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[A phenomenological study of Black female secondary school counselors and their experiences with self-care](#)

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PURPOSE OF THE STUDY To explore the experiences that Black female secondary school counselors with self-care. This was accomplished through a phenomenological study where eight school counselors were interviewed and described their experiences with self-care and their challenges engaging in it effectively.

HOW THE RESEARCH ADVANCES THE PROFESSION This research explores voices of Black female secondary school counselors, learning their experiences as self-care, how their role as a school counselor impacts self-care, and their recommendations for improving self-care.

GUIDANCE FOR PRACTICING SCHOOL COUNSELORS Black female school counselors may benefit from creating a self-care plan (Ricard, 2020) that outlines specific activities that support their well-being. They also can practice reflection and set personal boundaries—for example, taking notes when incidents in their building are racially motivated or involve students of color, reflecting on the implications of the incident for themselves and their students, and determining whether they need to set a boundary for their involvement in the incident. Black female school counselors who work with a team of school counselors may benefit from building trusting relationships and having open communication with their colleagues who can provide peer support; for example, the school counseling team could meet weekly to discuss issues they are experiencing, like peer consulting or team staffing that mental health counselors might engage in to discuss clients. Finally, Black female school counselors may pursue therapy for themselves. All school counselors may benefit from creating a self-care plan. Also, school counselors could benefit from personal reflection and boundary setting as appropriate and work with school administrators to obtain support when needed. Building trusting relationships with fellow school counselors is important, and this is an area where White school counselors can be particularly supportive of Black and other school counselors of color. For example, White school counselors can help foster an inclusive environment among the school counseling team by listening to and respecting the voices of school counselors of color, demonstrating compassion and empathy, and helping ensure equitable jobs duties/caseloads across the team.

EQUITY DIMENSIONS Equity is addressed through understanding self-care through the lens of Black female school counselors. Participants describe how their experiences as school counselors differ from White school counselors and what type of support they need to improve their self-care practices.