
What Is the African American's Experience Following Imago Education?

Journal of Humanistic Psychology
51(2) 216–228
© The Author(s) 2011
Reprints and permission: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>
DOI: 10.1177/0022167809352379
<http://jhp.sagepub.com>



Tanya L. Martin and Dawn M. Bielawski¹

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the African American's experience following Imago education. Six women and six men were interviewed for this study. Qualitative data analysis resulted in the following themes: (a) improved communication between partners, (b) increased understanding of self, (c) increased understanding of partner, (d) increased understanding of one's own and one's partner's childhood, (e) revealed more of one's authentic self, and (f) expressed need for more education about Imago therapy within the African American community. Information gained from this study will be of value to the field of psychology, providing culturally pertinent insight about African Americans and how they experience relationships and psychotherapy. The findings are presented and summarized through themes, individual quotes, a composite depiction, and a creative synthesis. Future research in this area would examine the long-term effects of Imago education in this population.

Keywords

African American, Imago, couples therapy, therapy, counseling

¹Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, USA

Corresponding Author:

Tanya L. Martin, 16000 W. Nine Mile Road, Suite 207, Southfield, MI 48075, USA
Email: tlmartinpsy@att.net

Literature Review

The decline of stable and healthy relationships among African Americans can be traced back to the institution of slavery. Families were often separated and sold to other slave owners in an effort to demean the race and make a financial profit. Unfortunately, the negative effects of separating spouses, family members, and partners were not taken into consideration. For instance, based on a review of slavery documents, when mothers gave birth, only their names and their owners' names were included in the birth record, not the fathers' or the children's (Boyd-Franklin & Franklin, 1999). As a result of these types of practices, many African Americans may have unconsciously harbored and passed on the negative effects to other generations. This behavior is so prevalent in African American society that the discussion of love, happiness, and togetherness is rarely written about, seen on television, or depicted in movies. Therefore, it is necessary to shed light on the many reasons why more information and education is not shared with and/or offered to this segment of the population:

Since our leaders and scholars agree that one measure of the crisis black people are experiencing is lovelessness, it should be evident that we need a body of literature, both sociological and psychological work, addressing the issue of love among black people, its relevance to political struggle, its meaning in our lives. (Hooks, 2001, p. 5)

Perhaps Black people are not experiencing lovelessness; instead, maybe they are being wrongly viewed as loveless. For that reason, it is imperative to change those stereotypes and educate society about African Americans and their ability to be loving individuals. These myths and stereotypes have mistakenly made many African Americans believe that monogamy, marriage, and two-parent homes are characteristics of relationships seen primarily in other cultures.

A number of factors seem to be at work: the devastating effects of slavery and Jim Crow laws on black marriages; endemic poverty, which puts added stress on already weak families; even fewer gains from marriage, especially for women; too early sex that puts young girls at risk of unwanted pregnancy; and racial concentration that magnifies the impact of these conditions. (Besharov & West, 1998, pp. 107-108)

These factors may be directly related to male incarceration, separation, premarital sex, poverty, low self-esteem, insecurity toward the institution of

marriage, and abuse and fear within relationships. Sadly, these dysfunctional intimate relationships among adults also gravely affect the children involved. Even in relationships where the parents are married, if they are not happily connected in the marital relationship, the children will most often experience negative repercussions in their own relationships. Hooks (2001, p. 169) asserted, "As mass movements for social justice lost momentum so did vigilant affirmative focus on black heterosexual relationships. Divorce rates, which are much higher for black couples than for other groups in this society, are one serious indication of crisis." Hence, the importance of developing and maintaining happy and healthy relationships has far-reaching effects.

Significant changes have occurred in the patterns of marriage and divorce in the United States during the past few decades, which disproportionately affect African Americans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). In comparison with Caucasian Americans, African Americans are less likely to marry, are more likely to marry later when they do marry, and are more likely to be separated, divorced, or widowed than the general population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005; see Dixon, 2009, for a review). Some of the factors contributing to this racial disparity in marital status include social movements such as feminism, cohabitation, putting too much emphasis on material things, and economic limitations; the misogynistic hip-hop culture view of women as inferior; religious differences; jealousy; and inability to resolve conflict (Dixon, 2009).

Gender issues also contribute to marital instability because of the tendency of African-Americans to protect their sons in ways they do not protect their daughters. The need to compensate for the greater psychological risk to which males are exposed sets up distorted expectations for them which then alienates female children in ways that later contribute to problems in marital intimacy. (Boyd-Franklin & Franklin, 1999, p. 275)

Comparison of African Americans with people from other cultures (Hispanic, Asian, and Caucasian) shows that African Americans are unlikely to seek out relationship therapy; they are more likely to go to their extended family with issues (Ho, 1987). African Americans commonly obtain therapy for their children's problems when referred by a teacher, rather than seeking therapy for their own relationship issues (Penn, Hernandez, & Bermudez, 1997). For Hispanics, *familism* is a value that stresses interdependence and the family over the individual, focusing on the children (Ramos-McKay, Comas-Diaz, & Rivera, 1988). For Asian families, the father is the patriarch and breadwinner, holding responsibility for all major decisions in the family (Ho, 1987). There is a stark contrast between the family systems in these other

cultures compared with that in the African American culture. This is largely because of the fact that African American men were involuntarily separated from their families and used as breeders during the time of slavery—a legacy that in some ways is still apparent today.

Because of the significant decline in marriage rates and escalating divorce rates among African Americans, this study focused on the effectiveness of couples' therapy, using Imago Relationship Therapy. Hendrix (1992) states that the Imago

is forged in the interaction between how we attempted to get our childhood needs met and how our caretakers responded to those needs, and etched on a template in our conscience. What we unconsciously want is to get what we didn't get in childhood from someone who is like the people who didn't give us what we needed in the first place. (p. 21)

This form of therapy is derived from an in-depth theory involving 16 original exercises aimed at improving relationships. The exercise that forms the foundation of Imago Therapy is known as the Couples' Dialogue, which involves three steps used to deepen, broaden, and improve communication. According to Hendrix (1996), the Couples' Dialogue is one of the most important tools in the process of improving communication between couples. The three components of the Couples' Dialogue are mirroring, validation, and empathy. Mirroring is simply listening to and repeating to one's partner what he/she has said; this is done to bring about active listening. Validation is provided after the listener has mirrored/repeated all the information shared by the sender. It is during this exchange that the listener explains to his or her partner how they "make sense." Empathy is also provided by the listeners as they explain to their partner how they "imagine them to be feeling or to have felt" during the said experience or situation. This dialogue is quite effective because it slows the conversation, allowing both parties to fully participate, but in a structured, heartfelt, and humanistic fashion.

Additionally, in an effort to determine the model most appropriate for this research endeavor, both quantitative and qualitative models were considered. After a review of these models, it was determined that a qualitative model would be most appropriate for this research project. The qualitative model used for this project is the heuristic model (Moustakas, 1990), which seeks to discover the unique and universal features inherently related to the research question. The heuristic model is a deeply personal research tool because it seeks to thoroughly understand and capture subjective experience. This is achieved by interviewing the co-researchers and thoroughly examining those things directly related to the

research question. In the heuristic model, the researcher plays a dual role because he or she is both a participant and researcher.

In addition to the heuristic model, the phenomenological model was considered for this study. According to Rockwell (2004), this model evaluates the following:

The appreciation of transcendental phenomenological analysis reveals universal themes at the same time that it highlights uniqueness of experience. In this context, outside the world of qualitative, proof-laden, statistical information, descriptive data invites the researcher inside the reality of the experience under examination. It does so in the words of the researcher participant—the only person who would be intimate enough with the details of the experience to shed light on the *wirkliches*, or real Being, in question. It is the research participant's assessment and expression of his or her inner world of meanings and textural experience that provide the qualitative research design with the stuff of its own exploratory nature and manifests as data ripe for existential-phenomenological analysis. (p. 86)

Despite the many rich qualities and elements of this model, the heuristic model was still most appropriate for this study because the researcher also shares his or her personal experience of the phenomenon being studied unlike the phenomenological model, in which the experience of the researcher is not included. In essence, it was important for this researcher (TLM) to be a participant in this study to fully relate to and understand the views of the co-researchers, and heuristic research is the only qualitative model that offers this option. Strauss and Corbin (1998) explain, "Remember, the idea behind varying methods is to carry out the most parsimonious and advantageous means for arriving at theory" (p. 34). Consequently, the heuristic model offers the elements necessary for completing this study in the most "advantageous" manner possible.

A thorough search of the literature on couples therapy found that studies focusing on African American couples therapy were typically limited to specific areas of research rather than the overall experience of African Americans. For example, drug abuse, interracial relationships, lesbian couples, spousal abuse, and infertility were areas of specialized study. Some articles also included only a small percentage of African Americans and were therefore of little use for extrapolation. This expansive literature search yielded no articles specific to African American couples therapy, demonstrating the novelty and importance of the current study.

Although Imago Therapy has a wealth of positive attributes and techniques, many people have never heard of it, particularly African Americans. Consequently, an exhaustive literature search on the topic, "What is the African American's experience following Imago education?" was performed. This search unearthed no findings specifically related to the question. However, a few studies were found that evaluated the effectiveness of the Getting the Love You Want (GTLYW) weekend workshop. Heller (1999) performed quantitative/qualitative research on 60 participants focused on the behavior, attitudes, and perceptions following a GTLYW workshop. Heller stated that for both men and women, there were significant positive effects on all variables measured. Pitner (1995) found that relationship quality was enhanced, and this enhancement was maintained 6 weeks after the GTLYW workshop. Improvement was found with regard to marital satisfaction, communication, commitment, conflict, and insight into one's family of origin in Emerson's (1993) study on the Imago workshop. This improvement was maintained on all variables, with the exception of commitment, 3 months after the workshop. The studies described above have demonstrated that the GTLYW weekend workshop is effective for the general population. However, the present study examines the effect of couple's therapy sessions as well as the weekend workshop on the African American's experience following Imago education.

Method

Participants

A total of 15 potential participants agreed to take part in the study. Interviews were conducted with 12 African American participants (6 men, 6 women). They ranged in age from the early 30s to mid-60s. Six of the participants were married (3 pairs of married couples), and 6 were unmarried (6 single individuals). One of the coauthors participated in the study as a co-researcher as is optional based on the guidelines of the heuristic model. She was interviewed by the dissertation committee chair using the same procedures as for other participants. Inclusion criteria for participants were as follows: African American, at least 18 years of age, in an intimate relationship (married or dating for a minimum of 5 years), and completed an Imago therapy workshop for couples and/or couples therapy with an Imago therapist using at least 1 of the 16 Imago educational tools referenced in GTLYW (Hendrix, 1988). Participants gave informed consent and agreed to a face-to-face interview, to have the interview tape-recorded, and for the interview to be held in an office setting. They were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

Procedures

Participants were referred for recruitment into the study by two Imago therapists who used the above-listed inclusion criteria to select them. They were then contacted by telephone, and an informational letter was mailed to them. Once they reviewed the study information and confirmed that they were interested in participating in the study, the prospective participants were contacted by phone to schedule an interview.

The interviewer took notes during the discussion and also recorded the interview on a tape recorder. As the participants began to engage in the interview, their ability and willingness to share their experience of Imago education evolved. The more they talked, the more intimate, detailed, and personal their stories became. Each conversational interview lasted between 1 and 2 hours and included the following focusing exercise and 3 guided questions: Think about your experience of Imago therapy. Reflect on whatever becomes present for you surrounding this experience, such as feelings, thoughts, bodily sensations, and so on; (a) What was your experience of going through Imago therapy? (b) How would you describe yourself and your relationship after completing Imago therapy? and (c) What were the things that held the most or least value to you after completing this experience?

The three questions provided the foundation on which the conversational interview was built. On completion of all interviews, a personal course of action was embarked on, which required the primary coauthor to immerse, reflect on, and examine the wealth of material collected through the use of the heuristic model. Based on the criteria used in the heuristic model, the researcher also sought to discover and understand the total experience of each participant involved in the research.

Results

One individual co-researcher's portrait is presented to give an example. The portrait is used here to uncover the true impact of Imago education and to show how it assisted in bringing the co-researcher to "life" as he authentically shared his experience following Imago education. Names have been changed for confidentiality.

Will is in his mid-50s. He has been married and divorced twice, is currently single, and has 3 adult children from his first marriage. He has a PhD in Finance and is employed as a dean of student services at a community college. He completed an Imago Therapy weekend workshop with his partner to assist her in receiving her certification as an Imago therapist. Although Will's

reason for attending the workshop was only to help his partner, he reported that he gained much more.

Will and his partner have dated “off and on” for almost 4 years, and despite their breakups, they have managed to develop a good friendship. Although they no longer have an intimate relationship, Will remarks, “The friendship has always been there and that’s the strength of it. With the friendship, there’s a respect. We have immense respect for each other.” It was also the respect and strength of their friendship that made Will eager to attend the workshop.

Will approached the workshop with an open heart and mind, as he very early on observed, “What the Imago experience did, it made me cognizant of my past relationships, it made me present and thinking in terms of what I did in terms of those relationships.” Will began to give his present relationship, as well as his past relationships, some very serious thought, as he easily absorbed the teachings of Imago therapy. He adds, “Imago brought increased clarity to our relationship; how we thought about each other, and how we understand where we’re at and how we understood what makes the relationship work, and how we understand what we have to work on, in order to make it work. This all involved being honest with our past and where we are today.”

Following his Imago experience, Will viewed the relationship/friendship with his partner as a team of sorts, as he describes a greater sense of responsibility for one’s self, one’s partner, and the relationship. He also articulated a degree of heightened awareness as he described his view of the relationship. “It was one of my first introductions to looking at relationships and looking into relationships from the outside in.” With such an introduction, Will began to slowly view his partner and their relationship through different lenses. In other words, rather than being self-focused and only looking at his needs, wants, and desires, he began to apply that philosophy to his partner.

He stands firm on this philosophy: “I thought all of Imago was important. All of the intrinsic value, cuz, it talked about moving away from yourself, the individual, and focusing in on the needs of the other, and love means accepting, accepting that person and loving them for who they are. Period. What they don’t have and what they do have. Period.”

Because Will was willing and able to focus on his partner and the institution of “relationshiping,” he was able to have a much broader and well-rounded experience of Imago therapy because he was able to look at his relationship, his partner, and himself, which allowed him to see how each of these entities is connected. After further pondering, he found the following: “When I reflected on the Imago experience, it made me think that men have a tendency to not navigate a relationship. They let the woman do the navigation. And man will just be a passenger in the driver’s seat. What it made me more aware of, was

not to be a passenger, but to help in the navigation and to not take so many things for granted, as men tend to do.”

Once again, Will articulated the need for relationships to work/function as a team. He embraces the team approach and looks at the many aspects of the relationship to bring them together as a whole.

The following themes were derived from analyzing the transcripts and notes from the 12 interviews: (a) improved communication between partners, (b) increased understanding of self, (c) increased understanding of partner, (d) increased understanding of one's own and one's partner's childhood, (e) revealed more of one's authentic self, and (f) expressed need for more education about Imago therapy within the African American community. For example, the experience of improved communication between partners was reported by 67% of participants. Quotes reflective of this theme included the following: “the Imago was very helpful in providing tools for communication,” “It helped me communicate better with my partner,” and “We have learned to talk, learned to communicate, learned to understand each other.” The majority of participants (92%) reported experiencing an increased understanding of self as a result of Imago therapy. Relevant quotes from interviews include the following: “What it made me aware of was not to be a passenger, but to help in the navigation of the relationship and not to take so many things for granted, as men tend to,” “I had a heightened sense of awareness about self . . . about me,” and “Um, and so I think that the Imago session, at least for me, served its purpose. Creating more of a self-awareness, with respect to relationships, who I am, um, why I do what I do, who I get into relationships with, and how I function in those relationships.” With regard to the third theme—namely, increased understanding of partner—some of the participants (58%) described having felt “selfish” prior to understanding how their partners truly felt. For instance, “I just realized that, wow, when I stopped being so selfish and took the focus off of myself, and began to pay more attention to my partner, I was better able to understand where he was coming from.” Another co-researcher commented, “It gave me greater insight and understanding about my wife. Things that I never knew; but things to help me appreciate, value and understand her better.”

The majority of participants (67%) reported an increased capacity to understand their own as well as their partner's childhood. “Childhood wounds” represented an aspect of the understanding of childhood that was particularly relevant for the participants. The identification of those wounds led to a personal and relational healing process. One participant stated as follows: “But what Imago did in going through the exercises and going into the developmental work as a client, it put me in touch with how I was shaping my present

as a result of my unresolved childhood wounds. And, how I was projecting that. It's almost like I needed him to be deviant, because that was my frame of reference."

In terms of how Imago helped participants understand their partner's childhoods, one participant said, "Well, by understanding Barb's childhood, I can understand where Barb is coming from." Although theme #5—revealed more of one's authentic self—is closely related to theme #2—increased understanding of self—it was necessary to list this as a separate theme because the participants experienced and shared with their partners a more "real and true" sense of themselves. This authenticity, reflected by 42% of participants, was often expressed as a "revelation" and/or a "letting down of one's guard." One participant said, "Imago addresses issues of authenticity, in terms of how authentic I was in relation to the person I was seeing." Another stated, "And so what's happened since this Imago thing, is that I have a heightened awareness, um, and that heightened awareness is causing me to kind of let my guard down. And, allow me to be vulnerable. Cuz it's about me." All the participants (100%) identified the need for more relationship education within the African American community. One participant shared, "I just want our people to get it. And we don't get it. And we're afraid to get it. We make jokes about people that get it. And what I mean by get it is, people that are in a relationship, openly caring about each other. And I believe Imago can help us do just that." Another co-researcher commented, "From the African-American perspective, it really becomes an important tool, because our community, in this country suffers from the breakdown of good solid relationships. Be it marriage or just plain straight-up good male/female relationships, which foster better decision making, better families, better organization, structure, discipline, raising of kids, having kids, all starts to come from this whole relationship piece and marriage, uh, and it's breaking down in the African American community. So here's a tool that maybe can help to address some of that issue. So the first thing I started looking at, coming out of Imago and my session and the exposure that I had is, HEY! Why aren't we pushing this thing in the Black community?"

Discussion

This study sought to answer the question, "What is the African American's experience following Imago Education?" Here, we elaborate on the overall findings in relation to the six themes described in the Results section. In an effort to foster more effective communication, the Couple's Dialogue was used. All the participants in the present study had learned this exercise as part

of their Imago workshop or therapy sessions, which led to improved communication between partners being reported by a majority of participants. Although the dialogue was sometimes initially approached with resistance, the participants remained cooperative and open-minded, as they used the dialogue and experienced positive changes in their communication. The improved communication was directly related to each person allowing his or her partner to “speak their voice” while the other intently listened.

For many of the participants, once they observed an improvement in their communication, they also recognized an increased understanding of self. The improved communication may have inadvertently facilitated this process, as the participants were able to “view” themselves from their own perspective as well as their partner’s perspective. Increased understanding of self also encouraged the participants to look outside of themselves in a greater attempt to experience an increased understanding of their partner. The participants reported that various Imago exercises facilitated this process. The exercises most often referred to were the following: the Couple’s Dialogue, the Parent–Child Dialogue, and the Behavior Change Request.

Imago education further provided the participants with tremendous insight and increased understanding of their own and their partner’s childhood. This process offered many “aha” moments. The participants began to understand that their current behavior and the behavior of their partner usually originated in childhood. As a result, understanding the past helped them better understand the present. Once the participants began to relax, let down their defenses, and trust the process, they revealed more of their authentic selves.

Despite the many positive findings, the study is not without limitations. Because of the limited scope of the project, the sample did not completely represent a full socioeconomic and cultural range of the population. Also, although a standard set of questions was used in the interview, it became difficult to keep the participants in the role of interviewee because they kept going off on tangents and asking questions about Imago therapy. This limitation of the heuristic approach is offset by the advantage of having a free-flowing conversation, which allows collection of more data and the determination of themes. A quantitative approach may be used in future studies to more definitively assess these themes.

The majority of participants expressed growth in terms of the above themes, but they unanimously stressed the critical need for more education about Imago therapy within the African American community. They identified the high rate of divorce, single-parent homes, and dysfunctional relationships as the top three reasons for educating this segment of the population. Overall, the participants reported positive experiences following their Imago education

experience because they considered it to be “very valuable and personally beneficial.” The results of this study are in agreement with other research that has examined the satisfaction with (Hogan, Hunt, Emerson, Hayes, & Ketterer, 1996) and effectiveness of Imago therapy (Emerson, 1993; Heller, 1999; Pitner, 1995).

Future research should be designed to include a follow-up interview to be given at the conclusion of the co-researcher’s 1-year anniversary of the completion of his or her Imago education. The study could be replicated with other races, cultures, and ethnicities with a larger sample size. This duplicated study could be used to compare and contrast what the participants learned about themselves, their partner, and their relationship. Furthermore, a comparison study of African Americans who receive couples therapy versus those that do not could be conducted.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no conflicts of interest with respect to the authorship and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research and/or authorship of this article.

References

- Besharov, D. J., & West, A. (1998). African American marriage patterns. In A. Thernstrom & S. Thernstrom (Eds.), *Beyond the color line: New perspectives on race and ethnicity in America* (pp. 95-113). Stanford, CA: Hoover Press.
- Boyd-Franklin, N., & Franklin, A. J. (1999). African American couples in therapy. In M. McGoldrick (Ed.), *Re-visioning family therapy: Race, culture and gender in clinical practice* (pp. 268-281). New York: Guilford.
- Dixon, P. (2009). Marriage among African Americans: What does the research reveal? *Journal of African American Studies*, 13, 29-46.
- Emerson, D. E. (1993). *Evaluation of effectiveness of “Getting the Love You Want” marital enrichment seminars*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Graduate School of Psychology, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA.
- Heller, B. C. (1999). An education of Imago Relationship Therapy through its use in the Getting the Love You Want workshop: A quantitative/qualitative assessment (Doctoral Dissertation, Saybrook Institute, 1999), *Dissertation Abstracts International*.
- Hendrix, H. (1988). *Getting the Love You Want*. New York: Henry Holt.
- Hendrix, H. (1992). *Keeping the Love You Find*. New York: Atria Books.

- Hendrix, H. (1996). The evolution of Imago Relationship Therapy: A personal and professional journey. *Journal of Imago Relationship Therapy, 1*, 1-18.
- Ho, M. K. (1987). Family therapy with ethnic minorities. In A. Lauffer & C. Garvin (Eds.), *Family therapy with ethnic minorities* (pp. 24-68). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Hogan, T. F., Hunt, R., Emerson, D., Hayes, R., & Ketterer, K. (1996). An evaluation of client satisfaction with the Getting the Love You Want weekend workshop. *Journal of Imago Relationship Therapy, 1*, 57-66.
- Hooks, B. (2001). *Salvation: Black people and love*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Moustakas, C. (1990). *Heuristic research: Design, methodology, and applications*. New York: Sage.
- Penn, C. D., Hernandez, S. L., & Bermudez, J. M. (1997). Using a cross-cultural perspective to understand infidelity in couples therapy. *American Journal of Family Therapy, 25*, 169-185.
- Pitner, G. (1995). The effects of a couples weekend workshop experience on marital satisfaction and relationship quality. (Doctoral Dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1995), *Dissertation Abstracts International*.
- Ramos-McKay, J. M., Comas-Diaz, L., & Rivera, L. A. (1988). Puerto Ricans. In L. Comas-Diaz & E. E. Griffith (Eds.), *Clinical guidelines in cross-cultural mental health* (pp. 204-232). New York: John Wiley.
- Rockwell, D. (2004). *Celebrity and being-in-the-world*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Center for Humanistic Studies, Farmington Hills, MI.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2005). *Table 3. Annual estimates of the population by sex, race and Hispanic or Latino origin for the United States: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2005*. Retrieved August 2009, from <http://www.census.gov/popest/national/asrh/NC-EST2005/NC-EST2005/NC-EST-03.xls>

Bios



Tanya Martin, PsyD, LLP, is a clinical psychologist, certified Imago relationship therapist, and college professor at Henry Ford Community College and Oakland Community College. She received her doctoral degree from the Michigan School of Professional Psychology.



Dawn Bielawski, PhD, is an assistant professor in pediatrics at Wayne State University. Her research interests include the effects of the environment on development as well as health communication.