One promising new area of research focuses on the intersectional experiences of Black LGBTQ+ people. Whereas previous studies have focused solely on one type of stigma (e.g., only homophobia, only racism), a 2020 study by Dr. Skyler Jackson of Yale University has captured experiences of Black LGBTQ+ people that were intersectional. Negative intersectional experiences can trigger stress and identity conflict, while positive ones can foster joy and help affirm one’s sense of connection and support within Black and LGBTQ+ communities. Indeed, despite experiencing multiple types of discrimination, Black LGBTQ+ people are finding joy, community, self-love, and empowerment within their identities. In fact, Black sexual minorities report positive intersectional experiences nearly three times more frequently than negative experiences, and the study results suggest that increasing the positive intersectional experiences of Black LGBTQ+ people may support their health and help them cope with racism and homophobia.
Inquire intersectionally! Ask open questions about how your client’s various identities conflict, integrate, cause stress, spark connection, or foster joy.

Help individuals consider ways to minimize exposure & increase resilience to negative intersectional experiences

Writing about experiences can be therapeutic – encourage writing about negative intersectional experiences to assist with coping or writing about positive intersectional experiences to savor them

Be aware of how the client feels about their identity at a particular time, as their identity-related struggles may ebb and flow based on daily events

Focus on identifying & embracing positive intersectional experiences as a source of meaning and pride; Consider ways to boost their frequency & prolong savoring of such affirming events, such as:

- Enjoying literature by and about Black LGBTQ+ people
- Experiencing Black LGBTQ+ representation in art, media, and politics
- Finding safe & welcoming spaces (e.g., LGBTQ+ affirming churches, racially inclusive LGBTQ+ nightclubs)
- Identifying intersectional spaces that cater to LGBTQ+ people of color (e.g., queer people of color organizations, community events for Black lesbians)

Here are some ways mental health providers can support the well-being and resilience of Black LGBTQ+ individuals:

The findings of this cutting-edge research have motivated additional research on intersectional experiences among other LGBTQ+ subpopulations, such as LGBTQ+ Muslims.

Reference:


https://africanamericanbehavioralhealth.org https://lgbtequity.org