

**Black and Latino Fathers of Students with Autism:
Culturally Responsive Support**

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Abstract

Perspectives from five Black and Latino fathers of students with autism are shared from this qualitative pilot study. The fathers were asked to describe the most helpful forms of support from school counselors. One-time, semi-structured interviews were conducted and interpreted with the thematic analysis method. Results suggest support from other parents, and specifically from other fathers, with shared experiences is most helpful. Recommendations for school counseling practice and research are shared.

Keywords: school counselors, autism, fathers, Black and Latino fathers

Black and Latino Fathers of Students with Autism: Culturally Responsive Support

Autism is diagnosed at a rate of 1 in 68 children in the United States (Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2014). Consequently, school counselors are tasked to find effective ways to support students with autism and identify support resources for families when needed (Auger, 2013; Krell & Perusse, 2012). Engaging parents as stakeholders in their children's education is an important but, at times, underutilized necessity of schooling (Henderson, 2007). Specifically, how school counselors support students with autism (SWA) and their families is an important consideration.

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2013) communicated how school counselors should provide direct and indirect services for students with disabilities in their position statement, *The Professional School Counselor and Students with Disabilities* (ASCA, 2013). These services include, but are not limited to providing individual, small group, and classroom-based counseling students with disabilities and advocating for students with disabilities within the school community (ASCA, 2013).

The Department of Education (U.S. Department of Education, 2013) offers a clear definition of autism citing:

Autism means a developmental disability affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.

Parental engagement is especially important for students with disabilities who often experience gaps in educational opportunities and outcomes compared to students without disabilities (Rock & Leff, 2007; U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2016).

Recent studies have illustrated the convergence of school counselors' lack of preparedness to effectively support students with autism. Dipeolu, Storlie, and Johnson (2014) documented limited resources available for school counselors serving SWA and recommended professional development to stay current with successful treatment modalities for high school students with autism. Auger (2013) highlighted how SWA are at risk for social challenges, anxiety, and underachievement. Auger (2013) also acknowledged that students with autism who are poor or are racial and ethnic minorities are less likely to receive mental health support outside of school. A resulting recommendation from Krell and Perusse's (2012) study was that school counselors provide highly individualized counseling for SWA and to maintain highly collaborative relationships with special educator and post-secondary institutions for effective career planning. Further, the authors reiterated the critical need for school counselors to be collaborators and contributors to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of students' Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and the necessity of early parent engagement by school counselors to support the students' success (Krell & Perusse, 2012).

Influence of Autism on Parents

Normative parental responses to the unique demands and symptoms of their children's diagnoses (e.g., significant financial costs, coordination of care, prognosis of

development) can include grieving, experiencing stigma in social settings, and relationship expectation adjustment (Seligman & Darling, 2007). Parenting children with autism has been identified as more stressful than parenting children without autism. Hartley, Papp, and Bolt (2016) found the number of negative interactions between married parents of individuals with autism contributed to parenting stress. This is a similar finding to Davis and Carter's (2008) research, which found that specific autism symptoms (i.e., social challenges) were triggers for parental stress and can contribute to negative interactions between parents.

García-López, Sarriá, & Pozo (2016) found autism symptom severity and family income were strong predictors of parents' adjustment to their children's needs. The authors also found gender differences in parental adaptation to their children's needs could be related to the level of caregiving involvement. The gender differences in stress assessment and adjustment have been consistently documented in the literature. Hannon (2013) found that Black fathers of individuals with autism were acutely aware of and consistently assessing their financial capital to adequately support their children with autism. Pottie and Ingram (2008) found mothers were more frequently inclined to use coping strategies that were problem-focused and engaged social support. These strategies were more successful than strategies used by fathers that included escape or withdraw (Pottie & Ingram, 2008). It is important to note that autism and other developmental differences have been found to enrich the family system by fostering deep family cohesion, developing resilience among family members, and nurturing a greater appreciation for diversity (Reichman, Corman, & Noonan, 2008).

Racialized Trends in Autism Diagnoses

There are autism diagnosis disparities across American racial and ethnic populations. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported White children's diagnosis rates were higher (1 in 63) than Black or Asian-American/Pacific-Islander children (1 in 81 in both groups) or Hispanic children (1 in 93) (CDC, 2014). Some research suggests three broad and related reasons why these disparities may exist: disparities in access to care between racial and ethnic groups; disparities in diagnosis timing between racial and ethnic groups; and, disparities in the frequency of dual diagnosis between racial and ethnic groups.

Reichard, Sacco and Turnbull (2004) asserted that access to care is a critical issue for Black and other racial minority children with autism and their families. Research has illustrated racial and ethnic minority families living with children with autism have been found to access care at much lower rates compared to White families living with children with autism (Thomas, Ellis, McLaurin, Daniels, & Morrissey, 2007). Access to care may also be influenced by differences in help-seeking behaviors among racial and ethnic groups (e.g., lack of trust in health care providers) (Mandell, Listrud, Levy, Pinto-Martin, 2002). Another barrier influencing access to care for autism among racial and ethnic minority populations includes lack of insurance (Smedley, Stith, & Nelson, 2003).

Missed or delayed diagnoses among racial and ethnic minority children is another factor that may contribute to racialized trends; however, trends results must be considered carefully. For example, Mandell et al. (2009) found patterns of delayed and missed autism diagnosis may be exacerbated among racial and ethnic minority children.

Gourdine, Baffour, and Teasley (2011) affirmed this conclusion when they found autism diagnosis in racial and ethnic minority children occurs later than in White children. However, New Jersey, a state with one of the highest autism diagnosis rates (1:45 children; CDC, 2014), has comparable diagnosis timing rates among diverse populations. A third contributor to racialized autism diagnosis trends is how frequently racial and ethnic minority children they are dually diagnosed, compared to White children. The CDC (2014) reported almost half (48%) of Black children with autism are dually diagnosed with an intellectual disability, compared to 25% of White children. Studies have documented those additional diagnoses are frequently conduct disorder or adjustment disorder (Mandell et al., 2002; Mandell, Ittenbach, Levy, & Pinto-Martin, 2007).

Research that investigates fathers' relationships with schools provides an important starting point in highlighting how school counselors can engage fathers of SWA more effectively. The literature is rich with studies offering evidence that father engagement and presence positively influenced educational experiences and outcomes of students. Fathers' engagement has been found to influence literary success in preschool (Bauman & Wasserman, 2010); high school graduation (Mackey & Mackey, 2012); and academic achievement (McBride, Schoppe-Sullivan, & Ho, 2005). Underrepresented in the literature, however, are the relationships of Black and Latino fathers of children with autism (or other learning differences) with their children's schools? The dearth of recent research on school counselor engagement of Black and Latino fathers of students with autism yields important questions about how these fathers would describe the most helpful forms of support for them and their students. To

address this gap, this paper presents the results of a qualitative pilot study sought to better understand how Black and Latino fathers of students with autism describe their relationship with school counselors and shares their recommendations to school counselors on how to better engage them in supporting their students' educational, social, and emotional success.

Theoretical Framework

The influence of cultural capital on parent involvement (Lareau, 1987; Lee & Bowen, 2006) is a fitting theoretical framework to guide an investigation about school counselors' relationships with Black and Latino fathers of students with autism (SWA). An autism diagnosis can be considered a stressor for a family (Carter & McGoldrick, 2005) as they construct a new collective identity and as fathers construct individual identities as fathers of SWA (Canary, 2008). Included in this process is deepening their understanding about the systems that support their children's educational success (Hannon, in press; Hannon, 2013) and developing their cultural capital (Lee & Bowen, 2006) within those systems.

Lee and Bowen (2006) posited that cultural capital involves the breadth and depth of a person's social, cultural, and material resources. This includes Black and Latino fathers' knowledge about their students, cultures, community resources, and occupations. Thus, the more resources fathers have and can use, the more cultural capital they possess. And, this cultural capital influences how parents interact with schools (Lareau, 1987). Shiffman (2013) found that helping parents to develop agency in support of their students' academic success increases parents' cultural capital. This

sociocultural approach to supporting Black and Latino fathers of SWA reflects a shift in the way schools engage in developing meaningful support systems for fathers.

Methods

A collective case study design was used to investigate the experiences Black and Latino fathers of SWA and their relationships with school counselors. Plummer (2001) wrote case studies aim to research specific phenomena in depth and the data are delineated by time period, activity, and place. A case study allows researchers to study individuals, events, activities, or processes of a bounded system. Donmoyer (2000) offered that the rich, descriptive case study approach provides an important means for addressing the complexity of applications in counseling, social work, and education. This study is a collective case study (Stake, 2005), because multiple cases (i.e., 5 Black and Latino fathers of SWA) were used to investigate a more general phenomenon or population. The cases in this study were bound by space and time (i.e., the time their students were enrolled in school). The research team sampled a group of five ($n = 5$) minority fathers from a major Northeastern city with students across five different schools in a case study to document their recommendations for school counselors as fathers of SWA.

Interviewers/Investigators

The first author is a counselor educator specializing in urban school counseling and is a Black father of two children, one of whom has autism. The first author has significant experience in qualitative research design. The second author is a counselor educator specializing in urban school counseling with extensive experience using qualitative and quantitative methods in research and served as the external auditor in

the data analysis process. The third author is a professional school counselor and current doctoral student in counselor education. The fourth author is a doctoral student in teacher education and teacher development and mother of two children, one of whom has autism. The third and fourth authors have taken advanced courses in qualitative research methods and assisted with data analysis.

Recruitment and Sampling Procedures

Black and Latino fathers of students with autism were identified with a criterion sampling method from a large city in the Northeastern region of the United States (Patton, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). After receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, recruitment materials (e.g., letters, flyers, emails) were distributed to 33 schools in the city to find prospective fathers. Seven of the 33 schools had significant populations of students with autism. The recruitment flyer was also posted on the first author's social media pages (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) for approximately two months. With extensive follow-up efforts, five fathers expressed interest to participate in the study, all of whom were eligible. The fathers identified as Latino (Ecuadorian/Dominican) and Black/African-American (4) and their ages ranged from 27-63 years old. The students came from five different public schools and their ages ranged from 6-19. Pseudonyms were created for fathers and their students to conceal identifying information. More information about the participants' demographics is available in Appendix A.

Data Collection and Analysis

Prior to interviewing, the first author engaged in bracketing (Glesne, 2011) to document preconceived ideas and hypotheses about the fathers' experiences with

schools and school counselors. At the start of each interview, the first author verbally summarized the informed consent document and offered fathers an opportunity to ask further questions before consenting to participate. Data were collected in two ways. First, each father completed a brief demographic questionnaire that requested information on their ages, racial/ethnic groups, occupations, marital status, relationships with biological mothers of SWA, highest level of education, age of SWA, gender of SWA, and students' specific autism diagnosis. The fathers then participated in semi-structured, one-time interviews that incorporated the specific area of study (Patton, 2002). The questions broadly asked about their experiences and engagement with schools and school counselors as fathers of SWA. Interviews were audio recorded and professionally transcribed. Transcribed interviews were sent electronically to the first author for review and modification to include indicators of nonverbal behavior, emphases, and other qualities not evident to the transcriber but memorable from interviews (Ochs, 1979). After review by the first author, transcripts were sent to fathers for review, modification, and approval. All fathers approved the transcripts and made no requests for revisions (see Appendix B).

Coding and theme identification. Data were analyzed using the six-phase thematic analysis method described by Braun and Clarke (2006) that included initial coding, search for themes, review of identified themes, defining and naming themes, and producing a report. The first, third, and fourth authors shared responsibility for coding and theme identification across interviews. Interviews were initially open-coded individually, in which the first, third, and fourth author member labeled raw interview data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to identify recurring references to language about helpful

support by schools and school counselors within the transcripts. The authors reconvened to determine similarities and differences in initial coding patterns. This consensus coding facilitated the initial codes to be organized into more abstract categories. The authors then reviewed categories to discover evident themes. After identifying a broader theme reflective of the previously identified categories, transcripts were sent to the second author for external auditing and to validate interpretation of the data. The audit and a subsequent research team briefing identified one overall theme that reflected the most helpful kind of support for these Black and Latino fathers of students with autism from school counselors, which was *support from resembling families and fathers*.

Trustworthiness. Trustworthiness involves the close monitoring of the various aspects of the research process *in order to substantiate a study's findings* (Hays & Singh, 2012) and establishes the investigation's credibility, transferability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1995). The research team used reflexive writing, participant/member checks of transcribed interviews, consensus coding, and an external audit to ensure the study's methods and findings were trustworthy. In order to reduce researcher bias, the research team engaged in reflexive exercises. These exercises included bracketing (Creswell, 2006; Patton, 2002) personal experiences with this particular phenomenon (i.e. our experiences, ideas, opinions, perspectives on fathering individuals with autism and fathers' relationships with school counselors) to increase awareness of personal biases. The first author also maintained journals during data collection and analysis to document three aspects of the experience: (a) the

personal influence of the research process, (b) the first author's reactions to fathers during interviews, and (c) inclinations about potential findings.

Member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1995) took place at two stages: during interviews (e.g., asking for clarity and confirming understanding) and after interviews (e.g., showing and forwarding transcripts for review and confirmation). Consensus coding and analysis (Creswell, 2006; Patton, 2002) came at two different points: during the initial coding process and in the use of an external auditor. The cumulative effect of these strategies enhanced the study's overall trustworthiness.

Results

Five Black and/or Latino fathers participated in this study to respond to the primary research question, *what is the most helpful support for fathers of students with autism from school counselors?* The data yielded one overall theme from this question: *support from resembling families and fathers*. Quotes from the fathers' narratives illustrate and offer evidence of the identified theme.

Support from Resembling Families and Fathers

All five fathers stated that the greatest source of support they receive is from other parents of SWA. The participating fathers stated the knowledge they gained from other fathers and/or parents and families with shared experiences was more trustworthy than knowledge from other sources (e.g., schools, service providers, etc.) and schools could be a facilitator of those connections between families and fathers. Dominick, a 37 year old father of a daughter with autism shared, "I guess more family oriented things where we could all come together and then have a discussion and stuff, that would be good". Cornelius, whose son is 14, mentioned his son's school role saying, "they of

course...should be well versed in those things that children with autism will need [and] what resources are available.”

The fathers discussed the importance of connecting with those with similar experiences. Forty-four year old banker Alejandro and his wife have a 19 year-old daughter, Isabella. Isabella has limited expressive language and was placed in a private, residential school approximately 80 miles away from the family’s home.

Alejandro offered:

...that information you get from the parents [is important] ‘cause they’ll tell you exactly first-hand knowledge how this person [service provider] is. “...the parent could say, Oh yeah, we went to that guy, oh yeah stay away from him. Awful bedside manner, or, this one was very patient. Or whatever the case may be. The best support is just the parents.

Broderick, a fitness entrepreneur with a six-year-old son whose autism symptoms were repetitive behaviors and hyper-focused interests, discussed the value of connecting with resembling families, noting,

We need to start creating these programs that allow us as parents to commune and understand how to raise our child. Not so much based on the fact that they’re all the same, but to know that we have a community to lean on.

The value of support from other parents of students with autism was echoed in the interview with Erick, a 45 year-old corrections officer with an eight year-old son with limited expressive language. Erick shared

‘Cause when you meet somebody that has a child with autism and then like I was saying earlier...you could feed off of them. You could, you know, kind of engage with them about how their son is doing and at his age point where he’s at and you know feed off of each other and stuff like that.

This sample of fathers communicated their heightened trust and reliance on those they identified as having shared identities and experiences to navigate systems and provide their children support.

Discussion

This study shares the results of a pilot study on what Black and Latino fathers of students with autism report to be the most helpful forms of support from school counselors. The fathers in this study communicated that school counselors can provide important support by helping connect members of this unique population to each other. Efforts to connect members of the school community to deepen relationships therein directly align with what the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, n.d.) articulates as inherent to school counselors' roles. This type of engagement by school counselors of fathers and families of SWA aligns with the ASCA National Model (2013) because it engages critical stakeholders (i.e., parents/guardians) in ways that can directly and indirectly support student success and well-being. The study's findings affirm important research about the importance of culturally responsive school counseling practices and supports emerging research on the experiences of racial and ethnic minority fathers of individuals with autism.

Culturally Responsive School Counseling Practices

Holcomb-McCoy and Chen-Hayes (2011) shared that in order to develop culturally responsive practices, school counselors must know their own culture and biases and seek to understand the cultures of their students and families. School counselors also have to understand their individual school culture. Rogers (2000) asserted that culture has to be a lens that informs counseling and family consultative

practice in schools. Specifically, school counselors must ask, what cultural norms exist within our schools that facilitate or prevent father engagement? This first step can assist in the developing cultural capital among fathers' of SWA.

The Black and Latino fathers of SWA in this study sought to increase their cultural capital by increasing their knowledge about their students' school experiences. They believed engaging with other fathers or families of SWA could develop this form of capital. Research on parent involvement continues to document the positive influence parent engagement has on student outcomes across demographic identifiers that include race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and parent educational attainment (Caesar & Nelson, 2014; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Shiffman, 2013). Researchers have encouraged school counselors to assess the cultural responsiveness of their programs to move from culturally inept to culturally responsive so they actively seek, invite, and engage parents who represent the diverse cultural identities of the student body.

Fathers of Individuals With Autism

Findings from this study align with biographical accounts and empirical research on the psychosocial aspects of autism on fathers and fathering. Naseef (2001; 2013) has communicated the experiences of fathers of individuals with autism, asserting that an autism diagnosis in their children can be traumatic for fathers. However, Naseef (2013) posited that given a certain level of support, fathers can use the diagnosis as a catalyst for significant personal development and post-traumatic growth.

Current counseling research is investigating what fathers describe as rewards of fathering individuals with autism, which can be of use to school counselors. A sample of White fathers of individuals with Asperger's syndrome reported the most rewarding

aspect of fathering individuals with autism was developing a communication system (Hannon, 2014), which can be a significant challenge given autism symptomology. School counselors can use this strength-based orientation in their consultation activities with parents as a way to acknowledge the unique experiences of their students' families in a culturally sensitive way (Rogers, 2000). In a separate study, Hannon (2013) found Black fathers describe the most rewarding part of their fathering experiences as those when their children are successful interpersonally (e.g., engaging in peer relationships) and intra-personally (e.g., academic success). Additional research has highlighted the intersectionality of Black fathers of students with autism and how it influences interactions with school personnel (Hannon, in press). While these forms of success may come with a different level of effort from neuro-typical students, students with autism can be especially challenged in these areas. School counselors consulting with fathers about the value of these forms of success demonstrate a commitment to understanding the diverse cultural identities of students with autism and their families (e.g., racial culture, disability culture, family culture).

Recommendations for School Counseling Practice

The findings of this study can be used to inform school counseling practice to support the wellbeing of increasingly diverse students and their families. School counselors can take simple, important steps to engage fathers of students with autism by using data to inform decisions about creating more useful father and family support of SWA. Given the limited knowledge base about fathers of SWA, particularly among fathers of color, data based decision-making (DBDM) is particularly important for school

counseling program management and accountability (ASCA, 2012; Dimmitt, Carey, & Hatch, 2007).

Data Collection on Fathers of Students With Autism

The effective delivery of school counseling services is largely predicated on how well school counselors can collect, analyze, and use data to inform their practice (ASCA, 2012; Dimmitt et. al, 2007). Basic forms of data can guide school counselors' efforts to support fathers of students with autism and enrich their relationships with this stakeholder population. What follows are recommendations for school counselors use of perception data, process data, and outcome data to supporting fathers of students with autism.

Perception data. Perception data are data about ideas, perceptions, knowledge and beliefs about a certain topic (ASCA, 2012; Thompson, 2012). Perception data can be used to provide school counselors an empirically-based sense of fathers' understanding of important dimensions of their students' school experience. These dimensions might include, but are not limited to: school counselor's role, types of academic support, and/or pathways to parent involvement. It may be especially important for fathers of SWA or other special needs to be informed about parents' rights/responsibilities and the consultative nature of the IEP process. School counselors can develop and distribute surveys to their entire population of fathers, or choose a specific sample of fathers of students with autism to inform their knowledge base of what fathers think, what they know, and what they believe about their students' school experiences. This perception data can also be collected in brief phone interviews, email communication, or other contact with fathers.

Process data. Process data are data that record what occurs during an experience and how the phenomenon is experienced (ASCA, 2012; Thompson, 2012). School counselors use process data to measure how students and families experience programs, outreach efforts, or other initiatives. These data provide school counselors measures to inform how such initiatives might be changed to better meet the needs of students and families. Similar data collection methods (e.g., surveys and/or in-person, phone, or email contact) can be used to collect important process data about topics such as fathers' experiences in IEP meetings or fathers' experiences with their students' teachers and school counselors.

Outcome data. Outcome data are data that measure what changes came as a result of a program, service, or intervention (Thompson, 2012). Outcome data become critical for school counselors after they have used perception and process data to inform the implementation of programs and determine what resulting outcomes emerge from implementation. For example, if data suggests fathers of SWA or other special needs might benefit from connection groups to learn from each other, it is imperative school counselors measure what outcomes develop as a result. School counselors might find that intended outcomes were not met, but other valuable outcomes emerge from this kind of intervention.

Conclusion

School counselors can help strengthen relationships within the school community by engaging in culturally responsive school practices (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Grothaus & Johnson, 2012). This study's results suggest that connecting parents with similar experiences is evidence of such practices. As school counselors collect data from

fathers, it reflects a focus on families that communicates their important role in students' success and is evidence of culturally responsive practice. This type of engagement engages critical stakeholders in ways that are affirming and beneficial.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

While the findings from this study are important, they are not without limitations. Two limitations are related specifically to the sample size. The population of racial and ethnic minority fathers of SWA is very unique and was difficult to sample for a number of reasons. Many fathers were not interested in participating or unresponsive to outreach. Consequently, finding an adequate sample size was challenging. A larger sample might further substantiate the claims of the findings. The second limitation with the sample was not including broader sample of fathers of individuals with autism (e.g., including White fathers of individuals with autism), whose experiences need to be documented to inform school counseling practice and research. A third and final limitation was methodological. While one-time interviews provided an important data source, using another data source would have enriched the data set and subsequent findings.

Future research (i.e., qualitative and quantitative) should consider the use of larger sample sizes in different research traditions to offer school counselors a more robust sense of fathers' experiences with school counselors. For example, the knowledge base will benefit from quantitative studies that measure the relationship between father involvement and specific student outcomes (i.e., behavioral changes, symptom reduction, academic success). These studies are designed to have larger sample sizes to determine external validity in the findings. Qualitative studies sampling more diverse fathers can inform the knowledge base, similarly. Phenomenological or

grounded theory studies can offer rich and contextually accurate description of fathers' experiences that can be of use to school counselors and school counselor educators.

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Appendix A

Demographic Participant Profile

Participant	Age	Ethnic group *	Occupation	Marital status	Highest level of education completed	Gender of child with ASD	Age of child with ASD	Specific ASD diagnosis**
Alejandro	44	Latino	Banker	Married	College	Female	19	Autistic Disorder
Broderick	27	Black/ African-American	Entrepreneur	Married	Some college	Male	6	PDD-NOS
Cornelius	63	Black/ African-American	Retired	Married	College	Male	14	Autistic Disorder/ASD Level 1
Dominick	37	Black/ African-American	Travel business owner	Married	High school	Female	8	N/R***
Erick	45	Black/ African-American	Law enforcement	Married	College	Male	8	N/R***

Participant age: M = 43.2 years old; SD = 13.2 years

Child with autism age: M = 11 years old; SD = 5.4 years

* Self-reported

** Self-reported

*** N/R = not reported

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

Eligibility/Screening Questions

- Are you over 18 years old?
- Are you able to speak and understand English?
- Do you live in New York City?
- Are you the father (biological father, step-father, or surrogate/father figure) of a child with autism?
- Are you a member of a racial/ethnic minority group in the United States (African diaspora, Latino, Native American, Asian-American/Pacific-Islander)?

Interview Questions

- Tell me about your child with autism.
- What did you know about autism before your child was diagnosed?
- How have your ideas changed or evolved now that you have a child with autism?
 - (Follow up): To what do you attribute those changes?
- In what ways do you help others in your life understand autism and its influence on your life?
- What are the most rewarding aspects of being the father of a child with autism?
- What are the most challenging aspects of being the father of a child with autism?
 - (Follow up): To what extent have you considered counseling (individual, family) to help confront the challenges you mentioned as a father of a child with autism?
- Did your child have a school counselor?
 - (Follow up): How would you describe that relationship between you and your child's school counselor?
 - What is the most helpful support for fathers of students with autism from school counselors?

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