An experimental investigation of white counselors broaching race and racism

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Abstract:

Broaching involves actively addressing culture and power in session, a counseling skill that is underused despite its promising track record. In an experimental analogue design, the authors studied potential clients' evaluation of an initial broaching statement. Results provide evidence of the therapeutic benefits of broaching, preference for broaching that addresses the counseling relationship, and the role of positionality in evaluating counselors' cultural responsiveness. Implications for broaching with minoritized clients are discussed.

Keywords: broaching | race | racism | minoritized clients | multicultural counseling skills

Article:

Broaching is increasingly discussed as a foundational intervention in cross-cultural counseling, with an emphasis on cross-racial dyads in particular. Counselors aiming to heal a "legacy of silence" (Day-Vines et al., 2007, p. 402) in relation to identity and power in the status quo can do so by broaching or inviting explicit dialogue with clients about race, ethnicity, and culture. Scholars have suggested that broaching can help remove barriers to accessing mental health services for *minoritized* clients (a term that exposes "the socially constructed nature of underrepresentation and disadvantage"; Harper, 2012, cited in Pérez & Carney, 2018, p. 162), thus offsetting disproportionately high attrition rates (Cardemil & Battle, 2003; Jones & Welfare, 2017). In many ways, broaching translates abstract competencies such as the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC; Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2015) into an actionable skill—an attractive and practical development that counselor trainees and counselor educators have been clamoring for (Alberta & Wood, 2009; Collins, Arthur, Brown, & Kennedy, 2015). Broaching can also explicitly convey a counselor's multicultural orientation, in effect demonstrating to the client the counselor's humble, open prioritization of culture (Hook, Davis, Owen, Worthington, & Utsey, 2013). Empirical work on broaching race supports the potential of this skill, with established

relationships to rapport building, counselor credibility, client persistence in counseling, and satisfaction with services (Fuertes, Mueller, Chauhan, Walker, & Ladany, 2002; Knox, Burkard, Johnson, Suzuki, & Ponterotto, 2003; Zhang & Burkard, 2008; Zhang & McCoy, 2009).

Despite the promise of this intervention, counselors in general (Maxie, Arnold, & Stephenson, 2006), and White counselors in particular (Knox et al., 2003), use broaching at low rates and express hesitance about how exactly to approach conversations about race (Day-Vines, Booker Ammah, Steen, & Arnold, 2018; Jones & Welfare, 2017). Counselor perceptions of the (ir)relevance of race offer one explanation for how broaching behaviors are applied in session, with systematic differences by counselor race/ethnicity (Knox et al., 2003). For example, in Knox et al.'s (2003) qualitative study, Black therapists indicated the mere fact that their client was a person of color elicited this skill, whereas White therapists expressed reluctance to broach, pursuing broaching in much fewer cases and only when race was obviously linked to the client's presenting concern or when the client mentioned race first. Counselors' hesitation is also stoked by ambiguity within the literature and conflicting descriptions of how and when to broach. To illustrate, the MSJCC skills competencies are stated in general terms, such as "acquire application skills" (e.g., Ratts et al., 2015, p. 6), "culturally responsive conceptualization skills" (p. 8), and "assessment skills" (p. 8) without further explication. In short, counselors do not have adequate guidance for forming effective broaching statements. In a comprehensive literature review, King (in press) traced both the agreed-upon, core tenets of broaching that have garnered widespread support and the components still under debate. She found consensus that broaching (a) is a counselor responsibility to prioritize culture in session and remove taboos on open discussion of culture and power, (b) is an ongoing process that occurs throughout the counseling relationship and as developments in the client's presenting concerns or working alliance arise, (c) considers dynamic identities with regard to intersectionality and shifting relational or sociopolitical contexts, (d) attends to the multiple levels of identity and power (i.e., individual, systemic), and (e) takes on a flexible stance whereby the client can determine the direction and focus of conversations.

In contrast, debated skill components reflect uncertainty about how to operationalize broaching that stems from disagreement between scholars and practitioners who have put forward recommendations for practice. Debated components include (a) the timing of the intervention, (b) pointedness of the language used, (c) goals of broaching, and (d) emphasis on similar and/or different identities between the counselor and client (King, in press). Most scholars have suggested that the timing of initial broaching interventions should be proactive and initiated by the counselor, with the first one to three counseling sessions cited as an ideal time to broach (Cardemil & Battle, 2003; Fuertes et al., 2002; Jones & Welfare, 2017; Zhang & Burkard, 2008). Furthermore, scholars largely have advocated using pointed language that directly raises the taboo topic (Cardemil & Battle, 2003; Day-Vines & Holcomb-McCoy, 2013; Day-Vines et al., 2007). However, counselors have preferred leaving their language more open to the client's interpretation, potentially falling short of the aims of broaching (Jones & Welfare, 2017). The most hotly contested components in the literature are its goals and focus on similarities and/or differences, with conflicting recommendations (King, in press). Debates about goals of broaching center on whether broaching should be focused on content and information gathering or on the relationship and interpersonal dynamics of identity (Cardemil & Battle, 2003; Owen et al., 2016). In addition, when counselors choose to broach for relational goals, there are differing

perspectives on whether to emphasize cultural differences alone or a combination of similarities and differences (i.e., bridging and broaching) they share with the client (Fuertes et al., 2002; La Roche & Maxie, 2003). In response, one goal of the current study was to begin to build an evidence base for broaching techniques that illuminate when and how White counselors can most effectively broach race and racism with Black clients. Although across the literature scholars often advocate for counselor broaching that is proactive and uses pointed language to address race specifically, there is a need to test more highly contentious broaching components in order to better operationalize this skill.

In designing the study, we sought to respond to two major limitations of research on the effectiveness of broaching: (a) the consistent lack of detail about the content of racial dialogues and (b) the focus on counselor (vs. client) perspectives. First, even when White practitioners reported directly addressing racial differences and the pervasive effects of racism with Black clients, details about how they initiated broaching were missing (Fuertes et al., 2002). For example, Knox et al. (2003) focused on White and Black counselors' experiences of raising the topic of race as opposed to how they chose to frame such statements, and Zhang and McCoy (2009) simply asked counselors yes/no questions regarding discussions of race and ethnicity.

Second, researchers who have begun to seek minoritized clients' perspectives as opposed to counselors' perspectives on counselor broaching have raised some interesting findings that merit further attention. Zhang and Burkard (2008) discovered that when White counselors broached race with Black clients (details of these conversations were not described), these clients rated their counselors as more credible and the therapeutic relationship as stronger. However, these results did not hold for Black counselors broaching race with White clients, suggesting that these dialogues are more meaningful, maybe more clinically relevant, in dyads in which the client is a racial/ethnic minority and race is perhaps more salient to her or his overall identity. In Chang and Berk (2009), racial/ethnic minority clients working with a White counselor reported that their counselor's unwillingness to discuss race led them to avoid disclosing topics related to their race/ethnicity and experiences of racism. Finally, V. S. Thompson and Alexander (2006) found no significant effect of White counselors addressing race difference in intake on Black clients' ratings of counseling at termination. This finding contradicts previous research on the effectiveness of broaching, although it was perhaps explained by the lengthy time lapse (about 10 sessions for most participants) between the intervention and data collection.

Motivated by the need to validate broaching components with attention to both what was said and who evaluates the impact, we proceeded with an experimental analogue design. This design allowed us to examine how potential clients received broaching statements by varying the debated broaching components of goals and inclusion of similarities and/or differences through four videos of an interaction between a White counselor and Black client (see Table 1). Given the emphasis on cross-racial broaching in existing literature as well as the uniquely taboo nature of discussing race (King & Jones, 2018; Sue, 2015), we focused on this dyad, including the variable of race salience for additional context. Broaching statements were consistent in their use of core tenets (i.e., counselor responsibility, emphasis on race and racism, allusion to dynamic identities with multiple levels, and flexibility). Our study was guided by one research question and four related hypotheses:

Research question: How do potential clients' perceptions of the counselor's multicultural orientation (cultural humility and cultural opportunities), the counselor's multicultural counseling competence, working alliance, and desire to continue services differ among all four broaching conditions?

Hypothesis 1: Average ratings on at least one counseling dependent variable would differ between at least two conditions.

Hypothesis 2: Each of the three broaching conditions (Conditions 1, 2, and 3) would differ from the broaching absent, control condition (Condition 4).

Hypothesis 3: Both broaching for the relationship conditions (Conditions 2 and 3) would differ from the broaching for content condition (Condition 1).

Hypothesis 4: Within the broaching for the relationship conditions (Conditions 2 and 3), broaching for similarities and differences (Condition 3) would differ from broaching for the differences condition (Condition 2).

Table 1. Operationalized Broaching Conditions

Condition and Components	Broaching Statement
1. Proactive timing, pointed language, broaching for content	Often, I ask my clients about their racial or ethnic background and other cultural identities because it helps me have a better understanding of who they are. It can also be related to what you want to talk about, if you have been, for example, thinking about your identity, experiencing discrimination, or maybe having conflict with people in your racial group or outside of it. First, I wonder how you see your race, or even experiences of racism, being related to what brings you in for counseling.
2. Proactive timing, pointed language, broaching for the relationship, differences	Often, I ask my clients about their racial or ethnic background and other cultural identities because it helps me have a better understanding of who they are. It looks like race is one area of difference for us, which could, at times, mean that I will not be able to fully appreciate your experiences. For example, as a White person I have unearned privileges and will not completely understand how racism is experienced by people of color. It is also important to me that you feel you can be authentic and share how you see things in here. First, I wonder how you think our difference in race might impact our work together and our relationship.
3. Proactive timing, pointed language, broaching for the relationship, similarities and differences	Often, I ask my clients about their racial or ethnic background and other cultural identities because it helps me have a better understanding of who they are. The fact that we are both women means we may have some shared experiences because of that; maybe we have both felt pressure to act or look a certain way before. It looks like race is one area of difference for us, which could, at times, mean that I will not be able to fully appreciate your experiences. For example, as a White person, I have unearned privileges and will not completely understand how racism is experienced by people of color. It is also important to me that you feel you can be authentic and share how you see things in here. First, I wonder how you think our difference in race might impact our work together and our relationship.
4. Control (no components included)	Not applicable.

Note. The common script across all four conditions is available from the first author upon request.

Method

We selected an analogue design with audiovisual vignettes to empirically test specific counselor broaching behaviors (Munley, 1974). The broaching literature is ripe for analogue research considering that conceptual pieces (e.g., Day-Vines & Holcomb-McCoy, 2013; Day-Vines et al., 2007; La Roche & Maxie, 2003) offer ample descriptions of the construct and existing

empirical studies (e.g., Fuertes et al., 2002; Knox et al., 2003; Zhang & Burkard, 2008) do not evaluate broaching framing. Furthermore, it is difficult, perhaps even unethical (see Heppner, Wampold, & Kivlighan, 2008, for discussion of ethical benefits to analogue design), to systematically control and vary broaching components in a naturalistic setting; a test of debated components with high internal validity, possible with analogue research, could advance the knowledge base on broaching.

Broaching Conditions

The video vignettes were created in line with recommendations for analogue research in counseling and psychology (Heppner et al., 2008). First, to minimize the tradeoff between internal validity and external validity or generalizability, we used vignettes that had high fidelity to real-life counseling in terms of counselor–client roles and the counseling environment depicted (Strong, 1971). The case vignettes also reflected core tenets of the broaching literature and faithfully depicted the manipulated variables for study (i.e., goals, similarities and/or differences; Heverly, Fitt, & Newman, 1984). To ensure that the vignette reflected these qualities, we conducted a two-phase pilot study, first, seeking perspectives of a diverse group of counseling doctoral students and counselor educators (Phase 1; $n = 11$) on the script and, second, previewing the videos to undergraduate students (Phase 2; $n = 51$) to confirm that the counselor was equally warm, skillful, and comfortable across conditions and that video length and quality (e.g., sound) allowed participants to make informed evaluations of the counselor.

From Phase 1 feedback, we enhanced the realistic nature of the overall script (e.g., substituting a reflection of content for a direct restatement of client words) and incorporated more approachable language within the broaching statements (e.g., softening mention of client concerns to goals for counseling or reason for coming in for services). In Phase 2, undergraduates enrolled in a counseling elective were randomly assigned to view one of the four videos in class with their peers (10 to 17 students per course section) and to provide feedback on a questionnaire they completed independently. On average, participants agreed that the counselor was warm ($M = 4.90$, $SD = 0.71$), comfortable ($M = 5.12$, $SD = 0.71$), and credible/skilled ($M = 5.18$, $SD = 0.91$). The mode score for each therapeutic factor in the total sample was 5 (*agree*), evidencing a strong presence of each therapeutic factor across videos. We then observed null results in a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) confirming there were no significant differences between conditions on counselor characteristics, Wilks's $\lambda = 0.82$, $F(9, 107.235) = 1.02$, $p > .05$. Similarly, there were no significant differences in ratings of video quality, Wilks's $\lambda = 0.90$, $F(6, 92) = 0.87$, $p > .05$, or ability to complete key dependent variable measures (see below) based on impressions gleaned from the video by condition, Wilks's $\lambda = 0.70$, $F(12, 100.830) = 1.21$, $p > .05$.

The final four vignettes each depicted a counselor–client interaction that displayed (or did not display in the control condition) initial, proactive counselor broaching statements with pointed language that varied in their goals and mention of similarities and/or differences (see Table 1). Each interaction was set in an intake counseling session, given the prevalent agreement about the merits of beginning broaching early in a counseling relationship (Day-Vines et al., 2007; Fuertes et al., 2002; Jones & Welfare, 2017; Knox et al., 2003; Zhang & McCoy, 2009). Across all conditions, the featured counselor in the vignette was a White woman in her 50s and the featured

client was a Black woman in her 20s; both individuals were practicing counselors with interest in culturally responsive counseling. Their demographics were deliberately chosen so that the focus of the conversation was on racial differences rather than gender, an often-cited visually salient facet of identity alongside race (La Roche & Maxie, 2003). Identical in all conditions, the counselor and client initially discussed the client's presenting concerns around depressed mood and social withdrawal. The control condition (Condition 4) ended there in order to prevent introducing new content that could unwittingly bring another construct into play for participants or confound our ability to compare conditions. The experimental conditions (Conditions 1, 2, and 3) were edited to imply that time had elapsed, fading out from the generic script and back in for the broaching statements, suggesting a natural flow into a conversation starter about race and racism. Throughout all conditions, the counselor used basic, facilitative helping skills (e.g., reflections of content and feeling, open-ended questions, minimal encouragers). As a result, the control condition also presented a therapeutic encounter (bolstered by pilot Phase 2 results), thus curbing concerns about allegiance effects or strategically weakening counselor responses to the client in the control condition. Additionally, in all counselor broaching conditions, counselor responsibility, multiple levels, and flexible stance were displayed in that the counselor assumed responsibility for the broaching statement; acknowledged individual and systemic levels of race; and posed an open question that allowed the client to self-identify, elaborate, and flexibly determine where the dialogue continued. The video faded out at this point, without a client response that might bias participants' evaluation of the counselor.

Participants

An a priori G∗Power analysis for multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) yielded a target sample size of 105, with an average of 26 participants in each of the four conditions. We electronically recruited a representative, random sample of 7,500 undergraduate students at a midsize southeastern university. Of those invited, 1,176 students opened the survey link; roughly 49% completed the survey, yielding a total response rate of 7.67%. Data cleaning consisted of removing the 601 incomplete cases, with only 123 requiring closer inspection. These 123 participants advanced in the survey beyond the informed consent; however, they did not complete items after the demographic portion and were ultimately removed. Thus, our final sample of 575 consisted of participants who viewed the vignette and went on to complete dependent variable measures.

Participants' mean age was 22.43 years ($SD = 6.26$; 148 missing cases), with the following distribution of self-identified gender identities: 128 (22.3%) men, 435 (75.7%) women, four (0.7%) transgender, and five (0.9%) other (e.g., genderfluid, nonbinary), and three (0.5%) missing cases. (Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.) The majority of participants were White ($n = 315$, 54.8%), followed by Black or African American ($n = 129$, 22.4%), Latina/o/x or Hispanic ($n = 48$, 8.3%), Asian ($n = 39$, 6.8%), multiracial ($n = 31$, 5.4%), other ($n = 7$, 1.2%), Native American ($n = 4$, 0.7%), and two (0.3%) missing cases. Mean race salience was 3.02 ($SD = 1.64$), corresponding to the midpoint of the scale (between slightly important and slightly unimportant). The sample reflected diverse sexual orientations, with 469 (81.6%) identifying as heterosexual, 12 (2.1%) as gay, 58 (10.1%) as bisexual, 14 (2.4%) as lesbian, 19 (3.3%) as other (i.e., pansexual, queer), and three (0.5%) were missing cases. Many participants identified as Christian Protestant ($n = 244$, 42.7%) or nonreligious ($n = 134$, 23.4%). Fifty-four

(9.4%) reported a disability. Finally, although the majority (87.13%) of participants reported a national identity as an American or U.S. citizen, 74 indicated other nationalities (e.g., Colombian, Nigerian) as primary to their identity.

More than half of participants ($n = 327$, 56.9%) indicated they had previously been in counseling, 246 (42.8%) had never been a client, and two (0.3%) were missing cases. Of individuals who had been a client (i.e., of the 327), 80 (24.4%) were currently seeing a counselor. On the basis of their current or most recent counseling, participants' most frequent presenting concerns were anxiety and nervousness ($n = 240$); followed by depression, low mood, sadness, and crying ($n = 225$); and stress and stress management ($n = 154$). Average satisfaction scores were high ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 1.39$), with 61% indicating being either very satisfied or satisfied with counseling.

Measures

Demographics and previous experience with counseling. Demographic questions were constructed to capture a range of multicultural identities in the areas of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, spirituality, nationality, language, and ability. Responses were categorical with the option to provide an open-ended response. A brief set of questions addressed participants' previous experience with counseling (i.e., whether a current client, overall satisfaction, and presenting concern from a checklist of general problems in living).

Desire to continue services. Participants were presented with a single item, "If I were the client, I would be _____ to continue counseling with this particular counselor," and responded on a 6-point Likert-type scale from 1 = *completely interested* to 6 = *completely uninterested*, with higher scores indicating higher levels of disinterest.

Racial identity salience. Racial identity salience items were presented as an introduction to the multicultural orientation scales. Participants indicated the level of importance of their race, ranging from 1 = *very important* to 6 = *very unimportant*, providing an in-the-moment or situational picture of the felt importance of particular identities (e.g., Yip, 2005). Higher scores thus reflect lower levels of racial identity salience.

Multicultural orientation. Multicultural orientation consists of cultural humility and opportunities to discuss culture and was measured with the following two instruments.

The Cultural Humility Scale (CHS; Hook et al., 2013) is a 12-item inventory clients use to rate their counselor's level of openness and responsiveness toward the client's most salient cultural identities. In this study, participants responded to the CHS with respect to their racial identity. The CHS was created to measure counselors' "way of being" (Owen, Tao, Leach, & Rodolfa, 2011, p. 274) with culturally different clients, typified by an orientation toward the other person that is respectful and egalitarian, filled with curiosity and a lack of superiority (Hook et al., 2013). The positive subscale (seven items) refers to the counselor demonstrating genuine interest and creating space in session for the client to explore the relevance of culture, whereas the negative subscale (five items, reverse-coded) suggests the counselor acts with superiority and makes assumptions about the client. All items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale

ranging from 1 = s*trongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*, with higher scores indicating higher levels of cultural humility. Hook et al. (2013) reported strong reliability (Cronbach's alpha was .90 in the present sample) and construct validity based on its relationship to other multicultural competence indicators.

The four-item Cultural (Missed) Opportunities (CMO) scale represents counselors' overall multicultural orientation (Owen et al., 2016). Items on the CMO scale are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*, with higher scores indicating more missed opportunities to discuss culture. Experts in multicultural counseling confirmed the content validity of survey items. A one-factor model fit the initial data collected from a diverse sample of clients and demonstrated strong reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of .86 (.65 in the present sample, lower than preferred but acceptable in light of the number of items; Lance, Butts, & Michels, 2006).

Cross-Cultural Counseling Inventory–Revised (CCCI-R). The 20-item CCCI-R (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Hernandez, 1991) captures a counselor's level of multicultural competence across cross-cultural counseling skills, sociopolitical awareness, and cultural sensitivity domains. Participants respond on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*, with higher scores indicating higher levels of counselor multicultural competence. Psychometric analyses have suggested strong interrater reliability, content validity for the foundational multicultural competencies (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992), and construct validity in differentiating between general counseling skills and culture-specific skills (LaFromboise et al., 1991). This client version of the CCCI-R has demonstrated strong reliability (Cronbach's alpha was .93 in the present sample) and removes concerns about counselors' potentially biased self-evaluation and socially desirable responding.

Working Alliance Inventory–Short Revised (WAI-SR). The WAI-SR (Hatcher & Gillaspy, 2006) is a brief, 12-item inventory of three domains of task, goals, and bond. It is rated on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *seldom* to 5 = *always*, with higher summed scores indicating a strong alliance. It has demonstrated strong psychometric properties across diverse samples of clients (Hatcher & Gillaspy, 2006; Owen, Tao, et al., 2011; Cronbach's alpha was .95 in the present sample) and previous correlations with therapist and client-rated improvement (Hatcher & Gillaspy, 2006). For the present study, participants were instructed to imagine themselves as the client in the client–counselor video vignette.

Procedure

Participants received an email invitation with a link to the consent form, demographic questionnaire, video vignette, and related measures (in the order outlined in the Measures section). Participants were randomly assigned to view one video vignette in its entirety. Those interested in incentives ($5 for first 10 respondents and drawing for $100 Amazon gift card for all respondents) added their contact information via a separate link that was not connected to their survey responses. A follow-up reminder email was sent 2 weeks later.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Beyond random assignment to groups, we checked that assumptions of MANOVA were met, including independence, multivariate normality, and common variance (Rencher, 2002). Univariate normality for each dependent variable was observed through Q-Q plots, and Levene's test of homogeneity of variances indicated no differences in variance for each variable by condition. Although Box's M was significant ($p = .032$), suggesting lack of homogeneity, in the context of roughly equal samples by condition and an alpha greater than .001, it is acceptable to proceed in light of the high sensitivity of this multivariate statistic (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2000). We then conducted two preliminary one-way MANOVAs to test for group differences in dependent variables as a function of participants' race/ethnicity and previous counseling experience. Given the presence of group differences by participants' racial/ethnic group, we proceeded with a MANCOVA. A multivariate approach in the current study minimized the risk of Type I error that would be present in first running multiple univariate contrasts (Rencher, 2002).

Participants' demographics were well balanced as a function of random assignment, with no significant differences between the distribution of racial/ethnic groups or gender (the two most salient identities in the context of the current study) by condition. We observed significant variation in race salience, $F(1, 559) = 230.56$, $p < .001$, by racial/ethnic group, excluding Native American ($n = 4$) and other ($n = 7$) participants for our analyses given their low sample size. White participants endorsed especially low average race salience ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 1.47$) compared with the rest of the sample, whereas Black/African American participants had higher than average race salience ($M = 1.67$, $SD = 0.96$). However, race salience did not systematically differ across the four experimental conditions, $F(3, 570) = 1.15$, $p > .05$. Additionally, previous exposure to counseling did not predict differences in the dependent variables, $F(5, 537) = 0.91$, $p = .475$, but racial/ethnic membership did, $F(20, 1775.34) = 3.51$, $p = .00$. Through univariate follow-ups, we located a significant difference in the CMO variable, $F(4, 539) = 10.23$, $p = .00$, with White participants on average assigning lower missed opportunity scores ($M = 13.71$, $SE = 0.20$) and thus rating the counselor more favorably than participants who were Asian ($M = 15.57$, $SE = 0.20$), Black/African American ($M = 15.46$, $SE = 0.32$), and Latina/o/x ($M = 16.34$, $SE = 0.51$) but not multiracial ($M = 14.90$, $SE = 0.64$; this is possibly attributable to Type II error given the sample size of 31). On the basis of these tests, we included race/ethnicity (with the following five groups: Asian, Black or African American, Latina/o/x, multiracial, and White) as a covariate in the main analyses.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1. We examined average ratings of all counselor and counseling process variables (i.e., CHS, CMO, CCCI-R, WAI-SR, and desire to continue services) to determine whether differences existed in at least one of these variables between at least two broaching conditions. The MANCOVA yielded significant results, $F(15, 1477.30) = 4.45$, $p < .001$, for the multivariate effect of condition when controlling for race/ethnicity (see Table 2), suggesting that the way the broaching statement was framed did vary how participants rated the counselor and counseling process on at least one dimension. Univariate tests located this difference in the following dependent variables: CHS, $F(3, 539) = 3.26$, $p = .021$; CMO, $F(3, 539) = 5.95$, $p = .001$; and

CCCI-R, $F(3, 539) = 15.46$, $p = .000$ (see Table 2). There were small effect sizes for broaching condition on CHS ($\eta^2 = .02$) and CMO ($\eta^2 = .03$), with a small to moderate effect size for CCCI-R ($\eta^2 = .08$). The magnitude of these effects was predictably modest because the dependent variables captured wide-ranging attitudes, knowledge, skills, and orientations of counselors; one broaching statement should not completely explain variance in ratings (see Trusty, Thompson, & Petrocelli, 2004).

Table 2. The Impact of Broaching Condition, Controlling for Race/Ethnicity, on Potential Client Evaluation of the Counselor and Counseling Process

Variable	Wilks's λ	F	df	p	Partial η^2	Observed Power
		Multivariate Analysis of Covariance				
Intercept	.04	2,635.38***	(5,535)	.000		1.00
Race/ethnicity	.93	7.88***	(5,535)	.000		1.00
Condition	.89	4.45***	(15,1477.30)	.000		1.00
		Univariate Follow-Up Tests				
Cultural humility		3.26*		.021	.02	.75
Cultural (missed) opportunities		5.95**		.001	.03	.96
Cross-cultural counseling competence		15.46***		.000	.08	1.00
Working alliance		2.18		.090	.01	.55
Desire to continue counseling		0.96		.409	.01	.26

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Hypothesis 2. Next, we conducted follow-up univariate and pairwise tests to answer Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4. Differences by condition, controlling for race/ethnicity, existed for the dependent variables in which culture was directly considered (i.e., CHS, CMO, and CCCI-R) but not for the WAI-SR and desire to continue services. In pairwise comparisons, the control condition (Condition 4) was most different compared with the other conditions, although it was not significantly different from each experimental condition across all three of the significant dependent variables. More specifically, the control condition consistently predicted lower ratings for CCCI-R ($M = 81.89$, $SE = 1.29$) when compared with Condition 1 ($M = 87.23$, $SE = 1.23$, $p = .003$), Condition 2 ($M = 90.77$, $SE = 1.27$, $p = .000$), and Condition 3 ($M = 93.69$, $SE = 1.30$, $p = .000$). For CMO, the control condition ($M = 15.58$, $SE = 0.30$) was significantly less favorable than Condition 1 ($M = 14.14$, $SE = 0.29$, $p = .001$), Condition 2 ($M = 14.46$, $SE = 0.30$, $p = .009$), and Condition 3 ($M = 13.92$, $SE = 0.31$, $p = .000$), as higher scores indicated more missed opportunities. Finally, for CHS, the control condition ($M = 43.85$, $SE = 0.78$) was only significantly different when compared with Condition 3 ($M = 47.30$, $SE = 0.78$, $p = .002$). Thus, Condition 3 emerged as most distinct, as participants scored this counseling experience better than the control condition on each culture-centered variable. Conditions 1 and 2 were evaluated more positively than the control condition with respect to CCCI-R and CMO only.

Hypothesis 3. In a comparison of broaching for the relationship conditions (Conditions 2 and 3) with broaching for content condition (Condition 1), significant differences existed only for CCCI-R. Condition 2 ($M = 90.77$, $SE = 1.27$, $p = .045$) and Condition 3 ($M = 93.69$, $SE = 1.30$, $p = .000$) elicited a slightly higher average rating of the counselor's cross-cultural counseling competence compared with Condition 1 ($M = 87.23$, $SE = 1.23$).

Hypothesis 4. Conditions 2 and 3 (whether or not broaching for the relationship focused on differences only or on similarities and differences) were not significantly different from one another across the three significant variables.

In a final exploratory analysis, we examined the interaction of race/ethnicity and broaching condition in a two-way MANOVA to examine whether the effect of the conditions varied by participants' race/ethnicity. Our null results, $F(60, 2438.74) = 0.80$, $p = .869$, revealed no evidence of an interaction effect, suggesting that broaching interventions added a benefit to culture-centered counseling variables across racial/ethnic groups.

Discussion

Variations in how a counselor framed an initial broaching statement mattered to participants in this study, but the effect was only true for participants' evaluations of the counselor on culture-centered variables (i.e., CHS, CMO, and CCCI-R), not the relationship in general (WAI-SR) or desire to continue services. After comparing the conditions of each variable, we found that Condition 4 (control condition) and Condition 3 (relationship, similarities and differences condition) emerged as most influential: The vignette without a broaching statement dependably underperformed, whereas the vignette with broaching for the relationship including similarities and differences regularly overperformed. Additionally, there were similarities in how participants rated the two relationship conditions (Conditions 2 and 3) in terms of CCCI-R, whereas the effectiveness of the content condition (Condition 1) fell between the control and the relationship conditions.

Differences by Status as a Person of Color or White Person on Cultural Variables

The widely held notion that discussions about race and racism are more often initiated (Knox et al., 2003; Sue, 2015; White-Davis, Stein, & Karasz, 2016), and indeed better received (White-Davis et al., 2016; Zhang & Burkard, 2008), by minoritized individuals led us to examine racial/ethnic group differences in evaluations of the counselor and the counseling process. On the whole, there were surprisingly few differences in average scores across participants of diverse races/ethnicities. Only CMO was significant; people of color (specifically Asian, Black/African American, and Latina/o/x participants) had higher average missed opportunities ratings, whereas White participants had significantly more favorable and lower missed opportunity ratings for the counselor depicted in the vignettes.

White individuals' lower CMO scores can be contextualized with previous literature. For example, Zhang and Burkard (2008) concluded that White clients' unchanged evaluations of a Black counselor when they discussed race, coupled with Black clients' greater benefit from a racial dialogue with a White counselor, reflected that White individuals, given their White privilege, do not have to "contend with the implications of their racial heritage" (p. 84) and may immediately perceive a more level distribution of power in cross-racial counseling relationships than minoritized individuals. White individuals may not perceive harm (or missed opportunities) when race is not addressed, and cross-racial relationships do not necessarily trigger conversations about race. Furthermore, White participants in this study had significantly lower average race salience (i.e., identification with their Whiteness) in comparison with participants of

color. Combined, these results suggest that racial identity factors affect how cross-cultural counseling is perceived (Owen, Tao, et al., 2011).

By contrast, participants who belonged to minoritized racial groups had more similar race salience scores to one another than to White participants, which may reflect some shared experiences of oppression (Sue, 2015) and could confirm the greater benefits of pursuing opportunities to discuss race with people of color (Knox et al., 2003; Zhang & Burkard, 2008). Notably, Black/African American participants in this study had the strongest average race salience scores, significantly higher than other people of color. This difference might be best understood in context of the history and persistence of anti-Black racism in the United States (Lynn, Jennings, & Hughes, 2013), particularly in the Southeast (Smångs, 2016) where this study was conducted.

Differences by Experimental Condition

The generally positive average evaluations of the counselor and counseling process across conditions make sense given that the vignettes were created to depict a neutral to good exchange between the counselor and client. Additionally, this positive reception combined with comparable ratings on culture-neutral dependent variables (i.e., working alliance, desire to continue) across conditions suggests that the vignettes were all therapeutic in nature and that variation in terms of video length and the control condition's exclusion of broaching content did not bias results. Rather, significant differences were only observed on the culture-centered variables (i.e., cultural humility, cultural opportunities, and cross-cultural counseling competence). Although it is surprising that neither the working alliance nor desire to continue counseling was affected by counselor broaching, it might be that clients rate culture-neutral variables on the basis of a broader set of counselor skills and behaviors. The growing distinction between universal and culturally responsive counseling processes dovetails with previous researchers' contention that the MSJCC require skills above and beyond strong general counseling skills (Cates, Schaefle, Smaby, Maddux, & LeBeauf, 2007; Tsang, Bogo, & Lee, 2011). It appears that cultural responsiveness is enhanced when counselors make more direct mention of cultural dynamics in session, especially when the relational contexts of identity and power are acknowledged. In other words, the counselor in the vignettes accessed therapeutic benefits in the intake that directly addressed culture as compared with the culture-neutral intake, with added benefit across all culture-centered dependent variables for Condition 3 (relationship, similarities and differences). Furthermore, there was some evidence that broaching maps onto broad qualities such as multicultural orientation and multicultural counseling competence. For both cross-cultural counseling competence and the counselor's use of cultural opportunities in session, all three broaching conditions surpassed the control condition. It seems that, generally, broaching is an effective way to demonstrate investment in pursuing discussions about culture. Amidst numerous calls to examine how multicultural counseling competence plays out in the context of counseling (Alberta & Wood, 2009; Sue, 2015), it is useful to establish such links between counselor behaviors and the qualities to which counselors aspire.

Our test of specific broaching components provides additional context for how broaching can be most effective. In the current study, variations in components seemed to matter most for participants' evaluation of the counselor's cross-cultural counseling competence. Relationship

conditions (Conditions 2 and 3) represented a marked improvement over both the control condition (Condition 4) and the content condition (Condition 1), suggesting two important points. First, broaching seems to embody descriptions of cross-cultural counseling competence as overt interventions that are visible to clients (Owen, Leach, Wampold, & Rodolfa, 2011). Second, clients might prefer that counselors involve themselves in the broaching statement through a relational approach. The counselors' self-disclosure of their identity demonstrated their self-awareness of their own White privilege, a central component of the MSJCC (Ratts et al., 2015; Sue et al., 1992). Thus, simply raising the subject of race and racism may not, in and of itself, convey that the counselor is highly competent to work with minoritized clients.

Although differences in counselors' cultural humility existed, only Condition 3 (relationship, similarities and differences) elicited significantly more favorable ratings than Condition 4 (control condition). Perhaps the fact that Condition 3 is a slightly longer broaching statement that involved more counselor self-disclosure and layered discussion of identity (through discussing both gender and race) conveyed the counselor's curiosity, consistent with the stance of cultural humility (Hook et al., 2013). Alternatively, this finding suggests that cultural humility may be crystallized at later points in the counseling process, with consistent demonstrations that the counselor is committed to empathizing with the client's worldview.

Finally, we did not observe different responses to conditions based on participants' racial/ethnic group, suggesting that the imagined benefits of broaching are widely perceived. Thus, counselors' feared downsides of broaching (e.g., Jones & Welfare, 2017) may not hold, even for clients belonging to the dominant racial group (at least in terms of how they viewed the efficacy of broaching race with a minoritized client). However, this finding should be considered in the context of an analogue design. The positive evaluations of broaching here, while robust, cannot stand in for actual clients' responses to a broaching statement delivered in their own intake session.

Implications for Counseling Practice

Ultimately, the present study supports counselors making broaching a priority for beginning new counseling relationships, given the potential clients' more favorable perceptions of the counselor and counseling process. The initial broaching statements provide an alternative to race-neutral "counseling as usual" by using proactive and pointed language about race and racism. Although the control condition was well regarded by participants, it did not perform nearly as well on crucial cross-cultural counseling variables (i.e., CHS, CMO, CCCI-R). It seems that raising the subjects of race and racism, particularly when focused on the relationship and attending to similarities and differences between the counselor and client, is one way to build clients' expectation that their counselor is culturally competent or oriented to their culture.

Counselors might consider how they could enact or personalize the elements of initial broaching that were consistently delivered to participants in this study, including (a) normalizing the broaching statement (e.g., "Often, I ask my clients about their race, ethnicity, and other cultural identities"), (b) attending to individual-level identity in addition to systemic experiences of oppression (i.e., race and racism), and (c) probing clients for their perspective (e.g., "I wonder how you see your race, or even experiences of racism, being related to what brings you in for

counseling?"). It appears that initial broaching statements should demonstrate the counselor's awareness of intersectionality by acknowledging multiple identities, recognizing shared identities with the client, and involving the self of the counselor. Although this might be a departure from the original goal of addressing differences between the counselor and client with respect to race (e.g., Fuertes et al., 2002; Knox et al., 2003), clients might appreciate exploring differences from a secure base of common ground. Similarly, invoking the relationship is helpful insofar as counselors self-disclose how their positionality might affect the work of counseling. It could be instructive to also consider how the counselor might determine which identities to broach and how they can use pointed language while not making assumptions about the client. For example, although race and gender can be visible differences, such visual cues do not provide the language clients use to describe themselves (e.g., woman or genderqueer) or complete information about their background (e.g., individuals who are Afro-Latina/o/x or multiracial).

Much of the genuineness required of broaching interventions can be demonstrated when counselors find their own voices in addressing issues of culture and power, particularly as they involve their own identities and experiences. Counselors will need to adapt the language of their broaching statement according to factors such as their particular style (e.g., the use of humor or more Socratic-style questions), the salient demographics between themselves and their client (e.g., where areas of similarity and difference lie), and the community in which they live and work (e.g., the presence of recurring systemic issues for client populations served in a particular clinic). Finally, the counselor should always remain attuned to the client's experience, avoid making assumptions or stereotypic generalizations about cultural groups, and follow the client's lead once the topic has been made safer to discuss in session (Cardemil & Battle, 2003).

Limitations and Future Research

It is important to consider this study in light of its limitations. The analogue design used here presents a tradeoff between increased experimental controls and decreased external validity. Although we operationalized and tested precise broaching components, they were not delivered within the setting of an actual counselor–client relationship and did not apply uniformly to all participants. Some participants, particularly White participants, may have had difficulty identifying with the client. Although we took steps to render a faithful depiction of broaching, there were surely nuances of tone, style, and phrasing that came through in the interaction. In addition, visual cues of race (e.g., hairstyle, dress) may have influenced participants' responses. Similar research in naturalistic settings, using tailored broaching statements, will offer more transferable findings. Future research applying analogue design might also incorporate other bona fide interventions into the control condition to strengthen robustness.

Our decision to focus on a cross-racial dyad with a White female counselor and Black female client reflects the state of the literature with its focus on broaching race (e.g., Fuertes et al., 2002; Maxie et al., 2006). We were also compelled by the evidence that race is salient and especially challenging for White individuals to address, given the social taboo on discussing race and racism (Chang & Yoon, 2011; C. E. Thompson & Jenal, 1994). However, narrowing our focus in this way also limited our ability to provide generalizable guidelines for broaching other counselor and client identities (e.g., sexual orientation, religion, class) or at other moments in the counseling process (e.g., in response to a rupture in the relationship). Furthermore, the results of

this study do not directly address the learning needs of counselor trainees of color, a common limitation of cross-cultural counseling course work (Seward, 2014).

Finally, we argue that the positionality of the counselor, the client, and the specific aspect(s) of identity being raised in session ought to matter. Future qualitative studies can illuminate nuances of context and style for initial broaching statements and may be best suited for conceptualizing identity more intersectionally. Given that counselors and clients belong to multiple, dynamic cultural groups with varied histories of privilege and marginalization (Ratts et al., 2015), it is important to chart how broaching dialogues unfold across contexts. Although the goals of broaching are epitomized in the intake broaching statements tested in the present study, scholars have also conceptualized broaching as an ongoing process present throughout the course of counseling (Day-Vines et al., 2018; King, in press). Longitudinal designs could better capture broaching as a recurring intervention and help to define the various functions of broaching throughout the life span of counseling. Does broaching fundamentally change the nature of the counseling relationship or the course of counseling? And if so, how? Such investigations could expand the empirical base for the benefits of broaching as well as point to additional, more complex cross-cultural skills.

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