us to feel a sense of collective healing when engaging in our work. Gina said, "I gained a community of support outside of a department and college that felt isolating, racist, and invalidating." These comments showcase the necessity of community for Black folks who are actively trying to heal within racist systems. TJ said it this way:

> As a collective, ARC allows us to build community out of common interests and "misery" we experience as GSOCs…ARC has served as a vehicle that has connected graduate students who may have never met otherwise, building mentorship opportunities, strengthening our network, and validating the experiences we have at Clemson, along with developing ways to disrupt and transform the negative experiences.

Within our written reflections, the majority of us discussed how ARC became a place of emotional support, noting the level of vulnerability we were able to have within the ARC community. For example, Maxine said, "[Healing from racial trauma comes from] having safe spaces to be vulnerable, where there's an opportunity to share stories, feelings, and other thoughts." Moesha echoed this sentiment and said, "this was my first experience discussing my goals with my classmates in a family/community atmosphere…this was healing for me because many of my close friends and family members do not understand what I am trying to do." These

excerpts illustrate the profound impact ARC had on Black team members through the strong emotional support the space provided.

Several of us within the CAE discussed the importance of having the physical support of other Black people in predominantly white spaces for events and milestones such as dissertation proposals and conference presentations. The Fresh Prince said, "For me, collective healing showed up by way of supporting each other outside of the space." For some of us, this type of support served as a reminder that we are not alone on our journeys. Ultimately, we each shared how being a part of the ARC community provided multiple layers of support that helped us navigate within a PWI and resist racist messages about our value, capability, and power as scholars. Such layers of support provided space to acknowledge and overt and covert racism we experienced *and* offered an opportunity for us to find ways to address and combat such racism through research.

Thinking of a Master Plan: Discussion and Implications

Our research illustrates the possibilities of research teams designed to center and emphasize collective care and social action, particularly in a racist campus environment. We focus our discussion on resistance to anti-Blackness in the academy and recommendations *for* and *by* Black people working within colleges and universities as students, staff, faculty, and administrators. Ultimately, we advocate institutional leaders (e.g., graduate school deans) allocate additional resources to support the development of emancipatory research counter-spaces (Phelps-Ward, 2020) that bring Black people together to collectively dream, heal, and resist within the structures of higher education.

The white supremacist structure of the academy seldom allows for spaces where we as Black folks (and all the ways we present, live, speak, love, believe, and know) can simply be ourselves, confidently engaging in research that seeks to dismantle oppression. When such counter-spaces (Solórzano et al., 2000) do exist, they typically manifest within Black and multicultural centers and programs and organizations that center minoritized populations (e.g., Black student governments, fraternities and sororities, and identity-based living-learning communities). Such counter-spaces rarely exist within research teams and are not emphasized within the scholarly literature.

Our findings support the notion that community-based research teams can lessen fears of engaging in research while providing opportunities for collective critical-consciousness raising and community. Research woes (i.e., feelings of impostor syndrome in the area of research and writing skills, fears of pursuing a research topic rooted in Blackness, and epistemological limitations born from objectivist and Eurocentric socialization) stem from anti-Blackness. As a team of researchers on the ARC team, we experienced research woes and anti-Blackness as we navigated uninviting spaces full of microaggressions (e.g., predominantly white classes with few opportunities to engage with texts by People of Color), invalidation (e.g., questions about why [we] decided to focus our interests or research on Blackness), and exploitation (e.g., being asked to work in spaces without being valued for our

intellectual contributions) as aligned with much of the literature on Black student and faculty experiences (Dancy et al., 2018; Kelly et al., 2017; Volpe et al., 2021). We resisted anti-Blackness through storytelling, naming the racism we experienced, celebrating with each other, and seeing value in what each person brought to the team's work. The act of reflecting on our trauma stemming from anti-Blackness—and sharing those stories with each other—afforded a space to discuss and process our thoughts, feelings, and desires for a better campus. Although the full ARC team is not all Black (i.e., the team includes white and non-Black team members all committed to the project of centering members with minoritized identities and working to improve the campus racial climate), ARC exists as a space where Black members feel comfortable to talk about racism and our collective plans to dismantle it.

The concepts of visibility, authenticity, shared experiences, and community contribute to the *how* of starting to heal from the trauma of anti-Blackness through research teams. ARC built a community of scholars through faculty teaching how to conduct critical participatory action research, role modeling a process that emphasized care, and supporting members through the process, regardless of level of experience with research. The team's work even evolved to a point where students felt empowered to teach new members how to conduct research and support each other through the research process. Black educators can facilitate similar spaces, but not without first unlearning and relinquishing white notions of leading, researching, and teaching. Such work involves seeing students as knowledge holders, resisting the temptation to do fast research, and leaning into healing practices (e.g., reflection, storytelling, dialogue, and fellowship). Further, graduate programs must teach graduate students (i.e., future faculty and administrators) how to establish research teams rooted in community-building and liberation. While such action would require an ideological shift and intentional curriculum, the change presents opportunities for a generation of faculty and administrators who cultivate research teams and labs that build students up rather than break them down—an emancipatory perspective. To actualize such change, university leaders must reward those who initiate and maintain research teams where emancipatory research counter-spaces can flourish within the promotion and tenure process through funding and allocations of campus space and financial resources.

Can We Talk For a Minute?: Conclusion

The research team experiences of Black people working within PWIs warrant more research attention. The act of resisting, healing, and loving all while engaging in research should not go overlooked as a liberatory practice. When factoring in a sociopolitical climate where racism, economic suffering, and health disparities persist, Black folks still find a way to make it and find healing in the process.

Figure 1

Researching, Learning, and Healing the Master's House Playlist

Note: Readers can listen to the song's referenced throughout the manuscript via the playlist curated by the authors: https://apple.co/2Oe2ttD

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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