

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE IMPACT OF CULTURALLY ACQUIRED BEHAVIORAL NORMS  
ON WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

GEORGE F. NUSSBAUM

Norman, Oklahoma

2004

UMI Number: 3128841

### INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

**UMI<sup>®</sup>**

---

UMI Microform 3128841

Copyright 2004 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.

All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

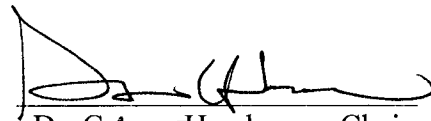
ProQuest Information and Learning Company  
300 North Zeeb Road  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346



THE IMPACT OF CULTURALLY ACQUIRED BEHAVIORAL NORMS ON  
WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE  
GRADUATE COLLEGE

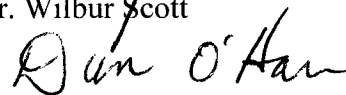
By



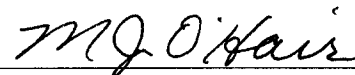
Dr. George Henderson, Chair



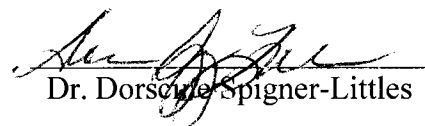
Dr. Wilbur Scott



Dr. Dan O'Hair



Dr. Mary O'Hair



Dr. Dorcas Spigner-Littles

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Walter and Mary Nussbaum. It was their confidence in me that provided the inspiration to achieve the highest level of education and success possible.

The completion of this research took many years. Along the journey many very special people provided guidance, coaching, constructive criticism, encouragement, inspiration and genuine confidence in my ability to complete the task. It is to each of these that I owe immeasurable gratitude.

First to Specialist Mark Morris and Captain Beck McCain; collectively they helped me learn that there are many, rich African-American ways of being that are not recognized nor understood by those of us who are not African-American. Clearly, Mark and Becky helped to plant the seed that resulted in this dissertation.

Secondly my most sincere gratitude goes to Dr. George Henderson, author, scholar, mentor, inspiration, friend, and the chair of my dissertation committee. It was his influence and insistence that the course on cultural diversity be included in the Ph.D. Organizational Leadership program. This dissertation is a credit to his remarkable insightfulness for leaders in any global organization.

Colonel Laura Brosch, ANC, Ph.D., and Colonel Patricia Patrician, ANC, Ph.D. for their extraordinary assistance in reducing a great idea into a manageable research protocol. Without their expertise and efforts I would not have met the rigorous requirements for the military Investigational Review Boards to conduct this research.

Dr. Wilbur Scott, for his guidance in the research design selection that enabled this study to be conducted. Dr. Scott gently encouraged my discovery of many possible avenues of exploration until the right disciplines came together. I will always be indebted to his skill and patience as I learned the art and science of qualitative research.

Lieutenant Colonel Janice Agazio, ANC, Ph.D., for her profound expertise in grounded theory research. It was her continuous push and insistence that enabled me to go beyond simple data coding and theme extraction to the discovery of the core perspective in the transcripts. My understanding of the relationship practices and expectations between peoples of differing cultural heritage will enhance my own future research, teaching, consulting and cultural diversity endeavors.

Dr. John Carter, fellow doctoral cohort member and true friend whose emails and phone calls kept me moving forward when the inevitable discouraging moments occurred. A special thanks goes to the thirty-two interview participants

in the study. Each and every individual illustrated a willingness to be open to explore and to teach ways of better understanding and communication across cultural perceptions. The enthusiasm shown by each of these members illustrates the need for future cultural diversity and human relations research.

Dr. Dan O'Hair, a researcher, editor, professor and advisor of esteemed quality. His insistence on the rigors of excellence in scientific investigation and reporting helped to fashion both format and content of this dissertation.

Most importantly, I acknowledge the tremendous support of my wife Jackie, son Justin, and daughter Jordan in allowing me to pursue this dream. The sacrifices in time, energy, emotion, and togetherness spanned many years and many situations. None of them would let me give up in the many times I thought the challenge was too much. Together, we can all take credit and pride in the humble achievement in reaching the goal.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	vii
Abstract	xi
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Significance of the Problem	3
Limitations of the Study	6
Research Questions	7
Definitions	8
Chapter Two: Selected Review of Literature	12
Introduction	12
Brief History of Diversity in the Military Environment	12
Symbolic Interactionism	16
Cultural Perceptions of Time	17
Cultural Allowances of Expressiveness	20
Oculesics and Kinesics Variances	23
Hierarchical Relationships in the Workplace	26
Literature Review Summary	27



Chapter Three: Research Design	30
Introduction	30
Individual Focused Interviews	31
Grounded Theory	31
Rationale	33
Data Collection	34
Research	34
Population Description	36
Data Analysis	37
Reliability and Validity	42
Chapter Four: Findings	46
Introduction	46
Looking for Variables	46
Time and Punctuality	49
Expressiveness	68
Oculesics and Kinesic Expectations	86
Request/Response Time	100
Supervisor/Subordinate Preferences	113
Chapter Five: Analysis of Data	119
Time and Punctuality	123

Expressiveness	132
Oculesics and Kinesics	138
Request/Response Time	142
Preference for Supervisors	146
The American Cultural Dichotomy	148
Chapter Six: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations	150
Summary	150
Conclusions	151
Recommendations for Future Research	161
Final Thoughts	163
References	166
Appendix A: Participant Invitation Letter	171
Appendix B: Informed Consent Form	173
Appendix C: Participant Demographic Information Form	176
Appendix D: Interview Vignettes and Questions	177
Appendix E: Study Population Demographics	181
Appendix F: Selected Verbatims	182
List of Tables	
Table 1: Age Demographics	37
Table 2: Time on Active Duty Demographics	37

Table 3: Education Level Demographics	38
Table 4: Initial Categories Emerging from Data	39
Table 5: Category Descriptors of Behavioral Norms	42
Table 6: White and Black Understanding of CP Time	50
Table 7: Acceptability of CP Time Among African-Americans	51
Table 8: Stated Significance of Sunday and Religion	54
Table 9: Requirement to Prove	56
Table 10: Punctuality Score Card	64
Table 11: The Dozens: Ritualistic Insults	72
Table 12: Grudges	75
Table 13: Freedom to Confront	81
Table 14: Interpretations of Eye Contact	87
Table 15: Respect/Disrespect	88
Table 16: Culturally Acquired Eye Behavior	91
Table 17: Supervisor/Subordinate Preferences	113

# THE IMPACT OF CULTURALLY ACQUIRED BEHAVIORAL NORMS ON WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

## ABSTRACT

This study explored cultural diversity influences on the concepts of time and punctuality; allowable limits of expressiveness; kinesics and oculosic cues; request/response time; and ethnic and gender preferences for supervisors. The research was conducted using participant volunteer personnel in a large U.S. Army Medical.

Using the theoretical background of Blumer's Symbolic Interactionism, thirty-two volunteer participants were individually interviewed in a qualitative, grounded theory research design study. The study population consisted of active duty military personnel with equal representation of males and females and officers and enlisted personnel from African-American and Euro-American heritage. Analysis of the data revealed a central theme of interpersonal relationship expectations. The responses provided in four vignettes exploring time, punctuality, expressiveness, kinesics and oculosic characteristics, request/response time, and preference choices for supervisors revealed that the African-American participants communicated workplace relationship efforts with an orientation toward an interpersonal approach (collectivistic). The participants from Euro-American heritages approached most workplace relationships from a

“business only” perspective (individualistic). The findings suggest that relationship expectations have a cultural basis in some of the miscues in work environment communication. Further research among other population and ethnic groups to corroborate this theory.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Cultural norms develop through a lifetime of conditioning and the experiences of each individual. Common understanding and rules guiding the interpretation of body language, the perception and manipulation of time, rules governing behaviors in the expression of intense feelings, and the significance and behaviors governing relationships are foundational to each culture group. Individuals within cultural groups become, to a greater or lesser degree, acculturated through their formative years. They continue to reinforce these constructs through association with similar members and through experiences. It is unclear whether or not these patterns persist in the military environment, and as such create leadership challenges in conflict resolution or uncooperative behaviors based upon differences in fundamental cultural behavior norms. The exploration of these norms through grounded theory research has significant utility in the understanding of conflict resolution, conflict avoidance, and future cultural diversity training initiatives.

The United States military is unparalleled with respect to cultural diversity advances in ethnic and racial relations in the workplace (Moskos, 1996). This massive organizational element is one of the most diversified work groups in the nation and as such is a significant pacesetter in our society for ethnic and racial integration and working relationships. Leaders of organizations comprised of

multicultural members need a solid understanding of cultural nuances in order to communicate effectively and reduce the opportunities for unintended friction resulting from cultural misunderstanding and communication miscues.

Cultural differences clearly exist, yet little effort has been placed on understanding, or attempting to understand the origin, meaning, or significance attached to these phenomenon. Effective military and civilian leaders need to continually develop knowledge and acquire diversity skills to lead a demographically changing and challenging workforce. Sociological and leadership studies have enhanced our knowledge of cultural norm differences. But most research has underestimated differences between workers from various cultural backgrounds.

#### Statement of the Problem

The purpose for this study was to examine and describe the communication perceptions among and between individuals who worked in a military medical environment in order to gain an understanding of differences in behavioral norm expectations. The focus of the research was to gain an increased understanding of potential differences in norm expectation in the communication process between military members from differing cultural backgrounds. There are currently no other studies that consider culturally acquired norms as a potential influence on communication in the military workplace.

The U.S. Army is comprised of culturally and racially diverse individuals

reflecting a wide range of experiences, talent, geographic backgrounds, and communication expertise. The synergy this diversity makes possible is maximized when misunderstanding among individual members is reduced (Thomas, 1991, 1996; Beebe & Masterson, 1997). A key leadership issue is the reduction of those factors that lead to the misunderstanding among group members. Behavior norm truths held by individual members regarding expected behaviors may well represent those factors that are easily overlooked as unlikely causes for communication barriers and interpersonal difficulties.

#### Significance of the Problem

Leaders in any organization use their time, energy and training to develop personnel. This leadership takes many forms, and includes technical as well as interpersonal skills. The economic demands of the Army and all other organizations mandate that all activities be effective and yield intended results. If the results are marginal, the environment must be studied to determine an adequate, alternative solution. The ideal is to design and implement cost effective, exportable training programs that have been research tested and validated to improve intercultural behavior as well as decrease unnecessary challenges in the communication process. Indeed, leadership issues in any environment are increasingly dependent upon the ability of managers and supervisors to manage diversity in the workforce. The U.S. Army is an ideal, albeit complex, diverse



organization to study in order to learn more about effective and ineffective cultural diversity initiatives.

In 1999, the U.S. Army had 479,426 active duty personnel.

(Defenselink;<http://www.web1.whs.osd.mil/mmids/m01.fy99/m01fy99.pdf>).

Within this population there were 72,028 female soldiers or 15% of the personnel.

There were 401,188 enlisted soldiers, representing 83% of the active duty strength. There were 124,402 African-American soldiers, including 7,350 officers, 1,812 warrant officers, and 115,240 enlisted members. This population group represented 25.9% of the active duty Army strength. The Hispanic and all other minority categories from this reference source indicated that the membership of this group was 67,800 personnel or 14.1% of the total population. Collectively, the minority population of the U.S. Army was 40% ([www.defenselink.mil/pubs/almanac/almanac/people/minorities/html](http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/almanac/almanac/people/minorities/html)).

Conflicts in the work setting, whether major or minor, are costly to the institution and to the personnel involved (Thomas, 1991; Blank & Slipp, 1994; Henderson, 1994, 1996; Dana, 1999, 2001; Bucher, 2000). Dana (1999) noted that conflicts among employees are one of the largest reducible costs in organizations, yet one of the least recognized. He estimated that “over 65% of performance problems result from strained relationships between employees - - not from deficits in individual employee’s skill or motivation” (p. 13).

Workplace conflicts from any source, including cultural background differences

and communication errors are expensive. Costs of conflicts can be measured in: “Wasted time; bad decisions; lost employees; unnecessary restructuring, sabotage, theft, damage; lower job motivation; lost work time; and health costs” (Dana, 2001, pp. 17-28).

A thorough literature search demonstrated that there have been no studies of this nature focusing on the cost of conflict in military installations. The military medical population was selected for this study because of the relatively long history of racial integration and because this population has a fundamental understanding of cultural diversity issues when relating to patients. Military medical administrators have not researched the wealth of diversity-related issues among themselves as health care professionals.

Knowledge may be added to the field by focusing directly on cultural norm content, the history and rationale for these normative behaviors, and the possibility of enriching the training provided in the work environment. Ultimately, it is expected that these studies could increase our understanding the behavioral norm patterns in culturally different populations and result in a readiness to behave more favorably in workplace communication encounters. Therefore my study may provide relevant information concerning how future cultural diversity, equal opportunity/ equal employment opportunity (EO/EEO) curriculums should be designed and taught in the military and civilian environments. Relatedly, the generalizability of this method may enhance the

cultural diversity training presently being provided in non-military educational settings.

### Limitations of the Study

The following limitations were identified for this study:

1. The use of a convenience sample of only active duty Army medical personnel may not be reflective of other corps groups within the Army or other active duty services. The ability to generalize the findings may be limited to the participant group only.
2. Participants may have been reluctant to reveal their true feelings regarding cultural norms during the interviews due to concerns of being personally identified through their responses. To circumvent this problem, the researcher stressed that the responses were completely confidential and that content from the audiotapes made during the interview sessions would not be used in any form without the expressed permission of individual participants.
3. The Medical Center's Clinical Investigation Division's Institutional Review Board (IRB) required that the subject content for the vignettes be presented to the board prior to the approval of the study. Grounded theory research typically does not assume a priori variables for a study, rather allowing them to emerge from the data in the natural progression of data collection. The Medical Center's IRB typically approves quantitative studies and exercised their

desire that this qualitative study provide a detailed listing of topic content for the interviews.

4. The use of the terms black and white when referring to

Individuals from the two cultural groups assumes that these are homogenous groupings of people. This is clearly not the case. Individuals bring to any research not only their individual cultural heritage but also vast differences that characterize geographic origins. Additionally, they bring, as part of who they are, their religious heritages and the ways of life in the neighborhoods in which they were nurtured. No attempt was made in this exploratory research to differentiate these differences.

### Research Questions

1. Are there identifiable culturally acquired behavioral norm differences between and among African-American men and women, and among and between European-American men and women in U.S. military medical personnel population?

2. If cultural normative behavior differences are identified, do they serve as potential sources for communication initiated discord between race, gender, or rank group members?

3. If cultural behavior norm differences are identified, do these cultural norm patterns in military personnel vary from those stated in current cultural diversity literature?

### Definitions

*Attitude:* “A learned predisposition to respond to a person, object, or idea in a favorable, neutral, or unfavorable way” (Beebe & Masterson, 1997, p. 173.). “A hypothetical construct that is not directly observable and must be inferred from measurable responses” (Ajzen, 1988, p. 4). “A relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner” (Rokeach, 1972, p. 112).

*Behavior:* “Anything that a person says or does” (Martin & Pear, 1996, p. 3).

*Black Americans:* While not technically synonymous, black and African-American are used synonymously throughout most literatures, including this dissertation. In this study, all of the black participants’ family heritages originated from the continent of Africa.

*Coding:* “The analytic processes through which data are fractured, conceptualized, and integrated to form theory” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 3). See also: Open coding and selective coding.

*Culture:* A learned, not inherited, collective phenomenon that is shared with others who live or lived within the same social environment where it was

learned. It is the “collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (Hofstede, 1997, p. 5). It refers to the beliefs, values, and attitudes that structure the behavior patterns of a specific group of people (Merriam, 1998.)

*Culture identity:* An individual’s self-concept of membership in a specific culture or subculture. This identity influences the communication choices an individual makes and how they will interpret communication from others (O’Hair, Friedrich, Weimann, & Weimann, 1997).

*Diversity-related attitude:* “A degree of readiness to behave in a given manner toward culturally different people” (Henderson 1994, p. 134).

*Memos:* “The researcher’s record of analysis, thoughts, interpretations, questions, and directions for further data collection” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 110).

*Open coding:* “The analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 101).

*Phenomenon:* “Central ideas in the data represented as concepts” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 101).

*Range of variability:* The degree to which a concept varies dimensionally along its properties, with variation being built into the theory by sampling for diversity and ranges of properties” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 143).

*Selective coding:* “The process of integrating and refining the theory” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 143).

*Sensitivity:* “The ability to respond to the subtle nuances of, and cues to, meanings in data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 35).

*Subcategory:* “Concepts that pertain to a category, giving it further clarification and specification” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 101).

*Symbolic Interactionism:* A theoretical framework that focuses on the nature of social interaction. George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) is credited with establishing the foundational work that was later interpreted by his student Herbert Blumer (1900-1986).

*Theoretical sampling:* “Sampling on the basis of emerging concepts, with the aim being to explore the dimensional range or varied conditions along which the properties of concepts vary” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 73). “Data gathering driven by concepts derived from the evolving theory and based on the concept of ‘making comparisons,’ whose purpose is to go to places, people, or events that will maximize opportunities to discover variations among concepts and to densify categories in terms of their properties and dimensions” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 201).

*White Americans:* While not technically synonymous, white and Euro-American are used synonymously throughout most literatures, including this

dissertation. In this exploratory study, no attempt was made to differentiate Euro-Americans by family origin such as Irish, German, Polish, Arab, etc.



## CHAPTER TWO

### SELECTED REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

Cultural beliefs and norms develop through a lifetime of conditioning and the experiences of each individual. Common understandings about body language cues, concept of time, the expression of intense feelings, and the hierarchy of relationships in the workplace are foundational in each specific culture. Individuals within cultural groups become, to a greater or lesser degree, acculturated through their formative years. They continue to reinforce these constructs through association with similar members and through experiences (Bar-Tal, 1990; Lustig & Koestger, 1996; Ting-Toomey, 1999). It is unclear whether or not these patterns persist in the military environment, and as such create leadership challenges in communication issues or uncooperative behaviors based upon differences in fundamental cultural norms (Mostkos & Butler, 1996).

#### Brief History of Diversity in the Military Environment

Since the early post World War II, the U.S. military has attempted, with reasonable success, to manage a wide variety of diversity among its members (Lawrence & Kane, 1995). The military service branches have been the national pacesetters in racial desegregation and remain among the best examples of human relations behavior and training. However, the task is far from complete (Henderson, 1975; Mostkos & Butler, 1996).

The post-World War II approach to race relations in the military setting has been one of integration of all personnel. Stouffer and associates (1949) published the classic study of racial integration during and following World War II. The social standard for race relations was initiated as a direct result of the global conflict and the practicalities and efficiencies of combat requirements. From that time to the present, the military directive is one of total integration of all members. The primary social emphasis is to control behavior in order to assure equality among all members. Dansby and Landis (1996) concluded that “the military approach to intercultural training, through recognizing the importance of effective predispositions and responses, is clearly focused on the behavioral side of the model” (p. 212).

Allport (1979) asserts that the act of increasing positive interactions among culturally different people helps to diminish prejudicial behaviors and creates the opportunity for integration policies. Henderson (1975) agrees that the proximity among peoples that have never known a member of another racial or ethnic group often provides positive results. He suggests that being together causes people to seek a “common human denominator” (p. 51). Not all research studies have confirmed this hypothesis. Kim (1997) suggests that “...intergroup contact is just as likely to heighten conflict as it is to reduce it”(p. 279). The basic assumption in the military environment since Stouffer et al.’s classic study in

1949, *The American Soldier*, is that when behavior is appropriately controlled, the correct attitudes will emerge. Fundamental cultural behavior norms however are unaffected.

Military behavior norm expectations are those behaviors established in early Army tradition and values predominately by Anglo-Saxon males for the good order and conduct of all members (Moskos & Butler, 1996). These expected norms, found in Army regulations and traditions, are taught to all commissioned officer, warrant officers, and enlisted military members in entry basic courses and beyond. Collectively, these codes of conduct regulations are intended to create a new culture and normative behavior for all military members. The degree of change required to meet and adapt to the expectations of these norms may vary considerably among individual military members.

There may be an assumption that fundamental and universal group norms exist in the military environment and that these are therefore central themes for all military members. This concludes that the military members comprise a homogeneous group and that norms are accepted as a given. Select group behavioral norms belonging to group members may be of greater significance than others and may be considered more central than perceived by members from differing groups. An example of this is described by sociologists Moskos and Butler (1996), discussing the paradoxes in American race and class relations, stated: "One is that while many whites will treat blacks as equal if they "act

white” ; few are prepared to treat blacks as equal if they ‘act black’” (p. 93).

These authors however point out that based on their experience and research, it is more common for white army soldiers to “act black”, and for black soldiers to “act white” to a degree rarely found in civilian society (Moskos & Butler, 1996).

This appears to represent an effort to find central norms on the part of Army personnel from different cultural group backgrounds.

Thomas (1996) concludes that there are cultural differences between members of differing races, specifically black and white, but he does not describe what those differences are. He emphasizes: “Diversity in its broadest sense applies not merely to a collection of people who are alike in some ways and differing in others, but also to intangibles--ideas, procedures, and ways of looking at things” (p. 46).

Much has been written in nursing literature regarding the care of culturally different patients (Giger & Davidhizar, 1995; Purnell, 1996). There are, however, few studies that consider culturally acquired norms as a potential influence on communication in the workplace. Other studies consider cultural aspects of patients that are cared for in the medical environment, but no study has considered the cultural influences on communication between the medical personnel (Giger & Davidhizar, 1995). Specifically, there are no research-based studies that explore diversity and behavior norm issues in the military professional nursing and paraprofessional workforce. Unintended communication barriers and

miscues may result from behavioral norm expectation differences. If substantial differences regarding these issues exist, then knowing, understanding, and appreciating these differences may create a more harmonious and more efficient work environment.

### Symbolic Interactionalism

Symbolic interactionism is the theoretical framework that underpins this study. This theory focuses on the nature of social interaction. George Herbert Mead is credited with establishing the foundational work that was later interpreted by his student Herbert Blumer. Blumer coined the term “symbolic interactionism” in 1937 (Benzies & Allen, 2001).

There are three basic assumptions of symbolic interactionism:

1. Members of society, individually and collectively, respond on the basis of meanings that things represent to them. That is, individuals as a product of a unique cultural background attach meaning to communication cues and act on the basis of that meaning. For each member, the world is interpreted through the use of symbols such as language, gestures, and non-verbal stimuli in the process of interaction. Members act on their understanding and interpretation of meaning that is derived from symbolic interaction.

2. The process of interacting aids in establishing a common meaning. Meaning for an individual emanates through the actions and interactions with other individuals. The symbolic interactionist perspective is that individuals are

able to act because of their agreement on the meanings attached to the communication symbols and cues in their environment.

3. The process of understanding meaning is both assigned and modified through interpretation that can change, be redefined, and realigned (Blumer, 1969). There remains the assumption that individuals have a freedom of choice, yet that choice is constrained by societal and cultural norms. Within this context, individuals have the capacity to synthesize the symbolic use of oral communication and gestures to create and communicate meaning and a common response in the interaction with others. The interpretation of stimuli provides new meanings and new responses that serve to actively shape the interpretation of meaning (Blumer, 1969).

Symbolic interactionism contributes a theoretical perspective to study how individuals from differing cultural backgrounds interpret meaning during the communication process with others and how the process of interpretation leads to behavioral responses in specific communication episodes. Assumptions underlying symbolic interactionism have excellent utility in the design of qualitative studies (Benzies & Allen, 2001).

#### Cultural Perceptions of Time

The construct of time is perhaps one of the most significant diversity-related phenomenon that is least appreciated when considering cultural issues in the workplace. The orientations toward time vary greatly across cultural groups.

The aspect of time is widely reported in the literature as being varied among peoples, yet it is not discussed in diversity training content as critically problematic.

E.T. Hall (1983) states that time, as a unique cultural norm, are a primary element in how peoples are united or isolated from one another. Time, when treated as a variable to be understood in the study of cultural norms, serves to identify how activities in life are organized, how priorities are established, and how experiences are categorized. The cultural understanding of time provides the mechanism to determine the efficiency or lack of with respect to competence, effort, and achievement. Cultural norm rules governing time provide an intangible measuring mechanism for determining respect issues, trust values, how people feel toward one another, and a significant determinate for whether or not they can get along.

Cox (1994) discusses time orientation from three distinct perspectives:

1. Linear-separable: Views time as including the past, present and an infinite future with specific emphasis on future. Time is considered separable in that there are quantifiable, specific units with defined beginnings and endings for categorical events.
2. Circular time orientation cultures experience time as determined by repeated cycles of activities such as rotating seasons, agricultural activities, and birth, life and death.

3. Procedural: In this orientation, time becomes essentially irrelevant allowing that behavior is activity driven and will take the amount of time it takes to complete.

The U.S. Army, although comprised of multiple ethnic subculture members, clearly favors a linear orientation to time. Evidence of this is noted with the extreme emphasis on scheduled start times for workplace activities, a preoccupation with deadlines, due dates, promptness and mission accomplishments through short and long range planning. This orientation is typically in the normal life activities for white Americans, but not so, in general for African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and Asian-Americans whose time orientations tend to be circular, procedural or a combination of both (Cox, 1994; Fine 1995; Henderson, 1994, 1999).

Illustrating this in the African-American culture is the frequent absence of a specific end time for social or religious events. Also noted is the existence of “CP (colored people’s) time” (Cox, 1994). The meaning of this cultural specific norm is that scheduled start times for events and appointments are treated by many with a great deal of flexibility (Cox, 1994; Henderson, 1999). Fine (1995) defines the cultural importance for African-Americans to fully participate in social and religious events. Fine describes many from the African-American culture, as having an orientation toward circular and procedural time. It may be more important for individuals from traditional African-American culture to be



“in time”; that is, in synchronization with the perceived natural rhythm of life rather than to be “on time,” which is imposed time for many events, including work.

Henderson (1999) further clarifies that most white Americans have a propensity for a *monochronic* time orientation, meaning a more rigid “one thing at a time” planning and activity schedule. This includes a strong affinity for rigid clock watching and an on time approach to all of life’s events. Henderson further elaborates that tradition-oriented black Americans are *polychronic* with respect to time orientation. This is defined as being involved in many activities simultaneously without regard to clock time. In this orientation, the activities and the relationships at hand take precedence over defined schedules. The potential for cultural norm conflict and diversity tension clearly exists when tradition-oriented polychronic members are subjected to the rigidity of a monochronic work environment (Henderson, 1994, 1999; Shipler, 1997).

#### Cultural Allowances of Expressiveness

Communication norm expectations are reported in the literature to vary greatly between the white and black cultures. White male dominated organizations expect that discussions will remain calm and generally unemotional. Voice inflection is expected to be low and well modulated with the maintenance of a polite atmosphere. Intense, emotionally charged and argumentative challenges are rare or nonexistent by expectation. Violations of this

communication code are usually dealt with by some form of formal or informal disciplinary action, especially if the individual expressing the anger, hostility or perceived violent emotion is in a subordinate role (Fine, 1995).

In the white culture, individuals are expected to restrain or suppress their emotions. From childhood, whites are taught that if you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all. Therefore whites, especially in the workplace, conform to the behavioral norm of suppressing anger feelings and to conform to the acceptable code of restraining expressiveness (Fine, 1995).

Stewart and Bennett (1991) describe the typical American communication style as being:

1. Problem oriented: Each event in the workplace is viewed as a problem to be solved. There exists an assumption that problems need solutions and that is the basis of work and reality.

2. Direct: Supervisors and workers are expected to value the time of the other and consequently skip the small talk. Expressions such as "Get to the point," "Get down to business," or "What is the point?" or "What's the bottom line on this?" are common statements in the predominately white business environment.

3. Explicit: What is stated in words is what is meant. Skill is required to learn how to state your point. The context of the message is located in the verbal statement while the non-verbal signals, such as gestures, facial expressions take

on a lesser value in the perception of meaning. American business culture places little emphasis on context of the conversation and high trust in the words used in the message.

4. Personal: Commonly, Americans' relationships do not run deep. Superficial topics such as where one lives or has lived, sports likes and dislikes, and other actions and experiences are explored to find a basis for relationships.

5. Informal: Americans quickly dispense with explicit formality in conversations and move quickly to an informal context. This is best illustrated by the use of first names early in a relationship. This degree of informality is uncommon in other cultures.

Kochman (1981) presents a differing viewpoint, illustrating that the American culture is not a homogenous mixture with identical norms for all members. The behavioral norm for a white employee would be to keep silent on contentious issues, or to at least refrain from argument. Kochman's research indicates that the behavioral norm for African-Americans would generally be the opposite; namely, if individuals have a position on an issue, they are obliged to speak up. The interpretation, from the black members' view is that silence signifies agreement. The black cultural norm is supportive in the expression of strong feelings and values the abilities of individuals to regulate their own emotions. White cultural norm requires that impulses toward self assertion be restrained. In those events, when anger boils over and is expressed strongly, the

white individual has a sense of having lost control. Whites practice throughout life the subtle art of aggressive/expressive self restraint.

Black Americans, in order to be perceived in the white work arena as socially acceptable, sometimes must suppress their cultural norm of expressing their true feelings. This constraining behavior is known as *fronting*. Whites are seldom aware of the fronting behaviors since restraint of these emotions is part of the white cultural norm. Kochman (1981) states that blacks must make a day to day effort to match the unnatural lingua franca effort to contain their emotions “in what they regard as a racially hostile environment” (p. 125; also see Shipler, 1997). Lack of passion on issues is regarded by blacks as insincerity. This is especially difficult as the black culture fully grants the liberty to express emotions.

Other cultural studies reveal that degrees of expressiveness among blacks is frequently condemned and misunderstood by white teachers and police. These cultural misunderstandings often lead to unwarranted and undeserved punishment when a true cultural understanding of black expressive norms would have been more helpful (Shipler, 1997).

#### Oculesic and Kinesetic Variances

Communication is a complex phenomenon that is seldom mastered or understood even in the closest of relationships. The range of opportunities for communication miscues begins with word selections to convey a message through

voice volume, tone, kinesics and oculusics. Kinesics, or body language, refers to gestures and important body movements that are incorporated into a speech act to convey messages. Ekman and Friesen (1969) described five major categories of kinesic behavior:

1. Emblems: non-verbal acts which have a direct verbal translations such as those found in greetings and gestures of agreement.
2. Illustrators: movements tied to speech, which serve to illustrate the spoken word.
3. Affective: displays such as facial signs indicating happiness, surprise, or fear.
4. Regulators: acts which maintain and regulate the act of speaking; indicating when a speaker wants to start talking or to relinquish the floor to another.
5. Adaptors: signs originally linked to body needs, such as wiping your brow, lip biting ( p. 283).

Oculusics, or eye behavior, is a source of intense communication potential, as well as a source for damaging communication miscues between individuals within and between cultural groups (O'Hair, Friedrich, Wiemann & Wiemann, 1997). Fine (1995) contends that eye contact between culturally different members varies widely. She writes that black and white Americans have near opposite eye contact patterns. "African-Americans generally have greater eye

contact when they are speaking than when they are listening. Whites reverse the pattern, showing greater eye contact when they are listening than when they are speaking” (p. 99). This creates a situation whereby whites and blacks are staring at one another when the black member is speaking. According to Fine, whites are inclined to “interpret direct and sustained eye contact...as a sign of intensity and passion” (p. 99).

Gudykunst and Kim (1997) also write that African-Americans typically avoid eye contact as a sign of showing respect, especially to anyone in an authority position. This is frequently perceived by whites as a sign of inattention, lying or disinterest. It is of considerable interest that of the works cited relating to eye contact Henderson (1999) is the only author to use the word “confidence.” He writes, “To most white Americans, eye contact indicates attentiveness, respect, and confidence.... If the listener looks away, however, it may be interpreted as disrespect, disinterest, a lack of confidence, or dishonesty” (p. 49).

In the work place setting, when eye contact that is otherwise correct within the culture of the individual is misperceived during interaction, feelings of mistrust, misjudgments of attentiveness and disrespect evolve from the communication. These tragic communication miscues serve to deepen and enforce incorrect stereotypical ideas between black and white workforce members (Henderson, 1994, 1999; Fine, 1995; Ting-Toomey, 1999).

Significant to this study was the cultural norm consideration of eye contact. O'Hair, Friedrich, Wiemann and Wiemann (1997) contend that eye behavior serves six communication functions:

1. To influence attitude change and to influence
2. To indicate a degree of attentiveness, interest, or arousal
3. To display emotions
4. To guide interaction
5. To establish boundaries on power and status
6. To create impressions in others (p.137).

#### Hierarchical Relationships in the Workplace

In the last twenty-five years, the military has seen an increasing number of female officer and enlisted members from all racial and ethnic cultural ancestry. The number of women in the combat services support Corps has always outnumbered those of the combat Corps, although more women are currently serving in these areas than at any time in the military's history. The Army Nurse Corps (ANC) has predominately been a female Corps throughout its more than 100 years history. Following the Vietnam War, men were allowed into the ANC as a commissioned officer. At the present time, the ANC has approximately sixty-six percent female to thirty-four percent male officers.

The strenuous mandates of equal employment opportunities and rules of conduct regarding gender relations create a working atmosphere that appears to

work well without overt difficulties. Moskos and Butler (1996) conclude that the military is one of the few institutions where gender and racial leadership in both officer and enlisted ranks is relatively seamless and without significant issues.

Yukl (1994), in his lengthy report on leadership research, omits any specific mention of gender as a variable, either from the leadership perspective or the subordinate roles in organizations. Thomas (1996) reports from his studies that organizations are making strides in recruiting women, but there remains a strong bias in organizations against that trend. This is especially true for black females.

#### Literature Review Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to illustrate common themes and disparities from highly respected authors relating to workplace communication theory, racial relationships in the military, concepts of time, expressiveness, paralinguistic issues, and supervisor-subordinate relationships in the workplace.

Symbolic interactionism was selected from a large array of possible communication theories due to the simplicity and common sense approach it provided. This contextual framework has an established published record for qualitative studies.

The Armed Services of the United States have a proud history of producing confident leaders in military service and respected, responsible citizens following active service. It is essential to illustrate the evolution of race relations



through time, beginning with the integration history following World War II, and follow through to the present to gain an appreciation for the progress in the military component of our society. The brief exploration of race relationships in the context of the military introduces the common denominator of a military culture in which both black and white service members bring their individual culturally acquired experiences. Paradoxically, the military culture was established on white, Anglo-Saxon traditions, yet today's military is comprised and led at all levels by members of both genders and many racial backgrounds.

Material was selected from literature dealing with how various societies perceive and organize their lives around the construct of time. This seemingly unimportant subject matter was selected because of the variability and conflict potential it presents in the workplace, especially that of the military.

The notion that there are specific behavioral norm expectations and rules for the expression of emotions and intense feelings that may vary along cultural heritage was explored. Communication cues can be seriously under or over interpreted and unnecessary consequences inflicted when expressive behaviors are perceived in incorrect responses.

Several literature sources highlight paralinguistic differences that may exacerbate misunderstanding among peoples. Specifically addressed is the construct that significant differences in eye contact patterns and expectations

exist. Misperceptions between individuals have the potential for respect, power, and threat issues.

The final theme presented dealt with hierarchical relationships in the workplace. Military culture predisposes that job placement is not based on race or gender. Studies conducted in non-military settings suggest that race and gender do influence supervisor-subordinate workplace behaviors and that these issues continue to be problematic.

The intent of this dissertation was to discover perceived cultural behavior norm differences regarding time, expressiveness, body language, and supervisor-subordinate relationships in a specific military environment. If differences were discovered, how well were they understood across cultures and how problematic were they to communication efforts in the workplace? The final intent was to discover whether or not current race relations literature represents the diversity issues noted in current American civilian society and the military society.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH DESIGN

#### Introduction

This was an exploratory study to define the parameters and discern variables that potentially lead to communication miscues in a workplace environment. There are currently no studies that discuss the influence of culturally acquired behavioral norms on communication patterns among this specific military population. A qualitative research design to develop a grounded theory of communication dynamics was selected for this study. This method allowed the progressive building of facts as simultaneous substantive data collection and comparative analysis occurred (Glasser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Polit & Hungler, 1999). Qualitative research is preferred when little is known about a topic and where knowledge building is a beginning in the development of more extensive research tools for larger population samples.

The general topic for the study and the political nature of the environment in which the research was conducted, dictated that content for the vignettes be approved by the medical center governing investigational review board prior to beginning the interview process. Based upon a lengthy literature review and my own personal experiences in informal discussions of culturally diverse communication issues in military settings, I selected the specific variables for this

study. A pilot group of four culturally diverse military members were purposefully selected to test the concepts of these variables prior to the formal approval to conducting the thirty-three volunteer research interviews.

### Individual Focused Interviews

Individual focused interviews were used as the method for data collection. Within this method, the researcher became the single instrument for data collection, with the collaboration and mutual consent of individual participants. Individual focused interviews allowed the researcher a degree of control and enabled rich data to be gathered, allowing the participants' experiences, feelings, and interpretations to emerge. As interviews progressed, the opportunity to clarify emerging themes and ideas from previous interviews were incorporated and further explored.

### Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is a research method that greatly facilitates the study of social interaction from the perspective of symbolic interactionism. The grounded theory approach uses a systematic method of data collection and simultaneous data analysis procedures to develop an inductively derived theory from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1994). Focused interviews provide the normal method for data gathering and the generation of the theory, based on comparative analysis between and among groups or individuals within a particular area of interest.

This comparative analysis is referred to as the constant comparative method and is central to the analysis of data in the grounded theory analysis process (Glasser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). This method allows the researcher to identify patterns and the relationships between them (Glasser, 1978, 1992).

Grounded theory research intends to describe patterns of actions between and among the research participants usually with a focused area of concern. Studies of this nature are designed to discover processes between people that describe pattern changes in communication, actions and interactions, and the potential influence of conditions which are internal or external to the subject population. (Strauss & Corbin, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

In this form of research, “hypotheses have at first the status of suggested, not tested, relations among categories and their properties, though they are verified as much as possible in the course of the research” (Glasser & Strauss, 1967, p. 39). The researcher is not simply the receiver of impressions but is drawn quickly and naturally into seeing categorical data and hypotheses formation. This method facilitates the comparison of variability in the feelings, behaviors, experiences, and perceptions of the population being studied. Multiple hypotheses are pursued simultaneously. This method is not intended to pile up evidence to establish proof, only to establish a relationship of bountiful data from a population source (Glasser & Strauss, 1967).

The grounded theory methodological process involves steps in data collection, open categorization, memo writing, assigning core categories, the recycling of previous steps in the core category determination, sorting memos, and discovering and explaining emerging theory. The primary purpose of this research method is to generate explanatory models of social processes grounded in the data provided by the participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Theories derived at the conclusion of analysis are directly linked to the data, in this case, the thirty-two participant interviews.

#### Rationale

The rationale for conducting this research resulted from the notion that cross cultural knowledge between African-Americans and white Americans in the military environment is limited or non-existent. The potential for communication errors in the military and healthcare settings can have serious, unintended consequences for all concerned. Reasoning implies that communication errors are possible and problematic when perceptions, stemming from individual cultural norms differ. The rationale for this dissertation is that communication errors occur between black and white military members resulting from individual cultural norm differences and that these errors have the potential for negative impact on organizational effectiveness and interpersonal working relationships.

Based upon this assumption, individual interviews were conducted with military personnel at a large medical teaching center in an attempt to determine

cross cultural behavior norm understandings between these two groups. The individual interview method was selected over other methods in order to gain a depth of understanding from each participant's understanding and cultural perspective. This method allowed the interviewer and the participant to explore rich experiences and cultural expression. This method also allowed the researcher to probe new territory in subsequent interviews when new information emerged.

#### Data Collection

Approval to conduct the study was obtained from the University of Oklahoma Institutional Review Board (IRB). Additionally, a requirement for study approval was required by Walter Reed Army Medical Center's clinical investigation governing body that has oversight for all research conducted at the military facility. Requirement conflicts were resolved between the two governing research approving bodies. However, this reconciliation resulted in the researcher being required to pre-select topics of focus in order to gain the approval of the Walter Reed IRB for a qualitative study. A faculty advisor from the Uniformed Services University for Health Sciences Nursing Division was required for additional oversight of the proposal and research. Dual informed consent documents were required for IRB approvals.

#### Research Method

A pilot study was conducted using the intended interview vignettes and questions with four volunteers. This facilitated the process, made the interviewer

more confident with the methodology and clarified the questioning process and interview flow. These pilot interviews were recorded but not transcribed. None of the pilot interview material or pilot participants were included in the actual research study interviews.

This study used a convenience sample of active duty military healthcare members assigned to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in the District of Columbia. Participants were invited to participate through a Participant Invitation Letter (Appendix IV) after being offered as a potential candidate by nursing supervisory staff at Walter Reed. A total of thirty-three individuals were interviewed. One interview was lost due to a mechanical problem with one of the recorded audio tapes. The intended target of thirty-two participants enabled an equal representation of several categories, including gender, race, officer and enlisted rank status. This representation was selected in order to evaluate the potential for bias that may result from rank or gender status rather than specific culture norms.

Following the approval process, participants were recruited through an invitational letter (Appendix A) given to potential candidates by nursing supervisory personnel at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Volunteer participants were contacted and interviews were conducted on the campus of the medical center at times convenient to the interviewer/researcher. The purpose of the study was presented to each participant, and also informed consent (Appendix



B) and demographic forms (Appendix C) were completed prior to beginning the taped interviews. Interviews lasted between one and three hours. There were no additional follow up interviews required or conducted. Prior to initiation of the interviews, a matrix was created to facilitate pseudonym coding of the transcripts. Male and female names were randomly picked so that the first person interviewed in a category i.e., a white male officer, would have a name beginning with the letter "A." The fourth person in that category would then have a name selected that began with the letter "D." This served to protect the anonymity of each participant, as well as determine the order in which interviews were conducted.

Interviews took place in the order that participants were recruited over a five months period. No attempt was made to interview in any specific order any grouping of individual participants by gender, rank or race. Consistent with qualitative methodology, data collection continued until data saturation was achieved. Data saturation was apparent for most themes by the twentieth interview, however, data collection continued until the approved protocol population had been interviewed.

#### Population Description

Tables 1, 2 and 3 describe the age, length of active duty service and the education levels of the participants.

—

Table 1

*Age Demographics*


---

Mean: Total Population	36 years	Range: 24-54 years
Males	35.9 years	Range: 24-54 years
Females	36.3 years	Range: 23-51 years

---

Table 2

*Time on Active Duty Demographics*


---

Mean: Total Population	10 years	Range: 0.7 – 24 years
Males:	9.1 years	Range: 2.0 – 24 years
Females:	11 years	Range: 0.7 – 22 years
Officer:	11.23 years	Range: 0.7 – 24 years
Enlisted:	8.9 years	Range: 2.0 – 20 years
Black:	9.25 years	Range: 2.0 – 20 years
White:	10.9 years	Range: 0.7 – 24 years

---

## Data Analysis

The data were acquired from the thirty-two interviews with military participants. All interviews were tape recorded and were taken to a legal transcription service for transcription. A total of 1,533 pages of transcripts were generated. The transcripts were reviewed and preliminary coding of information was initiated. NUD\*IST qualitative data analysis software called Nvivo was utilized to facilitate data analysis. Coding of the transcripts began following the first two interviews. Constructs of time, expressiveness, nonverbal behaviors, and

request/response time served as the core content for the vignettes. A fifth construct, hierarchical relationships, was added following the second interview.

Table 3

*Education Level Demographics*

	Masters Degree	Some Graduate work	College Graduate	Associates Degree	Some College
Total Population	8 (25%)	4 (12.5%)	12 (37.5%)	1 (3%)	7 (21.8%)
White	4 (25%)	3 (18.7%)	4 (25%)	1 (6.5%)	4 (25%)
Black	4 (25%)	1 (6.5%)	8 (50%)	0	3 (18.7%)
Enlisted	1 (6.5%)	2 (12.5%)	5 (31.25%)	1 (6.5%)	7 (43.75%)
Officer	7(43.75%)	2 (12.5%)	7(43.75%)	0	0
Female	5(31.25%)	1 (6.5%)	5 (31.25%)	1 (6.5%)	4 (25%)
Male	3(18.75%)	3(18.75%)	7(43.75%)	0	3(18.75%)

The analysis followed the grounded theory methodology described by Strauss and Corbin (1998). Raw data was converted into categories of similar information and properties through the initial open coding process. Data transcriptions were imported into NVivo. The use of this software enabled the researcher to read and apply initial descriptors to statements made by participants. Initially, each vignette was coded separately, generating multiple codes as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4

Initial Categories Emerging from Data

## Vignette 1: Time and Punctuality

- |                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Cultural aspects   | 8. Church and Sunday      |
| 2. Feelings generated | 9. Stereotyping           |
| 3. Punctuality        | 10. Civilian complexities |
| 4. Rank aspects       | 11. CP time               |
| 5. Race aspects       | 12. Gender relationship   |
| 6. Military aspects   | 13. Control               |
| 7. Problem generating | 14. Respect               |

## Vignette 2: Expressive Behaviors

- |                     |                                  |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Cultural aspects | 7. Military aspects              |
| 2. Racial aspects   | 8. Respect                       |
| 3. Rank aspects     | 9. Repeater                      |
| 4. Gender issues    | 10. Stereotyping                 |
| 5. Grudges          | 11. Dozens (ritualistic insults) |
| 6. Reactions        |                                  |

## Vignette 3: Kinesics and Oculics (Body Language and Eye Behaviors)

- |                            |                                  |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Eye contact             | 9. Fear                          |
| 2. Cultural considerations | 10. Interest                     |
| 3. Gender issues           | 11. Trust-truth                  |
| 4. Rank aspects            | 12. Learned at home              |
| 5. Race aspects            | 13. Guilty                       |
| 6. Military influence      | 14. Tone of voice                |
| 7. Attention               | 15. Stuff (random body gestures) |
| 8. Respect                 |                                  |

## Vignette 4: Request / Response

- |         |                          |
|---------|--------------------------|
| 1. Now  | 9. Cultural aspect       |
| 2. ASAP | 10. Military expectation |
| 3. STAT | 11. Respect              |

- |                 |                                     |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| 4. Voice-tone   | 12. Confrontation / insubordination |
| 5. Generational | 13. Civilian aspects                |
| 6. Gender-rank  | 14. Stereotyping                    |
| 7. Rank-race    | 15. Rank-rank                       |
| 8. Race-race    |                                     |

---

Vignette 4: Also generated a long categorization of materials pertaining to individual preferences regarding choice of a supervisor and avoidance of a supervisor. This was a theoretical discussion to further refine problem issues that may have been culturally driven. Categorically, the first and last choice preferences for the person that participants wanted to work for or avoid were:

- |                  |                                |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Black males   | 6. Females, no race preference |
| 2. Black females | 7. Males, no race preference   |
| 3. White males   | 8. Female comments             |
| 4. White females | 9. Gender-gender               |
| 5. No preference | 10. Age-experience             |

#### Free Nodes

In the process of coding the data, certain statements triggered the inclusion of free nodes or coding that did not seem to stand alone. There were 7 such nodes that were later incorporated into the consolidation of emerging themes. These included:

1. Black world
2. Cultural currency
3. Education
4. Non-person status
5. Like a man
6. White world
7. Hot buttons

“Hot buttons” referred to a question at the end of each interview that asked if there was anything that the participant would have included in the interview that served as a potential source of cultural differences or problem sources.

Following the open coding process, the categories were analyzed to define higher order relationships in the codes. Through the use of a continual comparative analysis, similarities in the data, as well as differences in the data began to emerge. Axial coding, as described by Strauss and Corbin (1998) was used to further refine categories in the data and to identify a single critical dynamic to describe fundamental, culturally acquired variances in the study population.

The primary analytical function of this form of research was to reduce large volumes of data into a representative form or theory. This was accomplished through the description of interrelationships, variations, consequences and conditions discovered in the data. Data generated by this unique research cohort were reduced to three primary themes (Table 5) in order to describe individual behavioral norms. The original research intent specified the discovery of cultural behavior norms in a military population consisting of black and white, male and female participants.

Table 5

---

*Category Descriptors of Behavior Norms*

---

1. Cultural conditioning
  2. Military influence
  3. Gender influence
- 

### Reliability and Validity

#### Methodological Rigor

*Truth value (credibility / internal validity):* A research design, qualitative or quantitative, is considered internally valid or to have truth value when there is confidence that the study findings are indeed characteristic of the variables being studied. The instrument is deemed valid when there is sufficient confidence that it adequately measures what it is intended to measure. In this study the truth value resided in the participants' experiences and through their discussions of culturally acquired normative behavioral expectations as perceived through their encounters with other individuals. Allowing for the flow of information rather than attempting a verification of a priori assumptions enhances the credibility of the study. "A qualitative study is credible when it presents such faithful descriptions or interpretations of a human experience that the people having that experience would immediately recognize it from those descriptions or interpretations as their own"(Sandelowski, 1986, p. 30).

One of the major threats to truth value in qualitative research is the closeness of the researcher and the subject population. His or her credibility is further enhanced when the researcher describes emerging themes through memos and careful descriptions of the coding and analysis processes. It is also advisable that the researcher provide personal interpretations of the data in relation to those of the participants. Paradoxically, this closeness of the researcher-participant relationship both enhances and threatens the credibility of this form of study. To counter this threat, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the raw data from the interviews be subjected to a form of peer debriefing: "It is a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind" (1985, p. 308). This approach was accomplished in this study with the assistance of Jan Agazio, a retired Army Nurse Corps officer and researcher, who has conducted and published qualitative studies.

*Applicability (transferability / external validity):* Quantitative studies require that threats to external validity be addressed through representatives of subjects, tests, and testing conditions. There are fewer threats to external validity in qualitative studies, primarily because this form of research emphasizes the study of phenomena discovered through the interview process. In-depth interviews were conducted with the volunteers in anticipation that they would



illuminate norms specific to their cultural heritages. The continued selection of participants for theoretical sampling in the later part of the study was directly related to the findings as they emerged in the course of data collection and comparative analysis. Additional volunteers would have been recruited, if necessary, until data saturation occurred; that is, when no new information emerges from the interview process regarding behavioral norm expectations within a racial group.

In qualitative research it is not the subjects who are key to the representativeness but rather the data they provide. The emphasis is to uncover typical or atypical norms, events, behaviors and responses in the lives of the participants (Sandelowski, 1986). Lincoln and Guba (1985) further elaborate this point in what they call “fittingness,” in which the findings can describe similar events outside the study specifics and that the research reading audience can find meaningful and applicable in terms of their own experiences (p. 124).

*Consistency (dependability / reliability):* In quantitative studies, reliability describes the consistency, stability and dependability of the vignettes used to conduct the research. The emphasis is on the uniqueness of the human experiences, which do not lend easily to a validation process. This form of research seeks to explore the variations of experiences rather than purely identical repetition of events (Sandelowski, 1986). Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose that consistency or reliability in qualitative studies are enhanced when another

researcher can follow an audit trail of how decisions about theory development evolved. For this purpose, all memos and coding decisions were included for peer review. The rigor of this form of study is demonstrated “when another researcher could arrive at the same or comparable but not contradictory conclusions given the researcher’s data, perspective, and situation” (Sandelowski, 1986, p. 33).

*Neutrality (confirmability / objectivity):* Sandelowski (1986) concludes that confirmability in qualitative research is achieved with the establishment of auditability, truth value, and applicability. Different from the quantitative discipline, qualitative research is best achieved when the distance between the investigator and the participant is reduced, thus blurring subjective and objective lines. Qualitative inquiry values the subjective reality and meanings associated directly from the lives and experiences of those being interviewed. Clearly, there are scientific complexities with this approach. Even so, this degree of involvement with the research subjects can yield benefits that outweigh the liabilities of attempting to gather substantive data through other research designs. For this reason, the engagement directly with the participants rather than a detachment from them was selected in seeking the thick descriptions of cultural variations in this study population (Sandelowski, 1986).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

#### Introduction

This chapter is a brief summary of the rich data gathered from thirty-two interviews of active duty medical personnel at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center. More extensive verbatims are in Appendix F. The participants were equally divided between officers and enlisted, males and females, and African-American (black) and European-American (white) soldiers. All of the participants responded from their individual cultural perspectives with enthusiasm to the four work-settings vignettes.

#### Looking for Core Variables

The primary research questions tried to ascertain whether or not there were culturally acquired normative behaviors that were specific to the African-American (black) and European-American (white) military members serving at a specific military installation.

If there were such behaviors, the next issue centered on variances in normative expectations and behaviors, and whether or not they served as sources for communication discord between racial or gender groups.

And, finally, I sought to discover whether or not the responses from the participant population varied from descriptive behavioral patterns published in current cultural diversity and culture-specific literatures.

An interview guide was initially developed that focused on five specifically related cultural areas: (1) time and punctuality, (2) allowable expectations for personal expression of anger and frustration in the workplace, (3) kinesic and oculesic expectations, (4) request / response time, and (5) supervisor-subordinate relationship preferences.

During the coding and axial coding process, specific questions were queried from the data to discover core variables, their properties, and ultimately core categories for theoretical constructs. These questions included: (1) What exactly is going on in the data? (2) Do the data suggest cultural differences between any or all groupings of participants? (3) What basic social problems did the participants describe? (4) What, if any, social processes mitigate the issues? (5) What did the participants require, seek, expect and request in their workplace relationships?

The coding and analysis process for this study integrated a grounded theory methodology. Grounded theory research can generate theories that represent patterns of behaviors which are relevant and problematic for the population being studied (Glaser, 1978). These patterns describe basic social processes (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986). Also known as the core variables, these processes, which appeared throughout the data, were central to the ultimate or emerging theories, and they became the core categories of the research effort.

Content variables for the vignettes used in this study were pre-selected rather than emerging naturally from the participants. As noted earlier, the reason for this deviation in grounded theory research was driven largely by the hospital's institutional review board requirement for specific research foci, especially in terms of content areas.

In this study, the basic social process or core variable that best describes behavioral norm differences between the black and white participants center on their relationship expectations. Workplace relationship practices and expectations differed considerably as a result of culturally acquired normative expectations and behaviors that characterized the black and white military participants. Generally, the black participants described specific interpersonal bonding orientations in workplace relationships, whereas the white participants described a more formal, business only (get the job done) task orientation toward workplace relationships. Hall (1976) and Hofstede (1997) discuss *individualistic* or *collectivistic* orientations as being descriptive of every cultural group. In this study, the African-Americans were collectivistic in their approach to interpersonal relationships, while the majority of the Euro-American participants were individualistic in their behavior.

Several things illustrate the complexities and nuances of the different orientations that were evident in the study population, especially in the major categories of time and punctuality, expressiveness, oculosic and kinesics

expectations, request / response time, and supervisor / subordinate relationship preferences. The data presented is based on the primary themes that emerged during the analysis process. These themes are: (1) culturally acquired variances, (2) military variances, and (3) gender variances. The primary themes are reported by the cultural heritage and gender of the research participants. Each theme, combined with the primary topic of the vignettes, illustrates culturally different orientations to workplace relationship practices. First, we will discuss the issue of time.

#### Time and Punctuality

The black participants understood and generally accepted a cultural phenomenon with respect to time referred to as “CP(Colored People’s Time) time.” Henderson (1999) describes Colored people’s time to mean “not driven by the need to keep rigid time schedules” (p. 57). He further contends that tradition-oriented black Americans often conform to a polychronic time orientation and therefore are engaged in multiple activities simultaneously. In this context, time is simply not of the essence.

All black officers and enlisted members described CP time as a known cultural entity and its meaning understood by all members. It was generally believed by the African-Americans that everyone (black or white) was aware of this difference in the black culture. To an African-American, however, time requires specific distinctions. Both male and female participants described the

need to have *social* and *private* time, which generally conformed to their family and cultural heritage. *Professional* (in this study, military) time required adherence to a rigid, clock orientation.

---

Table 6

*White and Black Understanding of CP Time*

---

White participants able to describe the meaning of CP Time	0 (0%)
Black participants able to describe the meaning of CP Time:	16 (100%)
Black participants stating that whites understand CP Time:	10 (62.5%)

---

Introduced also was the perception that there are cultural variations regarding the concept of time. And this has the potential for conflicts in communication and misunderstanding between culturally different groups. However, the time issue had wide variation among the black respondents.

Time

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that time has any cultural component?

ANN (black officer): I think it has a lot of cultural component. You know, there is what we call, we being African-Americans, CP time (colored people time) and so --

INTERVIEWER: So what does CP time mean?

ANN: CP time means -- okay when you say two o'clock that could mean, you know, three o'clock. That's CP time and it's perfectly acceptable. It's perfectly

acceptable. However, I've said to people -- I've said to younger officers, this is a military function. You cannot come on CP time. You need to be on time. I've had to remind myself, okay, I can't be on CP time. I have to be on time.

INTERVIEWER: And a source of problems?

ANN: Oh, yes. Because there are the misunderstandings that -- you know, again someone would think I was just being just inconsiderate. Just, you know, slovenly or whatever the case may be to not get there on time. When to me it would be like, what's the big deal? You know, they're going on without me. I'll get there when I get there and do my part when I get there.

The symbolic interactionism assumption provided context for the meaning of time variation in the general black community. Although there was not unanimity, the degree of acceptability of CP time served to establish a common meaning for half of the respondents. That is, half of the African-Americans agreed that CP time was relevant for them, and they adjusted the meaning to fit other contexts when required.

---

Table 7

*Acceptability of CP Time Among African-Americans*

---

CP Time is acceptable behavior:	8 (50%)
CP Time is not acceptable behavior:	8 (50%)

---



Having more than one cultural reference to time presented difficulties for some black individuals within their own cultural group, as well as with whites, in predominately social situations. It is for this reason that they accepted a method of communicating the time reference that was required for specific interactions. There were other relationship differences.

#### Relationship Expectations Described by African-American Participants

The following excerpts of responses to Vignette 1 illustrate the subtle differences in the manner in which African-Americans demonstrate relationship expectations in the workplace. Note the concern for trying to humanely deal with the punctuality issue. Crystal, Arthur, Castle and Derrick provided a glimpse of cultural relationship practices and the special interpersonal connective factor that binds together man African-American orientation:

INTERVIEWER: You're George now.

CRYSTAL (black enlisted): Whether or not I know Becky and I know how she is as a person. So if I know that Becky -- oh, Becky's late. Yeah, she'll be late. Then I might not tend to be too upset because I know that's her style. I mean if I was Becky and then George, I would have to say to you that George and I have worked together a long time and he knows me. And he knew that by me and him

being a coworker, working on this project, that I possibly could be late because something is always happening to me. So I think he kind of understands.

ARTHUR (black enlisted): If I knew Becky, you know, and she has normally had a pattern of always being on time, I'd probably -- which there may be something seriously happened and that's the reason why she didn't contact me. But if Becky was the type of person that was always late and so forth, a real slacker...

INTERVIEWER: If both individuals were African-American, does that change anything at all?

CASTLE (black enlisted): No, it doesn't. As I said earlier race or sex really is not an issue here. It's a matter of common courtesy between people. Whether they know each other or not.

INTERVIEWER: Let's go rank kind of neutral for the next piece of this and I'm going to tell you that George is a white male and Becky's a black female.

DERRICK (Black officer): Okay. Still once again, it just comes down to respecting others, whether it's their time or whether it's just the proper etiquette.

INTERVIEWER: If I remind you that it's Sunday.....

DERRICK: Once again, you know, it's just respect for the other person's feelings. Sundays, especially for black Americans, are normally a day for family, a day for church. It's a day that we usually take time out to spend with one another.

### Influence of Religion

Black males, more frequently than the black female cohort, described the sacredness of Sunday to the social, spiritual and cultural life of African-Americans. Sunday took priority over the business process in the black community (Table 8). They were quick to defend the sacredness of Sunday as a day for families and for relationship connectivity as illustrated in the abbreviated citations that follow.

---

Table 8

---

*Stated Significance of Sundays and Religion*

---

Black males describing significance of Sundays	5/8 (62.5%)
Black females describing significance of Sundays	3/8 (37.5%)
White males describing significance of Sundays	0/8 (0%)
White females describing significance of Sundays	2/8 (25%)

---

ARTHUR (black enlisted): And probably I wouldn't have even scheduled it for a Sunday. I would have scheduled it for a different day. On Saturday, that would be great, but Sunday pretty much, I would think that would be, "Like no." That would be last thing on the list.

BOB (black officer): I'm going to say that Becky is more than fashionably late and especially being it's a weekend and a Sunday, which is in my book, you

know, [is] family time. You know, you spend your Sundays with your family or at church. Don't necessarily want to spend it at work.

DAN (black enlisted): I can agree with that statement because African Americans, we do tend to schedule around our Sundays for that particular purpose of church and family. It's traditional for us that Sunday is a time set aside for us to just do absolutely nothing but do your church and family thing. Work is normally not a traditional part of -- especially if, you know, it's your day off, it's not a traditional part of African-American thinking.

INTERVIEWER: How sacred or important is Sunday to African-Americans?

DAN: Now I'm speaking from a personal standpoint as far as trying to look -- speak openly about our group. Very much so.

INTERVIEWER: Some of the African-American participants in this have suggested that African-Americans would not have even selected Sunday to do this. They would have done almost anything else, any other day but that because of what you've just said. Would you agree?

DERRICK (black officer): You know, Sunday is a very important day in our community. But an isolated situation

Arleen described her impression that a white supervisor would demonstrate very little, if any, consideration for a Sunday work appointment.

ARLEEN (black enlisted): I think he would more just be like, "Well, we made an appointment, you were supposed to be here at this time, regardless of church,"

whatever, whatever. We should have brought that issue up before Sunday got here if you knew you were going to be late.

INTERVIEWER: That's if George is white?

ARLEEN: Yes.

#### Perceived Need to Prove

Many of the black participants expressed an internalized need to prove themselves in meeting the perceived need of punctuality in the professional world. Often, as an attempt to negate what they expressed as self-imposed stereotyping as well as negative stereotyping on the part of whites, blacks exerted pressure on themselves to be on time, even though it was against their personal desires.

The responses regarding the need to prove stretched well beyond each individual. The comments seemed to reflect not only individual proof of individual competence but also a need to positively represent the entire community of African-Americans. Thus, there was a strong sense of being on trial both individually and for the community at large.

---

Table 9

#### *Requirement to Prove*

---

Black males describing need to prove	6/8 (75%)
Black females describing need to prove	5/8 (62.5%)
White males describing need to prove	1/8 (12.5%)
White females describing need to prove	2/8 (25%)

---

The need to prove, individually, that they are able to meet the imposed expectation, is an interesting finding illustrated by the following excerpts:

INTERVIEWER: If you were Becky, how would you feel?

ANN (black officer): I can relate it though to grad school. Now grad school, which I felt was basically a white world at (Name) University, that was more of, you know, if you set a particular time that's definitely what time you had to be there, whether it was a work group -- you know, definitely for classes. And then it was a work group. If I was working with a group, you know, I felt that definite pressure to get there and make sure I'm on time. Make sure I'm not late so you wouldn't be perceived as the slacker.

#### Communicating Cultural Norms

The second research question in this study asked if cultural norm differences serve as sources of communication discord between culturally different members. The following presents a finding of one of those potential difficulties. Black participants were asked if the white population in their work environment knew about, and understood the meaning of time to their black co-workers. The majority of black respondents explicitly stated that their white colleagues were aware of the cultural differences. Caroline's response is illustrative of the common response among black participants.

INTERVIEWER: If you ask a white person just at random, "What is CP time?" would they have a clue?

CAROLINE (black officer): I think eight out of ten people would.

INTERVIEWER: Would they?

CAROLINE: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And what would they say about it?

CAROLINE: They would laugh, and they were like, yeah, everybody knows what that is. Yeah, I think -- I know I can ask all my white -- they don't even have to be friends, just people in --

INTERVIEWER: At what age?

CAROLINE: It could go from 25 to 35, 25 to 40. I think more so the young people know it because they've heard the older adults talk about it.

The white participants provided common statements regarding the rules governing time and punctuality. Collectively, the whites appeared to have little, if any, understanding of time perceptual differences in any other cultural circumstances. Time and punctuality were absolute. Non-compliance was subject to disciplinary sanctions irrespective of race, gender or rank.

From the white respondents' perspective, there is a single manner in which time was understood and acceptable behavior must conform to this premise. The most acceptable norm for punctuality was to be early or, at the very least, exactly on time. There appeared to be no allowances for or knowledge of cultural variances between personal and professional lives. The notion that time may have various meanings, to include "CP time," had no significance or context for whites

participants. Contrary to what many black participants suggested, not a single member of the white cohort knew what “CP time” meant.

Kockman (1981) contends cultural differences are ignored or never recognized by whites due to the assumption that both cultural groups are functioning under a same language, same cultural (white American) conventions, and in this population, the same uniform. Without consciously realizing it, the white participants did not perceive those things as white group standards, but rather simply as the American culture.

The white female participants in the study failed to express a cultural awareness regarding more than one possibility for the appreciation of time. From their interview transcripts, there was a noted absence of comments about time pertaining to religious services, family connectivity issues on Sundays or specific significance for weekends in general.

Family was important to white males and females too; however, the primary functional relationship orientation in the workplace emphasized work and not interpersonal concerns, including the family. The notion of having to prove yourself in the work environment was essentially unmentioned by the white study participants. As a general consensus, both military cultural cohorts believed the major time issue centered on civilian personnel in the workforce, not with military personnel. This finding will also be discussed later in the report.



### Military Variances Not Viewed as a White Phenomenon

When the variable of a military environment was introduced into the vignette regarding time, all participants agreed that the military culture prevails. As described by both cultural cohorts, military time was exact: according to the clock. The expectation to be on time was described as inflexible. Many reflected the standard as requiring being present for duty up to half an hour prior to the scheduled. All of the military members accepted this as a minimum benchmark. Whites saw it as military time, although this same expectation was normally held for non-military, mainly white social settings.

Ann, a senior black officer, explained that blacks must learn to regard this aspect of belonging to a military organization as the military culture and not a white culture situation.

ANN: I think it's on a much more of a military protocol type of environment, which is where a lot of our young black officers get themselves into trouble because when you start talking to them about accepted practices, i.e., you need to be on time, not CP time, that's not to necessarily say you need to be on white peoples time. That says you need to be on military protocol time and it has nothing to do with trying to be white. And a lot of black officers do get caught up in this thing of -- when they're young, you know, they kind of come at you with this, "Oh, well you just want me to try to be white."

No, it's not about trying to be white. It's about being appropriate for the environment that you have decided you want to live in, which is the military environment. And there are some things that are acceptable and some things are not acceptable. And you will in the end be judged on how well you comply or don't comply with the acceptable norms.

You know, after you grow up and get past your lieutenant/captain stage, hopefully you realize it's a military organization and some of the rules are in place -- the rules being in place have nothing to do -- I don't know at this point, with racial issues. It has to do with having a certain type of order within the organization and having established expectations within the organization. I think during the lieutenant/captain stage for everyone, even the young white officers, you're still deciding whether or not you're going to become a part of this organization or whether you're just going to, you know, be around -- you're still observing and assessing the organization to decide if it's something you want to become a part of. If you decide you want to become a part of it then that means you start to accept the expectations as your way of life. I think, you know, you have to decide that or else you're just not going to be happy. You're never going to be happy in the organization if you don't learn to accept some of their ways as your way of life.

INTERVIEWER: Are you assimilating to the military regime or to a white military regime, if there is such a thing -- a difference?

ANN: I think personally that you assimilate to a military regime. I don't think you lose your individuality as a black person or as an African-American person, you know. And a lot of times people think that's what you have to do.

The military represents the epitome of hierarchical organizations. As such, all military personnel are required to show proper respect for the rank of the individual over that of the individual as a person. With regard to the variable of time, failure to meet a stated clock time agreement may result in unwanted and even long reaching consequences. Succinctly stated, the participants uniformly agreed that:

1. A person of higher rank must not be kept waiting for a more junior member;
2. Failure to meet the first component may or will result in a form of discipline, formally or informally; and
3. Military supervisors up and down the spectrum will keep score on punctuality indiscretions.

The norm of not keeping higher ranking individuals waiting was adequately demonstrated in the transcript. The next four citations exemplify the components of discipline and the perception of military score keeping (See Table 10).

INTERVIEWER: If I told you that George was a captain and Becky's the colonel.

CRYSTAL (black enlisted): I'd think the same thing, in the military things seem to be held more against you than if you were in civilian -- you know, in the civilian, yeah, that was done but, you know, in the military it just seems like your throat would get cut, you know, so to speak if you did something like that. It would kind of always be held against you if you did something like that -- and it would kind of always be held against you throughout that time.

INTERVIEWER: Would you say that the military is very prone to keeping score?

CRYSTAL (black enlisted): Yeah. Yeah, I think they are.

DIANE (white enlisted): And I'm sure that if I was Becky [as the captain] I would be totally shaking in my boots, especially if George was anywhere in my rating scheme because that's a whole little target thing on the OERs [Officer Efficiency Reports] and can be very detrimental to an officer's career.

BECKY (white officer): I think the military, it's just drilled into your head, you know, to be on time and I think that supervisors are more willing or quick to reflect that in your evaluation report than they are for other types of workers

INTERVIEWER: Let's make George a colonel and Becky a captain.

CATHY (white officer): Oh, Becky's screwed.

---

 Table 10

---

*Punctuality Score Card*


---

Does the military “keep score” on those who are not punctual?

Black participants that agree                      13/16 (81%)

White participants that agree                      10/16 (62.5%)

---

### Mutual Respect

An interesting discovery in this study was the universal expectation across race, rank and gender for the expression of mutual respect. Irrespective of an individual’s rank, gender or cultural status, equal conduct, with respect to punctuality issues, was stated to be expected. The rationale for mutual respect however, was clearly divided by relationship expectations from both the white and black perspectives. The following interview citations illustrate the finding:

Note that Brandi, a black enlisted soldier, felt that the colonel “should apologize to me” for being late even though he is a much higher rank. This notion again reflects the orientation that the majority of the black participants expressed in reference to interpersonal relationship expectations.

INTERVIEWER: Let’s switch it and make George the captain, and Becky’s colonel.

BRANDI: The colonel needed to apologize too but sometimes they don't provide it. But I feel the colonel should apologize to me too because if I shouldn't be late because of you, you come in late because of me. I think he needs to apologize.

Ann, a senior black officer, expected for the senior person to have an appreciation for the other person and show equal consideration.

ANN (black officer): Then that's even more inconsiderate. That's even worse because I would suspect that the senior person at that point in their career would definitely have an appreciation for the other person's time and would be considerate enough, you know, to let them know that they're going to be late.

Brenda, a white enlisted soldier, described the lack of respect for the leadership position. The relationship emphasis was stated in a much more impersonal manner. Rather than describing an interpersonal connectivity, Brenda stated it as not doing the job as a responsible leader.

BRENDA: Well I would think Becky (if she is the colonel) would know better and if she is in part of this -- because in having that much rank comes a lot of responsibility. And if you aren't responsible enough to come at two o'clock or at least two o'clock then, you know, that type of leadership position I don't know if I would want them in charge of myself.

Cathy, a white officer, described losing respect leadership, not the person.

INTERVIEWER: Now George is the captain and Becky's the colonel.

CATHY: He'd probably lose a lot of respect for her leadership if she doesn't have a good excuse.

Dustin, a white enlisted soldier, expected a supervisor to set the example and be professional, another example of a business, rather than interpersonal orientation.

INTERVIEWER: No, George is on time but he is the captain.

DUSTIN: I would say, yes. And if I was George I'd probably be even more frustrated because I'm looking at the higher ranking or more of a supervisor or leader role setting the example of being more professional. So I would be very -- I don't know if disappointed is the right word. I would be frustrated and probably disgusted in the fact that the person who is supposed to be my supervisor, is supposed to have more rank, or more experience and more knowledge, or more leadership qualities -- is beneath me.

#### Military Culture versus Civilian Culture

The Medical Center used for this study was not unique in the military with respect to diverse personnel complexities. The differences being a mixture of military personnel, government employees, hired through the Civilian Personnel Office, and civilian personnel, hired from agencies as required to fill critical personnel vacancies. This rich, socially diverse environment was ideal to study the effects of cultural differences and normative behaviors. Although a military

organization is a controlled environment, the rules governing military behaviors are not necessarily the same constraints that civilian employees or contract personnel are required to follow. The important variable of belonging to a civilian or military structure allowed me to demonstrate a cultural norm that is unique in the black community, yet one that is suspended by most of them while in a professional military environment.

The scope of this research addressed military responses regarding cultural issues. The following excerpts describe what participants provided regarding civilian personnel and punctuality concerns:

INTERVIEWER: If I'm looking at between the military and civilian, does the military seem to be more on time than the civilian or how does that --

DIXIE (black enlisted): Definitely.

INTERVIEWER: Is this [punctuality issue] problematic in the workplace?

DAN (black enlisted): Just from the military part of the house, it was a big issue with me as a Ward Master trying to manage civilians. Because as a soldier, we're supposed to be conditioned and disciplined enough to be in a certain place at a certain time, and then to factor in the civilians with the military and they're able to show up on this mythical CP time thing, that's irritating. And it was very distracting from my job because I took a lot of the time that I should have been working on issues to control and run my ward, talking with [civilian]employees about why they were late. Don't do this again -- and then it's always an issue.



INTERVIEWER: So it's more of a military mentality versus --

CHESTER (black officer): Yeah, I think it's more a military mentality because I get to work, you know, 15 minutes prior to starting my shift and, you know, most of my comrades, they do the same also. You're expected to be there 15 minutes prior to whatever time you have to be there but I guess the civilian sector, you know, they could get there exactly, you know, a second before that shift starts.

### Expressiveness

The second variable examined by interview participants related to allowable degrees of expressiveness in the workplace setting. The second vignette (see Appendix D) intended to exemplify differences between cultural cohorts and genders, in normative customs, in the expression of issue discrepancy between two or more individuals.

Several passages are presented to illustrate the cultural variability in expressive allowance, and to begin a definition of cultural acceptable boundaries within and between working members. African-American females collectively agreed that in many one-on-one, supervisor and subordinate situations, it was appropriate and allowable for the supervisor, if black, to fully express displeasure about the behavior of the subordinate. As the participants described, the behavior is the issue, not the person.

Again, in these citations, note the wording used by the black participants in describing the preservation and maintenance of relationships over attending to

activities only. In the excerpted discussions, the black females present a slightly different angle on this theme.

INTERVIEWER: So John is correct in being forceful?

CRYSTAL (black enlisted): I think so, yeah. I guess I would say women tend to be a little bit louder but emotional along with that. On the other hand I think a black male -- and I think it would have to depend on how bad the need was for that piece of equipment or supply. But I think a black male would be a little bit more vocal and maybe to the point of causing, you know, like a ruckus, but not really.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. In that situation would Bill be hurt more if he is white than if he is black?

CRYSTAL: And what color is John?

INTERVIEWER: Black.

CRYSTAL: Well I hate to say this but I think if Bill were black, I think his feelings would be hurt more than if Bill were white because the black person is going to think that John being black, that he is turning on him or, you know, "Hey, man, you know, we're supposed to be cool. You know, why are you getting all upset about that?" Whatever, whatever.

INTERVIEWER: If you are receiving the chewing so to speak, how would you feel?

DIXIE (black enlisted): Me, and the type of person that I am, I'm going to come back at you the same way you come at me, because you don't know what kind of day I've just had. So for you to add to any stress that I may have going on right now, you're going to get it just as well as you gave it to me.

INTERVIEWER: If I tell you that John is white and Bill is black -- I guess my question really is, is John going to be just as likely to go off on a white soldier as if the soldier's black?

DIXIE: Maybe but from my experience of what I've seen, I've known for black people to go off more -- it doesn't matter what your color is.

INTERVIEWER: If it were two white individuals versus two black individuals having this issue would it be as likely that it would be the same kind of situation or is it more likely that two black individuals would be more expressive with one another?

DIXIE: I think two black individuals would be more expressive with each other.

#### Dozens: Ritualistic Insults

Included in the findings was a discussion of a specific phenomenon, known in the black culture as "playing" or "doin' the dozens." Labov (1972), in his study of inner city youths, describe the complexities of rules governing ritualistic insults. Within the black community, there exists a system of insults known by various names, often by selected large cities and sometimes detailed by

the level and content matter of the discourse. Terms for these events include “sounding, signifying, woofing and cutting” (p. 297). Other terms used to describe this activity include the “dozens,” “screaming,” “joining,” “cutting,” “capping” and “chopping.”

In the Washington D. C. area it is also known as “snapping,” “cracking on someone,” or in the current street vernacular, as “joinin’.” This practice is deeply rooted in African-American tradition, dating to the early days of slavery in the Southern states. It is a ritualistic form of comic insult that allows a creative expression and emotional ventilation. Although white study participants expressed a health ability to joke and tease playfully in and outside the workplace, nothing approached the allowable parameters found possible in the black culture. The black participants unanimously agreed that “the dozens” has no place in the work setting, it nevertheless provided a contrasting example between the two cultures of the wider range of cultural acceptability for expressiveness for black members in general.

The speech event we call sounding is not isolated from other forms of verbal interaction; it can merge with them or become transformed into a series of personal insults. When ritual insult changes into personal insult, the difference between the two becomes quite clear....In the examples of sounding, the fundamental opposition between ritual insults and personal insult emerges. The appropriate responses are quite different: a personal insult is answered by a denial, excuse or mitigation, whereas a sound and its response are essentially the same kind of thing, and a response calls for a further response (Labov, 1972, pp. 330, 335).

Table 11

*The Dozens: Ritualistic Insults*

Do you know what it means when I mention “playing the dozens?”

Black participants that have a cultural understanding	14/16 (87.5%)
White participants that have a cultural understanding	0/16 (0%)

White individuals who encounter a group of African-American males engaged in the dozens and do not recognize or understand the cultural aspect of the event, often over-react to the perceived violent and volatile nature of the event. This same miscalculation could occur in other events due to the misinterpretation of the cultural allowances in expressive norms. Presented below one African-American female’s comments pertaining to this important cultural aspect of expressiveness and the interpretations and misinterpretations that can be associated with the practice. Other statements are in Appendix F.

INTERVIEWER: What’s doing the dozens mean?

CRYSTAL (black enlisted): Doing the dozens?

INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh.

CRYSTAL: I don’t know.

INTERVIEWER: What’s cracking on folks mean?

CRYSTAL: Cracking I think means telling a joke about them.

INTERVIEWER: Is it mean-spirited or fun?

CRYSTAL: Well to somebody who knows about it, it could be fun but if you're outside of who hears it, it could be mean. In other words if you and me were cracking on somebody, it means you know that individual but somebody sitting over there and they hear but don't know, they could think it was being mean.

#### Variances in Expressiveness

The African-American females argued unanimously that the person holding the higher rank, regardless of race, had the right, and the obligation to maintain a functioning work unit (See Vignette 2). Forceful expressiveness was acceptable to the black females, whether it was used by males or females. A lower ranking individual seldom, if ever, had the right to challenge a higher ranking person according to this group. It was the rank that was the differentiating factor, not the race of either individual.

There are protocol boundaries for disciplinary procedures in the military environment which Beth described as not screaming or using abusive or profane language. Voice volume was not the issue. The degree of needed expressiveness was not prescribed; therefore it became a matter of personal and cultural choice. These females were not inclined to accept any form of defiance from a subordinate, regardless of race or gender. The fact that this was a military environment took precedent over all cultural norm concerns. This group of

female service members took the military conditions and rank issues seriously, allowing for minimal variability in acceptable expectations.

The African-American females described themselves as unique in the cultural norm arena. Collectively, they did not expect to have to accommodate anyone's nonsense. Dixie adamantly proclaimed that she had "to prove something to people." That testimony was echoed by other black females as well as confirmed by black and white males and females. The black females were not as inclined to work well with one another. This female cohort provided an external appearance of cooperation, but behind the scenes were many carefully guarded resentments, positions to defend, and grudges that were meticulously maintained. These self-proclaimed characteristics are problematic in the work environment.

The black males, irrespective of rank, approached higher ranking black female supervisors with a certain degree of caution. But they were more comfortable in dealing with black females than white males or females. The white respondents said that they simply avoided confrontation with black females for cultural reasons and to avoid possible discrimination charges.

#### Grudges

The females from both cultural backgrounds unanimously agreed that females held grudges for greater periods than the males from both cultural groups.

Females agreed the males “get over it quickly,” but failed to state whether or not they considered that a desirable attribute of the males.

---

Table 12

*Grudges*

---

State that males hold grudges in the workplace for less than 24 hours:

Black males: 8 / 8 (100 %)  
 Black females: 8 / 8 (100 %)  
 White males: 6 / 8 (75%)  
 White females: 7 / 8 (87.5 %)

State that males hold grudges in the workplace for more than 24 hours:

Black males: 0 / 8 ( 0 %)  
 Black females: 0 / 8 ( 0 %)  
 White males: 0 / 8 ( 0 %)  
 White females: 1 / 8 (12.5%)

State that females hold grudges in the workplace for less than 24 hours:

Black males: 0 / 8 ( 0%)  
 Black females: 0 / 8 ( 0%)  
 White males: 0 / 8 ( 0 %)  
 White females: 0 / 8 ( 0%)

State that females hold grudges in the workplace for more than 24 hours

Black males: 8 / 8 (100%)  
 Black females: 8 / 8 (100%)  
 White males: 8 / 8 (100%)  
 White females: 8 / 8 (100%)

---

The male cohorts agreed that the females held grudges for longer time periods. The males further agreed that once an issue between two males was out in the open and had been resolved, the relationship before the event was quickly



restored. The male cohorts described gender issues as problematic in the work environment. Collectively, they did not attempt to speculate how this could, or should, be resolved.

Black males preferred to place issues out on the table so that they could be dealt with and resolved. Any degree of expressiveness was allowable as long as the respect of the other individual was maintained, and that profanity and abusive language was avoided. To the black males, volume in voice expression did not equate to a degree of readiness to become violent or physical in confrontational or reprimand situations. In the opinion of the black participants, white supervisors and subordinates avoid anything that seems confrontational. This was a source of notable frustration for the black males. Therefore black male officers and enlisted, were guarded about even appearing to be confrontational with their white supervisors. Given the opportunity, a black male would elect to walk away from a potential situation rather than risk a white supervisor's misinterpretation of his response over a disputed issue. A black subordinate who walks away from a white supervisor confuses the supervisor who has complete lack of appreciation for the cultural dynamics. In order to relieve personal tension from the dichotomy, a black male would often choose humor to mask and control the situation.

Throughout this study a critical finding emerged; that is, a black male must be regarded as a man. That implicitly means an adult man, no less. Further,

it implies an exacting equality with white males and females, and at least equal to that of black females, at any cost. In describing his role in the hospital environment as an enlisted soldier having to interface with young military physicians, Ben expected that they deal with him “as a grown man first.” Alex stated that the stereotypical notion that black subordinates were “incompetent” is alive and well among both black and white supervisors. Alex also cautioned that controlled emotional expressiveness was the expectation in “the white man’s world,” his description of the military culture.

#### The Issue of Supervision

The black male participants defined distinct differences in how they responded to a situation that is race dependent. In the situation where a supervisor was white and the subordinate was black, the lower ranking individual would accept the reprimand and move on. In the instances where both the supervisor and the subordinate were black, the male subordinates felt the freedom to approach the senior ranking individual and resolve work and interpersonal issues pertaining to the reprimand. None of the participants defined the work environment as “a white man’s world.” Rather it is a work or military environment in which certain behavioral norms are expected. To bring strong cultural norms of allowable expressiveness in a non-work setting to the workplace, especially the military, was not acceptable behavior.

The lengthy transcripts illustrate seven critical research findings relevant to cultural norm differences that continue to prevail in the military environment between white and black service members. The blacks believed that:

1. Cultural norm behaviors must be modified to fit the work setting.
2. Failure to conform to the military norm, not the “white” norm, would result in judgment against you. These expectations are learned gradually as part of adapting to the military regime. This was true for black and white, male and female service members. The adjustment however, was described as more difficult for African-American soldiers.
3. In a reprimand or confrontational situation between a white supervisor and a black subordinate, the two choices for the subordinate were to “take it” or to “walk away.” To walk away, for the black subordinate, implied gaining some distance from the situation in order to dissipate the anger and prevent a worsening situation. This option was normally not allowed because of the misinterpretation that would be made by the white supervisor.
4. In those instances where the supervisor and the subordinate were black, they would be more likely to have a mutual understanding of acceptable confrontational norms and feel able to be as expressive, yet respectful, as needed. When the supervisor was a black female, this was less true.
5. White supervisors did not deal well with events that had the appearance of being confrontational. In Chester’s personal situation, his white female

supervisor resorted to leaving him notes rather than communicate with him face-to-face.

6. Conversely, blacks in supervisory roles proceeded with caution when dealing with white subordinates in order to prevent a backlash.

7. Black males seldom, if ever, trusted their white supervisors due to the perception that there was a complete lack of understanding and relational acceptance. Black males, officers and enlisted, generally did not believe that whites gave them the respect of a “man to man” relationship encounters.

In the following excerpt, Chester described the only instance captured in this research, but one that probably occurs all too frequently, the breakdown of communication between himself and his white, female supervisor. The issue was one where a young, black male officer is seeking guidance from his white supervisor regarding his behavior that in the opinion of the supervisor was not to standard. Rather than deal with the issue on a face to face, interpersonal relationship level, the supervisor chose to handle the matter by leaving written messages in Chester’s department mailbox. This unfortunate tale presents a classic example of how white supervisors worked to avoid perceived, potential conflict encounters; a true cultural miscue.

INTERVIEWER: In the John and Bill scenario, does this kind of situation take place frequently? I don’t mean necessarily supply, but in general.

CHESTER (black officer): A couple of times my supervisor, you know, she has come across that way but as far as my –

INTERVIEWER: To you or to other –

CHESTER: Oh, no, to me.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Without naming names or anything, that supervisor is what rank?

CHESTER: Major.

INTERVIEWER: And male or female?

CHESTER: Female.

INTERVIEWER: And black or white?

CHESTER: White.

INTERVIEWER: All right. Was that an issue in your opinion?

CHESTER: It was at one point....okay, so it's now gotten to the point where I don't know if I have done something, but now we don't communicate. I get letters in my mailbox saying, you need to do this. Where before, you know, she would come and say, "Can I talk to you? Come into the office." But now I don't know if I came across a certain way. Now she doesn't, you know, approach. She just writes letters and sticks [them] in my mailbox, and that's how we communicate.

Chester suggested that gender would make a difference in the manner in which two individuals interacted in a confrontational event. Males would turn down the volume and tone when reprimanding a female. There was the concern that a female would possibly use the event in a formal complaint should they choose to do so. He indicated that black females had a greater sense of freedom in expressing themselves in a work environment. This opinion about black females is further born out in Table 13.

---

Table 13

*Freedom to Confront*

---

Would hesitate to confront a black male:

Black males: 0 / 8 ( 0 %)

Black females: 0 / 8 ( 0 %)

White males: 6 / 8 (75%)

White females: 5 / 8 (62.5%)

Would hesitate to confront a black female:

Black males: 5 / 8 (62.5%)

Black females: 0 / 8 ( 0 %)

White males: 5 / 8 (62.5%)

White females: 2 / 8 (25%)

Would hesitate to confront a white male:

Black males: 3 / 8 (37.5%)

Black females: 0 / 8 ( 0%)

White males: 0 / 8 ( 0 %)

White females: 1 / 8 (12.5%)

Would hesitate to confront a white female:

Black males: 3 / 8 (37.5%)

Black females: 0 / 8 ( 0%)

White males: 1 / 8 (12.5%)

White females: 0 / 8 (0 %)

---

### White Females

White females, like their male counterparts, addressed the work issues from a business relationship orientation. They expected that all work related encounters would be kept business-like, professional, and cool headed. Expressing displeasure in a harsh manner was to be avoided and should be used to make a special point in those instances of repeated offenses. Bi-racial encounters with any degree of demonstrated emotion, especially from blacks, was alarming to white participants. Most of the white females agreed that black officers and enlisted personnel were more expressive in their everyday communication experiences.

ANGELA (white enlisted): Well first off I would say that I think it's appropriate to do it in an area where not everybody else is hearing what their business is. At least he is behind closed doors and he is not out in the open basically chewing this individual for not doing his job in front of all his coworkers. Seeing a situation like that would probably be more alarming for it to be an interracial, a black man and a white person, versus two blacks in the room or two whites in the room. To me, blacks tend to be more expressive like that.

BRENDA (white enlisted): And if I was John, I probably try to keep my cool for as long as I could. You know, John needs to learn some social skills

CHRISTINE (white enlisted): Well if John is Bill's superior, or even an equal I think that it's okay if he lets Bill know how upset he is. I mean he didn't insult him in any way.

DIANE (white enlisted): When I was twelve years old we moved to southeastern Virginia. And the black males -- in the females you didn't see it too often, and I wouldn't say all of the black males, but the majority of the black males did respond to situations totally different than black, white, Asian, you know, females or males responded to them.

INTERVIEWER: How would you describe that?

DIANE: I would describe it as very aggressive. Not so much defensive, but very aggressive. I mean they had to get loud. They had to get close. You know, they had to get threatening in order to make you see that they disagreed with a point, you know, or that the answer was wrong.

INTERVIEWER: Was it frightening?

DIANE: Actually it was confusing to me at first. I had never, never seen that before and didn't understand it.

AMY (white officer): I think most people if you are on top of what you do and you can communicate that would put up with this. If this is two worker bees happen to meet up and the one has to ventilate and he ventilates and that's it, and he doesn't punch anybody, and he doesn't rip everything off the shelves and ruin



all the supplies; he just ventilated and that was it. Whether he needs to go to assertiveness training or better communication class, I don't know.

A critical finding was illustrated in Becky's excerpt. She is a white senior officer who related an incident in a previous assignment where she witnessed a verbal exchange between several of her black soldiers. In what was most likely another example of a cultural miscue, Becky's response to what she heard and saw was to formally discipline for "conduct unbecoming" the five black service members. From the account given by Becky, it is conceivable that what she witnessed and reacted to was in its own right culturally acceptable among the soldiers, and not worthy of formal punishment.

None of the white females had ever heard of the cultural component of the dozens or any other aspect of the phenomenon. Some slight teasing and joking was permissible in the workplace, according to most white participants, but it must remain very civil and friendly in appearance, especially between culturally different groups.

White males and females expected that all issues needed to be addressed in a professional manner. Implicit in the term "professional" meant in a moderate, non-exaggerated tone of voice without any outward display of angry emotions. Any escalation of emotions signaled to white males and females that they had lost control of the situation. The white cohort agreed unanimously that the person holding the most rank can influence the manner in which a message is

delivered to a subordinate. At no time was a lower ranking person to take an abrasive stance with a higher ranking person. The common denominator between the black and white cohorts was the expectation of mutual respect.

#### White Males

To the white males, maintaining emotional control was important. To “loose your cool” was not considered generally appropriate behavior. The idea of getting loud and forceful, which was allowable by the black males, was unacceptable to the white males. Loud expressiveness required that an apology be given to the offended party. Note Bill’s wording: “if you treat people with respect, you are going to get respect back.” That implied a relationship with a business orientation rather than an interpersonal connotation. David was the only white person who specifically considered certain aspects of behavior exhibited by blacks as being a culturally acceptable variation, and therefore allowable without alarm.

The white participants preferred the expression of interactions in a clear, precise, business only manner, and they would reprimand subordinates who deviated. Low volume, controlled expressions, and professional demeanor were the expected norms for the whites. According to them, if the supervisor in any encounter maintained control of himself or herself, the subordinate, irrespective of rank or race, would behave accordingly. The real issue at hand was to get the job done, correct errant behavior, and get past the trouble. To these respondents,

relationship issues were secondary, if considered at all. Also, lower ranking individuals were not permitted to challenge a higher ranking individual. From the white respondents' perspective, walking away was never an option for a subordinate.

#### Oculesics (Eye Behavior) and Kinesic (Body Language) Expectations

The findings in the data provided by the majority of the research population regarding eye contact differed from the expectations illustrated in the literature review. Henderson (1994) and Fine (1995) write that traditional African-Americans were taught to avoid eye contact while speaking to another person. This was particularly true if the person to whom they were speaking was in a higher status, such as parent or job supervisor. This was presumably to show respect for the status of the other individual. Brandi, a black enlisted participant, stated, "I don't look at you straight in the face, and that's a sign of respect." Brandi was the exception, having recently emigrated from Nigeria.

Most of the research participants stated that they were both taught and expected to provide courteous eye contact when speaking and when being spoken to. They expected the same thing in return from their black and white co-workers, irrespective of rank, race or gender. A possible exception to this practice would be in communicating with tradition-oriented third world peoples. The three most common themes with respect to maintaining good eye contact that emerged from the data were: (1) maintaining such contact indicated paying attention, (2) it

facilitated listening to each other, and (3) interest was being shown between the communicants (See Table 14).

---

Table 14

*Interpretations of Eye Contact*

---

Eye contact means

Person is paying attention	White cohort: 9 / 16 (56 %)
	Black cohort: 8 / 16 (50%)
Person is listening	White cohort: 8 / 16 (50 %)
	Black cohort: 7 / 16 (44 %)
Person is showing interest	White cohort: 2 / 16 (13 %)
	Black cohort: 2 / 16 (13%)

---

The black male participants described the nature of eye contact with increased meaning and interpretation. Eye contact functioned as an equalizer between individuals in the communication process. The instructions black males received pertaining to eye contact prior to entering the military illustrates a cultural norm differentiation from that of black females and the entire white cohort.

Collectively, both white and black cohorts expressed the notion that courteous eye contact between communicating individuals demonstrated that sufficient attention was being provided during the communication exchange; that adequate interest was being displayed; and, the person being spoken to be also listening. Common to the core variable discovered in this research, was the detail

that the black participants used in their description of listening and respect. The words disrespect and respect were used more frequently by black participants than by the white cohort.

---

Table 15

Respect / Disrespect

---

Number of times the white participants used the terms: 8 times

Number of times the black participants using the terms: 20 times

---

The majority of comments relating to the eye behaviors, voice tone, and gestures, reflected the cultural orientation toward interpersonal relationships (degree of intended connectivity) and mutual respect. The responses of the white participants, generally illustrated a concentration of effort toward the business activity to be accomplished, more so than interpersonal relationships with others.

#### Eye Contact

Although mentioned by the participants collectively, the perceptions of truthfulness and lying were rarely discussed. The literature suggests this to be a common interpretation, when eye contact is avoided. The following excerpts illustrate responses to the third vignette.

BRANDI (black enlisted): Oh, they're both females. Oh, looking in the eyes, okay. Then I think okay, because looking in their eyes to me, -- I find out when I got here that for somebody to know if you're honest or something -- to tell me if you're honest about what you're saying, or if you are getting the message, you have to look at them straight in the eye. Are they the same age?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

BRANDI: If they are the same age, I don't think it means anything in the American country -- if they're the same age. But in my own culture or background, if you are talking to me and you are older than me, I don't look at you straight in the face, and that's a sign of respect.

It's like I do something wrong and you try to scold me, try to explain to me I don't like what you're doing. I don't look at you straight. If I do that, that means -- what is that word? I disrespect you for looking at you straight in the eye. We are the same age, there's nothing wrong in looking at somebody in the eye. It's just looking. They are looking.

INTERVIEWER: But in your [former] country, in Nigeria, you were taught what?

BRANDI: Nothing. Just looking at me, I'm just --

INTERVIEWER: No, but I mean if you were speaking with your father, would you look him in the eye or would you look away?

BRANDI: I look away.

INTERVIEWER: As respect to him?

BRANDI: Uh-huh.

INTERVIEWER: And would he be looking at you though?

BRANDI: Oh, he can be looking at me.

INTERVIEWER: And if you do look him in the eye does that mean that you're challenging him or you're --

BRANDI: It depends on the situation though. If I always look away when he talks to me. When I do something wrong and he is scolding me, I don't look at him straight in the face.

Crystal was also one of the few black research participants who described the need to present herself as a person of equal value and importance. This was more pronounced in the black male excerpts, however, it was pertinent as well for the black female soldiers.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, once again thinking about how you were taught eye contact at home, what kind of emphasis was placed on what you should or shouldn't do?

CRYSTAL (black enlisted): Well I know my dad always taught me that in order for me to get my point across, and let somebody [know] that I was serious about what I was saying, that they didn't intimidate me, that I was to look them straight in the eye when I'm holding a conversation. Whether it be a positive

conversation or a negative one, and tell them what I felt about something or a situation.

INTERVIEWER: Was that supposed to signify something different when you were speaking with a white or another black, or would there be any difference?

CRYSTAL: Well maybe at that particular time coming from my dad and his perspective on things, he may have thought that I should have been doing it with a white person because of where we lived, and where I was raised. I was raised in a predominantly white community, so he probably, at that time, I'm sure kind of coached me along for that reason. But as I've grown up and become my own person and developed, I know that you have to do that with everybody --

Note the distinction that Dixie made between listening and hearing. To listen implied connectivity between communicating parties. Black participants routinely expressed a strong need to have the complete confidence that both parties were truly listening to one another.

---

Table 16

*Culturally Acquired Eye Behavior*

---

I was taught to make eye contact when speaking and when spoken to:

White cohort: 13 / 16 (81.5 %)

Black cohort: 8 / 16 (50%)

I was taught not to make eye contact when speaking and when spoken to:

White cohort: 0 / 16 (0 %)

Black cohort: 2 (12.5%)

I was not taught one way or another:

White cohort: 3 / 16 (18.8 %)

Black cohort: 6 / 16 (37.5%)

---



### Tone of Voice

The data presented here reflects differentiating cultural appreciations for the manner in which tone was used in the communication process. Statements made, particularly by the black female participants, indicated that the ability to distinguish tone change in a conversation was crucial to the understanding, meaning and interpretation of the communication process. A notable finding was that tone and gestures are frequently mentioned as important variables to be included in evaluating the nature and intensity of meaning. With the primary exception of voice volume and specific gestures, white participants did not mention tone as being important.

ARLEEN (black enlisted): What body language would get me in trouble when I was little, that's what you're asking me?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, or even body language that you could use right now to display something that truly is culturally different than what a white person would do.

ARLEEN: Oh, okay. I mean it would be any little thing. We have – whatever, you know, to snap your finger, and walk away, or just a head movement, you know. It's just a – I have no idea where this stuff stems from because my mother has never rolled her neck. I have never seen my mother do that.

INTERVIEWER: What's rolling your neck supposed to mean?

ARLEEN: I don't – it's just this attitude that I think we have that we just picked up. I don't think it's anything that's genetic, you know. But my sister and I used to roll our neck and, you know, have a walk away, and my mother hates that.

INTERVIEWER: So you are saying, what you're doing with your hands that's --

BETH (black officer): Extremely important. Are you pointing? Is that finger in their face or are you touching them, and if your voice is loud -- you know, they used to have this thing, I don't if there's any such regulation anymore, by provoking someone. If you want to change the climate of the situation in just a matter of seconds, then you use the wrong tone and point your finger. And I think that's regardless of what the age. Either they're going to be shut off --I know what I do when that happens, I will say, and I don't care what the rank is, "Excuse me, but when you can calm down -- when you're not hollering and you can calm down, we can talk, but right now I need to leave." And I will do that rather than return the behavior, you know, because that really pushes my buttons as well. And I've seen it. I can tell you when it's happening. It stands out. If you see two African-Americans, and their voices are loud and their hands are moving, then someone needs to intervene and, you know, just make them de-escalate what's going on. Because I'm telling you when that kind of tone is present and those gestures are present, they're not hearing what you're saying. They're watching the hands and listening to this voice, this demanding, commanding kind of a voice

that's not allowing them to be an adult on the same level as you are. And there you go, it's out the window. It's just out the window. And that's it.

BETH: I think that African-American men can have this problem with tone, you know, and how you're speaking. How much bass is in your voice or how loud you're talking to them, especially talking loud. That can really cause a problem.

INTERVIEWER: Is that culturally acceptable or understood perhaps is a better way of asking that?

BETH: I think it's more culturally understood, not necessarily accepted. I think that they feel as though you're speaking to them -- than if you're screaming, then you're not speaking to them as an adult to and adult, but a man to a boy, and that's not acceptable.

INTERVIEWER: There's more friction with African-Americans?

BETH: I think that there may be if -- it depends on the tone. It's all in the tone. Nobody else hears the tone. It's tone. Tone is very important in the African-American culture. Tone -- not necessarily what you're saying but tone or octave, or however you want to put it, is important, and not just to African-American men but to African-American women as well.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, what I'm saying is, John has been saying, "George, you know, you failed to order the necessary supplies" or what have you.

BETH: But if I'm telling you that you failed -- there's a difference in the tone and that can make all the difference in the world, whether they're in that store

room one to one or out in the open among the people. That's when it can really get to be a problem.

INTERVIEWER: In other words, you are suggesting to me that African-Americans are more sensitive to body language than maybe I understand?

BETH: I think so. I really do.

INTERVIEWER: So in other words, I could quite innocently do something with my hands that means virtually nothing to me, but completely puts you off.

BETH: Uh-huh, especially if it goes with inflections in your voice, the tone of your voice. You know, your face can be very generic, you know, but if you're raising your voice at African-Americans, male or female -- like I say, your face can be very generic, but if you're what we call hollering and it may not -- you know, to you hollering is, you know, hollering across the room to get somebody's attention or whatever -- you're hollering. Your voice is raised beyond just your normal level of speech. So you're hollering as far as we're concerned. And if you have your hands going with it, then you're provoking a real fight there, you know. And someone who is not controlled enough to just walk away from it....

BETH: And then in the military setting it's very hard to walk from a superior because then you're being insubordinate, you know. But I think what happens, and why there are a lot of African-Americans in trouble on active duty, is walking away from a situation to prevent grabbing you or making the situation worse by what they say and what they do. So by the time they remove themselves, now

they're being insubordinate. I know a lot of people who have gotten in trouble just being insubordinate in that manner.

Interestingly absent in the data were comments that indicated a strong military influence on oculesic or kinesetic behaviors. It appeared, with the few exceptions noted in this research, that eye contact behaviors were well established from the time of family origin. Gestures such as rolling eyes, rolling shoulders, the strut, walking away, and failure to provide eye contact were generally managed on an individual basis but were not acceptable for any race or gender in the workplace. Soldiers were taught in officer and enlisted basic training the expectations of respect for authority, rank, gender and professional demeanor. For both officers and enlisted personnel, this presentation of the standards was sufficient to establish basic compliance.

The black male cohort echoed the comments made by the black females. Collectively, the expectation was that direct eye contact was to be given and received in a normal communication exchange. Collectively, the expectation was that direct eye contact was provided and received in a normal communication exchange. Failure in this expectation gave the connotation one party was not paying attention, was not listening, or lacked interest in the proceedings. Paying attention was not necessarily the same as listening. For the African-Americans, listening involved a relationship bonding for the moment between two

communicating individuals. The white respondents did not address this distinction.

Attending to direct eye contact with another person had added significance for the black male participants. What once may have been a culturally sanctioned expected norm (for African-Americans to look down and thus avoid eye contact with a black person of higher status or with whites as a sign of subordination) was no longer an acceptable cultural behavior. The exact opposite now applied, particularly for black males.

Terms used by the black males and females emphasizing direct eye contact included “look them dead in their eye,” “look him straight in the eyes,” and “look them in the face.” This behavior, especially with other men and more specifically with white men, was to “show them that I am equal to them.” Also included in these discussions were comments to the effect that failure to provide direct eye contact with another man gave the impression of weakness. Note particularly the use of the word “man.” From the text of the interviews, the term does not appear to mean a masculine or gender reference, rather it implies an adult with at least equal status to that of the white male. The importance and significance of eye contact was an important finding in this research, and one that significantly differs from most literature sources.

There was little evidence in this data to suggest that there were profound cultural differences in eye contact behavior norms between the black or white

study population groups. One characteristic, that of “rolling they eyes,” was described by both cultural groups as unacceptable behavior, and interpreted as disrespectful and inattention.

Mention was made to staring as differentiated from normal eye contact. No specific definition or description for staring was provided, however. If this were felt to occur, it compounded the communication effort between individuals. Additional comments were provided by both culture groups to emphasize that failure to maintain eye contact when being spoken to can denote the sender or receiver were either not telling the truth, or were guilty of something. This interpretation was valid for both culture cohorts.

The white males in the research study provided nearly identical eye contact to those of all other participants. Another specific issue is worth noting: Whether white individuals often misperceived the eye contact from black males. If a black male intended to convey equal status in being an adult male in terms of education, respect and human rights through eye contact behaviors, did that constitute an opportunity for white persons to misread the intent? The responses from the white males did not indicate that a misinterpretation was perceived. Charles, a white enlisted, more than the others, understood what he experienced from black males.

INTERVIEWER: Have you noticed any difference in eye contact between the races?

CHARLES: No, I don't think so. I had to think about that for a moment but I don't know that I've noticed a big difference.

INTERVIEWER: And if it's a black private?

CHARLES: Same difference. I don't think that the race would change anything that way.

INTERVIEWER: Think about this just for a second. You're on the receiving end of eye contact and it's a black male or a white male. Is there any difference in the intensity or your feeling as the person that's being looked at, in a general scenario?

CHARLES: No, I don't think that there would be any difference, whether it's a white or black person that's giving me the eye contact.

INTERVIEWER: Does one feel more intense than the other?

CHARLES: Maybe slightly the black, but only a little different than --

INTERVIEWER: In general, do you think that the white male is afraid of the black male?

CHARLES: I think in general, there may be that going on, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Is that an intentional thing by the blacks, or a misinterpretation by the whites?

CHARLES: I tend to think that's more -- a little bit of an intentional thing as far as blacks are concerned.

INTERVIEWER: And intent to intimidate or an intent to do something else?



CHARLES: I think, an intent to do something else.

INTERVIEWER: But it's received as intimidation or maybe -

CHARLES: Yeah, I think more received in terms of intensity. I don't know necessarily intimidation but I know that, or my perception of things is that, historically from slavery, to prior to civil rights, and post civil rights movement, it seems that black males -- blacks may be still trying to make their presence known a little bit more in a pronounced manner.

#### Request / Response Time

The notion of request and response time was included in the interview process to help validate and contrast the answers from the previous content (Vignette 4). Request / response add a specific dimension to the concept of time that was not covered in the first vignette examining punctuality and other potential cultural components of time. This new context expanded the notion of time but also created the opportunity to explore a differing perspective of cultural understanding, that being, potential gender, rank, and race factors that certain common words, used in the workplace, can trigger selective responses. Research participants were asked to respond to the fourth vignette questioning appropriate response time to the words "now," "ASAP," "immediately", and "STAT." In medical vernacular, the term STAT implies a life or limb emergency. ASAP, now

and immediately, as illustrated in the responses, take on several confusing meanings in response to a request in the workplace.

As with the previous interview content, the core discovery of the relationship expectations between the black and white participants continued to be illustrated. As the passages are read, observe carefully the wording used by most of the black participants. Although the response of a subordinate may be the incorrect choice, in each case, the manner in which the supervisor responds illustrates an aura of relationship preservation, of concerned, correctional instruction, and respect for the subordinate. The responses given by the white participants once again, reflect the notion of business above relationship, and only moderate elements of instructional concern and respect for the person.

BRANDI (black enlisted): Now means now. I have to go and come back ASAP so I don't go and --

INTERVIEWER: So ASAP and now is the same thing?

BRANDI: ASAP yes, it's the same thing -- now, to me.

CRYSTAL (black enlisted): Well I know what it was. My dad, you know, now meant, while I'm saying it to you, stand up and start moving in that direction so now means immediately.

INTERVIEWER: Sergeant, I need you to go now to, or if I said to you, Sergeant, I need you to go ASAP, what's the difference in those two statements? Again, tone is non-specific.

CRYSTAL: Tone non-specific. I think they both mean the same thing. I'm going to react to both of them the same way.

INTERVIEWER: If I said to you, in a very neutral tone, I need you to go now and do something, I need you to go ASAP and do something, or I need you to go immediately and do something, which one has the greater urgency?

DIXIE (black enlisted): Immediately.

INTERVIEWER: All right. Does ASAP and now mean the same thing?

DIXIE: Well I guess all three of them mean the same thing but if you say I need you to go immediately to the pharmacy that's letting me know that, you know, that I'm saying this is something serious that you really need.

INTERVIEWER: Does now mean the same thing to everybody?

DIXIE: I mean it should.

INTERVIEWER: Does now mean the same thing to everyone?

ARLEEN (black enlisted): I don't think so. Like I said, it looks like -- it sounds like he is one of those people that are just nonchalant or whatever. You know, I don't like this Army anyway so I'll do it when I get a chance or when I feel like it.

ANN (black officer): With a PFC you would think they're kind of being passive-aggressive with regards to okay, I'll go but, you know, I'll take my time even though she had said now. It's probably up for interpretation. It could be interpreted differently by different people and you might have to say, you know, I really do mean now, not ten minutes from now. Well see in our world, health

care world, I really don't think it does. I think now means now. It can be interpreted differently but I think it should mean now.

BETH (black officer): Now means now, this moment, immediately, stat.

INTERVIEWER: Does it mean the same thing to everybody?

BETH: I think so.

INTERVIEWER: In an African-American culture, away from work, does "now" mean "STAT"?

BETH: Uh-huh.

INTERVIEWER: Or would it take on a different connotation?

BETH: Now means now.

INTERVIEWER: So irrespective of black/white, anything else, male/female, now still means now, and the expectation should be understood by Private Thomas no matter who --

BETH: Or what color he is, it should be now. Now means now.

BETH: Female/male, now means now.

CAROLINE (black officer): I mean now, to me, that's like a STAT.

INTERVIEWER: So that raises the question here then, does now mean the same thing to everybody?

CAROLINE: Probably not. No, I guess it doesn't.

Caroline, an African-American female officer, stated that black males, whether officer or enlisted, were more likely to respond favorably to a white

female than to a black female supervisor. Her point was that it may have something to do with how or where they grew up. Other black female participants indicated that black females were difficult supervisors for a variety of reasons. One possibility is that it was not necessarily a characterization of the black males, rather the manner in which the black females projected their authority. This was an important finding. More is discussed in the subsequent section discussing supervisor preferences.

INTERVIEWER: I guess the question is, is Thomas more likely, as an African American male, to be more defiant with a female versus a male?

CAROLINE (black officer): Probably more defiant towards the female.

INTERVIEWER: And they're going to be more defiant to a black female or a white female?

CAROLINE: More defiant towards a black female.

INTERVIEWER: What caused you to say that?

CAROLINE: I just say they would rather listen to a white -- let a white person give them orders and accept them better than they would accept a black woman giving them orders.

INTERVIEWER: Is there a reason for that?

CAROLINE: I think it could come back from their culture, where they grew or how they grew up. They give white women teachers more respect than their black teachers for some reason. I'm not sure of the reasoning.

In discussing culturally diversity issues, Henderson (1994) and Thomas (1991) vividly describe the ways in which some individuals look for issues that reinforce their personal views and biases. Note how the use of the simple terms to express the degree of urgency are in turn used to determine how the participants view the responses of others, including signs of disrespect, insubordination, racial biases, and gender prejudices.

Ben's comments regarding the method and actions that accompany a reprimand of a subordinate illustrated the core variable in this research. Note particularly the second paragraph below. Ben would have called the subordinate back and explained the urgency of the matter. He would maintain a personal connectivity to the subordinate and also make the needed correction of the behavior. While attending to the business requirement, he would not sacrifice the relationship between himself and the subordinate. In this research, white supervisors responded to the business aspect at hand, without displaying a relationship component with subordinates.

BEN (black enlisted): Okay, maybe PFC Thomas had something else pressing, you know, before you go pick up the meds. So if she said, well, stat or whatever - - but he could have had something that -- okay, he goes in the opposite direction. Okay, this is why he could really come out the ward and he turns and goes to one of the rooms. Well maybe he has something going on in one of those rooms before he went to the pharmacy.

BEN: Oh, if I said “now,” and they walked in a different direction, I’m like, “Come here. Did you not hear me?” Basically I will call them back and explain to them I need this now. And basically get to the bottom of why -- you know, where are you going. The pharmacy is this way. Basically what I would do, I wouldn’t just let it ride.

Alex suggested that males respond better to males than to females, but also concluded that when a white supervisor uses terms such as “do this now.” it added the perception of a racial context. Several passages throughout this research have illustrated that black males expected to be approached by others, irrespective of race, rank or gender, as adult males. Words, tones, and volumes that distract from that approach became instantly problematic. Although this was not necessarily a new discovery in the realm of human relations, interracial communication, it is noteworthy that in this population, these issues continue.

Ben provided some rare insight into the dynamics between officer and enlisted relationships. He concluded that in general males had a more difficult time working for females than for males. He further concluded that it was compounded when the subordinate was considerably younger than a female supervisor. When the officer is a young black female, a young black subordinate might attempt to take advantage of the situation. Note that Ben indicated that black females would usually start out in a friendly relationship orientation with

subordinates until they were tested, in which case they assert their rank and authority.

INTERVIEWER: What about any variables such as she is white and he is black, or vice versa, or any other kind of combination?

BEN: In some cases I've seen where, once again, especially if the private was black and the young officer was white -- another thing is that he may want to use - - I've seen -- he may want to try to put into play, young 20-21 year old lieutenant to a 36-year-old private, and it depends on where he is from, he may form -- that there's a little bias. You know, he may have a problem with it also. Depends on where he is from, and how he was raised, and stuff like that.

INTERVIEWER: Or is it worse if it's a white female?

BEN: It's worse if it's a white female a lot of times.

INTERVIEWER: Is it worse yet if it's a young black female?

BEN: Chances are it won't be, because he can try to get the booty probably.

INTERVIEWER: Trying to get the booty?

BEN: Trying to get the booty.

INTERVIEWER: What's that?

BEN: Sleep with her. It all depends on the private. Like I said, because if it's a black female and this older private, he is black also, he will tend to be more tolerable. He'll try to get on the good side.



INTERVIEWER: The younger black is going to try the same thing if the young lieutenant is black?

BEN: Especially the younger private, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Is that going to make things pretty complicated for the young lieutenant?

BEN: Yes, because for one, a lot of the lieutenants that come out of school, they try to get people as people first and stuff, and a lot of the younger kids -- I call them kids now days. A lot of kids tend to take advantage of that. Because I've seen a lot of young lieutenants and stuff that work right now, they're very friendly and they remain that way until someone tries them. And so yes and no, it's a male thing, you know, a lot of times regardless how the female is. The male eventually he is going to try you. But are they going to cause tension for the young lieutenant? Yes and no. If she catches on to him or she gets the notion that he may want to get with her, and if she nips it in the bud, then, no it wouldn't become a problem, because she would let him know what she is saying.

Again, note the relationship approach that a white supervisor took with any subordinate. For females, there seemed to be perceived power struggles with male subordinates. The first confounding variable became the age and race of the subordinate. The second confounding variable was the total inconsistency in the expression and interpretation of the words defining the urgency that a request demands. The following citations illustrate both relationship expectations, and

the confusion created in the communication process. Although the passages are not amenable to defining cultural differences in the total population, they do serve to illustrate a unique, albeit comical organizational practice with the potential for serious negative interpersonal consequences.

The white participants tended to be quick to interpret meaning as disrespect or insubordination when immediate action was not taken on a request. They did not differentiate based on the race or gender of the subordinate.

DIANE (white enlisted): My interpretation is there's either a lack of understanding or a lack of respect between the PFC and the charge nurse.

DIANE: So she either didn't make it clear to the PFC that -- I mean you said she said now. You know, don't dawdle, this has to get up here, da-da-da. Or that PFC just doesn't respect her, whether it's as a person, or as a nurse, or as the charge to react to her request for now.

INTERVIEWER: If you and I were working together on a nursing unit, and I said to you -- and I was the charge nurse and you were helping me out. And I said, I need you to go now to get this from the pharmacy, or I said to you, I need you to go ASAP to get this, what would be the difference in those two?

DIANE: There's no difference.

INTERVIEWER: No difference?

DIANE: No.

DIANE: There's not too many people who actually breakdown ASAP to be as soon as possible, which means, when I get around to it. Everybody takes ASAP as you should take stat, you know, and that's because everybody uses ASAP instead of using stat. So there's a chance that using the word ASAP might make them react quicker than using the word "now" but that's an individual call. To me it means the same thing.

AMY (white officer): If I was the one who said "Now" and I meant now, I guess I would have to say "Excuse me, you're going the wrong way and I need you to go a little quicker" or "Are you brand new, and do you need help or can you, do you know what you're doing?" That's not the rudeness, it's the "I need the item now."

INTERVIEWER: How many interpretations of "now" are possible?

AMY: Oh, there's lots. I think stat, now, immediately are very much over-used.

AMY: "Now" could mean anytime in the next ten minutes, anytime this shift,

INTERVIEWER: To whom?

AMY: To the person hearing it or the person speaking it.

Amy made a very good point as to the "now" in question, the supervisor's or the subordinate's.

AMY (white officer): But we're doing this "now" so this "now" takes over their "now." It's the same but there could be, I don't know how many different tiny little meanings.

The white participants suggested that their tone of voice reflected the urgency they intended to convey. The black subordinates indicated that the cue they expected was generally not conveyed by whites.

INTERVIEWER: Now -- the term "now."

CHARLES (white enlisted): Immediately, without delay, expeditiously. Now to me means let's make things happen at this point in time.

INTERVIEWER: Would it imply that I really don't care what you're doing, that anything you're doing is of less importance than what I'm telling you to do?

CHARLES: I think that the way that the word now is inflected would make that difference. If the charge nurse in the scenario, I need you to do this NOW, and there's emphasis on that term, yes. The emphasis would carry the connotation that I know you're busy but this has to happen. Drop everything and move out, draw fire. As opposed to I need you to go now and get the medications from the pharmacy, which suggests I would -- the connotation is that I'd like to see this happen and I kind of expect to see it happen, but if you've got something you need to finish up, finish it up and then do what I'm asking you to do.

INTERVIEWER: Which is it, go now, and I don't care what you're doing, or it's okay to finish up what you're doing and then go?

CHARLES: If there's not a big emphasis on the word now, then it could be finish up what you've got, and then move out and get things accomplished.

INTERVIEWER: So the word now is not necessarily the issue but the tone and the appreciation for that tone.

CHARLES: Right. Not the word so much as the inflection and the way that the word is presented.

INTERVIEWER: How in the world would you have the ability to read that from the individual?

CHARLES: I tend to think that you've have to work with life experience and experience with the people you're working with. Certainly if somebody -- and that would offer some problems. If the person told me, I need you to go now and get such and such, but they didn't put the inflection, the importance on that statement that would convey to me, "Oh, I need to drop everything and move out," but that's what they had in their mind, then the two of us -- if it caused a conflict, then the two of us would need to get together after that to make sure that we got on the same sheet of music in the future. But I know, you know, Captain so and so, when he says now and he says it big and loud, he means now. When Captain so and so says now and she says it loud, she means now. And when Lieutenant so and so says now, softly, she still means right away because she is just a soft-spoken person. You'd have to kind of learn with the person you're with, and if there's a problem you've got to work it out.

### Supervisor / Subordinate Preferences

The structure of the interview vignettes lead naturally into a discussion of preferences in supervisor and subordinate relationships. Military personnel are rarely given the choice regarding the race or gender of their superiors, however, the intent of this questionings was to determine if cultural preference choices and avoidances would emerge. Table 17 summarizes the selected transcribed material samples. And a few excerpts are cited below.

Table 17

#### Supervisor/Subordinate Preferences

PREFERENCE	White Male	White Female	Black Male	Black Female	Male Only	Female Only	No Preference
White Male Officer	1						3
White Male Enlisted	1				1		2
Black Male Officer			2		1		1
Black Male Enlisted	1		1		1		1
White Female Officer		1			1	2	1
White Female Enlisted				1	2	1	
Black Female Officer			2				2
Black Female Enlisted			1	1	1		1
<b>AVOIDANCE</b>							
White Male Officer				2			2
White Male Enlisted			2	1			1
Black Male Officer		3	1				1
Black Male Enlisted		1		2		1	1
White Female Officer			1	2			1
White Female Enlisted			1	2		1	
Black Female Officer	2					1	2
Black Female Enlisted		1	1	1		1	

ARLEEN (black enlisted): Just for a number of reasons. One would be -- I hate saying things. One would be because I'd love her to be in that leadership position as a black female. Two, I would look up to her and strive to be maybe like her as a black female. Maybe she would be a little more adequate to help me become a leader as far as to have more time for me, in assisting me with becoming a leader or striving for her position or a position like hers. So I guess that would be pretty much why I would want to work for a black female.

CHRISTINE (white enlisted): I've had five head nurses since I've been up there and my favorite one was a black female because she cared about everybody.

INTERVIEWER: Which would you choose to work for if you could do that from now on?

BRANDI (black enlisted): I would prefer to choose a black because at least I have some (unintelligible) and they would listen to me. If it would be a black, sometimes they would listen.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so you would choose a black what, male or female?

BRANDI: I would choose a male.

INTERVIEWER: If you could choose the person that you would work for consistently from now on, would that person be?

DELORES (Black officer): It would be a black male.

ARTHUR (black enlisted): Black male, he'd probably relate to some of the things that if I had issues or something was going on, he would approach me in a

way that (unintelligible). I guess it would be more just commonality. You know, we have a lot of things maybe in common, maybe not. You know, that all depends on how you feel for that person in the beginning but you know, if we were going for percentage wise, I would say most likely he would be someone I could relate to.

BECKY (white officer): For me, there are a lot of differences in how females react with each other and to me it would be interesting to explore more of the female type of relationships that you get in the military (unintelligible). I think we're so indoctrinated into the male/female, that there aren't that many skin color issues for the male/female, but I think there are some issues with the black female.

INTERVIEWER: Such as?

BECKY: For me, as a boss, I've had to work really hard and I love doing it, working with black females that it's okay for them to be assertive. Not aggressive, not aggressive, but it's okay to be assertive, and helping them learn how to do that in a professional way where they don't come off as a shrew, where they don't come across as a bitch. And even with white females, I spend a lot of my time working in that particular area on how to be assertive, how to be articulate, how to confront people and not do that subtle sabotage that you see a lot of in the workplace, when teaching people to confront someone, particularly female to female, in a way where you don't have that rollover into the sabotage



days or weeks later. Where they can express their displeasure at something and be able to go have a beer about it and not hang onto it.

INTERVIEWER: Just females in general or black females?

BECKY: Females in general and particularly -- and with black females, teaching them -- and it doesn't matter whether they're enlisted or officers, in teaching them that it's okay to be assertive and learning the difference between being a shrew, a bitch, and being professionally assertive.

ANGELA (white enlisted): Actually personally there is no preference for me. I've worked just as well for a white female as I have a black female, a white male as well as I have a black male. Probably if I had to choose I would say a female and it really wouldn't matter race.

AMY (white officer): I work better with male bosses, I think, in that I'm able to say "that idea stinks" and that boss will say "Okay." Well, I was raised, that if I'm going to have a criticism, I'm going to have a better solution or thought, you don't just come out and say something stinks. It's, maybe this is not going to work because there's this, this, and this. Males, I have found, are more receptive to that language more than females. With the females, I'm going to have an awful lot of energy spent on how I couch what it is I'm going say, and still be able to not fear reprisal of some nature. Males, you're able to say "What were you thinking?"

INTERVIEWER: But would you rather they wanted to work for you?

DIXIE: Honestly it does not matter. I mean somebody is going to work for me. It ain't got to be you. It ain't got to be, you know, whoever. I really don't care. The bottom line is things need to get done and they're going to get done regardless of who works for me. And I really don't care if you don't want to work for me or not because you're not going to make or break me. You know, there's nothing that you can do to help me, you know, progress in life so whether you want to work for me or not, I really don't care because somebody is going to work for me and the job's going to get done so --

ARTHUR (black enlisted): And with a black female it would be more trying to prove something, more of the hard nose in a way and I think would stay on top of the black males. And then the analogy with the black female it would be more or less that, I'll buy the car and [the black female will] try to hit me with it. You know, I'm trying to run away, you know, and move and dodge and I just want to be left alone, but [the black female will] just continually [be] trying to follow me. "What are you doing? Beep, beep, turn on your headlights. Get in the car I want to talk to you." And it's like, I don't want to talk to you.

CHUCK: The females -- I wouldn't want to work for a black female because, you know, like I said, they've got something to prove and they're going to run the floor and be all strict and whatever. But she is in charge of like this floor because the last Colonel that we had on this floor was a black female and she didn't know

what the hell was going. I mean I hadn't been in the Nurse Corps that long but she didn't have a clue what was going on.

The majority of black female officers had only had white female officers as examples and role models. To date, there have been three female African-American Nurse Corps officers that have reached the rank of general officer. There are increasing numbers of very qualified and competent senior black female officers in this military corps. From statements made in the interviews, this was often a culturally unfamiliar situation, and many have not had adequate role models to emulate. The majority of the mentors for black female have been white females. White females prefer the business only, task orientation approach rather than a more personal relationship (connectivity) practice more common in the African-American norm. It may be that it is more difficult for black females to switch from traditional relationship driven norms to a business (task) only approach. Reorienting relationship expectations and practices to that of business only may be perceived as the only way to maintain the position.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this chapter is to present the analysis of the relevant findings from chapter four. Three cultural behavioral norm differences discovered in the data are presented in the context of Blumer's (1969) theory of symbolic interactionism:

1. Members of society, individually and collectively, respond on the basis of meanings that things represent to them.

2. The process of interacting aids in establishing a common meaning. Meaning for an individual emanates through his or her actions and interactions with other individuals.

3. The process of understanding meaning is both assigned and modified through interpretations that can change, be redefined, and realigned.

The analyses in this context provide answers to the original research questions:

1. Are there identifiable culturally acquired behavioral norm differences between and among African-American men and women, and among and between European-American men and women in U.S. military medical personnel population?

2. If cultural normative behavior differences are identified, do they serve as potential sources for communication-initiated discord between race, gender, or rank group members?

3. If cultural behavior norm differences are identified, do those differences among military personnel vary from those stated in current literature pertaining to cultural diversity and cultural specific behaviors?

Content analysis of the interview transcripts revealed that the white participants adhered to the “low context” relationship approach described by Hall (1976). In the interviews, white participants fundamentally described their workplace interaction relationship expectation norms as being impersonal, matter of fact, task oriented, and race and gender neutral. Conversely, content from the black participant interviews illustrated that the interaction relationship expectation norms described by Hall (1976) as “high context,” was more routine, generally describing a greater degree of personal concern and attention for fellow workers. Therefore, the black participants attended to interpersonal issues before task performance. O’Hair, Friedrich, Wieman and Wieman (1997) add definitions of “high language” and “low language” to make a distinction in intercultural communication analysis concerning the degree of language formality and informality used within cultural, contextual and gender conditions (p. 112).

Judgment is not made in this dissertation about whether one cultural relationship norm is superior to another, in this or any other setting, but to present

the cultural behavioral norm alternative choices illustrated by the majority of members from each cultural cohort in this research. Culturally acquired behavioral variations in the workplace often contribute to communication difficulties as a result of different norm expectations of each cultural group.

Overwhelmingly, the white participants, inclusive of rank and gender, responded to the vignette scenarios with an orientation toward getting the job completed. The activity to be accomplished took priority over any interpersonal aspects of reaching that goal. To a white supervisor, a subordinate was either constructively engaged in getting the job done or they were not. White supervisors were more likely to refer to an individual they deemed as not engaged in getting the job accomplished as “insubordinate, having no work ethic, a slacker, disrespectful” or by other unfavorable descriptive terms. In reference to active duty personnel, whites overwhelmingly stated that race was not a factor in their judgment of a situation. Dalton (1995) describes this as “acting as if people are raceless” (p. 48). From the perspective of both white and black research participants, however, race and gender were significant factors in describing concerns regarding civilian personnel

Conversely, the African-American participants presented strikingly different responses to the scenarios with regard to the relationship practice employed. There is no doubt that accomplishment of the task was the ultimate goal for black participants to the same degree as for the white participants.

However, interview responses given by the black cohort participants reflected meeting job completion objectives being accomplished better through personal relationship efforts. The black participants were more inclined than white participants to appreciate a subordinate's behavior as being influenced by his or her culture, or to be willing listen to a subordinate's perspective on an issue.

A very close analysis of black male responses, more so than black female responses, illustrates that virtually each thought, speech act or action was carefully and consciously weighed prior to execution; that is weighed for the impact it may have in communicating with co-workers. Again from an interpersonal perspective, actions and responses were consciously and methodically adjusted by black males in relation to the race, gender and, often, the rank of the other party in any communication interaction. Black males expressed the highest need for appropriate cultural responsiveness in work-related interactions.

The core variables in this research are the *relationship expectation norms* exhibited from a cultural perspective by the black and white research participants. In each of the major themes explored, the white participants described the need for action, not interaction in a relationship context. Conversely, the black participants expressed a strong need to show and to receive communication in an interpersonal context rather than an action context. Culturally acquired

behavioral norm expectations between the black and white participant cohorts were clearly reflected in the context of the interview data.

The analysis of the research findings are presented in the context of five major themes reflected in the vignettes content: (1) time and punctuality, (2) expressiveness, (3) oculesics and kinesics, (4) request / response time, and (5) supervisor / subordinate relationship preferences.

#### Time and Punctuality

The analysis of interview data referring to time and punctuality provided multiple areas of cultural variability between the sixteen white and sixteen black participants. The variances found in this study were:

1. Punctuality
2. Cognizance of cultural variations
3. Significance of Sundays
4. Need to prove
5. CP (colored people's) time
6. Professional time
7. Private / social time
8. Intracultural communication
9. Military influence on punctuality
10. Civilian employees
11. Mutual respect



## 12. Expressiveness

### Punctuality

For the white participants, the meaning of time and the importance of punctuality was absolute, no exceptions. The expected cultural norm was to be, at a minimum, on time, preferably early, but never late. This custom was applied universally in their daily activities including social, family and work environments. Deviations from this convention required correction and often disciplinary action in the workplace setting. Harsh judgments pertaining to competency and character were given to offenders of time and punctuality customs without regard for race or gender. Mutual respect for the other person's time, not necessarily the person, was the expected norm; however, a white supervisor was more likely than a black subordinate to grant some degree of leniency to a white supervisor, rationalizing that "they are busy." The willingness to grant this exception was however, limited.

### Cognizance of Cultural Variations

The majority of white participants responded obliviously to diverse cultural meaning of time and punctuality. They interacted with all others, oblivious to the notion that there might be cultural norm variations in time perception. Kockman (1981) stated that cultural differences are ignored or never recognized by whites due to the assumption that both cultural groups are functioning under a same language, same cultural (white American) conventions;

and in the population of this study, the same military uniform. Without consciously realizing it, whites do not perceive these assumptions as white group standards, but rather, simply as the American culture. Dalton (1995) said: “They [blacks] feel forever on probation and under enormous pressure to mimic the behavior and attitudes of their white colleagues” (p. 225). In this research project, sixty-nine percent of the black cohort verbalized a need to prove their personal competence or equality to others, particularly whites; whereas nineteen percent of the white cohort expressed this need of themselves. The need to prove oneself is also discussed as a separate context item below.

#### Significance of Sundays

As stated by most white participants, religion, or church-related Sunday activities, had no specific cultural meaning for them. Interestingly, Ann, a black officer, illustrated her perspective on the subject when she described a white church service as starting and ending in a precise fashion each week. She described it as a “get there, get it done, and get to the next activity” orientation, without diminishing the worship experience itself.

Sundays in the black community are culturally meaningful not only for the expression of religious beliefs and values but is time dedicated to share with immediate and extended family members. Sixty-two percent of the black males and thirty-eight percent of the black female participants elaborated on the need for

family time and the cultural need for closeness that was shared with others, especially on Sundays as part of a larger community of religious worshippers.

The white participants rarely discussed the significance of Sundays as being culturally important. Although Sundays within family, and social context are important to whites, in reference to the data presented, it pales in comparison to the significance assigned to these things by the black study participants. In the white research population religion is an individual and not a collectivistic experience. This finding further reinforces the notion of different core variable pertaining to relationship expectations. Sunday was an important day for whites as well, but for different reasons.

The stated importance of Sundays to the black participants illustrated a cultural entity that was not known or understood by their white counterparts. The black military members fully understood their individual responsibilities in shift work and weekend rotation sharing in the hospital setting. What was not understood by the white group was the real sacrifice that was involved when a black member was required to work extra on a Sunday that has significantly more value, from a cultural perspective, than for a white member.

#### Need to Prove

For the white participants, there were fewer specific comments that made reference in needing to prove anything through time or punctuality efforts. Their approach was: Be there, or suffer the consequences—that simple. No need for

additional communication strategies or gamesmanship. No requirement to be annoyed with any other cultural perspective on the issue. After all, “we’re Americans, and military,” was their attitude.

Sixty-nine percent of the black cohort, compared with nineteen percent of whites, made reference to their need “to prove.” The need to prove implicitly meant that the black participants had to prove to their white counterparts that they were as capable, competent and equal to them in terms of work responsibilities. Most often, this statement occurred in the context of being on time. There was an implicit need to demonstrate to all in the work setting, and to whites in social settings, that blacks were capable of being punctual, and not to be perceived as “slackers,” or individuals too lazy or unwilling to hold up their end of a project.

It is interesting to note the character of these comments made by black participants. On the surface it seems as if black participants were referring to an individual and personal need to prove that they are up to the task itself and in a punctual manner. On closer inspection, there was an added component that suggests that they believed their personal behavior to reflect their entire culture. In other words, if they failed individually, it perfectly substantiated the stereotype of blacks as being “slovenly.”

Dalton (1995) and Henderson (1999) strongly conclude that the effect of the institution of slavery in the United States continues to influence cultural behavior and emotional norms. This partially answers the question why blacks

described a greater need to prove their competence, equality and personal value. A re-inspection of the interview data provides an interesting insight. Two of sixteen white participants referred to the terms “slave” or “slavery.” A white male used the term once when discussing African-American history. A white female used slavery three times when describing an unintended derogatory use of the terms with a subordinate. Conversely, the terms “slave” or “slavery” were used a total of eighteen times; five times by two black females and thirteen times by five black males.

From an acquired cultural norm perspective, the white participants did not have an appreciation for the continued oppressive influence of the historical reality slavery had on the black members with whom they worked. The oppressive nature of slavery appears to have some influence on the communication process and cultural variance in relationship expectations within the study population.

#### CP (Colored People’s) Time

The cultural norms with respect to time and punctuality by the African-American participants illustrate significant variability from that of the white research population responses. All members of the black cohort described a phenomenon known as CP (colored people’s) time. By definition, CP time is an African-American cultural norm that gives little meaning to time or punctuality. In a CP time environment, time is not of the essence. Critical findings in the

research indicate that most African-Americans understand CP time. The acceptability of the norm, however, varied considerably within the black cohort. Divided equally, eight members stated that CP time was culturally acceptable behavior during private or social time but not for military work time. The other half disagreed as to the acceptability of the cultural norm. Most black male and black female research participants agreed that CP time is never appropriate in the military work environment.

The black females essentially applied it to themselves as a gender issue, and accepted it, as “that’s the way we are.” Black males, however, agreed generally that the black females’ description of themselves was indeed accurate. The black males were not inclined to include themselves in the acceptance category of the phenomenon.

#### *Professional Time and Private / Social Time*

In symbolic interactionism terms, black male and female participants individually and collectively understood the historical meaning and significance of CP time. The process of interacting within the black culture itself establishes a common meaning. Interactions, however, require considerable amounts of adjusting and communication to be comfortable with and within the norm. The process of understanding the meaning of CP time by black military participants requires that time be divided into social / private and work times. Quite

interestingly, time was referenced by blacks as work time and specifically not as “white time.”

#### Intracultural Communication

During social / private time, interpersonal allowances are made and understood if someone arrives on CP time. This is especially true for larger social functions such as religious services, weddings or funerals, and parties. For the most part, no one is negatively sanctioned for arriving on CP time. “We should have known,” is a common reaction. Interpersonal communication between two black persons often require them to define whether or not an appointment is absolute clock time, or CP time for social engagements. In order to assure arrival for a function close to the intended start time, the black participants stated that they would often tell other persons to arrive one to two hours earlier than the intended start time to assure “punctuality.” The two black female participants from Africa stated that the closest to a time definition that could be expected in their country of origin would be “Oh, you [will] see me.”

#### Military Influence on Punctuality

In a military work setting, time is redefined and realigned by all African-American participants to conform to clock time. The black males indicated they required little additional conscious effort to be on time, or early for work related activities. Military conditioning and sanctions assured compliance. The black females agree. However, it was more complex for them. The philosophical

convergence of time and punctuality is well established in the military milieu. Neither blacks nor whites described the military as a white world environment, only as a mission-oriented organization having its own requirements and regulations. All military personnel, irrespective of cultural heritage, gender or rank, described the military culture as overriding the cultural nuances of any particular social or ethnic group. There was unanimous agreement that military requirements are universally and organizationally applicable to all medical employees.

#### Civilian Employees

Civilian employees, specifically African-American employees, and more specifically black civilian females, consistently violated the regulations for punctuality at work. Black and white supervisors agreed that the lack of adherence to the military conventions of time and punctuality by civilian employees was very problematic. Although not exclusive to black females, the participants in the study suggested the probability of cultural issues with respect to civilian workers in the military environment.

#### Mutual Respect

A common theme in the data was the insistence on mutual respect in reference to punctuality. Officers and enlisted members expressed their personal requirement to be punctual, and for subordinates to be punctual. Apologies were expected for failures in punctuality in all cases. The unanimous expectation



expressed across race, gender and rank variables was that officers should apologize for being late to any subordinate; and subordinates should apologize to their supervisor in the event punctuality conventions were breeched. The consistent, significant cultural difference was that the black participants expressed a mutual respect “for the other person,” while the white participants expressed a mutual respect for “the other person’s time.”

#### Expressiveness

Interview data with reference to expressiveness was noted to illustrate cultural variability between black and white participant cohorts. The categories were: (1) voice volume, (2) voice tone, (3) confrontational preferences, (4) post-incident grudges, (5) ritualistic insults - - the dozens, and (6) the American cultural dichotomy.

The symbolic interpretations of acceptable expressive norms varied considerably between the two cultural groups in this study. Explicit expressive issues with a common understanding across both culture study groups excluded the use of profanity, racial language, and character belittling of a subordinate by any supervisor. The expressive issue is to address a subordinate’s behavior exclusively.

Consistent in the interview data, a supervisor was allowed to express displeasure regarding the behavior of a subordinate. Whites did not, under any circumstances, allow a retort from a lesser ranking individual irrespective of race

or gender. The black participants stated that respectful disagreement with a black supervisor was acceptable in a one-on-one situation, and only after permission had been requested and accepted by the supervisor. This latter aspect was not specifically a formalized arrangement and certain symbolic interactions between dissenting individuals implied permission to proceed.

### Voice Volume

There was a general consensus that black males generally presented issues to individual subordinates in a louder and more animated way than white males or female supervisors. Black females, while generally deemed more expressive than whites, were divided in their replies as to the acceptability and necessity for increased volume in a disciplinary encounter. Black males expressed a correlation in volume to the number of times a particular subordinate required discipline, with volume increasing as the number of incidents increased.

Seen as a distinct cultural difference, both cultural groups did not view the issue to be of great concern. However, the preference of the majority of the white participants was to maintain a calm demeanor and give the appearance of being non-confrontational during disciplinary events or potential conflict. Most whites stated that the primary objective was to accomplish the job, and they were more concerned about potential gender issues than racial ones.

Statements provided by the black participants strongly suggest that disciplinary confrontations were directed toward correcting the person who

displayed improper behavior, rather than focusing on the behavior alone. Whites' relationship practice indicated a "behavior only" orientation.

### Voice Tone

It appears in the analysis of this research that voice tones provided the most significant symbolic interaction miscues in the normal work-related communication between the groups. The interpretation of tone inflections appeared to be uncharted, yet problematic.

### Confrontational Preferences

Acceptable expressiveness parameters for all groups indicate that:

1. There was less need for caution within cultural norm parameters when both parties were the same gender or the same race.
2. White males were slightly more cautious in terms of gender than with race.
3. White females were not cautious with black or white females and expressed some caution in terms of black and white males, although controlled expressive behavior was preferred.
4. Black males exerted little caution with other black males, but were more exacting with expressive limits when they interacted with white males, and with both white and black females.
5. Black females generally were not inclined to adjust expressiveness based on the race or gender of the listener.

6. Tone of voice was believed to be a critical point by the black participants, and it was rarely mentioned by the white participants. Black males and females stated that they intently listened for specific voice tones rather than volume and words alone in order to interpret the symbolic meanings during a confrontation, disagreement or normal conversation. Voice tone to the African-Americans generally indicated the intensity of a situation, urgency or of condescension by whites or other blacks.

#### Ritualistic Insults – Playing the Dozens

I interjected the concept of “the dozens” or ritualistic insults into the interview process in an attempt to explore the range of symbolic cultural perspective in interaction expressiveness. I wanted to discover several aspects of this phenomenon. To do so, I asked the participants if it was acceptable behavior. The whites did not recognize the dozens by this term. Nor did they have any cultural understanding of it in any form. When describing “cracking” or “snapping” - more common terms to describe the dozens in a milder form, most whites agreed that there were often playful, non-threatening jokes among blacks in short verbal volleys “all the time.” The nature of the military environment dictates that racial, gender and personal issues are to be avoided.

In the black cohort, eighty-seven percent knew the cultural and symbolic natures of the practice of ritualistic insults. This group had specific experiences regarding the dozens. Black males played it in its most extreme form. It is

intended as a verbal art form carried out predominately between black males.

Whites may attempt to play, but normally they do not know what they are doing, and inevitably and inadvertently they cross a line that results in verbal or physical disaster. Ben stated it best when he described the dozens as a creative, comic insult exchange, however, “if you can’t run with the big dogs, you better stay under the porch.”

The dozens by any name is not accepted at work for any reason.

Admittedly, however, joking started by a black male may be a little more intense in the work-place, and is sometimes misinterpreted as being hateful or threatening. “Momma jokes” are an anathema at work, but they may be acceptable in private social situations. The end result of this culturally specific endeavor has the potential for a unique and creative expressive enjoyment for the players and observers, or may result in one party or other becoming angry, with a physical altercation resulting. As an after thought, it is worth noting that rap music has its roots in the dozens.

The second concern pertaining to ritualistic insults centers on the reaction of whites in terms of the perceived limits of expressiveness, either the volume, tone or words experienced by white observers. Several black females indicated that their white coworkers frequently misinterpreted and routinely overreacted to what between black coworkers, is a culturally acceptable, non-threatening, expressive form of behavior. This is significant in understanding cultural norm

behaviors between racial groups. The most descriptive example in this research is provided by Becky, a white officer. She described encountering five African-American coworkers engaged in a discussion. Her response to the encounter: “I never heard people talk so hateful to one another in my entire life, and in fact, [I] had to sit them down and write them up for conduct unbecoming a non-commissioned officer. Blacks are very loud with other blacks, and they’re very—they go right for the jugular. I mean, they don’t even try to be nice.” The analytical point is this: whites frequently define symbolic meaning by purely white standards, especially when defining culturally allowable expressiveness. Consequently, they severely miscue when witnessing what otherwise, are culturally acceptable symbolic interactions.

#### Post-incident Grudges

Surprisingly, in this population of military professionals the behavior of holding grudges emerged. It appears that the females of both groups held more grudges than the males. Most males stated that once an issue was dealt with and resolved, the fractured relationship between two males, irrespective of cultural heritage, was mainly mended, often within hours. If the supervisor of a male was female, the males did not express holding a grudge toward the female following a disciplinary action. Not so with females. Several males specifically stated that females with whom they interacted tend to harbor grudges following any confrontation with another female without regard to race or rank. Several females

vividly described their ability to hold grudges and often plan opportunities to retaliate. Both gender cohorts agreed this behavior could be dysfunctional in the workplace. They also attribute the phenomenon, with a straight face, as “human nature” rather than as an unprofessional concern for other people. The consensus of the female being: “it has always been that way.”

### Oculesics and Kinesics Expectations

Four themes emerged during the content analyses of responses to Vignette

3. These themes are: (1) attention, listening and hearing, (2) respect as a man, (3) annoying gestures, and (4) walking away. I will discuss each of them briefly.

#### Attention, Listening and Hearing

Surprisingly, the expected variability between the two distinct culture cohorts did not exist in this study population with respect to eye behavior norms. Several literature sources, including Henderson (1994), Fine (1995), Samovar Porter and Stefani (1998), Stewart and Bennett (1991), describe eye contact behaviors as having definite rules when eye contact is expected, as a sign of respect. With the exceptions of two participants, Brandi and Delores, both were recently from the continent of Africa, eye behavior expectations for the participants were described identically. A non-staring, respectful eye contact between communicating individuals was expected. The most common, stated eye behavior interpretations were:

1. That appropriate attention was being provided by both parties

2. The person doing the speaking had the interpretation that the other person was indeed listening and hearing what was said, and

3. Proper respect was mutually exchanged.

Brandi and Delores had been taught to avoid eye contact as a matter of respect for a person of higher status. However, both stated that they had altered their behavior to accommodate the new, acceptable cultural expectation. Most participants described eye contact behaviors as part of who they were prior to joining active duty service. This distinction could be made between traditional and non-traditional blacks, with almost all blacks behaving in nontraditional black ways in formal organizations.

In most organizations, including the military, direct eye contact was expected between communicating individuals. Few significant interpretations surfaced in the interviews when eye contact conventions were not experienced. During the interview process I anticipated hearing interpretations of dishonesty, deceitfulness, lack of trust and disrespect, which did not occur. Conversely, there was no consistency from symbolic interactional, cultural, gender or rank perspectives regarding the meaning of non-compliant eye contact behaviors.

#### Respect as a Man

A notably important disclosure communicated by several black male participants was the expectation of being accepted as “a man” during a conversation. The implications described by Ben, Alex and Derrick specifically



are not interpreted in this analysis as a psychological, gender-related manhood association; rather it is mentioned here in a social context, i.e., black males wanting to be respected and treated as adult males. Being viewed “as a man” is analytically interpreted to mean explicitly not as a child to be talked down to, but talked to as an adult male and afforded the same respect, dignity and appreciation as any white male adult, or any white or black adult female. The use of the term “man” communicated an essentially deeper meaning than “masculine identity” that is described in most literature sources.

In a post interview discussion, after the recorder was stopped, Alex made a troubling statement in which he said, “Most white men talk to me like a black man, not as a man.” Ben, a black enlisted service member, when describing selected encounters with senior ranking white males in the work environment, made similar comments during his interview, stating, “I am a grown ass man, number one. Speak to me accordingly.”

Further analysis of these and related transcripts illustrates that the black males scanned the communication (oculesics and kinesetics) horizon from eye contact to tone and related gestures in order to ascertain if they were being accepted as an adult, as males; as being strong, not weak; as being educated, not ignorant; and at least equal and deserving of respect as any other human. Nothing in the transcripts indicated that the white participants expressed this need, nor would understand the intense, personal implications of this quest for a black male.

Notably, Ann and Beth referenced the black male concern for acceptance in their interviews, but they were not as descriptive as the black males.

#### Annoying Gestures

Both cultural cohorts described isolated, annoying gestures. These included “the head roll, the neck roll, the strut, and the hand in front of your face.” Mostly descriptive of black female behaviors by all participants, the frequency of the behaviors in this work environment was minimal.

#### Walking Away

In a separate category of expressive gestures, walking away requires discussion. Three black males and two black females discussed the desire, and at times, a personal need to walk away from a heated encounter in order to avoid unwanted consequences. Most blacks in the study, probably fully understood, and were sensitive relationally to a request for temporary distance in a potentially explosive situation. Descriptively, one of two possibilities exists. Kenesic and verbal cues would be provided granting the need to become as verbally, yet respectfully, expressive as deemed necessary, or one party would request and be granted unconditionally, without negative consequences, permission to interject time and space into the situation. Stated another way, it is generally culturally acceptable for a black subordinate to simply walk away for a time from a black supervisor without being punished. The cultural symbolic need for either of these choices was fully understood by most of the blacks in this study.

However, little of the behavior just described had any meaning, context or acceptability for the whites in the study. Any animated, volume excessive, tone intense, expressive behaviors presented by anyone, regardless of race, gender or rank, would likely be considered *out of control* and probably *personally threatening* to a white supervisor. Any behavior resembling walking away would be interpreted as insubordination. From the text of these interviews, there would appear to be a significant cultural impasse. To illustrate the point, the following text is a small segment of an interview with Derrick, a black officer.

INTERVIEWER: And so you have to alter that because that just doesn't seem to fit the white person's culture.

DERRICK: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: Now let's suppose that I'm your supervisor, as a white person, and you have a very decent understanding that I understand the black culture, and that that's allowable. Would you do it?

DERRICK: No.

INTERVIEWER: You're not going to trust me?

DERRICK: No, not at all.

#### Request / Response Time

The scenario for the fourth vignette was designed to test four issues:

1. As an expansion of the theme of time and punctuality from the first vignette. I wanted to discover whether or not variation due to cultural factors

might be stated relating to allowable and expected response times to normal words used in everyday requests to add an element of urgency to the need.

2. To determine if certain words normally applied to convey time urgency are perceived in communication as projecting a racial, rather than a time, connotation.

3. To determine if common words used to convey a degree of urgency, such as *now*, *ASAP (as soon as possible)*, *immediately*, and *STAT* are communicated consistently and have an agreed upon hierarchical ordered response parameter in the work environment.

4. To probe the possibility and lead into a discussion regarding gender and race issues in supervisor preferences, and the participants were asked which supervisors would avoid if they had a choice.

#### Cultural Variation

In answering my first question, there were no discernable, culturally specific responses to the content presented in the vignette. I actually expected that there would not be. However, when applied to other culture groups in future efforts there might be different findings.

#### Racial Connotations

The analysis of data for the second question seeking to discover if the words used in the vignette were interpreted to carry a racial intent rather than an urgency intent, revealed that it did occur. Arleen, a black enlisted soldier, stated

that she believed it occurred often. A white supervisor would use select words, such as “now, ASAP, immediately, etc.” in a request to a black person but not to a white person. Several white participants agreed that without consciously being aware of the fact, they did use words such as *now*, *ASAP*, *immediately* in a request more frequently with black subordinates, especially civilians.

This important point vividly illustrates several key issues. First, Henderson (1994), Thomas (1991) and others argue that all of us unconsciously look for those situations to reinforce our personal biases about others. Although this one issue about request / response time was not the central focus of the research effort, the point is made in this study population that occurrences of bias reinforcement existed.

Secondly, in applying the study core variable of relationship expectation norms, the respondents documented where these practices varied ethnically and were problematic in the work environment. Simple words spoken to convey a degree of urgency to a request, often produce messages conveying that subordinates were “insubordinate and lazy,” on one hand or “racist, unreasonable, uncaring and insensitive” on the other.

Dan and Chester, African-American supervisors, separately provided further illustration of this in the data. In both cases, as they conveyed the intent of urgency in a request for action. If their subordinates failed to respond accordingly, they called them back, and helped them to understand the intent of

the request on an interpersonal relationship level. This illustrates a relationship expectation norm with the subordinate, irrespective of race, gender or rank, which helps the subordinate understand the request, and leaves less room for racial and other miscues.

Chuck and Bryan, white supervisors, described their impersonal relationship expectation and demonstrated their cultural norm of demanding that the job be completed without consideration of other matters.

#### Hierarchical Interpretation of Words Used to Express Urgency

The third objective was to establish an understanding of a hierarchal relationship for terms used to communicate degrees of urgency. The analysis of the data shows that in this population sample none of the words such as *now*, *ASAP*, and *immediately* conveyed a consistent meaning across the range of participants. Analyzing this segment of data provided more comic relief than it did answers.

#### Gender and Race Working Relationships

Fourth, the issues of working relationships between races and genders were analyzed. Specific information pertaining to supervisor preference choices and avoidances is covered in the next topic. However, there were slight trends noted to suggest that the males had a more difficult time working for females than vice versa. The nature of the military population, with its strictly enforced rank structure, provides necessary behavior controls. In other study populations this

may result in significantly different findings. It is discussed here simply to suggest that gender relations currently are, and are likely to be an increasing factor in the covariant analysis of working relationships across culture groups.

#### Preference for Supervisors

The research participants were asked at the conclusion of the interview to offer their opinions regarding the choices they would make, if given the opportunity to select by race and gender the persons they would most likely want to have as their supervisors. Conversely, they were asked to select the persons, by race and gender, they would choose to avoid if provided the opportunity. It is necessary to point out that in this study population the diversity of supervisors based on gender and ethnic identity was perhaps greater than in most segments of our society. The responses given by study participants cannot be interpreted to reflect more than this population sample. The following is a numerical summary of the responses and excerpts from the participants by categorical features.

Total research participant population (32): 16 (50%) research participants preferred to have a male supervisor; 6 (19%) preferred to have a female supervisor; and 10 (31%) had no specific gender preference.

Total population (32): 4 (13%) participants preferred to have a white supervisor; 8 (25%) a black supervisor; and 20 (62%) expressed no specific racial preference.

Total population (32): 8 (25%) participants wished to avoid male supervisors; 15 (47%) wished to avoid female supervisors; and 9 (28%) had no gender they wanted to avoid.

Total population (32): 7 (22%) participants wished to avoid white supervisors, 16 (50%) wished to avoid black supervisors; and 9 (28%) had no racial preference to avoid.

Collectively, there were sixteen males: 9 (56%) participants in the study preferred to work for males; 0 (0%) of males preferred to work for females; and 7 (44%) of males expressed no specific preference.

Collectively, there were sixteen males: 3 (19%) males preferred not to work for males; 10 (62%) males preferred not to work for females; and 3 (19%) males expressed no avoidance preferences.

Collectively, there were sixteen females: 7 (44%) females in the study preferred to work for males; 6 (38%) females preferred to work for females; and 3 (18%) females expressed no specific preference.

Collectively there were sixteen females: 5 (32%) females in the study preferred to not work for males; 8 (50%) preferred not to work for females; and 3 (18%) females expressed no avoidance preferences.

While the sample size is far too small to draw any definite generalizable conclusions, it is interesting to note the gender factors taken from the interviews in this population. Noteworthy were the individuals in the study who stated



specifically that they would definitely not want to work for a black female (33%). White males, females, and black males concurred. Perhaps, as with all underrepresented persons, black females believe they have something to prove and they are overly tough or “bossy.” In fairness, it should be noted that several participants said that they had experienced very good black female supervisors; but when they were bad, they were intensely bad.

### The American Cultural Dichotomy

American culture is described in most literatures as having moderately homogenous patterns of behavior. Stewart and Bennet (1991) describe most Americans as being monolingual and therefore place great emphasis on the words used or not used to convey a message. This implies that Americans are, as a group, low context (individualistic) in their style of communication. When specific cultures are described in the works of Hall (1976), Schein (1992), Triandis (1994), Gudykunst and Kim (1997), Samovar, Porter and Stefani (1998), the term high context (collectivistic) is more frequently used to define African-Americans. The point to be made is this: the American culture is not a homogenous mix of subcultures. The cultural heritages of the white and black members in this study illustrate that cultural behavioral norms did indeed influence the communication and allowable expressive expectations in both study cohorts. As stated previously, the American military system is founded on white American cultural norms. Most white military members believe that they have

little reason or motivation to consider cultural variation possibilities within their work environment. Findings in this study indicate that variances existed in the small sample population and that the African-American cohorts, rather than the white cohorts, were required to adjust their cultural norms in order to succeed in the military environment.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

Most literature sources treat the American culture as if it is a homogenous entity comprised of people from a single culture of origin, hence failing despicably, to recognize inherent problems this approach creates (Stewart & Bennett, 1991). Individuals acquire behavior norms from their unique culture of origin that will continue to be the norms they follow in the communities, and the society in which they live. Each culture possesses a rich variety of ways to address, and assign significance to life events, and methods of communicating those meanings.

We learn from early life experiences the meanings assigned to concepts such as to time and punctuality, to the symbolic nature of expressiveness, to oculesic and kinesetic behaviors, to appropriate response conditions, and to supervisor-subordinate relations. In a single culture environment, opportunities for cultural misunderstanding are less likely to occur than when two or more cultural groups converge in social, diplomatic and work environments. Failure to recognize potential differences in culturally acquired normative behaviors results in costly mistakes, diminished efficiencies, personal frustration and anger (Henderson, 1994; Fine, 1995; Moskos & Butler, 1996; Dana, 1999).

After years of researching cultural diversity texts, articles and training initiatives, I felt strongly that an important element had been overlooked. I formulated this research proposal in order to address, what I felt was an inadequately developed concept in human relations understanding between black and white members in the U.S. military. The intent was to fill a perceptual void between what is stated in current diversity literatures and real life issues in a work setting. A specific military population was selected as the primary data source because of the long institutional history of racial integration of black and white service members in the work environment.

The research focused on identifying a basic social process or core variable that fundamentally illustrate cultural norm expectation differences in two cohorts. In order to discover this variable, if it existed, thirty-two individual focus interviews were conducted with an equal number of cultural, gender and rank member representation. Each session was audiotape recorded and transcribed verbatim, for coding, analysis and theory construction.

### Conclusions

The research questions in the study were:

1. Are there identifiable culturally acquired behavioral norm differences between and among African-American men and women, and among and between European-American men and women in U.S. military medical personnel population?

2. If cultural normative behavior differences are identified, do they serve as potential sources for communication-initiated discord between race, gender, or rank group members?

3. If cultural behavior norm differences are identified, do cultural norm patterns in military personnel vary from those stated in current cultural diversity literature?

Following a lengthy literature review, interview and data collection, coding and analysis, the research questions were addressed. The findings for each question raised in chapter one was as follows.

#### Question 1

Are there identifiable culturally acquired behavioral norm differences between and among African-American men and women, and among and between European-American men and women in U.S. military medical personnel population?

In this study population of military healthcare professionals, the norm expectation for workplace interpersonal relationship practices emerged as the central behavioral difference between participants from a black cultural heritage and participants from a white cultural heritage. A careful analysis of the transcript data revealed that the black participants routinely addressed all relationship issues from an interpersonal, rather than activity orientation. In every instance, the black participants attempted to interact with members of both

cultures in a collectivistic manner as described by Hall (1976); Hofstede (1997); Schneider and Barsoux (1997). Conversely, the white participants addressed work-related issues from the perspective of the activities and processes that were done to meet the requirements of the job, adopting an individualistic orientation to interpersonal relationship behavior in the workplace (Hall, 1976; Hofstede, 1997; Schneider & Barsoux, 1997). Ultimately, mission related goals of black and white participants were the same. Variations in culturally expected relationship norms were discovered in the following areas:

*Punctuality.* White participants collectively described time as being linear and absolute, by the clock. Their culture norm expectation was that punctuality is tied directly to the relationship between individuals and that time is vitally important. The whites did not view punctuality or time in any other cultural context. The black participants collectively described time in two aspects: work or professional time, and social and private time. At work, in the military setting, the black members on active duty adhered to the expectation of clock imposed time. In private, the cultural expected norm in most relationship encounters, especially for black females, changed to CP (Colored People's) time. All of the black participants recognized the cultural meaning of CP time, but not all of them believed it was personally acceptable. African-American members display a greater degree of understanding and tolerability for punctuality breeches than the white cohort.

*Sunday.* The white participants rarely described Sunday as having a specific cultural significance. Fifty percent of the black participants described Sundays as a culturally specific day in which relationships and interaction (collectivity) between group members were expected and much needed norms.

*Need to Prove Competency, Equality and Value.* Eighteen percent of the white cohort discussed a need to illustrate competency to their supervisors. Sixty-nine percent of the black respondents described their individual and collective need to continually provide proof of their competency, value to the organization, and equality with others, implicitly their white supervisors. Eighty-one percent of the black respondents agreed that military supervisors “keep score” on punctuality and other behavioral competency issues.

*Expressiveness.* Most of the white participants choose minimal expressiveness as their culturally expected norm in inter-relationships in the workplace. Whites would frequently hesitate to confront black males or black females, but less hesitant to confront other whites. Black participants, collectivistic in relationship practices with fellow workers, were much less inclined to exercise caution in getting issues out in the open and dealing with them. However, most black males expressed hesitancy in confronting black female supervisors.

*Oculesics and Kinesetics.* There was little mention in the data to suggest culturally expected norms that would impact relationships between coworkers from either cultural group.

*Tone.* The white participants rarely mentioned tone of voice in describing their own cultural norms. This is consistent with communication theory describe by Hall (1976), Hofstede (1997), O'Hair Friedrich, Wiemann & Wiemann (1997), Schneider and Barsoux (1997). In describing expressive behaviors among blacks, tone was mentioned by whites; however, it was either misinterpreted or considered a cultural nuance of African-Americans. The white respondents preferred to stay relatively tone neutral.

Many African-American participants stated that tone in a person's voice is a strong signal to determine the symbolic meaning of any interaction between communicating parties of any culture. Ekman, Friesen and Scherer (1985) conducted three studies to judge speech content, voice quality, face and body behaviors to rate the importance of each in judging behavior. Content under varying conditions was shown to judges for evaluation. The judges were predominately white American born females. The results of the studies indicated that content was more significant in interpretation of meaning than voice quality, even in deception induced experimental conditions. According to the researchers, "Voice quality may have so little weight in judging others because people are unfamiliar with it, hearing voice cues only as they are embedded in the works



spoken. Paradoxically the issue of voice quality and tone, it seems that judges ignore the voice as they do the body, just when it could be a valuable source of leakage information” (p. 61). The issue of voice quality, including tone in this study population, indicates a strong cultural divide on this issue.

## Question 2

If cultural normative behavior differences are identified, do they serve as potential sources for communication-initiated discord between race, gender, or rank group members?

First, the white study participants had a single orientation toward the meaning of time. The black participants gave time several meanings that can be applied to different situations. The issue was mitigated by the influence of the overriding military cultural requirements for management of time and punctuality; however, it remains a culturally related issue with respect to African-American civilian personnel.

Second, the issue of having to work on a Sunday is problematic. There was a wide difference in the meaning of this day in cultural contexts. Not having an understanding of this significance can cause cross-cultural conflicts.

Third, the African-American participants described a need “to prove” themselves in the workplace. This theme of having to prove is ambiguous from a problem perspective. None of the white participants expressed a need to prove

their competency. The black members described their need for validation of their personal value and worth to the organization in general and to their white supervisors in particular. This was expressed multiple times during the interview process, with references to slavery as the basis of the need to prove and the need to be respected as an equal. Such validation is problematic because few whites are aware of the historical impact of slavery on blacks. Thus black military members carry the burden to achieve equality in an organization whose white members largely think it already exists.

Fourth, the data explicitly illustrates a wide variability, and lack of understanding, transculturally, regarding expressive behaviors. While the white and black participants agreed that African-Americans have a tendency to be more expressive in context, boundaries are ill defined and conflict is inevitable due to miscues in expressive intent.

Fifth, most participants had different understandings of voice tone and inflection. The black participants relied heavily on alterations in tone and inflection to interpret meaning in communication. The white participants had a limited understanding of voice tone meaning for blacks, and they frequently failed to communicate or interpret their intent to blacks. Such communication miscues all too often resulted in erroneous message transmission and interpretation between the two groups.

Sixth, the white participants did not perceive a need to understand the nuances of other cultures. Specifically, they illustrated a limited, if any, understanding of the interpersonal needs of black members in their work units. This finding was primarily discovered in the perception of black males and some black females who described being “talked down to,” and discussions of masculinity issues by the black male participants.

Seventh, maintaining grudges was identified as a gender, rather than racial or culture, gridlock. The predominant perception in this study is that females, officer and enlisted, black and white, hold personal grudges at work and that this causes a wide range of organizational difficulties.

### Question 3

If cultural behavior norm differences are identified, do these cultural norm patterns in military personnel vary from those stated in current cultural diversity literature?

First, the literature indicates an incongruent description of eye contact behaviors between white and black individuals engaged in the communication process. Several literature sources, previously discussed, state that expected eye contact behaviors vary between members of the two races according to the accepted norms during speaking and listening. In this study population, the expected norm was that a respectful, direct eye contact be maintained throughout

the conversation between two parties, without regard to race, gender, or rank.

When addressed specifically, the participants agreed that such behavior was taught and learned prior to entering the military service.

Second, none of the literature sources provided the rich, descriptive, cultural perceptions of the primary content addressed in this research. Whereas topics such as male masculinity importance, cultural differences in time perception, and cultural aspects of expressive behaviors were mentioned in several sources, the participants in this qualitative study gave life and depth to the topics of discussion. Although this research does not offer contradictory findings to published literature, it does suggest areas for future consideration and a methodology for future discovery.

#### Limitations

Conclusions derived from this research are limited by several methodological factors. The fact that the participants were drawn exclusively from a single facility and the sample size is small limits generalizability to the greater military or civilian population. The participant sample represents an equal distribution of volunteers from both white American and black American culture groups. Within each of these participant groupings it is unrealistic to declare homogeneity of culture representation. Factors such as religious affiliation, early childhood geographic factors and multiple additional variables influence the cultural identity of the individuals in this study. Those who volunteered represent

a convenience sample of military members. There is minor variability in the ages of participants in both cohorts. There is a wide range of variability in the meaning of time for active duty individuals, but it is consistent between the two cohorts. There is a consistency in the educational experiences of group members and it exemplifies comparable education levels between ethnic, rank and gender subgroups.

A significant limitation in this study was the use of a priori themes for the vignettes. In the truest form of grounded theory research, these themes would have emerged from the interviews as cultural areas of concern to participants, if they were indeed significant. However, in order to conduct the research with this population, the institutional review board of the military facility preferred to know the areas of exploration prior to the study approval. It is worth noting that at the conclusion of each interview the participants were asked, "If you had been conducting these interviews, what subjects or content (hot buttons) would you have included that I did not mention?" In every instance, the reply was that all the major areas were addressed and the respondents could not add anything in the way of missed content.

The third methodological limitation was the absence of measures to determine the degree to which the findings are problematic or have a significant cultural impact on workplace communication. Clearly, none of the issues that emerged are in a critical stage requiring immediate action to prevent workplace

chaos. This population may represent one of the best intercultural communication examples in the nation. The study focused on finding areas that may be addressed in future research and educational endeavors to make it a model example of workplace relationships.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

This was a qualitative study to discover the existence of culturally acquired norms that impact workplace communication using vignettes suggesting areas where norms may vary between target population groups. A follow on study, using the same general population pool in another qualitative study, could ask the question, “If this organization was comprised of only white Americans or black Americans, how would communication and relationships be different?” This would be conducive for focus groups or individual interviews.

For comparative purposes, the original study should be replicated in a non-military environment, tailoring the vignette questions to eliminate military specific content. This might validate or dispute the findings in this study and allow comparative illustrations of the mitigating effect of the cross-cultural communication variable the military environment. Future iterations of this study should be expanded to ascertain the acquired cultural norm expectations of other groups, i.e. Hispanic, Asian, Korean, and American Indian, etc.

Further research is needed to better understand the depth and meanings of specific content gleaned from this study. That is, the African-American study

participants provided interview content that strongly suggests that they were not made to feel equal to their white counterparts. References to their need to prove to others that they were competent, valuable and equal suggest feelings of inferiority. There appears to be a strong relationship between feeling oppressed and the frequency in which the institution of slavery was mentioned by black participants. A further example of this was described, especially by several black males, as needing to be seen and respected “as a man” by their white colleagues and supervisors. These issues are likely to continue to be a source of cultural and communication misunderstanding if they are not methodically studied in future research endeavors, particularly in the military environment.

Much can be learned in a study of voice tone in the communication process. Whites pay little attention to this in normal workplace communication, while African-American co-workers rely on it routinely. Research in this area is vital to future communication endeavors in the study across cultures. Multiple qualitative studies are needed to refine theoretical perspectives and qualitative assessment tools should be developed to quantify the existence and degree to which cultural norm variations are problematic in multiple workplace settings.

This study has to potential to launch many additional research efforts in the discovery of cultural understanding. As awkward as it may sound, I think we need additional studies to determine *that* we don’t know, so we can learn *what* we don’t know about intercultural relations and communications.

Specifically, replication of this study should occur in a non-military hospital environment to validate the findings and to explore the military as a variable in hospital race relation endeavors. The study methodology should remain the same, varying the vignette contents to reflect non-military scenario membership. However, if altered, the methodology could be the use of focus groups rather than individual interviews.

The black participants in this research made numerous statements indicating that “voice tones” in communication are not well understood. This subject alone merits additional research.

Finally, I believe the military environment can provide a splendid exploratory arena for cross-cultural understanding such as when, where and how individuals are perceived to “talk down to” or to deny full rights of acceptance to coworkers. Research thus far has not fully described this area of inquiry in order to resolve these continuing communication or miscommunication problems.

#### Final Thoughts

Organizational leadership is uniquely complex and challenging in multicultural environments. The needs to establish trust and to develop correct understandings of cultural norm expectations are essential in workplace settings. The need persists even in those organizations like the U.S. military that pride themselves as being models for intercultural acceptance and mutual working relationships. In fact our survival in the global community requires cross-cultural



behaviors that facilitate meaning for inter-group cooperation and the cultural influences that drive them are evident.

The regulatory nature of equal opportunity (EO) and equal employment opportunity (EEO) initiatives, while vitally important in human relation efforts, leave a large gap between being civil in the workplace and the processes implicit in appreciating and valuing differing cultural norms, values and behaviors that affect day-to-day workplace relationships.

The U.S. armed forces primarily serve as the military defense systems of our Nation. Within these organizations, some of America's finest men and women serve in a complex and culturally rich diverse environment. As many of the research participants in this study indicated, the military has a long history of initiating social changes that are later duplicated in civilian organizations. From the first racial integration of black and white service personnel in the Truman Administration to present day worldwide, transnational alliances, America's military is at the forefront of multicultural cooperation, camaraderie and friendship. Even so, much more can be done, especially to improve our own intercultural relations.

The intent of this research was to explore gaps in research areas to prompt additional discussions, training and better knowledge of cultural differences that cause strife in the workplace. The research participants brilliantly illustrated differences in terms of their core emotional issues. My role as the researcher was

to attempt to ask the right questions and allow respondents to provide the dialogue and possible solutions for some of the complex communication miscues that occurred daily in their work environments. It is my firm conviction that there are kernels of knowledge in my findings, which through further study, have the possibility of bridging a few gaps between the relationship expectations of blacks and whites specifically and between other combinations of majority-group and minority-group persons in general.

## REFERENCES

- Ajzen, I. (1988). *Attitudes, personality, and behavior*. Chicago: The Dorsey Press.
- Allport, G.W. (1979). *The nature of prejudice 25th anniversary edition*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Bar-Tal, D. (1990). *Group belief: a conception for analyzing group structure, processes, and behavior*. New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Beebe, S.A. & Masterson, J.T. (1997). *Communicating in small groups: principles & practices*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.
- Benzies, K.M. & Allen, M.N. (2001). Symbolic interactionism as a theoretical perspective for multiple method research, *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 33(4), pp.541-547.
- Blank, R. & Slipp, S. (1994). *Voices of diversity: real people talk about problems and solutions in a workplace where everyone is not alike*. New York: American Management Association.
- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism perspective and method*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Bucher, R.D. (2000). *Diversity consciousness: opening our minds to people, cultures, and opportunities*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc..
- Chenitz, W.C. & Swanson, J.M. (1986). *From practice to grounded theory: qualitative research in nursing*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Cox, T. Jr. (1994). *Cultural diversity in organizations: theory, research and practice*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koechler Publishers.
- Dalton, H.L. (1995). *Racial healing: confronting the fear between blacks and whites*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.
- Dana, D. (1999). *Managing differences: how to build better relationships at work and home*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Prairie Village, KS: MTI International, Inc.

Dana, D. (2001). *Conflict resolution*. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc..

Dansby, M.R. & Landis, D. (1996). Intercultural training in the military. In D. Landis and R.S. Bhagat (Eds.), *Handbook of intercultural training*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). (pp. 303-215). Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications, Inc.

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.). (1998). *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc..

Ekman, P. & Friesen, W., (1969). The repertoire of non-verbal behavior: categories, origins, usage, and coding. In Kirsten Malmkjaer (Ed). *The linguistics encyclopedia* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (p.283). New York: Routledge

Ekman, P. & Friesen, W., & Scherer, K. (1985). What you say and how you say it: the contribution of speech content and voice quality to judgements of others, *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 48 (1), pp. 54-62.

Fine, M.G. (1995). *Building successful multicultural organizations; challenges and opportunities*. Westport, CT: Quorum Books.

Giger, J. N. & Davidhizar, R.E. (1995). *Transcultural nursing: assessment and intervention* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). St. Louis, MO: Mosby-Year Book, Inc.

Glaser, B.G. & Strauss, A.L. (1967). *Discovery of grounded theory*. Hawthorn, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.

Glaser, B.G. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity: advances in the methodology of grounded theory*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Gudykunst, W.B. & Kim, Y.Y. *Communicating with strangers: an approach to intercultural communication*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc..

Hall, E.T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. New York: Anchor Books; Doubleday Dell Publishing Group.

Hall, E.T. (1981). *The silent language*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group.

Harris, P.R. & Moran, R.T. (1996). *Managing cultural differences: leadership strategies for a new world of business*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Houston, TX.: Gulf Publishing Company.

Henderson, G. (1975). *Human relations in the military: problems and programs*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

Henderson, G. (1994). *Cultural diversity in the workplace; issues and strategies*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Henderson, G. (1996). *Human relations issues in management*. Westport, CT: Quorum Books.

Henderson, G. (1999). *Our souls to keep: black/white relations in america*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, Inc.

Hofstede, G. (1997). *Cultures and organizations: software of the mind*. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Kim, Y.Y. (1997). *The behavior-context interface in interethnic communication*. In James Owen (Ed.) *Context and communication behavior* (pp. 261-291). Reno, NV: Context Press.

Kluckhohn, F.R. (1964). Dominant and variant value orientations. In C. Kluckhohn and H.A. Murray (Eds.). *Personality in nature, society, and culture* (2nd ed.) (pp. 342-357). New York: Alfred A Knopf, Inc.

Kochman, T. (1981). *Black and white styles in conflict*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Labov, W. (1972). *Language in the inner city: studies in the black english vernacular*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Lawrence, G.H. & Kane, T.D. (1995). Military service and racial attitudes of white veterans. *Armed Forces & Society: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 22, 235-256.

Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc..

- Lustig, M.W. & Koestger, J. (1996). *Intercultural competence: interpersonal communication across cultures*. (2nd Ed.). New York: Harper Collins College Publishers.
- Martin, G. & Pear, J. (1996). *Behavior modification: what it is and how to do it*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc..
- Moskos, C.C. & Butler, J.S. (1996). *All that we can be: black leadership and racial integration the army way*. New York: HarperCollins College Publishers, Inc.
- Newlin, K., Knafl, K. & Melkus, G.D. (2002). African-american spirituality: a concept analysis, *Advances in Nursing Science*. 25 (2), pp.57-70.
- O'Hair, D., Friedrich, G.W., Wiemann, J.M., & Wiemann, M.O. (1997). *Competent communication*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc..
- Pearce, W.B. (1994). *Interpersonal communication: making social worlds*. New York: HarperCollins College Publishers, Inc.
- Polit, D.F. & Hungler, B.P. (1999). *Nursing research; principles and methods*. (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Purnell, L. (1996). Workforce cultural diversity, *Surgical Services Management*. 2, pp. 26-30.
- Rokeach, M. (1972). *Beliefs, attitudes, and values: a theory of organization and change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers.
- Samovar, L.A., Porter, R.E. and Stefani, L.A. (1998) *Communicating between cultures*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Sandelowski, M. (1986). The problem of rigor in qualitative research. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 8(3), 27-37.
- Schein, E.H. (1992). *Organizational culture and leadership*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc. Publishers.
- Schneider, S. & Barsoux, J. (1997). *Managing across cultures*. London: Prentice Hall Europe.

Shipler, D.K. (1997). *A country of strangers: blacks and whites in america*. New York: Random House, Inc.

Stewart, E.C. & Bennett, M.J. (1991). *American cultural patterns: a cultural perspective*. (Revised Edition). Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, Inc.

Stouffer, S.A., Suchman, E.A., DeVinney, L.C., Star, S.A., & Williams, R.M., Jr. (1949). *The American soldier: adjustment during army life, volume 1*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Strauss, A.L., & Corbin, J.M. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Thomas, R.R. (1991). *Beyond race and gender: unleashing the power of your total work force by managing diversity*. New York: American Management Association.

Thomas, R.R. (1996). *Redefining diversity*. New York: American Management Association.

Ting-Tommey, S. (1999). *Communicating across cultures*. New York: Guilford Publications, Inc.

Yukl, G. (1994). *Leadership in organizations*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

## APPENDIX A

### PARTICIPANT INVITATION LETTER

You are being invited to participate in a research study to support a doctoral dissertation entitled, "Do Culturally Acquired Behavior Norms Impact Workplace Communication?"

You are asked to participate because you are an active duty member from either African-American or European-American heritage. The purpose of this research is to determine if behavior norm expectations differ in this population group based upon cultural heritage.

If you are willing to participate in this research study please call COL (Ret) Nussbaum at your earliest convenience at (301) 421-4293 to schedule an interview. At this meeting you will first be asked to read and sign an informed consent document. Then, you will be given a demographic data sheet that will take less than two minutes to complete. After this the collaborating investigator, George F. Nussbaum, a doctoral candidate from the University of Oklahoma, will interview you. In an open discussion with the investigator you will be presented with several work place vignettes and asked to provide comments that reflect your perspective about the items presented. The interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes of off duty time and will be conducted at a time that is convenient for you.

The interview will be audio tape recorded for later transcription, review, and analysis. You will be offered the opportunity to review the transcript if you wish. Your identity will not appear in any transcript or published data. No one except for the interviewer will know your identity. The audiotapes will be maintained exclusively by COL (Ret) Nussbaum and will be destroyed three years after the completion of the study.

The expected results of this study will be to identify areas not currently considered for human relations training. Your participation in this research may lead to a better understanding of work place communication and provide the fundamental knowledge about cultural norms not previously studied in this or any other population group.

Thank you immensely for your consideration to participate in this research.



George Nussbaum, Colonel (R)  
Collaborating Investigator  
Ph.D. Candidate  
University of Oklahoma

## APPENDIX B

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

1. Title: Informed Consent Form. This research project is being conducted under the auspices of The University of Oklahoma - - Norman Campus. This form documents that you have given your willing consent to be a participant in this research project.

2. Introduction. Thank you for considering to participate in this research project. The results of this study will be used in the preparation of a doctoral dissertation at the University of Oklahoma, and depending on the results, may be published. The title of this study: *Do Culturally Acquired Behavior Norms Impact Workplace Communication?* The principal investigator is George F. Nussbaum, a doctoral candidate from the University of Oklahoma program of interdisciplinary studies with a focus on organizational leadership. His faculty sponsor is Dr. George Henderson, Department of Human Relations.

3. Description of the Study.

You are being asked to be in this research study because you are an Active Duty Army member assigned to Walter Reed Army Medical Center and your family of origin is either African-American (Black) or European-American (White, non Hispanic). Your participation is entirely voluntary. Refusal to participate will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

The purpose of the study is to examine and describe the communication perceptions among and between individuals belonging to a military medical work environment in order to gain an understanding of individually acquired cultural norms. A qualitative research approach with focused interviews will be used as the method for data collection. The value of the research will be to promote an increased understanding of the differences in norm expectations in the communication process between military members from differing cultural backgrounds.

No other studies have examined specific, common culturally acquired behaviors that we learned from home and how they may effect the communication process in our everyday work environment.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to complete a demographic data sheet and be interviewed by COL (Retired) George Nussbaum. The interviewer will describe five or more work related scenarios and ask you to give your opinion about common norms associated with these everyday occurrences. The interviews will be audio taped

for later transcription, review and analysis. You have the option to allow the interview to be audio tape recorded or not at the end of this consent form. Your identity and audio recordings will be protected to the best of our ability.

You will be allowed to review the content of the transcript to check it for accuracy, to make any corrections or clarifications, or to add any thoughts that you feel are necessary. The transcript will be mailed to you. Follow up participant contact will be made by phone or in person at Walter Reed Army Medical Center to validate accuracy and corrections, if any, of the transcribed interview.

You will be part of this study for up to one month. Your active participation will consist of the interview, which will take about 60 to 90 minutes of off duty time and will be conducted at a time that is convenient for you and possibly a follow-up contact that will take about 15 minutes of your time.

There will be up to 32 people taking part in this study.

#### 4. Potential Risks and Benefits of Participation.

A. Risks. There are no expected risks or discomforts from being in this study. It is possible however, that emotionally charged issues may be discussed. You have complete choice regarding the discussion of any and all issues.

B. Benefits. You will not benefit from being in this study. Subject will not be paid for their participation in this study. Neither the investigator nor any other party involved in the research will receive monetary remuneration for this project.

#### 5. Subject's Awareness.

A. Conditions of Participation. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Refusal to participate does not invoke any penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled. The subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

B. Confidentiality. The investigator, COL (Retired) George Nussbaum will keep records in a private locked file located in Maryland. These records may be looked at by people from the Walter Reed Department of Clinical Investigation, the Walter Reed Human Use Committee, the Army Clinical Investigation Regulatory Office (CIRO) and other government agencies as part of their duties. These duties include making sure that

research subjects are protected. Confidentiality of your records will be protected to the extent possible under existing regulations and laws. Your name will not appear in any published paper or presentation related to this study.

To protect your confidentiality, you will be assigned an identification number that is not your social security number, this will be used to label the audiotape and transcription. Your name will not be used during the interview process and identifying information will not be included in the transcript of the interviews. The audiotape and transcript will be kept by COL (Retired) George Nussbaum in a locked file. The audiotape and transcript will be destroyed 3 years after completion of the study.

C. Compensation for injury. Risk of injury is not foreseen. No compensation for injury is available.

D. Contacts for Questions about Research and/or Subjects Rights. Questions concerning research itself may be referred to George F. Nussbaum, telephone (301) 421-4293, email gnussbaum@earthlink.net Questions regarding your rights as a research participant should be directed to the Office of Research Administration University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus at (405) 325-4757 or email irb@ou.edu

AUDIO TAPING OF STUDY ACTIVITIES: To assist with accurate recording of participant responses, interviews may be recorded via audio tape. You have the right to refuse to allow such taping without penalty. Please select one of the following options.

- ☐ I agree to be audio taped for purposes of this research.  
☐ I do not agree to be audio taped.

6. Signature. *I hereby agree to participate in the above-described research. I understand my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX C

## PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The following information is requested as part of the data analysis portion of the research. This information will be kept separate from the context of your interview and you will not be identified in any way with the information that you provide during the interview process. Thank you very much again for your cooperation and support for this research study.

**Identification code** \_\_\_\_\_ **Gender:** Male \_\_\_ Female \_\_\_

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Your military pay grade:** E- \_\_\_\_\_ O- \_\_\_\_\_

**Racial Identity:**     White / Euro-American \_\_\_\_\_  
                               Black / African-American \_\_\_\_\_

**How many years have you have been on Active duty?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Indicate your highest level of formal civilian education:**

Less than high school \_\_\_ Some high school \_\_\_ Equivalency credit for H.S. \_\_\_

High school graduate \_\_\_ Some college \_\_\_ College graduate \_\_\_

Some graduate school \_\_\_ Advanced graduate degree \_\_\_

**Place of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Size of community in which you spent most of your life:**

Rural Small town or village (Under 500 population) \_\_\_\_\_

Town ( 500- 25,000 population) \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb or small city ( 25,000 – 100,000 population) \_\_\_\_\_

Large City ( Over 100,000 population) \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D

### INTERVIEW VIGNETTES

The following vignettes are presented for your comments and analysis. There is not a predetermined right or wrong answer to these situations. Keep in mind that I would like for you to respond to these from as many perspectives as you choose. You may ask as many questions as you like about the scenarios.

#### **Vignette 1:**

George and Becky, co-presenters for a major conference to be given in two weeks, are working to finalize a Power Point presentation. Slightly behind schedule, they agree to meet on Sunday afternoon at 2 P.M. at their normal work place. George arrives at approximately 1:45 P.M. to get the computer turned on and the notes together. Becky arrives at 3:10 ready to work.

What are your thoughts or comments?

How would you feel if you were George in this situation?

How would you feel if you were Becky in this situation?

How would it make a difference if you knew that George is a Colonel and Becky is a Captain?

What if the ranks were reversed?

How would it make a difference if you knew that George is a white male and Becky is a black female?

What if the racial backgrounds were just the opposite, that is George is black and Becky is white?

How would it make a difference if you knew both were black / white?

What is "CP time?"

What is your overall interpretation of this situation?

How is this or a similar situation likely to occur in your work location? Describe what it would look like.

**Vignette 2:**

John and Bill, co-workers, encounter one another in a supply room. John points out that Bill apparently failed to order necessary supplies and that they were getting critically short of these specific items. John uses very forceful and emotionally charged language to make his point. At no time however does John use profane, abusive, or racial language toward Bill and no one else hears the communication between these coworkers.

What are your thoughts or comments?

How would you feel if you were John in this situation?

How would you feel if you were Bill in this situation?

How would it make a difference if you knew that John is a staff sergeant and Bill is a specialist?

What if the ranks were reversed?

How would it make a difference if you knew that John is a white male and Bill is a black male?

What if the racial backgrounds were just the opposite that is Bill is black and John is white?

How would it make a difference if you knew both were black and the same rank?

How would it make a difference if you knew both were white and the same rank?

What would be different if I said that the individuals in this scenario were both females?

How would it be different if one were male and the other a female?

What is your overall interpretation of this situation?

What does “doing the dozens” mean to you?

How is this or a similar situation likely to occur in your work location? Describe what it would look like.

**Vignette 3:**

Karen is talking with Barbara about a special project they are to complete. Karen is very aware that the entire time that she is speaking Barbara is intently maintaining eye contact with her.

What are your thoughts or comments?

How would you feel if you were Karen in this situation?

How would you feel if you were Barbara in this situation?

How would it make a difference if you knew that Karen is white and Barbara is black?

What if the racial back grounds were just the opposite, that is Karen is black and Barbara is white?

How would it make a difference if you knew both were black?

How would it make a difference if you knew both were white?

What is your overall interpretation of this situation?

How is this or a similar situation likely to occur in your work location?  
Describe what it would look like

Are there any other body language issues that you can describe that may present problems in the workplace?



#### **Vignette 4:**

Dorothy, the military charge nurse, instructs PFC Thomas to go “now” to the pharmacy to pick up medications. PFC Thomas turns slowly, agrees to the request, and walks off in no particular hurry in the direction opposite that of the pharmacy.

What comments or questions do you have about this situation?

What other words describe what “now” means to you?

Does the term “now” mean the same thing to everyone? Can it mean “immediately” or possibly, “soon?”

Is PFC Thomas’ behavior a form of defiance or a differing interpretation of the request for “now?”

Discuss the scenario if both Dorothy and PFC Thomas are black.

Discuss the scenario if both Dorothy and PFC Thomas are white.

Discuss the scenario if Dorothy is white and PFC Thomas is black.

Discuss the scenario if Dorothy is black and PFC Thomas is white.

Describe any differences in behavior if PFC Thomas is male versus being female.

Are there issues with males working for females in the workplace?

If you could select the race and gender of the person that you would most like to work for in every assignment in the future, who would that person be?

If you could avoid by race and gender the person you would most not want to work for in future assignments, who would that person be?

Are there any “hot button” issues that I should have asked that I omitted with respect to how black and white soldiers interact in the workplace?

With that I am going to turn off the tape recorder. I want to thank you for the great discussion that we had and for participating in this research endeavor.

# APPENDIX E

## STUDY POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

		Rank	Age	Years Active	Education
White officer	Allen	O-6	52	24	MSN
White officer	Bryan	O-5	54	18	Some Grad work
White officer	Chuck	O-1	29	13	Some Grad work
White officer	David	O-2	24	2	CG
White enlisted	Aaron				
White enlisted	Bill	E-4	28	2.75	College Graduate
White enlisted	Charles	E-4	37	5	College Graduate
White enlisted	Dustin	E-6	33	8	Some Grad work
White enlisted	Everitt	E-6	36	17	Some College
Black enlisted	Arthur	E-4	31	3	College Graduate
Black enlisted	Ben	E-5	31	12	Some College
Black enlisted	Castle	E-9	46	20+	MS
Black enlisted	Dan	E-6	40	15	Some College
Black officer 01	Alex	O-3	34	13	College Graduate
Black officer	Bob	O-4	43	17	MS
Black officer	Chester	O-2	28	6	College Graduate
Black officer	Derrick	O-3	28	3	College Graduate
Black enlisted	Arleen	E-4	35	2	Some Grad work
Black enlisted	Brandi	E-4	39	6	College Graduate
Black enlisted	Crystal	E-7	44	22	College Graduate
Black enlisted	Dixie	E-5	24	4	Some College
Black officer 01	Ann	O-5	45	20	MSN
Black officer	Beth	O-5	51	19	MSN
Black officer	Caroline	O-2	33	15	College Graduate
Black officer	Delores	O-2	31	6	College Graduate
White officer	Amy	O-4	41	15	MSN
White officer	Becky	O-5	48	20	MSN
White officer	Cathy	O-1	23	0.7	College Graduate
White officer	Deborah	O-4	38	16	MSN
White enlisted	Angela	E-6	44	20	Assoc Degree
White enlisted	Brenda	E-4	23	5.5	Some college
White enlisted	Christine	E-4	25	3	Some college
White enlisted	Diane	E-8	36	17	Some college

APPENDIX F  
SELECTED VERBATIMS  
C.P. Time

Brandi is a first generation African-American from Nigeria. Her responses reflect a deep traditional orientation:

BRANDI (black enlisted): It takes me a while before I know the importance of time. But to them (Africans) they don't think it's anything. When they tell you two o'clock, you won't meet them there.

BETH (black officer): Becky arrived CPT (colored peoples time) which means - a lot of people would be very offended, you know, that that person doesn't feel that their time is important. But I would say it's a Sunday afternoon. So most likely -- not knowing, but most likely Becky's coming from church I would think and services run late generally in Afro-American churches. The other thing I would say is that it's not too much that we're not raised to believe that time is important and that you need to be at your assigned place on time.

The males were much more descriptive regarding CP time, and to point out that, although it is a common cultural phenomenon, it was a descriptor of female more than male behavior.

INTERVIEWER: What is CP time?

ARTHUR (black enlisted): That's stereotype by saying that it's colored people time from -- so I understand and it's pretty much where they'll say, you say you're supposed to [arrive at] 0900 but at CP time, that could mean 0930. So if you want someone of color to make it on time you should tell them it's 0830 and they'll be there 0930.

INTERVIEWER: What is CP time?

BEN (black enlisted): Colored people time? Oh, okay, I ain't heard colored people but I heard, you know, black folks time. Yeah, colored people, yeah. Colored people time, nigger time, you know, just black folks time in general. That's another stereotype. Basically black people -- CP time is basically later than the appointed time. That's what it all boils down to.

INTERVIEWER: What's CP time?

CHESTER (black officer): CP time I would just say is colored people time, you know. That's what I call it. We have our own clock. It's like our clock is -- it's like, you know, when you go to the office and you see, you know, all the different Country's clocks, you know. Well, we have our own clock up there on the wall.

INTERVIEWER: Well really, what would those hands be on that clock, or would there even be any hands?

CHESTER: Well, there wouldn't be any hands on the clock. It would just be like, you make your own --

INTERVIEWER: What's CP time?

DERRICK (black officer): CP time is something we use in the community. We call it colored people time or we even say “Negro Eastern Standard time” because we have the reputation of tending to be late. And for whatever reason that is, I think that rationally we in our own community come to the conclusion that we’re going to be late.

#### Acceptability of CP Time

The following selections describe degrees of acceptability by African-American participants relating to the issue of CP time:

ANN (black officer) But again, if you didn’t come up in that culture -- if you did not grow up in that culture you would not know that it’s not that someone is being inconsiderate of your time but that in fact that is just culture -- that’s acceptable behavior for them.

The next comment that Ann made is in reference to the individuals described in the first vignette:

ANN: And, you know, sometimes that doesn’t happen. We’re not direct with each other and so we go off, you know, George thinking that Becky is just so inconsiderate or maybe doesn’t want to do the work, which would even be worse.

INTERVIEWER: If both George and Becky were African-American, would they understand each other that way and it wouldn’t be aggravating?

BRANDI (black enlisted): If they are both Africans (unintelligible) understanding like I said, Africans they don’t really keep being on time as really,

really, really, really important to them. It doesn't bother them what time they get there. They will tell you, "Oh, you see me. Okay, we see each other, that's good." So the time doesn't really make an impact.

The next excerpt illustrates that African-Americans recognize this as unique cultural phenomenon. The entire time issue was less difficult to resolve if both parties involved are from the same cultural heritage:

CAROLINE (black officer): George is black and Becky is white. Would he be upset? He'd probably still be upset as far as the time thing goes. I think he'd be - I'm not sure. I think he may be more understanding to the fact that Becky's late.

INTERVIEWER: All right. If Becky is black and George is black, now where's the understanding?

CAROLINE: There'd be a whole lot more understanding on both their parts.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Now explain the reason that you said that.

CAROLINE: It goes back to the stereotype. If other folks expect us to be late we're our own nationality, ethnicity expects us to be late as well. And so there's a more understanding on both parts. More acceptable on both parts.

INTERVIEWER: Are you suggesting that time has different meaning?

CAROLINE: Yes, yes, it does.

INTERVIEWER: All right. How would you describe black time and white time then if that's what you're saying?

CAROLINE: People have even been making blacks and whites, and they make it in a joking fashion, but more so if it's -- even if it's a joking fashion it's still a true statement to some folks. Now every black person is going to be late, you know. Black males in this study discussed time as having a strong cultural component. Generally, it is described as most often applying to social and not workplace situations. Ben described himself as explicitly electing a non-conformance approach to cultural nuances and the consequences of his choice when he failed to comply with cultural norms:

INTERVIEWER: Is ~~it~~ [CP time] acceptable?

BEN (black enlisted): Amongst blacks, yeah. You know, amongst blacks, you know it is.

INTERVIEWER: Is it pretty much expected?

BEN: Once again, amongst the general population of blacks, average, yes. But me, once again, I'm the type of person, I don't -- you know, me I don't use, once again, no cultural or stereotypical or faddish beliefs, you know, to get through life. I don't, you know. And that's why -- I'm constantly picked on a lot and stuff, you know because I'm just straightforward and stuff, you know. The CP time, I don't do it. You know, I don't get down with that.

The excerpt following further describes the degrees of personal acceptability for the concept of CP time. The reference to George and Becky comes from the first vignette (Appendix D).

BETH (black officer): Okay. If I were -- probably if you're George and I Becky and we know each other well as either coworkers or maybe we socialize off work, then probably how we communicate would be different. I may say when you tell me two o'clock, okay, do you mean 1400 or are you talking about CPT, Colored Peoples Time, which means I may get there sometime between 2:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. Now I don't want to mislead you in that, it's not accepted. CP is not accepted. But I'm telling you, if you go to a function generally, it's an Afro-American wedding, it's an Afro-American funeral, it's an Afro-American dinner, whatever, and if the majority of people who are there are Afro-American, if it is to start, the dinner, the wedding, the funeral at 3:00 p.m. and it doesn't start at 3:00 p.m., it doesn't start until 3:30 p.m., 3:45 p.m., in general most of those people will not be highly upset. You know, they'll be -- I'm not saying they won't be upset but you know what they'll say, "we should have known." It's CPT, Colored People's Time. It's a joke in the African American community. Not to say that we don't expect that if I invite you to my house at 3:00 p.m., I'm looking for you to arrive at 3:00 p.m., but if you're 3:30 p.m. getting there, then it's not necessarily that you're being disrespectful to me.

#### Perceived Need to Prove

CRYSTAL (black enlisted): I think in the military you have to continually, prove yourself, even though you may have proven yourself. Well heck, I've been in for 22 years and I feel that I'm still proving myself. And I think one slight of that



kind of - - you know, one mistake or whatever, you know, at one time, you know, could harm you.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think everybody tries to prove themselves? I mean that's in the back of their mind?

CRYSTAL (black enlisted): I think at a certain point, yes, people do continually try to prove their worth and then I think probably something happens. I know it happened to me. Something happens that makes you say, hey, you know, I'm tired of proving myself.

INTERVIEWER: Would proving yourself be a common theme for whites as well as blacks, or more so one group than another?

CRYSTAL (black enlisted): I think it's equal across the board. I think from a black person's perspective, and this is me saying this, but I think black people think this. I think from a black person's perspective they always think that whites are always trying to prove themselves as being better or the best. And I think from a white person looking at a black, I think that they always think that the black person will always be the one that's tailing behind. So I think in our own ways, we try to prove ourselves but for different reasons.

Note particularly Crystal's reference to the high relationship value placed on communicating well, being a "people person and a fair person," in her response to needing to prove self worth:

INTERVIEWER: Okay. What's the reason that the black [person] tries to prove himself?

CRYSTAL (black enlisted): Well I think for, like in my particular -- for myself, I think that you already know that blacks are labeled to be -- let's see, how can I put it. To have like -- I can't think of the word I'm looking for but not as maybe studious I guess as the white person. So I think they always would be trying to prove in their own way that I can achieve this. I am just as smart. And I know in terms of like being book smart, people put a lot of value on how many degrees somebody has but I know -- I've worked with people that have degrees that can't communicate that well, that can't relate to people that well. So I know a lot of focus is put on people that have, you know, one to two degrees, and she has a Ph.D., but that doesn't necessarily mean that you are a good person, or you're a people person, or you're a fair person.

CRYSTAL: So I think blacks tend to prove that I might be lacking in maybe my education but I am someone that can be a little bit more people friendly, you know, work with you a little bit better, understand things a little bit better. And I think that whites tend to take all of that for granted and it's not really a big deal.

Arthur and Dustin also referenced the need to be known for what others think of them and to prove that they are capable and responsible:

ARTHUR (black enlisted): And for me that makes me feel good because now you've established a reputation and the people around you understand it and they

respect that and they say, you know, this is a character maker, something's wrong. And compared to someone who didn't say that and then when they're late, oh he is always late da, da, da. And there really was something wrong.

By contrast, Dustin described wanting to make an impression rather than a need to establish proof of ability or capability in accomplishing a task.

DUSTIN (white enlisted): For me being in the military, that makes a big difference and that's just because of the rank structure. And I guess I personally care and I think a lot of emphasis on what people think of me and how I do my job. So to me that would make a big difference. If I was working with someone that was of higher rank, I would want to impress them. I would want to show them that I'm capable of doing the job and that I'm willing and able to work above my means to get promoted or to get a better position, or to succeed. So I think that probably would make even more of an impact if I was George saying, okay, well obviously, you know, she doesn't deserve a promotion or she doesn't deserve any rewards because she is unprepared or unequipped at her job, or time management, or leadership positions.

#### Communicating Cultural Norms

Allen, a senior white officer, was very explicit in making the point that all Americans are classified in a single culture, therefore the rules of engagement were universal to all Americans. Although not stated by others in exactly this manner, it appeared that whites in general agreed with that convention.

Interestingly, much of the current literature that addresses the American culture, describes all Americans as having a singular orientation to time and relationship (Harris & Moran, 1996; Stewart & Bennett, 1991).

ALLEN (white officer): I think there is an expectation in America divorced of -- because we're the confluence. But I think the norm in America, say versus the norm in Brazil -- in America usually when you say you've go to be someplace at nine o'clock, the expectation is that you're going to be there at nine o'clock. In America generally it's understood that when you need to be someplace at a certain time no matter what culture you're from, you're kind of expected to be there and you do ill to yourself in a formal situation to disregard those conventions, at least in this country in a business relationship.

Common courtesy in any culture -- well no, I won't say in any culture, but in this culture, common courtesy would dictate that you would have to alibi it and whether or not that person will accept that alibi. Even somebody I'm familiar with will say, "Oh (Name), I'm sorry, or colonel, I'm sorry, I got caught up in a traffic jam here, or my kid was sick." I'd want to hear something. I'd probably want to hear some kind some kind of -- there is no doubt under any circumstances. What am I here, a potted plant? You know, what am I waiting for? But I would want some courtesy dispensed. I'm probably more amendable than others to accepting a reasonable justification unless I've been slammed before.

INTERVIEWER: If both Becky and George were African-American, would anything change?

ALLEN (white officer): Would anything change? I don't necessarily see there would be a difference necessarily. I think an African-American to another African-American if they had to wait an hour, maybe an hour and 15 -- well no, just an hour even though the person came 15 minutes ahead of time, the agreed upon time was an hour so that's where I draw the distinction. But I wouldn't necessarily say that color would be a variable necessarily in that situation because I think if I'm looking at a cultural phenomenon, and I'm not necessarily in tuned to what the black time -- you know, with the black ethnicity, if there is a specific timeframe. I still think the American culture where blacks are part of the American culture, they would be expected to be at certain places at certain times like Hispanics, Chinese, Japanese et cetera. That's just my perception.

Note that whites typically discussed issues from an individualistic, business (get the job done) only, rather than from a personal relationship perspective. The white members valued the accomplishment of personal and organizational tasks over any form of interpersonal working relationship. From this standpoint, punctuality issues had the potential for conflicts in communication understanding and action completion.

BRYAN (white officer): I'd be mad. I'd be upset. I would still go on and I probably wouldn't say anything but I would be thinking about it. I think some of

us come from a generation that says, you know, be ready. You know, if you're anything you're early. I look at the people that do well. They're always ready, prepared and ready to go. They've got it all set up and do the planning. To me it's not a rank thing. It's personal. It's your work ethic. I don't think that, you know, rank plays a part in it and I don't think it does in the military. I mean to some people it does but to me if there is a job to be done and everybody's agreed to do something, then that's the reason why you're there. It's the job. And if you're supposed to be doing something then that's what you should be doing. Be there on time. Get it done.

White participants did not specifically identify social / private time as being distinctively separate from professional time. However, Chuck did state that "it might be a cultural thing." Contrary to the expressed notion about stereotyping of blacks, white participants generally did not express stereotype classifications about blacks and punctuality although, again, Chuck stated that it is the nature for African-Americans to be late, and that they "really don't care." In perspective, whites, in this study, did not reflect this stereotypical opinion regarding black military members as such. The more common reflection had to do with civilian employees. This finding will be discussed later in the study.

CHUCK (white officer): It's just in like their nature for them to be late, for like, African Americans or something just to be late. I don't know if it is how they are

brought up or something like that -- but it's not just strictly African American or white, but a lot of the African-Americans show up late, and really don't care.

David, a young white officer, made a rare observation that illustrates his understanding of cultural orientation differences:

DAVID (white officer): Us whites are uptight and always have to be doing something. Especially in conversation, you ask somebody what they did, a black person -- you know, it's usually leisurely, hanging home with the family doing that. Whites are always going on vacation or, you know, doing activities to get out and do something or work. That would be what I see.

#### Time and Punctuality

INTERVIEWER: What would make the military situation different?

ARLEEN (black enlisted): I think the military -- it would be different because like there are so many different flags that sometimes I don't even see race. I never even think about he is white or she is black.

#### Military Culture Supercedes Race and Gender

African-American study participants universally agreed that private and social context of time did not apply to their professional lives in the military. The military environment, with a rigid rank and accountability structure, required

conformability by all members. The following excerpts reflect the influence of the overriding military culture over all other cultural considerations.

ARLEEN (black enlisted): I don't think Becky would have been late. I really don't, because of the seniority issues.

CRYSTAL (black enlisted): Well in the military I think it sheds a different light on things because of course you always want to do what your supervisors have asked you to do. And probably Becky would not have been late. She probably would have been there on time. She may have been maybe five or ten minutes late but maybe not a whole hour and ten minutes.

ANN (black officer): I think Becky has at least two lessons to learn, that number one, you do not keep a colonel waiting. That is just absolutely not appropriate for the -- that's not military protocol. And the other thing is that again within the organization, two o'clock is two o'clock.

BETH (black officer): In that situation I would say they're both military and if they're on military time then I would think that too much of Becky's private life is spilling over. I don't think that, as an active duty person, what's acceptable is completely different than what's acceptable in your personal life as an Afro-American person. Meaning that if you're an active duty person and you're assigned place of duty at two o'clock is that meeting place with the other active duty member George.



BEN (black enlisted): No, because when it comes to mission, I don't really see rank. You know, you say you're going to do something, you know, follow through on it.

INTERVIEWER: Would it make any difference if you knew that George is a colonel and Becky is a captain?

ALEX (black officer): Yes. (laughter). The guilt would probably be more along the lines of fear at that point. If you are late for a colonel, for me with a colonel and that late, yes. From my experience uh, with most senior officers, uh I can't really speak on that end, I can speak from a captain's end I would probably be thinking that my career was toast, I had lost their confidence

INTERVIEWER: Is this being on time business a problem in the workplace?

BEN (black enlisted): Specifically here? No. And see in the military we tend to streamline it more. We tend to streamline and nip it in the barrel a lot quicker than in the civilian sector. And so if tardiness was a problem in the military we nip it in bud really quick. Because, you know, we make you be there at a certain time or even on your days off. So tardiness in the military, like I say, you know, we nip it in the bud pretty quick so it's nothing that would grow, you know.

CHESTER (black officer): Now in the military of course, you know, you have to be on time, but as far as like social life, you know, folks feel like hey, you know, just because you say a certain time that doesn't mean I have to be there exactly at

that time. You know, if I come late, what's the big difference? But in the military it does make a big difference.

BILL (white enlisted): Okay. Well that adds a totally different twist to it because once you add the military thing -- like militarily to me is different than civilianly. When you're military, basically depending on your command, being late is inexcusable....

The answers remain the same when the ranks were reversed in the interview:

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that this time thing is a communication problematic thing between the black and white folks in the workplace? Now the workplace, being military, in this instance.

CAROLINE (black officer): As far as the military, I think it's better. I mean blacks and whites know that. They say 7:00 to 3:00; you need to be at work at 7:00. You're going to be there or you're going to get disciplined.

INTERVIEWER: Is the military the important variable?

ANGELA (white enlisted): I believe so because it seems to me the military makes quite an issue out of being to work on time, i.e. when you talk about the military going to a formation, the standard is let's be there 15 minutes ahead of time.

Relationship Practice - - Mutual Respect

Castle, a Black enlisted soldier, expected “mutual courtesy,” an interpersonal relationship quality.

INTERVIEWER: If I told you George is a colonel and Becky is a captain, how would that change the dynamics of it all?

CASTLE (black enlisted): Well I don’t know if it will change it much. Again, it comes down to personality. And, you know, rank is important. I think we both know that. But certainly -- it’s just some mutual understanding between people, whether you have rank on or off, or if you’re in the military or not. But it’s a mutual courtesy that people exchange between one another to -- if you’re going to be late, you know, you can call and if something precludes you or prohibits you from calling, save it until you get there and simply put it up on the table and then move forward on with that. Rank although it’s very important, it still comes down to a mutual understanding agreement between two people regardless of rank.

Derrick, a black officer, wanted to be treated the way you want to be treated, an interpersonal relationship quality.

INTERVIEWER: Let’s reverse the ranks and George is sitting there, as the captain and Becky’s the colonel.

DERRICK (black officer): Well kind of like what I said earlier, if Becky’s the colonel, you know, she gave the captain a deadline and she is not holding up her

responsibility as far as what I guess her rank should either own up to or measure to if you would. You know, as a senior leader, it's really vitally important to set the standards and to, you know, make decisions or use your judgment based on the way that you want to be treated yourself.

Allen, a senior white officer, described both interpersonal and business approaches to mutual respect. Note his use of the term "power gradient," and "concern about relationship."

ALLEN (white officer): I think -- you see as a colonel, I'm the power gradient so I can shape the context, okay? You're saying the captain is now waiting, is that correct? Unfortunately it will be easier by position for the colonel probably to make their case, and that's just the nature of the beast. Now hopefully the colonel -- and I would say the colonel owes the captain an apology unequivocally, and I really believe that and if they don't -- and the captain has a right to be upset. I think the greater power, the greater responsibility.

Amy, a white officer, looked at the "business needs to get done."

AMY (white officer): I try to look at what business needs to get done at hand. So, if I'm putting my name on something my own self, I would want it to be a good job. I think as an automatic military answer, if the colonel is waiting on the captain for an hour, there'd better be a very good reason why that captain was late.

Chuck, a white officer, is offered to “chew Becky....a little bit...” His comment was not in the mainstream response pattern from either cohort.

CHUCK (white officer): Well if I was George I would probably -- well it is a day off but I had already agreed -- I would probably chew Becky there a little bit for not coming in when she said she would be -- because everything in the Army is time based so if you say you’re going to be there, you’re going to be there.

#### Military Culture; Civilian Culture

INTERVIEWER: Is being on time, punctuality a problem here in the workforce?

DERRICK (black officer): At times, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Can you isolate any grouping of folks that tend to be late more than others? Some folks have pretty well indicted the civilians more than the military folks. Would you agree?

DERRICK: I would definitely agree on that.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. If that’s the case, of that group would there be more of them that are white or black, or it doesn’t matter?

DERRICK: I will honestly say and I feel that, you know, it would have to be black, typically because the majority -- or not even the majority but a large number of the workers on the floor are black Americans. As for civilians, whether they belong to a white cultural background or a black cultural

background, the idea of punctuality doesn't hold as much weight as it would for the military folks.

INTERVIEWER: Do you find a difference between the military setting and the civilian setting and if so, how, in relationship to the time?

BRENDA (white enlisted): I see a lot of people just taking their time, lollygagging in the civilian sector. I don't really know -- I guess we're taught so much discipline in the Army or we're supposed to, that kind of sticks with you throughout your career. And in the civilian world, the repercussions aren't as harsh I don't think so people take that for granted.

INTERVIEWER: Just for grins, are there any of the civilian nurses that work here that were formerly military?

BRENDA (white enlisted): Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Do they keep the military demeanor as far as dedication and so forth?

BRENDA: For the most part, yes. The ones who are prior military you can tell because, I've even asked, "Do you have a military background? And they'll say, "Yes." And I'll be like, "all right!"

INTERVIEWER: Are there any groups of people, or categorically, are there people that are late, versus categorically, people that are not?

CATHY (white officer): You can count on the military being on time. Almost 99.9 percent of the time they will be at work on time or have -- you know, they

just don't call in sick. They can't not just to decide to show up, where the contract, the civilians you'll have that.

INTERVIEWER: Some folks recently that I've interviewed have suggested that there's a clear difference in the concept of being on time between the military and civilian populations. Would you comment on that from your experience here?

CHARLES (white enlisted): Yeah, I tend to think that military personnel tend to be a little bit more aware of being on time and what their deadlines are. That may be because of sort of the nature of the military and that there always seems to be a deadline and a specific timeframe that you're trying to do this, that, or the other. And I think that civilians generally speaking don't have the same sort of view of deadlines.

Note that David saw a civilian, but not a race component to the issue of tardiness in the work environment.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Is there a military versus civilian variable?

DAVID (white officer): Absolutely. It's all -- mostly -- I'd say nine out of ten of them civilian.

#### Time and Punctuality: Gender and Racial Variances

The interview data strongly suggested that the black participants had a firm understanding that within the black community, time may have multiple meanings. The military expectation was that absolute punctuality for all workplace personnel was required. However, it is recognized that those who are

not compliant are most often black female civilian employees. It needs to be noted that the population source for this study is a hospital environment and thus a ratio of females to males is naturally higher (60:40) in a large hospital nursing department.

In the subsequent passages, Arthur, Chester and Dan agreed that punctuality was not regarded as important by many black female, civilian employees. They were careful to add that it was not a black male issue.

INTERVIEWER: Well you raise an interesting question. If you can think for a second, is there a difference along cultural lines about the civilian personnel that you work with and their concept of time or approach to time? Can you see anything in that group that may be clearly defined by race just in terms of the behavior that seems relative to time?

ARTHUR (black enlisted): Well I do have to say that I think when I work the medical floor that the black females there really didn't respect time much. If they were late it was "Oh, well." However the black males, the black males would be more time conscious and I think this is being because the supervisors were from military and were able to control the black males more than black females.

Chester expressed an understanding, on an interpersonal level, with regard to the African-American cultural perspective.

INTERVIEWER: Are you going to have a little more understanding if they don't show up on time, from a cultural perspective?



CHESTER (black officer): From a cultural perspective, I would say if that other individual is black I would have a better understanding, well, hey, you know, this folk is going to be late anyway.

INTERVIEWER: Do white folks have the opinion that black folks are going to be there late?

CHESTER: I don't think so but on the other side, you know, me being an African-American I know that, you know, African-Americans have problems with being on time at a certain place. But I don't think white folks actually know this.

INTERVIEWER: Does CP time bleed over into the workplace?

DAN (black enlisted): Yes, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Is that a problem?

DAN: Definitely. I had that problem as a Ward Master and of course when I spoke to my employee about it, I didn't use the term CP time, but in the back of my mind, that's what I was thinking.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Was this employee African-American?

DAN: Uh-huh.

INTERVIEWER: Was this employee military or civilian?

DAN: Civilian.

INTERVIEWER: I'm hearing in these interviews that that's a very common difficulty among the civilian workforce that are African-American. That their time reference is not exactly the same as the military reference, would you agree?

DAN: Yes, very much so. Most of my peers had some of the same issues and looking back it was with the African-American female employees, the civilian employees that were having problems getting to work on time.

Ben, Castle, and Dan did not see it as a racial issue and did not cite it as a gender issue either. Recall that Ben considered himself a nonconformist in matters of cultural differences between whites and black individuals.

Additionally, these represent male perspectives, and African-American males in this study population generally did not regard the CP issue as part of their normal behavior process.

INTERVIEWER: George is white and Becky is black, does that change the dynamics of anything.

BEN (black enlisted): No, no. You know, it let's you know, you know, wrong is wrong.

INTERVIEWER: If I said that Becky is white and George is black, does that change anything?

BEN: No. As far as the way I feel about it, no, no. Like I said, you know, from my standpoint no, it wouldn't change a thing, you know, as far as I feel, you know, if she is late, she is late....Now I don't really have an answer for that because, okay, if both of them are African-American, would it take place,? I don't think color has anything to do with tardiness, you know. If you're going to be late, you're going to be late. Now how it would be handled then I guess when it

comes to color and gender, then that may be a factor but I don't think color would determine whether someone is going to be tardy or not.

INTERVIEWER: If George is black and Becky is white, does that change anything?

CASTLE (black enlisted): It certainly does not.

INTERVIEWER: If both individuals were African-Americans, does that change anything at all?

CASTLE: No, it doesn't. As I said earlier, race or sex really is not an issue here. It's a matter of common courtesy between people. Whether they know each other or not, I mean it's an agreement and you try to adhere to the agreement that's established.

Black Females:

African-American female study participants illustrated by way of their responses that CP time was very much a cultural part of their lives. Beth agreed that there is a punctuality issue for black females and she would be inclined to be understanding of the cultural nature of the situation.

BETH (black officer): The other thing I would say is that it's not too much that we're not raised to believe that time is important and that you need to be at your assigned place on time, I just think that we have so many other things to do to get ready, it's not unusual for us to be late.

INTERVIEWER: Define us.

BETH: Afro-American, particularly Afro-American females.

INTERVIEWER: If you're George and you are African-American and Becky is African-American, would there just be an understanding at that point?

BETH: I think I would still be upset that she is not here, but most likely I probably would give her a little more of the benefit of the doubt than I would if she were not Afro-American as well.

A very interesting dynamic, Caroline, a black female, placing herself as a black male in the scenario, would have given the female (white) the benefit of the doubt, illustrating again, the component of an interpersonal relationship orientation. This appeared to be a dual cultural perspective.

INTERVIEWER: In your opinion, do you think that white folks just expect that a black person is going to be late and that they just have to put up with or they just have to know that that's the way it is?

CAROLINE (black officer): In my opinion, yes, white folks do expect black folks to be a little late if they can't make it in their time. But as far as to put up with, no, I don't think that they expect they have to put up with it.

INTERVIEWER: George is black and Becky is white. Would he be upset?

CAROLINE: He'd probably still be upset as far as the time thing goes. I think he'd be -- I'm not sure. I think he may be more understanding to the fact that Becky's late.

White Males

The white males in the study did not see punctuality as a racial matter, but did state it as a gender concern from their experiences. Also note from the responses that the white males' comments reflected a business over relationship orientation.

BRYAN (white officer): It would still be the same. To me it's the time. And it's agreed on that you were going to do something and be ready and to do it. It doesn't make any difference -- if they were Asian, whatever. It's the getting the job done and being there on time to get the job done that counts. It doesn't matter to me, who they are, or what they are, or whatever.

INTERVIEWER: What if both George and Becky were both African-Americans?

BRYAN (white officer): It still goes down to the work ethic. I come from a very strong say Protestant work ethic. And it's the work ethic that means the thing. It's not anything else. It's strictly work ethic. And that was your responsibility. You had a responsibility to be there, to do something and get it done.

INTERVIEWER: Would you tie a racial component to that or not?

BRYAN: No. No, I would not. It would just be females tend to be -- and it's not a racial side, it's female.

INTERVIEWER: George is white and Becky is black. How if any does that change the dynamics, or the nature, or the character of that situation?

CHARLES (white enlisted): I think it would run the same as if both characters were the same race.

INTERVIEWER: If they're both black does that change anything at all from your experience?

CHARLES: No, I don't believe so.

INTERVIEWER: Let's remove the rank thing and just sort of non-specific, at least for the next question, and let's make George white and Becky African American.

BILL (white enlisted): That makes no difference to me whatsoever.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Now let's make George black and Becky white.

BILL: Once again, no difference. Late is late. I mean it doesn't matter what your race is.

#### White Females

Deborah, Angela, Christine, Brenda and Diane did not place a cultural label on the matter. Deborah did contend that black, female civilian employees were the punctuality offenders most often. Instead they collectively illustrated a strong business over relationship approach. Note the wording used by Diane when she identified having "respect for the other person's time," rather than for the person.

INTERVIEWER: What difference if any would it make if I told you that George and Becky were both black?

DEBORAH (white officer): None. It's a professionalism issue. It's not a racial issue. If I had to put a face on it, it would be a black female.

INTERVIEWER: Black female military or civilian?

DEBORAH: Civilian.

INTERVIEWER: George is white and Becky is black.

ANGELA (white enlisted): That truly doesn't make a difference to me.

INTERVIEWER: George is black and Becky is white. Does that change anything?

ANGELA: Not to me. Again, I don't think race has a whole lot to do with it. To me it's just a matter of whether or not you respect another person to be on time when you say you'll meet at a certain time.

INTERVIEWER: This being on time, being late and all that kind of stuff, is it problematic in the workplace?

CHRISTINE (white enlisted): In my workplace?

INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh.

CHRISTINE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Who are the guilty parties?

CHRISTINE: Civilians, and the majority of them are black, if that's pertinent.

#### Expressiveness

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that black soldiers are more expressive with one another in those situations than white folks are?

ARLEEN (black enlisted) Yes, I think so. I think they're more expressive.

INTERVIEWER: What's the rationale for that?

ARLEEN: I hate to say things when you come back at me like that. I don't know. I guess our upbringing. I mean it's like I can -- for me, I can say things to Sergeant (NAME) that I wouldn't say --

INTERVIEWER: Who is?

ARLEEN: Who is black -- than I could to Captain (NAME), which is white, in the same scenario. Depending on the extent of the voice that he gave me to yell or something, I would probably -- if he was black or white, I would probably mumble under my breath, just from my upbringing.

In the next excerpt, Brandi made a profound statement regarding the differences between the two cultural groups. Note the connectivity statement in asking for time and to just listen. The fundamental, basic social process in this research was very well illustrated in her statement. The relationship expectation that she, and other blacks as well, required was to be given the time and an audience to present issues, and to resolve them without judgment.

INTERVIEWER: What does a white person need to understand to make them a better leader?

BRANDI (black enlisted): It's a matter of time. Just give your time to listen to who complains and not ask too many questions. And if you are too busy and too - - you wouldn't get anything solved. Blacks, they like to talk, but they like to



express themselves, and they want to express your own ways of adjustment and correcting the problem. Just listening is what a leader is supposed to do, but just listening to be really, really attention when it comes to trying to solve a problem between a worker or something.

INTERVIEWER: Are they [white supervisors] afraid of the black subordinates?

BRANDI: I don't know that they are afraid. I would say listening is what is needed. It's not that they are afraid. When you are a leader, listen to me. Even if you are afraid, do it one time, second time then you won't be, and again. Just listen, listen. Don't make it snappy, quick.

Beth described subtle distinctions regarding issues of forceful behavior and what constitutes forceful. In her opinion, it was not necessary to raise the volume in expressiveness to accomplish the desired outcome. She indicated that the definition of forceful from a black perspective may well differ from that considered to be forceful by a white person.

Ann packed a lot of information into her response. She delineated a difference in how two black members would react to one another, given a military atmosphere. Ann and Beth began to illustrate the ground rules for confrontation between two individuals that are male and black:

First of all, the issues needed to be brought out openly, but in a non-antagonistic manner.

Secondly, profanity and disrespect for the other person was not allowable.

Thirdly, Ann introduced, what will subsequently be demonstrated throughout the remainder of the study, that black males must be respected as adult men; the inference being, at a minimum, equal to anyone in society, and nothing less.

BETH (black officer): I think it depends on how or what you mean -- what is forceful. Probably what you think is forceful and what I think would be two different things.

INTERVIEWER: All right. Describe that.

BETH: For me, forceful is not necessarily derogatory. I think that if that's -- if John is the supervisor in that situation, then being forceful means, I'm telling you what I want, why I want, when I want it, and how. I think that's forceful. I think as long as you're not shouting.-- I don't think that's necessary in any situation. I don't think it's necessary to raise your voice to get someone's attention. You know, I think you just need to make eye contact and speak to that person one to one on what you want. I don't think you need to raise your voice.

ANN (black officer): You really have to consider peoples backgrounds. You know, how they grew up, what environment did they grow up in, what value system that they grew up in, when you start looking at how they are assessing why they responded in a particular way.

INTERVIEWER: If the men were both black?

ANN: Then Bill is going to feel like well, he is just getting that tongue lashing from the Sergeant, you know, because he didn't do his job. I think that if they were out of the military, the two who are both black will be very careful with regards to how far they -- you know, John would be very careful as to exactly what he would say to Bill. John being the superior person, being the supervisor. I think John would be very careful with regards to how much profanity or how much -- you know, I guess how verbose he was with regards to addressing Bill on the issue. He would not antagonize.

INTERVIEWER: And both are black.

ANN: Exactly. Because Bill would perceive -- if he became too animated and, you know, used too much profanity, Bill would start feeling antagonized. He would not have this military structure that said there is a certain way, you know, a Specialist is supposed to respond to a Sergeant. This would be just two black men -- even though you're my supervisor, no, you cannot come and talk to me any kind of way you wanted to. And I think that would be no matter where they grew up. There are just a certain -- he would feel like John was disrespecting him and not treating him like a man so to speak.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Let's reverse and John is black and Bill is white.

DELORES (black officer): I want to say that but I am not that sure because -- The reason I'm having difficulties with this is because personally when I was growing up in Nigeria, we were all one race but we are from different tribes and

what we had was (unintelligible), which was this tribe thinks this tribe is not as clean, this tribe thinks this tribe is lazy, this tribe thinks this. So when it comes to America, there's a racial mix of all different races. And I don't know -- since I'm not white I don't know how the white people, but I don't -- if they feel that way they don't often show it like that. He is very quick to hmm, that was done because I am black. Even though I've done something wrong along with that, I would feel I was -- okay, maybe he is raising his voice extra to try to be forceful because I'm black, you know what I mean?

INTERVIEWER: If both John and Bill were black --

DELORES: Then it wouldn't be an issue. It wouldn't be a racial thing. It would just be, you didn't get the thing done. You're probably lazy.

INTERVIEWER: But is there a cultural component, an allowance with the context to get a little more expressive than you might if the dynamics were different?

DELORES: Yes, because I think when -- I don't know because we're really, really, really changing but, if you have two black people yelling at each other, forget trying to be cautious, the whole nine yards. You would be as loud (unintelligible) calling all kinds of names, calling your mama names but it would be okay because you've understood that you're not trying to really -- you're talking to me and not the group, my group. In that case you're cursing me and not just my group. There's more -- you get more effect if you think the group is --

versus if you're talking to me as an individual. If it's a black and black person, then I wouldn't feel like you're an aggressive person. Whereas, if it's a black and white, then you must be in status bigger than me.

INTERVIEWER: From a cultural perspective do you think there are different rules, between how we express ourselves to one another within a culture?

DELORES: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: How are they different? What's allowable and what's not?

DELORES: Oh, I can only talk from the black perspective. If you get two children talking, the N word -- we call each other that and that's no problem -- call anything. But let someone of a different race use that term -- for some reason what is funny within a culture and allowed between ourselves, if any outsider comes in it's not allowed because you may not fully understand the context in which it's being used so you may use it wrong and therefore it becomes offensive. And the prime example is using that N word, but don't try to -- unless you really, really know them very well. And there are some white people that have been around black people and know when to use it and when not to use it and that's really okay.

Delores described her understanding that cultural responses to situations differ between many black and white members. What was perfectly acceptable in the black culture was often not understood by white observers, whether in child discipline or work related matters, as described in these excerpts.

INTERVIEWER: Is being a little more expressive, just in for example tone, body language, volume more allowable -- in other words if you saw a group of two or three black individuals trying to sort out something difficult. Okay, given those same set of circumstances, would the white folks understand what was taking place?

DELORES: No.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. If you saw the white folks acting like that what would be your interpretation?

DELORES: Something is really wrong because it's not common for them to be that expressive from my observation anyway. I see when it when I take my children out, how the mothers relate to their children, the white mothers to the children and the black mothers to the children. They're just different. We will yell and yell at that child right there but here -- Johnny, come on here. I mean it's a much calmer relationship. You know the black mother would spank that child right then and there.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have to temper how you express yourself when you're dealing with whites?

DELORES: As I said before, you have to be cautious. You have to think of your words, think of your body language because what is okay in my culture with me and my black friends would not be okay with my white friends because there's no need to be talking to her like that whereas in the black culture, yeah, if I yell it's

okay (unintelligible) so loud. I tend to be loud. If it sounds like I'm yelling just ask me. And I see people looking at my face sometimes when I say something because they're not sure if that tone of voice matches the emotion and then that gives me a clue that they misunderstand. Whereas a black person might not have a problem with you [if you are black] yelling at her like that.

INTERVIEWER: You and I are working on the nursing unit and I am superior to you by -- I'm your rater. And you make an honest medication error and I clearly need to really discuss this with you, and we're behind closed doors, and let's say that we're both black. How will that conversation play out as opposed to, I'm white and you're black?

DELORES: I would think that you would probably yell at me for doing something wrong but -- you are now black. We're both black now. I would think that you would yell at me for doing something wrong and correct me but I would hope that you would not (unintelligible) to make sure that that doesn't happen again.

INTERVIEWER: Would you yell back?

DELORES: I wouldn't yell back because in that case I was wrong.

INTERVIEWER: And suppose we disagreed on the facts? I didn't particularly like the way you were doing something --

DELORES: Okay, so if there is some other misunderstanding. Yeah, there will be yelling back, because we were behind closed doors. Even if you are a higher

ranking person, we are behind closed doors, no one can hear this conversation but you and I. I would ask your permission to speak to you and then express myself.

INTERVIEWER: Would you ever feel the liberty to do that if I were white?

DELORES: I would be very cautious. I would come close but cautious.

INTERVIEWER: Would you perceive that I would be afraid of you?

DELORES: Yes, because I have heard of situations like that. You feel like being threatened because your tone of voice got really loud.

INTERVIEWER: And why the tone?

DELORES: That's my suggestion. Loud tone of voice. The tone of voice then tends to be threatening, you know, to them. They associate that with violence whereas we express, we already have violence in a different -- if we need to be violent, we will be violent. It's never yelling.

Dozens: Ritualistic Issues

INTERVIEWER: Would you describe it [the dozens] as sort of a verbal duel?

ARLEEN (black enlisted): Yes, definitely.

INTERVIEWER: Is the game usually started in fun?

ARLEEN: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Is it intended to escalate to frustration and anger?

ARLEEN: I don't think so. I don't think it's intended.

INTERVIEWER: Would you ever see white folks doing that?



ARLEEN: No, I don't think -- well I did in school some, but I think with blacks it would go on to a certain age than with whites -- things like that.

INTERVIEWER: If whites were to encounter two black young folks, men, cracking on one another, what would they be thinking? Would they misinterpret what was going on?

ARLEEN: I think they would.

INTERVIEWER: What would they be thinking?

ARLEEN: That they're probably fighting or something, which it will escalate into that but -- they're on the right track.

INTERVIEWER: But they probably are over-reading it at times?

ARLEEN: Yes, I would think so.

ANN: (black officer): Well see the thing is, that is in a -- that's in a playful kind of situation. If they're in a work environment, in the professional environment, those rules don't hold I don't think.

INTERVIEWER: If two or more African-American males were away from the work place, are there culturally acceptable duels that might go on verbally that if I walked up, I might not understand what's going on?

BETH (black officer): Yes, definitely.

INTERVIEWER: And how would you describe that?

BETH: I think that -- depending on the age of the African-American males and just like within the other group, you know, their backgrounds to a certain extent

but not necessarily. They might be kind of loud. What other people may see as a loud altercation, you know, it's probably more like horseplay or, you know, how young guys kind of wrestle around or whatever. You may not see them wrestling around. I don't know how to exactly describe it. You may walk up [as a White person] and think that there's something really going on here, but there's not.

INTERVIEWER: I've heard the situation described as doing the dozens.

BETH: Oh, yeah but that's old. I don't think the African-Americans would call it that. They probably wouldn't know what it is unless it's from some movie or they overheard it from their parents, or something like that. But, yeah, doing the dozens, it can be just play, just play. But it can get out of hand as well.

The intention in this line of the interview was not to specifically outline the essence of the sport of the dozens, but to demonstrate a cultural aspect of expressiveness that has much wider margins for the black culture, and very narrow margins for the white culture. The difficulty begins when, through cultural misunderstanding, a white individual overreacts to, what is otherwise a culturally correct situation, among black communicants. This cultural difference and over interpretation of expressiveness is considered a significant finding in this research.

INTERVIEWER: What is the dozens?

BETH (black officer): The dozens is kind of -- jokingly kind of a one-upmanship, you know what I mean? Say for instance -- I'm trying to think of

one. Oh I can't think of anything. But what it is, you know, if you [a white person] want to really get into an uncomfortable situation, say something that's very derogatory about an African-American person's mom, and there you go. Friendship's gone, you know, and they're very upset with you. But in the dozens you can get away with it depending on how you say it, you know what I mean? Or if I want to tell you I think your mom's so ugly -- what is it? Well I don't know. I can remember as a kid you said, "Oh, your mom wears combat boots. Well your mom does,"-- and it's back and forth. But it's playful. It's not -- there's no fighting really during any of this. It can avoid -- you know, you can use that to avoid a fighting situation, you know what I mean? Usually what happens is it gets to be fun to see who can outsmart the next one, who's more creative, who has the wider imagination? And then back and forth it goes and it's more fun. But if you come up on it and you go, " Well your mom or -- so I'll do this -- well I would do this." You know, it's a back and forth kind of thing, but if you don't know the people involved in that situation, or the men, you don't know the dozens, then you think that there's going to be a fight any second.

INTERVIEWER: The real question is, I'm not talking somebody's mother or something else, but two black individuals maybe having a little contest that is playful, but to a white person, you'd better call the MPs? (military police)

BETH: All the time.

INTERVIEWER: At work?

BETH: Yeah, I think so. And if it does I think if a white person were to observe, it would certainly not be because they wanted to come to observe it. It would be something they happened to observe. It's not something that's practiced all the time unless it's some really young people, you know what I mean? Really kind of immature people who can't draw the line between work and outside. But like you said if it was a Caucasian person watching then, we've got to get Security up here. I think the playful verbal dueling, that would be acceptable at work but the dozens, that's a different kind of dueling and that would not be.

INTERVIEWER: Okay but that's [the dozens] understood among two black males but not understood at all by a white person?

BETH: I think it depends on the white person, where they come from, what their experience with African-Americans have been because I would be very cautious if I was a Caucasian person, male or female, jumping into the middle of the dozens because you may not be accepted doing that.

Caroline's experience suggested that there can be a fine line that is crossed by one player or the other that ultimately causes a more serious altercation to occur.

INTERVIEWER: What's doing the dozens?

CAROLINE (black officer): Oh, playing the dozens?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

CAROLINE: To go back and forth with someone else and talk about -- you can talk about somebody's mother and you come up with different stuff about his mother, da, da, da, back and forth.

INTERVIEWER: What's that all about?

CAROLINE: Sometimes when you're playful, and sometimes they're going to be mean so you have fighting words so to say.

INTERVIEWER: How likely is it it's going to end up with fight?

CAROLINE: Probably nine times out of ten.

INTERVIEWER: It does?

CAROLINE: Yeah, probably nine times out of ten?

INTERVIEWER: Somebody gets offended?

CAROLINE: Uh-huh, yeah. Some people will go too far and -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER: How do you know where the line is?

CAROLINE: When you get hit.

INTERVIEWER: I should have known!

INTERVIEWER: Is it more culturally acceptable to be more expressive with one culture than another or with one cultural background than another?

CAROLINE: African-Americans probably across the board are more expressive and they voice their expressions, they voice their opinions more so. And they will be heard. I'm not sure that's acceptable or whether or not -- in the workplace but they do it. I'm not sure if it's legal for them.

INTERVIEWER: Would a white person coming on to that expressiveness be understanding of what's going on or would they be either intimidated or perhaps every frightened?

CAROLINE: Possibly intimidated.

INTERVIEWER: Because they don't understand it?

CAROLINE: Because they don't understand and it's a natural reaction to some African-Americans that don't mean anything by what they say.

#### Expressiveness

INTERVIEWER: Now would a specialist be very likely to be correcting a sergeant?

DIXIE (black enlisted): It depends on what type of specialist they are. You've got some specialists who are scared to say anything to somebody. They just say, "Well, okay, whatever. You know, I've got to listen to them because they're a staff sergeant."

ARLEEN (black enlisted): In the Army I would say you just suck it up and go on.

INTERVIEWER: But does John have the right to blast Bill a little bit?

ARLEEN: In the military situation that I've seen for the last two years, I think he does because of things that we were taught, you know. You know, you've got to be responsible. What if we were on the front line and you forgot to get this. So I think in the military, yes, John had a right to blast Bill.

INTERVIEWER: All right, let's make John the specialist and Bill is the staff sergeant.

ANN: (black officer) Well, you know, Bill is going to put him at ease and tell him he is, you know, being disrespectful because then suddenly it's okay -- well not okay but, you know, the specialist is just not going to be at liberty to say what he wants to say or to express that frustration to the staff sergeant. He is going to be expected to keep it in.

INTERVIEWER: So the racial piece does or doesn't make any difference? It's the rank?

ANN: Exactly. I think it's the rank that makes a difference.

BETH (black officer) As long as he is not screaming at the specialist, or being abusive, or using profane language -- if he is just relaying his point then I think it's appropriate. I think by virtue of the military structure, he has got to be careful how forceful he is. But I still think as long as it's done -- he is not hollering, he is not being abusive, he is not using profane language. He is stating the fact and there you go.

CAROLINE (black officer) It would not be acceptable but it's more acceptable the other way if the Staff Sergeant talked to the E-4 like that. It has to be verbalized. You have to let the E-4 know or the person that I expected something of you. It was not done. How you say it, yeah, it does matter how you say it.

INTERVIEWER: So when you get more rank you get volume?

DELORES (black officer) Yes. It's okay to have more volume than the lower rank.

INTERVIEWER: Is a black female more likely to stand her ground harder or something than a white female?

DIXIE (black enlisted) I think so.

INTERVIEWER: Why is that?

DIXIE: Because it's just us. I mean it's just -- you know, don't nobody really want them talking to them but I don't know, for some reason, you know, -- well okay, for me, I feel that I have to prove something to people. You know, like I have to let you know, look just because I'm the only black female down here, you're not going to just tell me what you're going to do to my shift.

INTERVIEWER: Let's have two females in this instead of two males. How's that interaction going to go?

DIXIE: Oh, females they don't ever get along, so that's not going to go well. You're going to have the -- I think you will have the higher ranking female -- okay, I think you're going to have the lower ranking female really not going to say anything to the higher ranking female because for some reason higher ranking females, the same thing with males, they just feel they have to prove something.

You know, because I'm not going to let some Specialist female, you know, like yell back at me, you know. It's just not going to happen.



INTERVIEWER: Is it going to be a worse situation if they're both white or if they're both black?

DIXIE: I think if they're both black because black women, we've got an attitude.

INTERVIEWER: Describe that.

DIXIE: We just have an attitude just because -- I mean, I don't know. We just feel like -- I mean I know everybody goes through their problems and, you know, some white people they go through more harsh stuff and more worse stuff than other black females, but depending on where you grew up at, and where you came up from, you're going to have an attitude. Most black females who I came across, we have attitude. We have grudges. We have chips on our shoulders. The world is just against us, and that's it. And so like any time anybody come at us (unintelligible) it's just like -- you know, we just think that I'll just come back at somebody.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, these attitudes and grudges, what are they?

DIXIE: They come from everything. It just comes from dealing with men who lie, and it's not about nothing. It comes from working and you think you're doing real good in your job, and you're not getting the recognition that you feel you deserve. It comes from -- certain single parent females, it comes from that, from being a single parent because the dad done left or whatever, and he don't want anything to do with you, or the child. It just comes from everything.

INTERVIEWER: And so if another female has an encounter with you, it's just going to all come out on that?

DIXIE: Yeah, especially if you come at me. Like, if you're yelling at me about ordering some supplies. I mean, get somebody else to order them from now on. I mean if it's just that bad then don't have me order no more supplies then.

Problem solved.

INTERVIEWER: If the two females have an encounter in there like that and they've been just fine with each other before but now they have this encounter, how long is it going to be before they get over it?

DIXIE: Until one of the other females come up to them and they're like, "Look, I'm sorry but - - ."

INTERVIEWER: How long is that going to take?

DIXIE: Whenever they come because I just had a situation like that yesterday. A female, she snapped at me and it was uncalled for. You know, she was having a bad day -- I mean well, it wasn't a bad day, but like a lot of things was going on so when I had said something, she snapped at me. So I said, "You know what, you don't have to worry about me saying anything else to you for the rest of the day." And that's what I did. I didn't speak to her. I didn't say anything to her. She said, "You're mad?" And I was like, "Yeah." She said, "You mad at me, I said, "No," and I kept on walking. And so then when she pulled me to the side she was like, "What's wrong?" And I was like, "Everything." I said, -- "but you

started this. You started my anger, like you just pissed me off. You started the piss off part.” And she was like, “Oh, well, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to come at you like that, but it was just this was going on, that was going on so when you said that, I kind of snapped at you and I realized that when I snapped at you, you know, what I did and I was sorry for that.” And I was like, “Okay.” But had she not said anything to me I still wouldn’t be speaking to her, because I felt I didn’t deserve that.

INTERVIEWER: Now let’s make John, John, and Bill is now Betty. Is a male going to be as likely to be as expressive with a female?

DIXIE: Unless he knows that female and if she is one of those sensitive type females, then he may watch what he says to her if he knows for her, you know, to usually be whining or always crying.

INTERVIEWER: Let’s do it the other way around. Let’s do John is now a female and Bill is a male. Is the female as likely to go off on a male?

DIXIE: I’m the only female down there now so I -- well all the enlisted anyways are all males. So I feel that I have to like, you know, speak to them like I have no fear of them, which I don’t, but I have to talk to them like, “Look, I’m the NCO and, you know, you’re” -- to the males also because sometimes they talk to me like -- I’m an E-4 and I have to let them know. “Look, I’m an NCO just like you are.” So sometimes by being a female, you have to come off on guys kind of strong to let them know, you know, you’re standing your ground, or you’re not

going to take no crap from them. So you just have to stand your ground sometimes.

INTERVIEWER: Go back to the supply room and would two females be more likely to have a --

ARLEEN (black enlisted): A cat fight.

ARLEEN: I would think probably females just because, you know, I'd probably have something to say back to her before I would him.

INTERVIEWER: But are females more likely to jaw --

ARLEEN: Exchange words or something?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

ARLEEN: Yeah, I think they are.

Ann provided a reflection on her working relationship in a previous assignment, with a white subordinate officer. She detailed what she would have expected in their working relationship, had the subordinate been a black male rather than a white male.

ANN (black officer): I'm reflecting on my own comments that I made saying that, you know, a black male may have more openly challenged me than what [a named former white subordinate officer] did. I mean, again he challenged, but he was very tactful about doing it. He was very careful with his presentation, whereas with a black male, they may feel like, you know, they can just kind of do it much more openly. Not necessarily in a more disrespectful manner, but just

much more openly rather than trying to tactfully do it, if that makes sense, which could be a source of conflict between the two.

Beth described differences between how black males were able to relate to one another in an expressive sense, but that the same did not necessarily apply across the gender spectrum.

INTERVIEWER: We talked about African-American males. What about females? Is that --

BETH (black officer): If you walked up on a group of African-American females and you thought that there was a fight about to break out, it probably is.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. If you walked in on two females would you have a different approach, a different thought?

CAROLINE (black officer): I probably would have a different process with them, you know, they're more emotional and even though that one was wrong, she still will have something to say and try to defend herself as to why -- and you might ask her like to stop fussing and ask her stuff like that.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Tell me what you're saying again. The females --

CAROLINE: If they had the same scenario with the females than the ones that had originally ordered the supplies, then the one that didn't order supplies, she would probably say, "Well da, da, da, and because this and that," and the other one would go, "I didn't ask you all that! From right here, you didn't do what I

asked you to do,” and it can go back and forth, versus a male -- I don’t know, females are just going to say things. They’re more emotional on both parties and they tend to express it more so than your male would express.

INTERVIEWER: Is that because they are female or would there be a racial component? Are two black females more likely not to speak to one another, or two white females not speak to each other, or some other combination? I guess it boils down to, is it a racial question or is it a gender question?

CAROLINE: And it could very well be both.

INTERVIEWER: Are males more likely to resolve an issue and get over it?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, nine times out of ten. Maybe not five minutes later but nine times out of ten, you know, throw it out the window and be done with it.

While females hold this grudge, and that’s the whites and the blacks.

INTERVIEWER: So for John to be forceful is okay?

ARTHUR: If that was the way he had to express it, yeah, that was okay.

ARTHUR: Variations between the black and white?

INTERVIEWER: Right.

ARTHUR: Okay. With each other?

INTERVIEWER: Okay, explain it both ways then.

ARTHUR: Okay. If we’re both black, I’ll put the black first, I think -- it’s kind of difficult. I’ll say it’s kind of difficult to explain to you from both because it all depends on -- there’s a lot of variance involved as far as the background. As I see

it it's the total opposite of another black compared to this black. I kind of can know the norm of a black or pick up on how this person is just by, you know, being or just talking with that person five minutes, you know, to get a sense of what I can actually say to this person, or get a sense of is this person. With the blacks it wouldn't be more of a blow up it would be kind of more joking type of ways and laugh about it and then go from there. And the reason being I would say that with the blacks because black males -- because there's a lot of pressure I believe on the black male now. But I believe it's [humor] a mechanism, I know from me that I'll turn on. Humor helps me to calm down, reevaluate the whole situation, and get fresh ideas.

Note again the emphasis that black participants placed on relationship work while whites concentrated on business activity work.

ARTHUR (black enlisted): Well I don't think with the blacks, I think there was more kind of pass it off and it would be like okay, you know, we'll just deal with it later. And then on the white side I think it would have probably been more of a hard type thing, and see if we can get something done now, you know. No exceptions, we need to get this done now or it needs to be taken care of.

BEN (black enlisted): Yeah, because from what you're saying John didn't belittle him in any way racially. He didn't cuss at him. At this point, John wants to tactfully -- but at the same time, you know, maintain respect. You know, he wants to tactfully but forcefully, you know, tell Bill, "Hey, this is what's going

on, fix it.” But like I say, you know, if you’re using profane language, if you try to belittle him in any kind of way, anything like that, you know. I mean, I don’t see anything wrong with it.

INTERVIEWER: Is either one preferred?

BEN: Well by me being John, I’m the type of person, I don’t like to get firm unless I really have to. But like once again, depending on whether I told -- you know, whether I brought this up to Bill before now -- initially, no, because we’re both grown men and, you know, tell a person once and they should get it done. Like I’m the type person, I’m a grown man first. And I would speak to you accordingly. You know, and I’ll treat you as an adult as well. So, no, I wouldn’t use the firm tone and all that stuff initially, no. Because I’m the type of person, you know, I give everybody a fair shake.

Alex, a former enlisted soldier, now serving as an officer made the following important contributions. In the excerpt, Alex demonstrates three strong points:

1. That communication on a personal relationship level is the ideal;
2. There is no need to fear one another
3. The degree of latitude Alex felt in being able to express himself.

Note: The capitalization of words in the excerpt reflects his actual volume emphasis while being interviewed.



INTERVIEWER: OK, now, as we did previously, let's make them both the same rank and both of them are black.

ALEX (black officer): (Long pause) I probably think they would be the same as if they were white or black. You would expect that incompetence, cause it's a stereotype that is taught to us [black males] from the time we hit kindergarten, from the time we are outside of, from the time we have to intermingle with other cultures, we are taught that. And we think it of ourselves. We [black males] fight the battle, and we think it of ourselves, so I think they are probably thinking the same thing....And I've experienced it.

INTERVIEWER: Would two black males tend to be, now don't let me put words in your mouth, more expressive toward one another in those circumstances, and consider it normal than they would if all of the other dynamics were different?

ALEX: It depends on the situation, I don't think in that situation, no. But I think that if it is not dealing with on the job the yes, I think there would be some loud expressions and they wouldn't take offense to that.

INTERVIEWER: Elaborate on that from a cultural perspective.

ALEX: If me and my friends were supposed to go the swimming pool and my responsibility, and I say I was bringing the towels and I didn't bring the towels then my friends may say some pretty vulgar things to me. You know....LOUD. But I know they wouldn't mean anything by it. They wouldn't say those things to

sting, it would just be our way of expressing yourself. You know they may say, "YEAH, I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO BRING THE DAMN TOWELS, YOU KNOW YOU SCREWED UP MAN, YOU DIDN'T BRING THE TOWELS." Or something else and there wouldn't be any offense to it. And I would probably snap to say something back to them.

INTERVIEWER: There could get to be some name calling and everybody is OK with it?

ALEX: Yeah

INTERVIEWER: If I were to watch that as a white person, what would I be thinking?

ALEX: That we're in a serious altercation, verbal altercation.

INTERVIEWER: But you are saying that that would probably not occur at work?

ALEX: No

INTERVIEWER: Even if it were in private?

ALEX: No.

INTERVIEWER: Because it is a military situation or it just wouldn't occur at work?

ALEX: I don't think it would occur at work, and I have to speak from my perspective, I think you have to, when you're on the job you're in the white man's world, so you know, you basically, I mean it's like, I don't want to say turn it on,

turn it off, but you have a certain way, whether you are in the military or not. But when you are at home or when you're in your own environment then you can be yourself. But I certainly am a different way at work than I am at home. I'm much more relaxed, my choice of words is different. You know I'll speak to my Sergeant here, we're speaking totally professional, but if he calls me at home, totally different language, choice of words. Whereas if I were to hear that here at work I would take offense. It's like a sixth sense or something. I wouldn't do that when I got this uniform on. You act a certain way, you ARE a certain way.

The next segment illustrates the concept of getting it out so that it could be dealt with. Whites did not want to do that; confrontation was not deemed acceptable behavior.

ALEX: I try to get that out the way first if I'm having a problem, the first thing I'm going to do is we are going to sit down and we are going to communicate...bottom line. Let's communicate, let's get everything out in the open RIGHT now. What is your issue? Why are we here when we started here? You know we, met, you know, it was the first time we met, what happened from then to now, and what are your issues with me?

INTERVIEWER: When you have that sit down and talk about it, would the white person ever have initiated that conversation?

ALEX: I don't think so.

INTERVIEWER: Do they want to discuss it or do they dance around it, feel afraid?

ALEX: Not necessarily feel afraid, but dance around doing it just because. At that point you know they are doing it just because. About half the time the [white] soldiers that I've had to sit down with had issues with me. Some were legitimate, and I had to apologize, and I had to say "Let me apologize for that, that was wrong, but let me..." and I explain to them why I made the decision that I made, or why I had to do that in that situation to try and get an understanding.

INTERVIEWER: Were these of a professional variety or a cultural variety? The issues?

ALEX: I think they were both. I think they were both, professional, but, there were definitely professional decisions or professional issues but I think it was the culture, culture differences that made them that, that made them an issue. So I had to sit down and tell them why. If it was legitimate, even if I was right. If I felt as though they had a.... I could understand where they were coming from, because, I was enlisted, then I would sit down and explain it to them. And even if I didn't agree with them, even if they didn't have a legitimate beef I still, I would not stand up and tell them, "Hey, that's BULL SHIT." You know, "Okay, that's a valid concern BUT, but, you know, you got to fix this because....it's not a winning situation." I have one [white] E-5 that used to work for me, that used to work with me on the ward, who I'd sit him down, and we were talking, and he

just wasn't having it, you know, he had nothing to say to me, you know, I was an ass, I bossed him around....

INTERVIEWER: He was white?

ALEX: He was white and I was like, I'm trying to tell "What about, am I? What about it that's PISSING YOU OFF? Am I talking HARSH? I want to know what you're, what you're THINKING." "Ah, you're just an ass, you are mean sir."

And I say, "You know what, bottom line is, you GONNA DO WHAT THE HELL I SAY. You [are] in A LOOSE, LOOSE SITUATION. I OUT RANK YOU. So you know, you can LIKE IT OR NOT, BUT YOU'RE GOING TO DO IT." Because I mean he was just being, causing tension, and at that point I knew it wasn't culture, THAT was straight up RACIAL, and so at that point it was no use in discussing it further. "You are in a loose, loose situation. I'm sitting down here and trying to make things easy for you, or not easy for you, FOR US, trying to REASON with you, you weren't having it. Okay, you're going to listen....

INTERVIEWER: Is the expressiveness different between say you and black friends than it would be white friends, or between your observations of two white folks?

BOB (black officer): I know that there is a perception that, you know, black people are friendlier towards each other or whatever but it's just that -- I think culturally there is certain norms that go way back that people just don't violate. All the black people will speak to each other whether they know each other or not,

and all the white people will keep on walking and they will only speak to you if they know you. And see that's a cultural thing. That's 100 percent culture. It's like a knee reflex I mean for me, because I was taught from the time I was a little boy that you never pass another adult without speaking to them, or saying "Good morning, or How are you doing?" It's almost like a reflex, you know, you just say it.

INTERVIEWER: Does it irritate you when a white --

BOB: Well it's not expected. I mean culturally I don't know. I don't think they think about it.

Chester was of the opinion that becoming expressive was not acceptable.

CHESTER (black officer): Right. In my line of work, you know, there's a certain way that you communicate to people and it's not -- you know, it's unacceptable -- a certain way you express yourself. So I would say that's unacceptable if he is just going off on Bill for just --

Here Chester described the notion of walking away from a white supervisor to avoid a situation that he did not want to become a problem. He seemed to know that a white supervisor was not able to have this conversation without him becoming the victim of unwanted consequences. The white supervisor on the other hand was going to completely misinterpret the behavior of walking away as one of disrespect or apathetic behavior.

INTERVIEWER: But now you're Bill. How do you feel?

CHESTER (black officer): Well I would feel upset obviously. You know, this person is, you know, speaking to me any kind of way and I'd probably just walk away, you know, instead of, you know, having the problem, you know, escalate to something else. I would just, you know, walk away and say, hey, you know, I'm going for a walk. You know, calm yourself down and I'll be back and then we can talk when I get back so.

INTERVIEWER: Now I think where I'm going with this is, is John [as a white supervisor] going to be less likely to be animated because Bill is black or is it going to make one bit of difference under the circumstances?

CHESTER: Under the circumstances I would say it would make a difference.

INTERVIEWER: Would or would not?

CHESTER: It would. It would make a difference.

INTERVIEWER: So what's John going to do?

CHESTER: John, he'll probably be the calmer one. He'll probably be like "Okay, yeah, you didn't order the supplies." I think he would come across more calmer for the simple fact that he is white I would say.

INTERVIEWER: Is that a cultural comment or is he afraid of confrontation?

CHESTER: I would say it's cultural.

INTERVIEWER: John is African-American and he is still the superior person and Bill is still the one that didn't do what he was supposed to do and in this case he is white. So is John going to be more animated because he is African-

American, towards the person that made the foul up, or is he going to be less likely to do it because this person is white, or what difference does it make?

CHESTER: I would say I think John might be more animated for the simple fact that, you know, he is African American. He'd probably come across as being more -- probably loud and more upfront, and he is probably not, you know, afraid to kind of show the (unintelligible) thing that he is saying. He'll probably just let it all out. Like "Hey, you messed up, you know."

INTERVIEWER: Now is the expressiveness from a cultural vantage point?

CHESTER: I would say from a cultural vantage point.

INTERVIEWER: What's snapping or cracking on somebody?

ARTHUR (black enlisted): Well my understanding is it's humiliating them in a way -- someone else, you know.

INTERVIEWER: Is that unique to one race or another?

ARTHUR: Yeah, yeah. It depends on the person. I know for me, I can pick up on a person if a person's being hostile to me, snapping at them, but my snap is to improve a person. You can either be snapping at them or you can snap at them just to [see] what they say, you know, bring them down. If I snap it's more of improvement, you know. And some people take it wrong. If they take it the wrong way, believe me, I will never ever snap at -- it could be some -- the reason why I'm doing it is to save their behind



INTERVIEWER: Outside of the work environment, do you see that kind of thing going on culturally between black males?

ARTHUR: When you're outside the workplace you just want to relax, have fun, take things easy. And if you do get snapped at pretty much you're going to snap back hard because you're not in that work environment where, you know, sometimes they deem that as being inappropriate behavior or what not.

Ben, in describing the dozens, makes the point that, in its truest form, "it is like watching a concert because, although they don't physically get it on, they just sit back and relish, you know, the laughs and stuff." He cautions, about those who are actively engaged in the duel, "If you can't run with the big dogs, stay under the porch."

INTERVIEWER: What does playing the dozens mean?

BEN (black enlisted): Joking and the dozens -- when you say dozens, basically mama jokes.

INTERVIEWER: Does that still happen?

BEN : Very seldom. You find it more in the younger crowd. You know, you find it more in the young crowd.

INTERVIEWER: In or outside the military, it doesn't matter?

BEN: In and out, but now with the political standings and (unintelligible) -- basically now -- we're living in a politically correct society now. It's done pretty much more in the closet, you know, out of the limelight now. Because myself,

you know, I even do it, but I'll don't do the mama jokes. I don't do the mama jokes but, you know, as far as cracking on anybody else, we do it every single day around here. And that's one of the reasons why people want to come to my shift, work with me because I'm not only a leader, I'm a friend as well. So, yes it happens, you know, right here.

INTERVIEWER: Is it done equally among people, males/females, white and black?

BEN: Males and females but it's done more so, you know, with blacks.

INTERVIEWER: Does somebody who doesn't understand what's going on, does it sound mean, either in the tone of voice or the words that are used?

BEN: To someone who doesn't know what's going on, they're not used to it but the stuff that is being said and the tone of voice -- even if they're not used to it -- you know, they don't get in on it, but they listen, and it's like they're watching a concert because although, they don't physically get in on, they just sit back and just relish, you know, the laughs and stuff too.

INTERVIEWER: Does it ever get mean spirited?

BEN: No, uh-uh. Now here with me, no, it doesn't. But I've seen sometimes where individuals -- they want to start joking, they want to start cracking, but if you get a few good ones on them, they can't handle it, and they want you to shut.... I'm the type person, kind of like a train that's going and going and I'm

not going to stop. And I'll tell you first off, "...if you can't run with the big dogs, stay under the porch."

BOB (black officer): Well there is "cracking." You know, cracking on folks. That's old folks language, dozens and cracking. I mean now the new kids, they've probably got some other lingo but I'm not up on the vernacular of the street right now. Yeah, it goes on, but usually it's on your -- usually you reserve your joke telling to your own cohorts.

Ben demanded to be respected whether or not he was outranked by individuals. Ben also made a statement that, in this research, appears significant. He stated that he was an adult male in this society and neither rank nor race changed how he expected to be approached in work setting.

INTERVIEWER: If John is a staff sergeant and Bill is a specialist, does that change anything?

BEN (black enlisted): No. From my point of view, no. But I've seen military individuals, they tend to use their rank as leverage and stuff, you know, to speak anyway they want to towards individuals. Once again, I've told senior ranking individuals the same exact thing. Look, I'm a grown ass man number one. Speak to me accordingly. Like I said -- and if they accept it, the military, said to say,

yes. Like I said, it's not doing a black thing. I'm just doing the right thing and so that you know who I am as a person.

INTERVIEWER: Let's make John a Staff Sergeant and Bill a Specialist. Does that make things okay, not okay, how would you describe that?

DAN (black enlisted): It's still about the same. Bill is the specialist. He is a junior. The staff sergeant hopefully has laid down the rules and the timelines that he wanted Bill to get the supplies in so it's still okay for him to kind of emotionally expressive, tell the guy why -- you know, how he feels about him letting the supplies get low.

Arthur's description of encounters with white, male supervisors is classic. He described being unable to express his own concerns in the manner that he can be heard. Having no other choice, he simply went along for the ride. This is representative of cultural differences in expressiveness and of resulting communication miscues that most likely occur between the black and white working members.

INTERVIEWER: One [apparent] aggravation between whites and blacks is that from a black person's perspective, a white person is afraid to engage them [blacks]. They won't get as animated or conversely, they won't allow a black person to become expressive because it's interpreted by the white person that

they're out of control, whereas that's not at all what the black intends whatsoever.

They're just trying to get the point made.

ARTHUR (black enlisted): Right.

INTERVIEWER: How does that play into any experiences that you have if at all?

ARTHUR: Well I guess I'd be going right back to my work environment where I've notice with white males, not the females, the white males have a tendency to not let you really express yourself. I believe that's true because [during] the conversations, they're in the driver's seat in the conversation, from what I've seen, and this is like the higher ranking even some of the same rank, you know. They're in the driver's seat, and they're driving, and when you try to mash on that driver's ed car brake, and attempt to look at something else, they're too tense and, you know, they take control again and after a while you pick up on it, you just try to enjoy the ride as much as possible.

#### Supervision

INTERVIEWER: Now let's make John a staff sergeant and Bill is a specialist.

CHESTER (black officer): If John's a staff sergeant -- I would say I wouldn't see anything wrong with it then if John's a staff sergeant.

INTERVIEWER: So he can just feel more animated and that's all right?

CHESTER: I would say so.

INTERVIEWER: And Bill as a specialist should take it or be offended?

CHESTER: Well, you know, being that he is a specialist, you know, at that time, he should say, "Hey, you know, yes, sergeant, you're right. I didn't order it," and then just walk away.

The following would only occur if both parties were black:

CHESTER: Now if he has any problem he could just say, "Sarge, you know, it just doesn't feel right. You know, could we go to the office and we can talk. I just didn't appreciate the way, you know, you came across."

INTERVIEWER: Is that a military influence or some other variable?

CHESTER: I think it's some other variable. Even if I was in the civilian sector and working at an office, it's a certain way I have to come across to the people at that office rather than, you know, I'm out with my friends or I'm back at the house.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Is this your work behavior or is this, we have to put on the white world?

CHESTER: I would say it's a work behavior.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, but it's not necessarily put on the white demeanor and behave in the white man's world and then go back and go home? I guess there's sort of three answers here, one of which is the one that you can choose. It's either I have to act white because this is the world that I'm working in, or I have to act different because that's how you act in the workplace, or I have to act a certain way because this is military.

CHESTER: I think it's the workplace. You have act different because it's simply the workplace, you know.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So what's the difference in how you behave? Can you describe that? Or how you act.

CHESTER: I guess the difference is, it comes down to conforming to the way I guess the office operates because there is a certain way, you know, you speak when you're talking in the office. You know, you have somebody coming in and say -- you know, just stating, you know, business. There's a certain [way] you communicate rather than, you know, being back at home. It's just the environment that you're in.

INTERVIEWER: So if you were at home, what would be different?

CHESTER: If I were at home I would feel more relaxed, you know. I'd feel like, you know, since I'm at home, I could speak any kind of way that I choose but --

INTERVIEWER: And any kind of volume tone?

CHESTER: Any kind of volume tone because it's --

INTERVIEWER: And it wouldn't be judged?

CHESTER: It wouldn't be judged because I would be around my friends, my family and I don't that they would judge, you know, the way I speak.

INTERVIEWER: So if you tried that at work, you'd be paying for it for --

CHESTER: Oh, definitely. You try that at work -- you know, work is different and --

INTERVIEWER: You know, you made a comment too a few minutes ago and that is you said you'd walk away. I've heard that several times before. Why would you walk away?

CHESTER: For me, I think, you know, if I would stay there then, things would just escalate to something worse, you know. Probably come down to words and even fists. So I figure just by myself walking away -- and I know the type of person that I am. You know, somebody gets me upset then, hey, you know, I'm going to let them have it, so my best thing is just to walk away and, you know, allow time to kind of calm things down, clear things up. Then afterwards then -- after a couple of hours then I'll come back and say hey -- you know, sit down and talk, what's the problem?

INTERVIEWER: Okay, suppose you work for me and let's make me a [white]lieutenant colonel and let's make you a captain. And I have something that has displeased me, and I bring it to your attention. And something about the way I say it to you just makes you feel totally bent out of shape, and you decide to walk away rather than deal with it, and then I want to know why in the world you're walking away.

CHESTER: Right. Well in that situation there's no way in the world -- you know, my superior, you know, telling me something, whether or not I agree with



it, or disagree with the tone of voice that he is using or the language that he is using, I would just have to, you know, stay there and just bear it.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, now from a cultural standpoint, would it be better if under that circumstance -- let's suppose you really and truly knew you were in error. We can make up anything, but that you really and truly knew that this was not a personal thing. That it was really -- but you were still so aggravated with yourself or the confrontation, culturally -- if everybody understood everybody's culture, would it be better if I understood that you may just need to walk away for a few minutes and not judge that?

CHESTER: I think it would be better from a cultural point of view if both had that, understanding, hey, certain things -- you know, certain things or -- the way you speak to certain people, might offend them. If that's understood then it would be more, understanding that hey, let the person walk away. You might be offended -- even though I may not think that, I just offended this individual by the way I spoke to them. If that's understood, I think it probably would help the situation a little bit more.

INTERVIEWER: Would a black supervisor of a black individual be more understanding?

CHESTER: I think it probably would be more fire, because I think both sides would kind of go at it.

INTERVIEWER: There's going to be more fire because you're comfortable -- if you're on the receiving end, then what you're telling me and what you just said -- I'm not trying to lead the witness here, that you would feel a lot more comfortable in return fire --

CHESTER: Expressing -- right. I think so. I'd feel more comfortable.

INTERVIEWER: So you'd have really less reason than need to walk away?

CHESTER: Right.

INTERVIEWER: But if you're dealing with me by virtue of the fact that I'm white, you would think, "Any fire I throw here is going to hurt me," whereas if you throw it at a black person they'll understand you.

CHESTER: I think -- yeah, you're definitely right.

INTERVIEWER: Is a black superior going to choose his words more carefully if he has a white subordinate?

DERRICK (black officer): Oh, absolutely, absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: How's he going to do it, harder or less?

DERRICK: He is going to do it very cautiously. He is going to make sure that -- if he is disciplining a white subordinate, he is going to make sure that first of all, he is justified, and he is going to make sure that he doesn't say anything to have the tables turned on him so to speak. He is going to be very careful in the words that he chooses and he is going to be -- yeah, he is going to proceed -- he may be forceful but he is going to proceed with extreme caution.

DERRICK: I think you're right when you say that typically if you were to address any black person that we're going to face it head on -- not necessarily be confrontational. You know, if there's an issue and you see fit for me -- it's a big enough issue for you to call me in the office to sit down and talk then I want to make sure that the statements that you make to me are very justifiable and you have a reason for calling me in. There's evidence supporting the reason why you called me in to talk to me. And if the evidence is accurate, as a black person I'm not going to try to defend it if the evidence is there. However if you call me in based off of assumptions and there's really nothing justifiable based off -- you are my superior and I'm going to respect that. But I'm definitely going to sit up on the edge of my seat, and look you in the eye, and ask you, "Why is it that you're assuming, or you called me based off assumptions, instead of calling me in and approaching me and asking me if these things are issues before you jump to your own conclusions?"

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Exactly what you just said, get to the edge of your seat and look me straight in the eye -- see I don't know that white folks do that, and so if I understood your culture, that would be a normal way of doing it.

DERRICK: I think so.

INTERVIEWER: But if I don't understand that, [as a white supervisor] then all of sudden I go "uh-oh, he is coming across the table," and so I may try to avoid it

because I don't how to deal with it, and there's where I'm really going. Do you agree?

DERRICK: Okay. Yeah, I think so. But, yeah, I'm going to sit up on the edge of my seat, and as a black person I would choose my words really, really carefully. Even though I sit up on the edge of my seat and I want you to know now that we need to really deal with each other, because you called me in, based off of something that's frivolous and nothing that could stick, you know, I need to be able -- I going to be firm but I'm going to really choose my words carefully because, now I know that more than likely, you may feel some intimidation. But I don't need to give you anything to be able to say, you know, that particular coworker is very disorderly or he is very hostile, anything that would come back to "bite me" I guess.

INTERVIEWER: And several African-Americans have made the comment that if this encounter was starting to get real tense, that they would excuse themselves.

DERRICK: Absolutely, absolutely. Either excuse myself or bring in --

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Here's the question. Would you excuse yourself if you were dealing with a black superior?

DERRICK: No, no.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, you'd just do it?

DERRICK: If it was a black superior?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

DERRICK: No. I mean, what I'm saying no to is, if we're having a discussion and I'm dealing with a black superior, more than likely I'm more prone to stay until the issue gets resolved.

INTERVIEWER: No matter how intense it gets?

DERRICK: No matter how intense it gets.

INTERVIEWER: But you're not going to do that with a white person?

DERRICK: No.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

DERRICK: Do I get to elaborate on why?

INTERVIEWER: No, no, please.

DERRICK: Because in the bigger scheme of things I feel like if this situation gets intense, and it is my word against a white person's word, whenever the highers to be take a look at it, I honestly feel like they're going to be more partial to the white guy or to the white person. And if there's a heated discussion -- and it's getting heated and it's between me and a white person, then I know more than likely I'm probably going to say something a little bit out of line that that person will be able to use as his justification as to, you know, why it needed to even go to higher ups anyway. Am I making sense there?

INTERVIEWER: Okay. But let's get at the crux of this. Is it culturally correct for an African-American to become much more exaggerated in their expression in that culture?

DERRICK: I think so, yes.

INTERVIEWER: I mean it's allowable, it's permissible?

DERRICK: It is.

INTERVIEWER: And so you have to alter that because that just doesn't seem to fit the white person's culture.

DERRICK: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: Now let's suppose that I'm your supervisor, as a white person, and you have a very decent understanding that I understand the black culture, and that that's allowable. Would you do it?

DERRICK: No.

INTERVIEWER: You're not going to trust me?

DERRICK: No, not at all.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, then the next quick question on that issue is, do a lot of black folks get in big trouble because they're not exactly sure where the line is, and they cross it with a white person? The second part of that question is, would the black community be better off in the workplace if the white folks understood the nature of expressiveness in the black community?

DERRICK: Oh, yeah, I think so because it's all about perception and what I may feel comfortable doing in the community, and when I say community, the black community, black folks in my culture, you know, it may not be acceptable to another culture. And we can take that farther than just white people. You know, I

probably would approach a Japanese supervisor a little differently. I would probably approach an African, from the continent of Africa who was here, probably differently. But for black Americans trying to, I guess diversify or I guess be -- I think that when we come around in the white community, that, yes, a lot of our action has to be curtailed because there is a lack of understanding there, or even if not a lack of understanding, a lack of acceptance.

ARTHUR (black enlisted): And if he does it in a harsh way I believe Becky would shut down and just be like, if he doesn't let me explain, maybe Becky may just start sobbing too. It depends on the type of person she is, very sensitive type or she is kind of one of these headstrong women.

INTERVIEWER: And it it's two black females?

DERRICK (black officer): And if it's two black females it will probably be, you know, what we just finished talking about as far as they would deal with it initially the way we would deal with it in our culture. And if it's military, I think that that superior is going to somewhere in there interject that, "Oh, yeah, by the way, you know, don't forget that I am superior or, you know, I am higher up in the ranking chain."

INTERVIEWER: Okay now forget John and Bill, it's now Barbara and Betty --

ARTHUR (black enlisted): Definitely different, definitely different and I don't care if they were black or white females, pretty much females in general are really sensitive types. Females are really hateful toward each other. Males are -- we're

more of, if it happens, it's over with, forgot all about it. If we were friends, in other words, if we had a relationship.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of a thing, problematic in the workplace?

ARTHUR: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: In what respect?

ARTHUR: When the female nurses are against each other they hold grudges for a very long time.

INTERVIEWER: Would John be as comfortable with being forceful with a female or would John tone it down regardless of whether Janet is white or black or whatever?

DAN (black enlisted): He would probably tend to tone it down a little bit. Since it's for the fact that -- especially both being in the supply room alone, no one else is there to witness this. And if anything -- is she gets upset and for some reason decides to say that he cornered her, or some kind of way offended her, abused her physically, or so much as tend to raise his voice at a female -- much more as a male because it's just that fear factor of the male/female relationship -- it's still kind of problematic.

INTERVIEWER: If John is dealing with Betty, is John going to temper it no matter what Betty is or what John is? Are they going to tone it down because of gender difference or are they going to play it out the same way?



CHESTER (black officer): Well I think they would tone it down. Well John would tone it down, bring it down a little bit because in this time of age, you know, with women's rights and, all that good stuff, and sexual harassment I think it's kind of --

INTERVIEWER: Even in the military?

CHESTER: Even in the military.

INTERVIEWER: Now let's make John, Betty. She is the superior person in this event and Bill is still Bill. Is she going to get just as animated as a male superior or more so, or how's that going be?

CHESTER: I don't think -- well it all depends though. I would think a white female probably wouldn't get as animated as an African-American female.

African-American female, they'd probably like, you know, just hey, you know, use all sorts of language. You'd just messed up, so you're going to pay for it so.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, so she is going to even be more animated than an African American male?

CHESTER: I would say so.

Chester concluded that race nor gender matter to a black female

CHESTER: For an African-American female I don't think it would make any difference at all.

INTERVIEWER: So they're not one bit afraid?

CHESTER: They're not one bit afraid, but for the black male, I think he would have some type of recourse or, you know, kind -- try to step back a little but I don't think that -- an African-American female would just let it all out.

INTERVIEWER: If it's two females in that room, what's going to happen?

CHESTER: Two females, it would get really animated and they both would be --

INTERVIEWER: Regardless of their race, or would it be less under some circumstances than others?

CHESTER: I'll say it would be less if there's two Caucasian females, but with two African-American females, then it would just be an explosion regardless of, I would say rank.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

CHESTER: I'm not sure exactly what it is. It's, you know, the way African-American females are brought up. And you get more kind of -- you get more leeway than African-American males. I don't know why.

INTERVIEWER: Are you talking in general or in military mostly?

CHESTER: I would say in society in general. I don't know what it is but, you know, a lot of things are -- African-American females, they could do and a black male goes and does the same thing, they look more harsh on that African American male than they would do on the female. And I don't know why that is, but I think that's true.

## Grudges

ARTHUR (black enlisted): And then the male, that would be George, would just kind of let it go after that, you know. Being a male, pretty much just sit there and let it go. But with Becky, that will remain with her and she will remember that and think that he has it in for her, and all this other stuff.

CASTLE (black enlisted): Well with my personality and then I'm Bill now, I would say I would look at my responsibility in that process. If I failed to do something I would then take heed of that and maybe rake myself over the coals a little bit, but then I would move forward with it.

INTERVIEWER: Well I'm kind of getting to this point. Are men going to hold grudges more or equal to what two women under the same circumstance would do?

BEN (black enlisted): Women tend to hold on to animosity longer. They tend to hang on to tension longer. They do. Whereas guy[s], you know, no, I understand, I understand. But, you know, we're cool. It's fine, you know. Like, you know, women tend to a lot of times blow stuff out of proportion. Not to be sexist, just from what I see and from what I know. It's human nature. Very seldom do you find a woman that, you know, encounters something, moves on. Very seldom. They tend to hold tension more towards each other. Because I've seen where a lot of females get along with the males better than the females. Not because it's something sexual it's just because they feel -- even the women themselves will

tell you that they have more male friends than females, or they can get along with males, or they can work better with males. Because they themselves -- they call themselves back stabbers because they are just backstabbing and two-faced. They can't get along amongst themselves and they admit it.

INTERVIEWER: Are they going to get over it pretty quick?

CHESTER (black officer): I think so. I think with males, you know, we have short-term memory I think, you know. Things happen, hey, that's done, and tomorrow come back to work and, you know, act like, you know, nothing has happened.

INTERVIEWER: What about a black person to a black person?

BECKY (white officer): There would definitely be an increase in volume. It's my experience, and I had an experience when I was in the Heidelberg where I had five black NCOs, both male and female. I never heard people talk so hateful to one another in my entire life, and in fact had to sit them down and write them all up for conduct unbecoming a non-commissioned officer. It's been my experience and observation that blacks are very loud with other blacks and they're very -- they go right for the jugular. I mean they don't even try and be nice. They are very hateful. And it's difficult because once they have that interaction, it's been my experience that they can't do the "Let's have a beer and get over it kind of thing." They hold that grudge. They remember that conversation and everything that comes.

BRENDA (white enlisted): And Bill if he is having a problem with the way that John is talking to him, in a very professional manner, he can confront the situation and say listen, I can -- I'd be more than happy to talk about this in a professional manner but the way you're talking to me right now it's really not appreciated.

BRENDA (white enlisted): Maybe because I have -- like I know my black girlfriends are really loud at times, more so than my white friends and more, you know, expressive and dramatic, things like that.

BRENDA: The males don't get -- the black males don't let things bother them in my job as much as the black females do. They either -- when something goes wrong, the black females will shrug it off like they don't care, or they'll go off on people basically without taking the blame for themselves. And then, like the white -- I don't know. The white males also kind of shrug things off like they don't care either but when it comes -- like if they've done something wrong, they'll say, "Oh, I did it, sorry," and take the repercussions. The black females that I work with don't -- they'd rather place the blame on someone else. That's what I feel anyway.

INTERVIEWER: And the black males?

BRENDA: The black males they do the same as the white males. I think it's more of a gender thing more than a racial thing, because the guys either don't really stress out about things that go wrong. They just say, "Hey, it's not worth

stressing out about.” And if they do see something wrong, then they’ll say, yes, that was my fault, what can I do to make it better.

INTERVIEWER: Let’s make them both females then. Are they going to play out the same dynamics in the same way? Are two females going to have this one getting on the other one?

DEBORAH (white officer): Probably, probably.

INTERVIEWER: If you put yourself in John’s position and you need to make a point with another female, are you going to get expressive or are you going to approach it differently.

DEBORAH: I have been in that position and I’ve approached it from a couple of different ways depending on how many times it happened before, you know, track records and what my level of general frustration was with the particular issue.

So the more I’ve had experience with the same individual not delivering, probably the more expressive I have become with it.

INTERVIEWER: You said something about going and having a beer. If it were two males involved and they were both white, how much more likely would it be that they could go have a beer after that and blow it off as opposed to two blacks?

BECKY (white officer): Oh, I think it would be a big difference. I haven’t seen two black men being able to explode at one another and being able to recover any kind of friendship, although I’ve observed white males doing that on a regular basis.

INTERVIEWER: All right, let's make them females.

BECKY: Haven't seen very many females be able to recover from that. They can certainly form a work relationship where they can work with each other. But I see there again, for two white females to hold a lot of resentment toward one another. Then it shows up in a way that you wouldn't expect of -- two weeks down the road there's an over reaction to something that the person who received the verbal lashing, then turns around and does it to that person for something that they did.

INTERVIEWER: They're just lying in wait?

BECKY: Exactly. They were waiting for that perfect opportunity to now do the same thing to that other person.

INTERVIEWER: Is that more of a white phenomenon, or black phenomenon, or female?

BECKY: I think that's more of a female phenomenon.

INTERVIEWER: So ultimately the females take much longer to get over it than males?

BECKY: Oh, absolutely, absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: So John and Bill are going to be aggravated with one another, particularly if they're black for a few days but a week later it's gone?

BECKY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: All right. Let me do it this way. As opposed to if they were both females.

ANGELA (White enlisted): Okay, that throws a different twist on it. Most men in my opinion have been -- they're the type that if something happens, it gets blown up and they walk away from it and everything's fine and dandy. Whereas a lot of times with females, they tend to sit and stew about it a lot so that, you know, ten or fifteen minutes later they still might be, well, you know, she jumped down my throat about this, and if I do something here, is she going to jump down my throat again.

INTERVIEWER: Now let's make John and Bill females.

BRENDA: Okay. I think there would be more of a grudge holding and more of a backstabbing type of situation.

INTERVIEWER: Even over a relatively simple thing that I described?

BRENDA: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: How long is it going to take them to get over it?

BRENDA: It depends if they avoid each other for a while or if -- I mean because the females that I've worked with, they tend to avoid each other for an hour or so and then once they talk about it, it will be okay. But it's how long they avoid each other because then they just grow angrier and angrier because they're not talking it out as fast.



INTERVIEWER: Would this sort of situation change if one of them were female?

CHRISTINE (white enlisted): I don't think so.

INTERVIEWER: What if both of them were female?

CHRISTINE: I don't think so -- well maybe. I mean because I think females tend to carry on an argument. You know, like they can't just drop it. I think males can be like "Hey, I hated that you did this or whatever. I think we need to pay more attention." Then if a female said that to another female, and I'm generalizing, but I think that I can because I am a female, they tend to not drop things, and then they'll be like all upset all day long and telling everybody. That's my experience.

INTERVIEWER: If, John was white and Bill was black, how does that play in to anything?

AMY (white officer): Right off the bat, I would say it wouldn't. It's just one guy needs something from another guy. And normally, I think, what I've seen is the guys can talk that way to each other the males can talk that way to each other and maybe by noon they can sit down and have lunch together. But if that was two females, they would probably not speak for twenty years. So, I don't know about the black/white issue, at least in the military, as much as the male/female. I don't know that high ranking officer or enlisted males would want a lower ranking female doing that ever. Ever, ever! And I don't know that two females,

no matter what their ranks were, would do well with a supply closet with the door shut yelling at each other.

CHARLES (white enlisted): It sounds to me as if John is projecting himself well. He is presenting the emotion that he has that things are not being taken care of, but he wants to make sure that there is no question in Bill's mind that he is unhappy with what's going on.

INTERVIEWER: So John is justified in his tone and manner of addressing Bill?

CHARLES: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: At no time during this however does John use profane, abusive, or racial language toward Bill and no one hears the communication except the two of them. What are your comments?

BILL (white enlisted): There's a way to say everything and I'm also a good Devil's Advocate on this because I know at times when you're stressed on the ward, that things don't come out exactly how you want them to or would want them to. But there's always a way -- you should always be polite to the person. You don't want to be like you said, forceful. You want to just kind of let them know, like "Hey, you know, you didn't order this. We need more, can you kind of get on it." But in the heat of -- I know I'm guilty of this as well. In the heat of running around at your busiest, sometimes things don't come out the way you want them, but you should apologize if they don't. But no -- my philosophy is, a

lot times if you treat people with respect, you're going to get that same respect back.

DUSTIN (white enlisted): Listening to the scenario, my first instinct is that's probably not the best way of handling that situation. The most important thing now is, what do you do with the situation? I guess I'm not one to scream or rant and rave because you're not going to get any supplies. They're not going to magically appear on a table.

EVERITT (white enlisted): I think it's appropriate that he let him know that he dropped the ball and it wasn't conducive to his work because he really relies on him to do his part of the job.

INTERVIEWER: Are black soldiers more expressive than white soldiers?

EVERITT: I would say, yes. They tend to be a little bit more verbal I'd say. I would say, they're always able to communicate a little better it seems like.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So from a cultural standpoint what are you saying?

EVERITT: I guess verbally they're able to talk and express themselves maybe a little better.

INTERVIEWER: So in other words if you had an African-American boss as opposed to a white boss and they were expressing some displeasure, then you could expect that from a cultural standpoint -- now agree or disagree, from a cultural standpoint, they may have a little more to say and perhaps a little thicker,

only because they're African American, but not as a put down, but as a way of expressing their thoughts.

EVERITT: I would agree with that.

INTERVIEWER: If two African American males were doing that with each, does that seem to get a little more intense?

EVERITT: The boundaries widen a little more.

INTERVIEWER: Between the two of them?

EVERITT: Yeah, definitely.

ALLEN (white officer): I think people have to modulate their tone. What message is he trying to get across? My thoughts are his tone, if it's exaggerated, is compromising the effectiveness of that relationship, if it's exaggerated. I'm such a klutz when it comes to stuff like this. I would say you can get the same effect at a lower volume. If you're at a larger volume you may be subverting yourself as a leader.

CHUCK (white officer): Well I have seen some African-American sergeants or - - you know, they just make a big long drawn out -- just like beating a dead horse. A long drawn out like a ritual sort of thing. You know, just on and on, hyping on something and it's not even just one day, it's -- the next day it's the same thing. You know, three days -- it can be on something that was, you know, three days before. Just hyping stuff.

INTERVIEWER: I'm going to say, is John correct or appropriate in his discussion with Bill?

DAVID (white officer): Yes, I believe so.

INTERVIEWER: So the manner in which he comes across to Bill is okay?

DAVID: Uh-huh, yes.

INTERVIEWER: So if you're John, you feel that you're appropriate in your behavior?

DAVID: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: What about two black soldiers?

DAVID: Well from what I've observed when two black people get in a disagreement, yes, I would say he'd be all out and about talking to the other one in that manner because I've found them to be more out spoken in that they will talk to each other loudly, firmly, and not have a problem being vocal about their problem.

BRYAN (white officer): That happens all the time and I don't lose my temper even if I know that I'm going to have to take the blame some place else or somebody's going to be mad because this didn't happen -- I'm going to have to go upstairs.

INTERVIEWER: But John works for you and he confronts Bill and he gets pretty animated in the sense of how he expresses his displeasure. Is that acceptable, or is it acceptable sometimes and not at another?

BRYAN: No, I don't think -- I think rarely is it acceptable. I think you could -- very seldom -- if it had a serious, serious, serious consequence but on the whole, no, I don't believe in raising your voice and screaming or -- I don't think he is right in it.

INTERVIEWER: If I said do you understand what playing the dozens means, does that have any meaning to you?

ALLEN (white officer): No, it has no meaning.

INTERVIEWER: What's doing the dozens mean?

CHUCK (white officer): I don't know that one.

INTERVIEWER: What's cracking on somebody?

CHUCK: I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: but what's doing the dozens?

DAVID (white officer): Don't know.

INTERVIEWER: What's cracking on somebody?

DAVID: In my mind that means like when I crack on somebody, you make fun of them or you may crack a joke about them.

INTERVIEWER: Is that done equally among blacks and whites?

DAVID: With each other or within the race?

INTERVIEWER: In any kind of way.

DAVID: Oh, absolutely. I think it's done equally.

INTERVIEWER: All right. And you don't have any trouble cracking on a black person?

DAVID: Absolutely not.

INTERVIEWER: And they you?

DAVID: No.

INTERVIEWER: Does it ever get mean spirited?

DAVID: Never.

INTERVIEWER: Now let's make John, who's the one doing the speaking, a staff sergeant and Bill is a specialist.

BRYAN (white officer): All the worse. All the worse for losing your temper because you have that rank over him and I think that's an abuse. That's probably why we don't have any specialists, right? I really don't believe in that approach at all period.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, let's make Bill the staff sergeant and John is the specialist. John is still doing the mouth.

BRYAN: Wrong still. On no account should you be -- you don't accomplish things. You just build barriers when you scream at somebody. People have long memories. A lot of people have tender skin too, so when you do something to -- some people can hold that and it's unproductive to yell on any part, whether you're the boss or whatever.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Again, John's the one doing the talking and John's a staff sergeant and Bill's a Spec-4.

BILL (white enlisted): It changes it all again. It changes it because basically in the military -- I mean from basic training on, I expect sergeants to be like that (finger snap), because that's kind of their whole role basically from what I've learned in the military. Their role is to be the hard-nosed. You jack up, you fix this right now, you know. Even with the little drill sergeant point, the whole hand point, you know, that's how I expect staff sergeants to be. I've met a few that are like, ..."you messed up, everybody does." But a lot of sergeants I've met, you know, straight and narrow, "this is your mistake, you go fix it," -- push, you know.

BILL: But no, you don't defy that rank even if you think that person's a total loser and got that rank by luck. It's just the whole system. You don't do it

INTERVIEWER: If I told you that John's a staff sergeant and Bill is a specialist, what's that do to the picture? John's the one doing the chewing and he is the staff sergeant.

DUSTIN (white enlisted): Okay. It doesn't really change the situation knowing the rank structure, although I would have to say I would be a little disappointed in the manner that John handled the situation, being the supervisor, and being more of a senior leader. I would think he would be a little bit more professional in how he handled the situation.



INTERVIEWER: Is it conceivable that we can reverse that and John is the specialist and Bill is the staff sergeant and the specialist is having this discussion with the sergeant?

CHUCK (white officer): No, he'd be out of his mind to even question the rank of an NCO, you know, if he is the specialist because it's not how smart you are or how dumb you are, it's just whoever is the higher rank. It can be the dumbest crap you've ever heard in your life, but you can't dispute it. You can't say, "That's not the greatest idea." Well that's only going to make somebody pissed off at you.

INTERVIEWER: Where does the uncomfortableness come from?

DUSTIN (white enlisted): I've seen that in the military. I've seen that in the military where the males -- they don't like working for females, they don't like being told what to do from the females. Me personally, it doesn't really have an impact on me. I come to work. I do my job.

INTERVIEWER: Is it harder for a black male to work for a female than it is for a white male to work for a female?

DUSTIN: I would hesitate to answer that because I would think that it wouldn't really make a difference, but I can see that if it was an African-American male and an African-American female, it would be easier for the African-American male to work with the African-American female than to work with a Caucasian female.

INTERVIEWER: So a female sergeant discussing with a female specialist over a supply issue. Play that one for me.

CHUCK (white officer): Yeah, they tend to chew somebody out more I think because they've got more -- they've got to show -- my opinion is, they have more -- because they're in the Army, they've got to prove that they are tough or whatever so they tend to chew ass more than even like the guys would. Even if it's a female sergeant talking to a male or female person, they tend to just fly off the handle and sort of, you know, give you a good ass chewing there.

INTERVIEWER: Is that problematic in the workplace?

CHUCK: Yeah. I'm thinking, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: On a scale of one to ten, you know, across the board how much of a problem is it?

CHUCK: I'm going to say a seven. It's right about a seven.

INTERVIEWER: Is it a cultural issue or is it a --

CHUCK: I don't think it's a cultural issue. I think it's just a black female in the military has got something to prove. That they need to, that I've got this rank because I'm tough, and I can do the job and nobody's taking it away from me. And I want all the stuff --

INTERVIEWER: Now I'm looking at the subordinate. Who is going to have the most trouble, white female, black female, white male, or black male under that superior person's discussion?

CHUCK: And the superior being a male or female?

INTERVIEWER: The superior is a black female, or female in general. Answer it however way you want to.

CHUCK: Let's see. I don't [think] that the guys would care because I mean even if she went off on them, they would just shake it off and say, "All right, that's cool." But if either a black or white female under a black female -- I mean you've got to have your ducks in a row and your stuff together or -- and either one of those would have a hard time under a superior that was a black female.

INTERVIEWER: Let's put two females in there instead of males. Will two black females be more vocal with one another?

DAVID (white officer): Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: Than two white females?

DAVID: From my experience, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. If one of them is female -- let's say that Bill is now Jennifer. Would John address a female in the same tone and manner?

CHARLES (white enlisted): John should be able to address the same situation without any change in the way that he is stating himself. Again, it's similar to the specialist talking to the sergeant or the staff sergeant. You know, the nature of relationships between genders, he needs to make sure that he is being specific about what he is unhappy with, and that he is careful not to make any kind of

indication that the problem is related to the fact that she is female. That the job isn't getting done not -- and it's not getting done because you're a woman.

INTERVIEWER: Let's have John as obviously a male, and then it's a female subordinate. Is John going to be more or less likely to be forceful in this situation?

DUSTIN (white enlisted): I would probably tend to say he is going to be less likely to be more forceful. He probably would be a little bit more sympathetic or empathetic to the individual being a female. He is going to be a little bit more guarded, especially in the military because you have to always be careful of the boundaries. Not over-stepping your boundaries and having -- I don't want -- well, in the civilian world there would be a lawsuit. In the military you'll have charges brought up against you saying that you were abusive or harassing the individual because of the fact that they were a female. So that's always in the back of your mind that you have to be a little bit more guarded, a little bit more careful in how you handle certain situations.

INTERVIEWER: How likely is it that if John is the sergeant and now Bill is Brenda instead, so we've changed the gender there -- is John as likely to chew out Brenda, as he would have been Bill?

EVERITT (white enlisted): I'd say he'd be a lot less likely to chew somebody out -- a female out more than a male.

INTERVIEWER: Some folks suggested that males get over it quicker than females.

CHARLES (White enlisted): Okay. That could be true. I do tend to notice that women may hold on to the situation a little longer than men do.

INTERVIEWER: What if they're both females?

DUSTIN (White enlisted): Probably even more likely, and I only say that because in my experience, females tend to be a little bit more emotional and they tend to hold on to feelings of anger a little bit longer than males. Males will get angry, either verbally or physically let off their steam, and they, it's kind of over with a lot quicker. Females tend to hold on to it and they can be a little bit more spiteful toward one another.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, just generally speaking do males get over it and pal up again in a sense, quicker than females?

CHUCK (white officer): I think so.

INTERVIEWER: How likely is the situation that I describe to occur between two females in a supply room or that kind of scenario?

CHUCK: That would be kind of low -- it would be generally, more males, you know, if it's like that than for like females. And they tend to always stay sort of pissed off at each other it seems like.

INTERVIEWER: What if it's a female and the male is the one receiving this. Is the female going to be as forceful as the male?

DAVID (white officer): Could be. I've seen it both ways. I've seen -- we try to keep the -- not only the interracial but the inner-sex relations okay. But I've also seen a lot of women -- if I can touch on the military, that like when they're female and have a higher rank, or just female in general, to be a little more forceful with males because they can or they think they deserve -- that they've reached that point of authority.

### The Communication Process

Crystal introduced a culturally acceptable component in the communication process. She was the only person to describe, or refer to this culturally unique feature that is often part of, and expected in the communication process between African-Americans. The literature refers to this expectation as "call response," (Fine, 1995). In practice, a black person demonstrated they were listening and engaged in the communication effort by making confirmatory or negative statements while the other person is speaking. This form of relationship engagement is completely foreign to the communication practices for whites. Indeed, when it occurs, a white person judges the behavior as rude and would be functionally unable to continue the conversation.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. I'm talking to you, are you supposed to be looking at me or looking down, or looking some place else?

CRYSTAL (black enlisted): Well technically, what I should be doing is interrupting you, and stopping you, and clarifying anything that I don't

understand, or asking you to repeat something if it's unclear to me, or I need to, you know, think about it a little bit more. That's what I think, if you look down or whatever, whatever, it's a form of disrespect so I think it depends.

INTERVIEWER: If you're Karen, what are you thinking about Barbara?

DIXIE (black enlisted): That's she is listening.

INTERVIEWER: All right. If you're Barbara, are you doing the right thing?

DIXIE: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: If you were to come in here and say to me, "Sergeant, here I am, ready to go to work," and you start talking to me and I won't look at you, what are you thinking about me?

DIXIE: That you're not like listening to me. You might be hearing me but you're not listening so I mean those are two different things right there.

ANN (black officer): And that's why I say, you know, it depends on the look. If you're doing the stare, you know, the I'm not scared of you, and say what you want to say to me, I'm not going to back down, kind of look, or if it's a I'm looking at you so that I can do my best to understand what you're saying and try to comply with what you're saying to me, it's different. There are a lot of variables that go into that looking.

ANN (black officer): Yeah, I think that for most -- I think for black people, for people across the board, you know, a show of respect and just show that you are in fact acknowledging what the other person has said, you know. In general with

just American culture -- is to look at the person and again, you know, it's a certain type of look. It's not the, you know, stare down, "I'm going to intimidate you look. It's just, you know, a casual look of, "Okay, I'm interested in what you're saying," and, you know, "I'm engaged in what you are saying. I'm not just kind of trying to ignore and standing over here and wishing you'd go away."

INTERVIEWER: Some folks that I have talked to said just the opposite. They were told, "Don't you eyeball me, boy." That to look at them was not showing respect.

ANN: Right. And that's why I was saying, but I know everyone on my block was not taught the same thing, you know. And you're right. A lot of people were taught not to -- you couldn't do that direct look kind of thing because that was seen as being disrespectful.

BETH (black officer): Well I was taught that if you are speaking to me, I need to be looking at you so you know I'm attending to what you have to say and it's important, what you have to say. And vice versa. If I'm speaking to you, I expect you're looking at me and not all around the room and outside too, to show me that you're paying attention to what I have to say as well.

BETH: My interpretation is either you're not interested at all in what I have to say and would prefer not to be here or that you're -- if you're not making eye contact with me at all, then you're not interested. You're just not interested in what I have to say, or perhaps you're angry and want to say something.



BETH: Most black people will find it suspicious that you can't make eye contact or that you're not willing to make eye contact.

BETH: And I think that's where that comes from. There was a period in time where you were not allowed to make eye contact with a Caucasian person, male or female. You know, that was then disrespectful. So I think that's where that comes from.

INTERVIEWER: Is that the way you feel all black people were taught?

BETH: I think most of us were taught that, if I can't look at you, then I can't be trusted. If you can't make eye contact, then I really can't trust you. Why can't you make eye contact? What is it that you're trying to hide, or why -- what is it you're so uncomfortable with that we can't look at each other?

CAROLINE (black officer): Then I don't think that you're giving me your full attention. You're not really listening to what I'm talking about, and you're not looking interested in what I'm talking about.

Delores, now an African-American officer, also is an immigrant from the continent of Africa. She describes the re-learning process that she had to undertake as an individual in a new country.

INTERVIEWER: What were you taught?

DELORES (black officer): I was told not to look.

INTERVIEWER: Not to look.

DELORES: Not to look, and I had to learn to do that. It was very hard but I had to learn to do that.

INTERVIEWER: This is speculative. Do you think that the African-American male is taught eye contact by his father differently than a daughter would be taught it?

DELORES: Yes, because -- I lived in New York City and if you go to New York City and not maintain eye contact you will get in trouble, because eye contact is a kind of an insult to anybody by looking away. Females are always -- we hope we get females to do it a little softer but along the way they pick up a few things. But yeah, if you don't make eye contact it's a sign of weakness so you have to make eye contact.

INTERVIEWER: Is it possible that when a black male maintains eye contact with a white male --

DELORES: They are thinking that it's going to be aggressive.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

DELORES: Yes, it's possible. If it's just the eye contact alone there might not be a problem but if it is the eye contact intense, then it's a problem.

INTERVIEWER: Then is that a potentially frightening situation for the white person?

DELORES: Uh-huh.

INTERVIEWER: And the black person is not intending it to be --

DELORES: May not, may not. Sometimes may, then may not be. But sometimes, yeah, I'm looking at [the reason for it is], because you need to hear.

INTERVIEWER: Is there a respect or an intimidation factor in this?

BETH: In making eye contact? I think it's respect. I really think that it's respect. I'm not intimidated by the person who can't make eye contact or maintain eye contact with me. I think what it does, it serves to tell me to be cautious. That's about it.

ANN (black officer): It's always interesting for me to see the young African-American lieutenants and captains, and most of the time it's the females, who may have gone to a predominantly black school. Well we use a lot of body language in those schools. And then when they come into the military, they bring all the body language with them.

ANN: For some professors it may be acceptable. And, you know, you have cultures within all these cultures. For some of them it may be acceptable, but if you get a professor for instance, my mother's age, she would be very offended by, you know, someone who would come and have all that body language going on when she is engaging in a discussion with them about something. It would be viewed as being disrespectful, even by my mother. And sometimes they may say well, you need to not have so much body language, but at the same time they would understand it. Someone might understand and not find it disrespectful.

BRANDI (black enlisted): Oh, that's the first problem I have with my first sergeant because she was talking to me and I was just looking like -- all the things she was (unintelligible) then she is like, "look at me." How can I look you, you are -- first time (unintelligible) above me. I can't be looking at you. And she said "Now what do you mean?" So I didn't catch it until later that -- I was like, do you know what happened (unintelligible) that's the way when you keep eye contact, they really can tell if you're lying or something -- I didn't know that. I was thinking I was giving her respect because it's high above me. And through that incident I started trying to look at the faces.

Note the preciseness and intensity with which Dan, Bob, Chester, Arthur, Ben, and particularly Alex addressed this critical component in cultural communication.

DAN (black enlisted): How was I taught eye contact? Maybe my dad said when you talk to people look them in the eye and tell them the truth. It wasn't formally sit down and, you know, showing how to carry on a conversation. It was basically just a word of guidance on how to talk. It wasn't --

INTERVIEWER: So what happened to you, or what was said I suppose, if your dad was speaking to you and you were not maintaining eye contact with him?

DAN: He would think that you weren't paying attention to him, weren't listening to what he was saying so he would give you that sentence, "look at me

when I'm talking to you." And, you know, I think it just was to insure and instill it in yourself, you know, make sure he has your undivided attention.

INTERVIEWER: Is there any difference, or have you noticed any difference in people's ability to maintain eye contact or not, along racial lines?

DAN: Actually I've found as a supervisor, most of my African American employees could not look me in the eye, especially if it was in a situation where I was counseling them, a derogatory counseling for a time management issue or something like that. They couldn't look me in the eye. They'd look on the floor, on the wall, all the time they're talking and it just happened the majority were female. And it was a very difficult thing for me to talk to them when they're looking at the floor, and not being able to look me in the eye made me think that they were lying, they weren't giving me the truth.

BOB (black officer): Well that's good. Eye contact denotes attention so when someone is looking at you or focused in on you, then that means that they're paying attention to what you're saying or they have interest in what you're saying.

INTERVIEWER: Now let's reverse it again. You're Karen and you're doing the talking and I'm Barbara and I'm not looking, what are you thinking about me?

CHESTER (black officer): I'm thinking that you're not interested at all in what I'm saying and I would be offended by that.

INTERVIEWER: What are you thinking as Karen about Barbara?

CHESTER: Barbara is maintaining --

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, you're Karen and I'm Barbara and I'm maintaining eye contact with you while you're talking to me. Is that appropriate?

CHESTER: Yes, that's appropriate. You know, it makes me feel that, you know, at least -- even though, you know, you may not be listening but it shows me that you're actually making an effort.

INTERVIEWER: So Karen's talking, Barbara's maintaining eye contact. Is Barbara doing the right thing?

DERRICK (black officer): Karen's talking, Barbara's maintaining eye -- yes, I think so.

INTERVIEWER: All right, what's Karen thinking?

DERRICK: That Barbara is really listening to what she has to say.

ARTHUR (black enlisted): I was taught as far as man is concerned, you know, male to male; shaking your hand, always look them in the eye. In a work environment it's different depending on the culture. For Asians, it's inappropriate to look in the eye. You look away for respect and whatnot.

INTERVIEWER: Is there a difference in how whites and blacks are taught eye contact?

ARTHUR: I think there's a difference between male and female with eye more so than white or black.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So it really wouldn't make any difference if they were both white or both black, or any other combination?

ARTHUR: Right.

INTERVIEWER: All right. If I didn't do it -- now I'm white. If I didn't do it, what would you be thinking about me?

ARTHUR: Disrespect.

INTERVIEWER: If I'm black and you're black, would that change anything?

ARTHUR: Wouldn't change any thing.

INTERVIEWER: If I did maintain contact with you, what would you be thinking?

ARTHUR: Pretty good guy.

ARTHUR: My father, he put into me it was like, this is how you do it because I think he was instilling that you are a man, and this is how a man does it, and you look them in the eye, and it insures that I am a man like you are a man, and I'm not afraid of you, and also I'm giving you respect and you can respect that. And I get that way I guess even now.

BEN (black enlisted): So, you know, as far as a black man to make good eye contact with a white man, I don't think a white man feels threatened at all.

INTERVIEWER: How were you taught regarding eye contact?

BEN: Look at me when I'm talking to you. It all depends on how easy the discussion was. Now if it was something that she [my mother] was really trying to get across to me, or getting my butt tore up about something, and then looking at her would keep her off me. "Look at me when I'm talking to you boy. Don't

look away from me.” I mean it wasn’t a constant thing. Like I said, it was one of those heated moments things. “Look at me when I’m talking to you boy,” you know. My father figure, whatever he was, he was just there. But uncles and aunts and stuff like that, yes, you know, I’ve been told a few times that you’ve got to do this, and this, and this to get -- to make it in the white man’s world. Like you say and -- like once again -- I think like my last year in high school, first year of college, my grandmother, come to think about it, she told me the same exact thing. Look me in the eye, and she said whatever you do, don’t let nobody stare you down. You know, she always told me.

INTERVIEWER: How were you taught eye contact from home?

CASTLE (black enlisted): When I’m talking to you, look at me. Actually it was, you know, you look at a parent to acknowledge their presences but in some cultures looking at a parent directly, it’s forbidden.

ALEX (black officer): With me and my friends that I have noticed and with myself that we didn’t look each other in the eye unless we were ( not intelligible).

INTERVIEWER: Unless you were what?

ALEX: Up set, unless we were mad. Getting ready to fight. I mean that’s when we were looking them dead in their face, looking them dead in the eye. That way they know exactly what you’re feeling. They know what you are thinking. But, just shooting the breeze, I haven’t noticed it. I didn’t notice it until my Dad told me and I had to start paying attention (laughter).



INTERVIEWER: Was your Dad trying to teach you to operate in a black world a white world or a world at large?

ALEX: I'm pretty sure he was trying to prepare me to operate in a white world. That was considered correct by society. And not only that, I think it was considered a sign of weakness by society if you didn't. And so what he wanted me to do was to be able to, you know, you look them in the eye and you show 'em that you are strong, you show them that you are a man. Because if you don't then it is taken as a sign of weakness and you'll lose respect or never get it from them.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think eye contact is an issue between whites and blacks?

ALEX: Not now, but I think in my father's generation it was. I think it was, the looking away was seen by blacks in my father's generation as slave mentality. Not being able to look someone in the eye, always keeping your head low and never look at 'em..

INTERVIEWER: When you have an encounter with another black male, what do you expect from him? Do you expect eye contact or do you expect anything at all, one way or another?

ALEX: It's not even something that I uh, even consider.

INTERVIEWER: Do you make any kind of a judgment, one way or another, if somebody does or does not look you in the eye when they're talking to you?

ALEX: Mostly no.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think, uh a white person makes a judgment about any other people based on eye contact?

ALEX: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. What does a white person expect?

ALEX: Expect? I don't think of it as an expectation uh, of them and they may expect a black person not to look them in the eye.

INTERVIEWER: Do they make a judgment when they don't look them in the eye or make a judgment?

ALEX: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And what is that judgment?

ALEX: It is a sign of weakness. A sign of superiority and inferiority.

INTERVIEWER: And so what if the black person looks them in the eye?

ALEX: It's a challenge, it's a challenge.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, if a white person is looking you in the eye do you perceive it as the white person challenging you?

ALEX: No, cause that is normal.

INTERVIEWER: How were you taught at home?

BOB (black officer): What?

INTERVIEWER: About eye contact.

BOB: Oh, that's not taught at home. That's like trying it out and getting your butt kicked in the wrong place. That's just life. I mean, you know, you go and get your butt kicked and then you know the next time when you go through there, not to be looking at no guys too -- you know, too intently, you know. That's pre-Army, you know, teenage stuff. See I can tell jokes!

BOB: Well, you know, that may have been -- no, they were probably thinking about a different context. Because see I was born in 1959, in the deep South, in a very segregated, racist culture, and that situation would apply to when black people were dealing with the white folks, that you wasn't supposed to make eye contact. But not among your own people, no. But as we went into an integrated South in the '70s, then that's one of the things that fell by the wayside, you know.

INTERVIEWER: So a black person was told, don't look at a white person?

BOB: I think my daddy used to tell me stories about people getting lynched because of stuff like that. You know, I grew up in Georgia, you know. They did some crazy stuff back then, you know. But like I said, as we moved into the '70s, people got more enlightened. Things like that tended to change.

Chester, an African-American officer, made an additional point for consideration and that is, not every black person is from the United States. There are multiple countries, each with their own cultural variations that contributed members to the black population in the USA.

INTERVIEWER: How were you taught eye contact? How were you taught and where? I mean who influenced that, if you can even remember?

CHESTER: I think it's probably from my culture because I mean, I wasn't born here in the states. I was born in Haiti, and back home, you know, they just drill it in you that if someone is talking to you -- and it started off, you know, with adults. You know, an adult is talking to you, you need to stand there and look them straight in the eye. And, you know, I think that stuck with me from childhood.

INTERVIEWER: What would happen if you couldn't look them in the eye?

CHESTER: I'd probably get smacked in the head.

INTERVIEWER: Have you noticed anywhere along the line that there's a difference between eye contact between whites and blacks?

CHESTER: I wouldn't think so. I don't see any difference at all.

Derrick vividly confirmed the importance and significance of good eye contact to communicate equal status with others. He described how the role of slavery continues to influence the black male, and how the influence of those events must be addressed in a day to day working relationship. The complete disregard for human worth, that was indigenous to slavery, has a visceral influence for many, if not for most black Americans. This history and influence created the internal need to present and be recognized as an adult, intelligent, professional, and equal to anyone. To an African-American participant, eye

contact was much more than a mere formality. White study participants were oblivious to this important variable and cultural issue.

DERRICK (black officer): Yeah, I've been taught whenever you're speaking to someone or whenever you're being spoken to, to look that person in the eye.

INTERVIEWER: Who taught you that?

DERRICK: My parents.

INTERVIEWER: Did anymore go on with that?

DERRICK: Oh, absolutely. Any time a white man talked to you, you look him dead in his eye and you speak back to him and vice versa, you know. Anytime you speak to someone, or you speak to a white man, or a white person, shake a white person's hand, you look them dead in the eye when you do it.

INTERVIEWER: What is that supposed to be conveying?

DERRICK: It's supposed to be conveying the fact that I'm not intimidated for the fact that you're white. I'm looking you in the eye because I'm a respectable person. I'm a respectable person for the most part and I'm to be respected. And I grew up in the deep South by the way.

INTERVIEWER: What else do you want me to know about you when you do that?

DERRICK: That I'm a man. I'm a man.

INTERVIEWER: That was it. I keep hearing that. Only from the African Americans. The white folks I have interviewed have never said that.

DERRICK: Uh-huh. There's a reason behind that.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, tell me.

DERRICK: There's a big reason behind that.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me that. That's the piece I'm missing.

DERRICK: I think what people fail to realize, is that slavery wasn't that long ago. You're talking about maybe three generations and then you had slaves. I had a family member that started tracing back our family tree. Three generations ago, you know, those facts are lost. There's no record. That's not very long ago, three generations. And of course we talked about it a little earlier, our beginning in America was nothing -- it wasn't easy. You know, there were -- I mean it was totally just -- it was just like we were put here without even being respected as just a simple human being. You know, it was like this is what you do. You work. If you don't work, we'll kill you. We'll hang you, we'll rape your wife and take your children from you. It doesn't matter. You're black; you're a slave, that's what you do. Over the evolution of our culture coming to the point to where it is now, you know, there's been things that we felt were very important to establish the fact that we were, you know, respectable humans. And those things tend to get passed down from generation to generation. I'm pretty sure that, you know, my parents were taught whenever you deal with someone white then you looked them in the eye. And you do those things to allow them to know that, you know, you're more than just a slave or a field hand, but you are a respectable person on

the same equal playing field that they are. And I'm pretty sure my parents were taught that. You know, that's why they taught me that and I will teach my children the same thing even to this day.

Dan, a black enlisted soldier, described the frustration and confusion he encountered when a white supervisor failed in providing tone alterations in messages sent. Culturally, he was expecting to hear tone changes along with the words spoken to determine a degree of urgency in a request. Comments from the white cohort did not mention tone as a part of the communication process. There may be a fine line between voice tone, and the perception of "talking down."

DAN: I can't pinpoint it but there are -- I've got supervisors to this day that -- they're white, and it's not that they speak in a monotone or whatever, but it's a tone in their voice that it's difficult for me to discern because, they don't get hyper or the voice doesn't go up. So they could say something to me like, "Could you check on such and such for me?" in that tone of voice, and it's an urgency that I'm looking for I guess in the tone of voice. And then they'll turn five or ten minutes later, "Didn't I ask you to do such and such?" So it's not an inflection in the voice that would go up and fall down. And I'm like, "Okay, yeah, I remember you said that." And they said, "Well you haven't done it yet." I think it's the tone of voice that if you don't put a certain inflection in that -- you know, like I need this right away, or specify it, then I hear it and I process that it's

okay, something that you want me to do. But at the tone of voice that it's said, sets a little bit of urgency for me.

INTERVIEWER: Well you raise a real interesting point. Are African-Americans listening for tone as much as content in the words?

DAN: I think so.

INTERVIEWER: And whites are not real good with tone?

DAN: I think so. I think so.

INTERVIEWER: Are African-Americans in your opinion pretty consistent with what the expectation is and the tone that they use to discuss it?

DAN: Well there's some variations here, but generally I would say that they try to be constant but there's a variation there so it's going to be a couple that (unintelligible) and that's not going to flow with the norm. I think if we have something that we think is urgent you can hear it the way that it's brought across in the way we speak.

INTERVIEWER: And I think part of what you're saying is when you converse with a white person, is there a tone that gives the feeling of being talked down to, or something along those lines? In other words, as far as I'm concerned when I'm speaking with you, I just want to be speaking with you as another human being, another person, an equal, a peer. But if the perception is different because I'm white, or some way saying it, and me being almost any white person, then we've



got to learn to do that differently or the perception has to change. Is any of this making sense?

DAN: Uh-huh. It's a common belief that we are spoken down to, or the white people kind of change their level of talk from the words they use when they talk to us. So that's kind of in the tone text of things. They don't think that you're going to understand some of those words that they would normally speak with. So I understand his conversation when he said that you talk to him as a man and not as black man. That's common among African Americans. They think that they are talked down to because they're perceived as being at a level below or less perceptive than their white counterparts.

INTERVIEWER: If both Bill and John are African-Americans, are they going to be more comfortable in the expressiveness that we've put into this scenario as opposed to other circumstances?

DAN (black enlisted): I don't think they're going to be more comfortable for the fact that number one I know that -- let me look at this as an ethnic thing. Both of them being black, it's going to have a slightly different factor because the little insightfulness or being -- raising your voice -- between the two being the same cultures, black people don't tend to converse with each other well when one tone of voice is quite, you know, higher -- or perceived as being yelled at. Then that could be a problem.

INTERVIEWER: Can you describe that or tell me what you're really saying?

DAN: I think we refuse to be talked down to by our own people. I'm kind of saying that they -- we will accept another African-American being above us as far as a supervisor or whatever, but if they start screaming -- if we start screaming and yelling at each other -- we try to keep each other on the same level of thinking that you are worthy. You can be a good person. You can be this or you can be that. And when we start screaming and hollering at each other -- we tend to not look at things in a supervisor or subordinate relationship. And emotions will play into it, and our emotions will try and make us go back to an ethnicity thing and try if we can -- I guess the short of it, I guess is like playing the race card. "Oh, man, you're black, I'm black. You know, you can talk to me, but you can't scream at me. You know, we've got to get along." That's the best way I can describe that. I haven't looked at it that way, but I think people from an African American background talk in a different tone to another race than they will with their own and vice versa.

INTERVIEWER: Has maintaining eye contact with one another always been what African Americans were expected to do or have you heard stories of otherwise?

DAN: I've heard some stories. I grew up in the South and my grandfather actually was a slave -- my great-grandfather was -- I think he was a sharecropper. That's what he called himself, a sharecropper. And the stories about eye contact was that they -- he wanted to look -- if you had to look at each other, to keep the

eye contact -- because there was a signal -- you know, it's a certain look that they had that you can get from a person just like, you know, looking at the eyes and you know how to act, and what was going to happen, and what not to do. I don't think it's so much so why African-Americans insist that their kids when they're raising children looked them in the eyes. You know, that's more of respect type of thing, look another man in the eye and stand there and tell them the truth. Look him straight in the eyes.

CASTLE (black enlisted): Eye contact -- if I were to throw my hands up and make gestures, I think it would be a show of disrespect knowing that you're not only a civilian, but you're a retired colonel. So if I have a soldier that comes in my office and, you know, gesturing, just putting the hands on the hips and rolling the eyes, I would have an issue with that because to me that would convey a sign of disrespect.

INTERVIEWER: Any other behaviors?

CASTLE: Rolling of the eyes, sulking, or looking down in a way as if to be oblivious to our dialogue. That would rub me the wrong way but --

BEN (black enlisted): Now when it comes to eye contact, posture, stuff like that, to me I won't think that the white male would feel intimidated or (unintelligible) of being aggressive. As a matter of fact in some cases -- it depends on what the situation is, like a job interview, or any interview, or whatever, just a concentrated period, we try to do it more to whites than we do a black because -- once again, it

all depends on a situation. Would the white person feel threatened? No, I don't think so because if it's something -- again, it's like if we're working together on something, or if we're communicating for some reason, I don't think that the white person would feel threatened, because from my knowledge, and from my experience and stuff, that's what they're looking for, because that's what we were always told and stuff. Do this, do this, do this and stuff, you know, to set your mark. So, you know, as far as a black man to make good eye contact with a white man, I don't think a white man feels threatened at all.

INTERVIEWER: Would a white male have some fear or intimidation from a black male based on eye contact?

DAN (black enlisted): I could say yes and no. Yes, because -- it's not just a black thing, but everybody has a look that we mostly use on our children and, you know, I've got this look that I can give you, and you better not look back at me. And I think it can be a black man looking at a white man, and white man looking at a black man. It's a certain look that you can get from that person, and that's the look, and if you look back, you'd better look back in a certain way, and it better not be intimidating or challenging.

INTERVIEWER: Are white men afraid of black men?

DAN: I think, generally, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Why, or for what reason maybe I should say?

DAN: I think again it's just that -- my perception is the media thing and the fact that we don't have enough people participating in diversity training to understand the other side of the culture. What's going on? So what they get is basically what the media is putting out there, and so we only see one side of that person. We don't get to know them as a person. A black man will look and say well that's just another white man -- if he is going to get the job ahead of me or whatever. And then walking down the street and the white man sees the black man coming toward him and he, -- in our mind we're thinking, now I know this guy's afraid of me and he is probably getting ready to reach back and check and make sure his wallet's not out and so forth. Because all they're seeing on the news is that this black man is going to rape, rob them, or whatever. And so, you know, the media plays into that a lot. So it's a cultural thing, you know, not understanding the culture that everyone is not -- it's ignorance that causes a person to do these things, I think real diversity training would definitely alleviate a lot of unnecessary fears and concerns.

The following represents a continuation of the issue relating to expressiveness. In that section, Chester, a Black officer, described the situation with his white female supervisor. He revealed that the situation had come down to receiving written messages in his department mail slot rather than a face to face encounter with his supervisor. Notice the hurt, the anger, the frustration that he described as a dramatic result of, what appeared to be a simple breakdown in

understanding the important cultural nuances between two adult, educated officers in the military.

INTERVIEWER: Is she afraid of you?

CHESTER (black officer): I think so. I don't know --

INTERVIEWER: Why is she afraid of you, because you're a male, or because you're a black male?

CHESTER: I think because I'm a black male. Not just, you know, a male but being a black --

INTERVIEWER: All right. In your opinion, are whites general afraid of African Americans?

CHESTER: I would think so. Now it all depends, you know, where you're at or what place you're at. I would say it does exist, that there is a fear of the African American male.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Does the African-American male like that?

CHESTER: No. Well for myself, I don't because I'd rather have, a supervisor come to me, and sit me down, and actually explain things, than having to read the letter, you know, every time. Because really, I guess, I just don't want to feel left out. You know, everybody else, getting pulled into the office whereas myself, I'm getting a letter and I hate -- I just hate being different I would say, even though for some people it might be better. Hey, you know, I don't have to deal

with her. I can just, you know, get a letter and just read it and probably just, rip it up at that point. But, you know, my thing is just, being different and I want

Dan's comments reflected his experience as a supervisor. He stated that "most of my African-American employees could not look me in the eye." Dan, however, did not specify whether or not these employees were active duty military, however, he did specify they were female.

INTERVIEWER: Is there any difference or have you noticed any difference in people's ability to maintain eye contact or not, along racial lines?

DAN (black enlisted): Actually I've found as a supervisor, most of my African American employees could not look me in the eye, especially if it was in a situation where I was counseling them, a derogatory counseling for a time management issue or something like that. They couldn't look me in the eye. They'd look on the floor, on the wall, all the time they're talking and it just happened the majority were female. And it was a very difficult thing for me to talk to them when they're looking at the floor, and not being able to look me in the eye made me think that they were lying, they weren't giving me the truth.

INTERVIEWER: Now let's say between a black female and a black male, are there any languages that are going on in terms of eye contact there? Maybe I shouldn't say languages, expectations for normal conversation, that if they don't occur, then there is a judgment made?

ALEX (black officer): I don't think.... No I would say nothing. I would say no in that aspect because culturally, black women have had to play the role of the man, they have had to be the strong person, they've had to be the bread winner, so whether or not they look at a person in the eye is, you can't make a judgment. A black man would not make a judgment on a black women whether or not they are weak because we know our history, and we know that black women have done it, you know, they have been the ones who have been the strong ones, who have you know the one surviving, just surviving. So as a culture, black men know the black women are stronger.

Oculesics

ANGELA (white female): She shows that she is listening and is really interested in what Karen is saying. Yeah, I would expect too also, so that they know I'm understanding what's going on.

BRENDA (white enlisted): I would think that she is really paying attention to what I have to say. I was making sure I made eye contact with her. To me, I think that would just show that I wanted to show by eye contact that I'm really in tune to what she is discussing, you know, trying to listen. Because it's one thing to hear but if you're listening to someone, that's the one way you can show that by eye contact.



CHRISTINE (white enlisted): She is listening. I would think that if someone is looking at you, you would look back at them when you're talking. It's polite. It shows that you're listening.

INTERVIEWER: So if you're Karen?

DIANE (white enlisted): I would think that Barbara was listening to me.

INTERVIEWER: And if you're Barbara?

DIANE: If I was Barbara I'd be thinking whatever she was saying because I'd be paying attention.

INTERVIEWER: Barbara is intently maintaining eye contact with her. What are your thoughts?

AMY (white officer): If someone was doing that to me, another female was doing that to me, I would interpret that to be one of two things. One could be that they are trying to intimidate me, or make sure I'm telling the truth. Or the other one is, they are so engrossed in what I am saying that they don't want to miss a thing. So there would be other questions that I would use to see if they were trying to sort of bully me, or if there were other questions as to "Oh my goodness, I'm hanging on your every word. What were the last words you heard before they were put to sleep?" or, whatever.

AMY: You should be looking at them enough that they know you are paying attention, and be able to repeat back what was said to you. But you did not stare unblinkingly making funny faces, or I think that would have been interpreted as

going a bit too far in the listening process, to just be staring. But you'd better be showing that you are paying attention. If you chose to look at the ground or look somewhere else you either were uh, not telling the truth, or they weren't worth your time at that moment. You were spending your time somewhere else.

CATHY (white officer): Probably that she is listening. I mean that's a good sign of listening if they're not kind of looking out on their own or like they're ignoring me. She is obviously listening.

DEBORAH (white officer): That's she is intense. That she is focused on the conversation.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And if you're Barbara, are you doing what you're supposed to do?

DEBORAH: Yes. When I'm talking to somebody and they're not maintaining eye contact with me, I think that they're not listening to me.

INTERVIEWER: If you're white and a black person is not looking at you while you're talking or doesn't maintain a pretty decent eye contact, what's your impression of that individual?

DEBORAH: That they're not paying attention to me, that they're disrespectful.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, that was what I was going to ask you. Is this an issue in the workplace?

DEBORAH: I don't find it an issue. If somebody's not focused on what I'm trying to say to them, I usually say something. "Are you listening to me? Did you hear what I said?"

Angela, a senior, white enlisted soldier, portrayed the relationship approach with a business, rather than personal orientation. She recognized that there may be cultural components to what she saw in coworkers, so she described watching what they do.

ANGELA: I would be thinking that you really don't -- number one, that you're not respecting me, because to me, giving eye contact is respect, but I know there are some cultures that giving eye contact is a sign of disrespect too. Now I don't see that in the black culture, as much as say -- I can't think of the race now -- Samoans. Samoans looking an elder in the eye is disrespectful. I would take into consideration what race the person was. If it's a black person that may be the way they were raised. I would kind of, as a supervisor, be thinking, alright, I'm going to keep my eye on you. And if he goes out and does what he is told and, you know, everything's hunky-dory, okay, that's showing me that wasn't disrespect to me. That was just the way he was raised. And he was listening to me, versus if he didn't go out and do what I told him to, well now, that's total disrespect and that's showing me that by not looking me in the eye, you're dishonest. So it would be kind of a continuous thing.

INTERVIEWER: When you speak with somebody else, particularly if they're subordinate, what do you want them to be doing in terms of eye contact? Do you want to see their eyes or do you not want to see them?

BECKY (white officer): I want to see their eyes. I don't want a blank stare, but I do want them looking at me.

INTERVIEWER: And if they're not looking at you, what are you saying to yourself?

BECKY: It depends on whether I know that person or not. If it's the first one -- first time I'm talking with them, I might ask them, "Are you uncomfortable looking at me when I'm talking with you?" Because I did have one girl who constantly went like that. She was a black female. And particularly if she thought she was in trouble -- and she'd say, "No, I do that because I'm thinking of what you're saying and that helps me think." But I would question a behavior --

INTERVIEWER: Was that the only reason that she did that?

BECKY: I would pursue it a little bit and I would, you know, ask her, "Is that a way of withdrawing, is it that you're not agreeing with what I'm saying to you?" particularly if I was having to counsel her about something negative.

INTERVIEWER: Have you noticed any variability in eye contact with people that are white or people that are black? Any sort of a pattern?

BECKY: I would think less eye contact with black females.

INTERVIEWER: And black males?

BECKY: I think it depends on their rank or their position that they hold. The less rank they have, the less likely they are to keep that continuing eye contact.

INTERVIEWER: And for those that do keep the contact, is it more intense than you almost expect the context to demand?

BECKY: I have had some do that, but I would say the majority of the people, it's a legitimate eye contact. It's not an over-enhanced or over-prolonged or kind of a staring down kind.

INTERVIEWER: Have you ever perceived almost a threat by that?

BECKY: No.

DIANE (white enlisted): I would say that of course my top few ones would be the same as anybody else. Rolling the eyes -- when people roll the eyes at you, especially if you're talking forcefully like in the last vignette, or you're trying to get a point across, or trying to get somebody to understand you, rolling the eyes is very irritating because that either means they're not paying attention to you, or they feel like you're belittling them.

Hand waving; I cannot stand it when somebody puts the hand up in front and waves you off, and shakes their little head as in, you know, "that's a no-no, don't do that to me." And that's how I ended up with an IG complaint. One of the soldiers did that and told me not to raise my voice at her, so I showed her what raising my voice was like.

But when I came in the Army, it was coming right from that attitude. You know, the change is coming. And it used to be -- you know, it was more of a black female thing. You know, you didn't see in the Asian females or the white females or any of the males. You know, it was an all female thing. And it was definitely a black female thing. Shake the head, roll the eyes, and wave the hand in front of you.

INTERVIEWER: Any other body language that's either confusing, or insulting, or frustrating?

DIANE: This is going to sound really stupid but when somebody goes to a rigid parade rest, especially if you're, you know, using the forceful talk or even if you're really chewing on them, if they go to that strict, you know, elbows pushed back, hands clasped tightly behind their back, head and eyes to the direct front, just rigid parade rest. I think that's disrespectful. I don't think they're doing that because they were taught to stand at parade rest when an NCO is talking to you. I think they're doing that because that's their way of locking up, and blocking you out, and thinking of a thousand different things, and how angry you are making them. So that one does bother me.

INTERVIEWER: Does that occur with any race or gender more than another?

DIANE: Males. Not a race but a gender.

CHRISTINE (white enlisted): We have a new head nurse that continually points, and points like when she is talking. She is very abrasive and it's hard for the whole floor to get used to.

INTERVIEWER: Is this person white or black?

CHRISTINE : She is black.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Is she aware of that, that --

CHRISTINE: Probably not. She so scary who's going to tell her?

INTERVIEWER: Is there any other body language that is exhibited in the workplace that just is one of your peeves?

DEBORAH (white officer): When people do the whole neck thing. You know, how some black females, when they get frustrated or excited, they move their neck and head around in a triangular fashion.

INTERVIEWER: What are they trying to say when they do that? What's the message being sent?

DEBORAH: Sort of emphasis -- they're emphasizing whatever they're saying by their body language.

INTERVIEWER: Is it hostile?

DEBORAH: I guess sometimes it would be, depending on what the context of the conversation is.

INTERVIEWER: Or is it just emphasis?

DEBORAH: I think it's emphasis.

INTERVIEWER: Are there clear differences in body language that you noticed between blacks and whites in this military setting?

ANGELA (white enlisted): Yes, talking to them there are. For instances a lot of the black communities have their different signals and signs that they flash at each other all the time, and throwing hands one way means something, and throwing hands a different way means something totally different. And to a white person that's never experienced that, it can be very disconcerting. It's almost like you don't if they're disrespecting you or not. It makes me very uncomfortable.

Deborah, a white senior officer, related a true confession of an event that she caused without intent. In an attempt to be humorous, she used the term, "little slave" in the presence of, and in relation to one of her black subordinates. She learned quickly a valuable cultural lesson.

DEBORAH (white officer): And sometimes people use slang in a way that other people find offensive, that they don't realize that it's offensive.

INTERVIEWER: Give me an example.

DEBORAH: One day last year before JCAHO (a hospital accreditation inspection), we were kind of slow, and I have this LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse) that is awesome, and we've kind of taken her from the LPN course and nurtured her, and she is a great nurse. She turned into a really good personal care nurse. I see us as having kind of mentor/mentoree kind of relationship, and so I told the charge nurse, who is African-American in the presence of this LPN --



INTERVIEWER: And the LPN is white or black?

DEBORAH: They're both black. And I made the comment that, "I was going to take this nurse, and she was going to be my little slave for the afternoon." It was my way of using slang and saying, I've got all the skut work that needs to be done to get ready for JCAHO, and I'm going to make her do some of that stuff with me, not understanding the ramifications of saying that to an African American women. I just was trying to be funny and using slang.

INTERVIEWER: Stepped on your poncho on that didn't you?

DEBORAH: Oh, my God. That was horrible. That was horrible. You know, they told me right away. They called me on it. Maybe not right away, maybe within half an hour, and told me that it was inappropriate, and told me they were very shocked that I said that. And, you know, I felt horrible, because that wasn't the intent of it. I didn't mean to make either one of them feel bad, and I certainly didn't need to offend them. But just not realizing that there are certain words that are taboo, besides the ones that are commonly thought of.

INTERVIEWER: Some folks have talked about eye rolling and swaggering, and some other kinds of stuff that you tell them to do something they give this -- or some kind of thing. Is that --

BECKY (white officer): Oh, absolutely. Anything that would indicate that Valley Girl, whatever, whether it's a hand motion, whether it's an eye gesture, you bet.

INTERVIEWER: The Valley Girl. Is that more pronounced in one group than another? More female, or more black female, or white female, or any kind --

BECKY: Well, female, yeah. I think age has more to do with it than whether they're black or white.

INTERVIEWER: And what do you mean by that?

BECKY: I think someone under the age of maybe 20 or 22, is more likely to give you the, "whatever hand gesture," as opposed to someone over 22, and they'll use it in a different context.

DUSTIN: Well when I'm speaking with somebody I would rather someone not, like stare at me.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. But I'm not really saying stare. It's just more of a --

DUSTIN: Oh, okay. I misunderstood what you said. Because normally when I look at someone, I'm kind of looking, you know, at them but I'm not looking right at their eyes. I'm kind of looking at a point above them, showing, you know, with head signs that I'm actually paying attention. I'm interested in what they're saying.

INTERVIEWER: So how would they be reading you if you couldn't look them in the eye?

CHUCK (white officer): Like you're lying, like, you know, you're not listening to what they're saying, you're not paying attention. You know, something along those lines. You don't care what they're talking about.

INTERVIEWER: Intently maintaining eye contact with her. What are [your] concerns or issues with that?

BRYAN (white officer): That could be a psychological game when you do stuff like that. You know, you would usually talk and, you know, you listen just -- but to sit there and stare intently, what's going through -- are you listening to me or are you planning a retort or something? You know, I would wonder something about that.

INTERVIEWER: If you'd think about this for a second, would you say one way or another if African-Americans that you're counseling with, have a tendency to be more direct with their eye contact, or more indirect as opposed to whites?

DUSTIN (white enlisted): And that's a hard question and I've had several African-American subordinates and I would probably say that they tend to be or they tend to show a little bit more remorse. If I'm counseling a Caucasian for being late for work, they tend to kind of say, "Well, okay, yeah, I was late for work. Okay, let me sign on the dotted line." The African-American is kind of more -- you know, their attitude is, "Yes, I was late for work. It won't happen again. You know, this is why I was late." They're more apt to give me more of an explanation and they tend to look down, or tend to look away, when they're being reprimanded a little bit more from my experience. I would say in my experience the African American tends to be -- they tend to look away more.

They tend to be more with their heads down with less eye contact than the Caucasians.

INTERVIEWER: How were you taught at home?

CHUCK (white officer): To?

INTERVIEWER: Eye contact.

CHUCK: When somebody's speaking, you know, you're supposed to look at them when they're talking and that helps you to have some kind of a little understanding what they're saying. You know, you're just supposed to look at them, give them your attention.

CHUCK: Okay. So your folks consciously said, look at me when I'm talking to you?

CHUCK: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And suppose you didn't do that, what was the diagnosis?

CHUCK: They'll smack the hell out of you.

INTERVIEWER: So how would they be reading you if you couldn't look them in the eye?

CHUCK: Like you're lying, like, you know, you're not listening to what they're saying, you're not paying attention. You know, something along those lines. You don't care what they're talking about.

INTERVIEWER: All right. Now going back to Karen and Barbara. Karen's white and Barbara's black.

CHUCK (white officer): There's nothing -- you know, if you're looking while I'm talking that's what you're supposed to be doing.

INTERVIEWER: If both were black or both were white, does it make any difference?

CHUCK: No.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think there is any variation in expectations between blacks and whites in terms of eye contact?

BRYAN (white officer): You know, I've never given it a thought. I don't know. I really have not ever thought of that. I couldn't tell you.

INTERVIEWER: Any other body language that may be unique to blacks that is a form of communication that --

BILL (white enlisted): During the argument stage, the head rolls. That's one thing I've noticed that -- I've gotten that a few times. In an argument they do the head -- like some of the black females I talk to, they'll do that head roll thing. You know what I'm talking about? Where they kind of do a whole almost, rotation with their head, when they're kind of getting nasty with you. And it's just like -- it's almost like rolling eyes. It's kind of a sign of disrespect when they're talking to you. Kind of like, "Oh, no, you didn't. You're not going to..." -- you know, and that's the only thing I've noticed, from afar like just when people are arguing with one another. Especially -- I mean in any kind of argument and I guess to be stereotypical that is kind of like a black thing I think.

BILL (white enlisted): The strut of some of the -- it's a younger thing. It's like a younger soldier thing. Like, you know, in drill sergeants, they are always like, "get the bounce out of your step. You're not back on the block," and stuff like that. You see that a lot, especially in the younger male population -- the strut. And it annoys the crap out of me to see the strut. I just want to be like, "Walk normal, and pull your pants up." You know, stuff like that. So I've noticed the strut is definitely a body language thing.

DUSTIN (white enlisted): And that was an adjustment I had to make when I came in the military. You know, in the military when someone speaks to you they expect you to be looking at them and they expect some kind of eye contact. And that's kind of something that I wasn't used to and I never really looked at a lot of people. So that was an obstacle I had to overcome, especially going to various forums and various ceremonies and situations.

INTERVIEWER: At anywhere in your military career has anybody addressed eye contact as an expected norm?

CHARLES (white enlisted): I tend to think that -- when frequently, being in formation, those commands that are given that -- your command that says, "Watch the person who's speaking." So I think the military does pass that on quite frequently. There is an expectation that when somebody is talking and passing on information that eye contact is what is desired.

INTERVIEWER: Have you ever noticed that black males tend to have a more intense look when you're talking to them than not, or perhaps they don't look at you?

BILL (white enlisted): Sometimes what I've noticed about some of the black males that are my friends at work is, they kind of look you up and down first before you talk. And maybe that's a military thing. Most of the males I talk to are Sergeants and, you know, they're checking your uniform and stuff like that.

INTERVIEWER: When you were in basic training, was it ever brought to the groups' attention that eye contact had an importance?

EVERITT (white enlisted): Yes, I guess so because the drill sergeants or somebody's talking, you have to give them the respect, to actually look at them and follow them instead of daydreaming.

INTERVIEWER: Take yourself back to enlisted basic time in the days of Drill Sergeant and all of that sort of stuff, was eye contact from a military perspective pounded into anybody or was that ever an issue within the context of basic training?

CHUCK (white officer): I don't think they ever said it but when the drill sergeant was talking, you know, all eyes on him. You didn't have the option to, you know, talk and BS around.

#### Request/Response Time

INTERVIEWER: Is there a cultural component to this?

DELORES (black officer): I think because of language (unintelligible) because I mean if I say right now, you should understand it's right now. But if you -- wouldn't say culture. Maybe it's a small cultural but it's more of a personality

Note that Crystal and Arleen heard the words expressed in the request.

They stated, however, as mentioned previously by other black participants, that they were expecting other kinesic cues such as the tone of voice to convey part of the urgency, not just the words alone.

CRYSTAL (black enlisted): It depends on what I'm doing and it depends on the scenario of the thing. If I know you just got a phone call, and you're talking to somebody and you hang up and you say, Sergeant [Name], I need you to go here now. And you had that tone in your voice, but I also know that you just got something that prompted you to probably do that and that, you probably do need it.

INTERVIEWER: Would I need to say now?

CRYSTAL: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: What if I didn't say now? I need you to go --

CRYSTAL: And you didn't have any tone in your voice? Do I know anything else?

INTERVIEWER: Not necessarily.

CRYSTAL: I don't necessarily know anything else and you said I need you to go and pick up something, I think you would have to say now.



ARLEEN (black enlisted): I wouldn't know. I guess it's just like I said, it's just a tone. The word has no -- without the tone. If she just tells me go now, you know, in a nice respectable way, I'm going to go.

Arleen repeated the concern that white supervisors often placed an emphasis to a request by using the term "now." In her opinion, this carried a racial component and an intentional put down each time the word was used. While it is not possible to judge specifically the true interpretation of meaning intended by the supervisor, the subordinate clearly interpreted a word, the tone and volume, to be condescending in nature. This theme was repeated by others in subsequent citations.

ARLEEN (black enlisted): Specialist (Name) could you go down and get, you know, some medication now, I would go. But if there was more of a, Specialist (Name), you need to go NOW and pick up the medication, I would have some hesitation or, "What have I done, and why are you talking to me like that?" Because there's a way to speak to anyone. There's a decent -- I mean that's -- I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: Would you read some racial something into a request like that, particularly if she was white?

ARLEEN: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And what would that interpretation be?

ARLEEN: That maybe she thinks I'm not her equal, you know, or --

INTERVIEWER: Just that one word and how she said it, connotes a talking down to you?

ARLEEN: Uh-huh, just that one word and how it is spoken. But she is like, "Could you go NOW!" -- You know, it's the tone I would think. To me it's the attitude with the word now. So with any word it's an attitude.

DELORES (black officer): Oh, Lord, that has happened too many times. I'm thinking I need to raise my voice and make it clear how important it is for you to go to pick up the medication right now because I need the medication right now.

INTERVIEWER: If I were the charge nurse and you noticed that every time I asked someone to do something, if it was a white person I said, "I need you to do this," and if it's a black person I say, "I need you to do this 'now,'" Maybe the same tone of voice, but I put 'now' in there, would that be noticed that to the white person I just say, I need this done. To the black person I say I need it done 'now'?

BRANDI (black enlisted): Uh-huh, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Does that kind of thing happen?

BRANDI: Oh, you mean here? Yeah, it does happen.

INTERVIEWER: That way?

BRANDI: Uh-huh.

INTERVIEWER: Between white and black or --

BRANDI: It happens.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, when you say it happens, who's the one that is guilty of causing the miscommunication?

BRANDI: In charge.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, but is the charge white, or black, male or female?

BRANDI: White.

INTERVIEWER: And it's usually toward the blacks because they get more emphasis?

BRANDI: Uh-huh. It is what we go through every day, and I'm smiling again because I don't think there's a solution to it. It's just going to go on and on like that.

INTERVIEWER: Now if Dorothy was white and Thomas was black, or any other kind of combination, does any of that play into it?

DELORES (black officer): I would hope not because if Private Thomas failed to go get my medications, not necessarily because she is black, it would mean that he is either being disrespectful or being very lazy. I wouldn't think it's a racial thing.

INTERVIEWER: Are there some combinations between female or male that just don't work?

DIXIE (black enlisted): Like what do you mean?

INTERVIEWER: A white male trying to work for a black female, or any other combination.

DIXIE: I think any male working for any female is always a problem.

INTERVIEWER: Is it harder for a black male to work for a black female than a white female or any other --

DIXIE: Uh-uh. It's just for a female period.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, why?

DIXIE: For some reason men, you know, they have that Stone Age type thinking. You know, I'm the man -- so what. Especially when the female is the boss of that male it's even harder because, it's like, I don't know, they just have that male mentality like, they should be in charge. They should be the ones running things, so it's hard. I mean, I know it's hard for me. I have all males that work underneath me, and I've had issues that they were on a male shift, and that male did not have no issues, and I got upset about it, and they were like, "well you can't compare yourself to me." I said it really shouldn't matter if I'm a female and you're a male. You know, we're both NCOs.

INTERVIEWER: Is it racial or would you see a male/female thing, or a female/female thing, or a rank thing, or where would you classify it?

ARLEEN (black enlisted): A little bit of both because I think with male/female, the male always thinks he is the dominant one so that's talk down. With female/female, it's just a woman thing, you know. I can't say with male/male. Or if it was a female telling a male to go maybe that's why he would be so

nonchalant about going because he feels dominant and “a woman can’t talk to me like that.” “I’ll do it when I get a chance.”

INTERVIEWER: So if Dorothy’s a brand new butter-bar [lieutenant] and is what, 23 years old, something like that, and Thomas is a 36 year old private, that’s going to be a problem?

BEN: In some cases, yeah, because a lot of individuals, especially a lot of young enlisted -- well of course he is not young anymore but, you know, a lot of enlisted personnel are brainwashed a lot of times. Once again, that packed baggage. They’re brainwashed and they form prejudice toward officers, and especially the junior enlisted, the one just coming in from school. What’s she going to tell me? I’m a grown -- you see what I’m saying. I’m a grown ass man. So a lot of individuals have a problem taking orders from someone younger than them regardless of the rank structure.

INTERVIEWER: If Tom, the young lieutenant is a male, says it to the private, does that change it? I mean Tom is 23 years old too.

BEN: Exactly. I’ve seen it before and especially because some black men, you know, tend to -- once again with the eye contact thing and the power thing and stuff, some black males hate to have their manhood challenged. And see the young lieutenant is not challenging the black man. Not at all. He asks him to go get meds. But some black men have this mindset and stuff, you know, their manhood is being challenged because -- basically it’s like a manhood thing. He is

being told what to do -- ego thing. He has been told to do by a younger white male.

CASTLE (black enlisted): Well certainly in my mind, when you say now, in any language it means, you know, immediately. Where I mean now doesn't mean tomorrow in my mind.

INTERVIEWER: When I say to you, "Private I need you to go now", or "Private, I need you to go ASAP", what's the difference in those two requests?

CASTLE: That's interesting. Now and ASAP, now means after I'm finished speaking with you go now. ASAP means as soon as possible. Well my, soon as possible may be vastly different than yours. You may, in your mind, say ASAP, which means within the next few minutes. ASAP to me may mean next week. That's a big issue. A big issue. I was a drill sergeant. I can't imagine me telling soldiers, okay, I need you all to do something, and you can get around to doing -- I need it now. So now to me means right now.

DAN (black enlisted): There's obviously a lack of understanding on the PFCs [private first class] part of what now means from the captain and she should have stopped her when she turned in the opposite direction of the pharmacy and said, "No, now means now, you're going the wrong way," and redirect her right then and there. Something was not communicated properly. Something didn't quite go through.

INTERVIEWER: Does now mean the same thing to everybody, just the word?

DAN: Probably not.

INTERVIEWER: What is your interpretation of now? What's another word that means now?

DAN: Right away, maybe, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Here's an interesting one that I tried to decipher. What's the difference between now, ASAP, and stat, or are they all used the same way?

DAN: I think as nurses we may tend to use them kind of on the same line, but then I can clearly define as an individual request, now to me would be more important than an ASAP, because ASAP is as soon as possible. I'll get to it as soon as possible. Could you go to the pharmacy and get this as soon as possible? Yes, sure I can. And a STAT of course, it's quickly done, no sooner said than done so.

In the following note that Dan did not jump to an insubordination conclusion, but that perhaps the subordinate did not understand the request. The business only, relationship approach, customarily demonstrated by whites would have interpreted this action as insubordination.

INTERVIEWER: So this individual just looks and walks off, you're going to redirect their attention to --

DAN (black enlisted): What I meant by now, right.

INTERVIEWER: Would you interpret that they were just blowing you off, being insubordinate or being something else?

DAN: No, no, I wouldn't look at it as insubordination. I would look at it as maybe she didn't understand what I meant by now.

INTERVIEWER: But what is "now" supposed to mean?

ALEX (black officer): Now means go, don't stop, don't stand, go past go, don't collect two hundred dollars, you go straight to that point, is what now means to me. What now may be acted upon is a different thing. I honestly feel throughout every culture everybody knows what now means and what it means, because now means now.

Alex provided two critical points from his stance as an officer and as an African-American. First, he stated that younger soldiers are more likely to challenge the authority of a superior ranking individual. Although he might mumble under his breath, he would carry out the request. Alex did not see it in a cultural sense, but as a challenge, a rebellion of sort. He described how he would exert his authority in the situation. He further described giving a soldier the opportunity to sit down and discuss how military orders were to be received and carried out. He illustrated this in a relationship building connectivity context. In the event the soldier chose to ignore the guidance, Alex stated that "our working relationship needs to leave this realm and go strictly, not professional, but military..."



ALEX: The word now, that's going to take me off on another tangent but. There is a new breed of youngster out there, and that new breed of youngster has made a new breed of soldier where....when I was a private, if someone who outranked me, like an NCO or an officer told me "now," I moved, period, the end. I would talk about them up under my breath, I'd call them every name in the book, but you moved. NOW, I've seen soldiers being given orders and, "Oh well," lackadaisical which is, I don't think that is a cultural thing. I think that's a non-verbal cue to say rebellion, a challenge, it's a challenge when they don't do that. At least I perceive it as a challenge, which would probably make me uh, it would work, you know what I mean, I feel as though it would be done. It would tick me off because it is a challenge. "You can't tell me what to do." And at that point it would move from superior-subordinate to you know, to totally out of the realm somewhat of the military because then, whereas I would be giving an order based on what I needed in a situation as a nurse or an officer to ....I CAN tell you WHAT TO DO, and let me SHOW you how much I CAN TELL YOU what to do, SHOULD I CHOOSE!

ALEX: I've been in that situation, but I tried to sit down and talk with the soldiers and let them know that anything that comes out of anyone's mouth that outranks you, is an order. They may say it nicely. They may not say it nicely. They may form into a question, they may say, "Can you do me a favor?" but it's an order, you need to move. If you can't handle that, then our working

relationship needs to leave this realm and go strictly, not professional, but straight military, whereas I will call you by your rank, by your name. I will give you a directive, and you will move out, instead of the new breed whereas, "Can you do me a favor and take those vital signs?" or "Do you mind, do you mind doing this?" and I think some soldiers actually perceive that they have a choice as if they can reply, "Yes I do mind, Ma'am", or "Yes I do mind, sir." If they can't handle that and you have to flip and tell them, "No, you're going to do this now." Then they get offended by that, because the whole relationship is just changed.

INTERVIEWER: From your experience, is that equally shared between white females and black females, and white males, and black males or is there a difference.

ALEX: I don't think it is equally shared but I don't it is cultural. I think females get it more from male subordinates. For a female, I think female officers, charge nurse will get that lackadaisical, "Okay, alright, I hear you," from males. I don't think it matters which, what race they are. What does, when you get to the cultural, males don't usually get that from males or females. A male supervisor would not get that from a male or female inferior as much. I think females get it from young male soldiers. What's cultural about it is how you perceive why they are doing it, or how the subordinate is perceiving why they are telling me that. That could be true, it may or may not be true. You could have a white officer say to a black private "do this now." And that private may feel that they are telling

me this, or talking to me this way, because I'm black. I've talked to soldiers who have been in those situations, and it looked like they were being mistreated or strongly talked to because they were black, and I agreed with them.

Bob provided an entirely different interpretation for the term "now."

INTERVIEWER: Well she told him to go now.

BOB (black officer): Well now could mean anything. In medical terminology to express the urgency that you want someone to react -- if you mean as soon as possible or --

INTERVIEWER: If you told me to go now --

BOB: STAT.

INTERVIEWER: Well I know but if you told me to go now and do something, what would your expectation be?

BOB: That you will put it on your agenda and you would do it.

INTERVIEWER: What would be the limit of what now could mean?

BOB: I mean maybe you will continue doing what you were doing, bringing that action to a termination and then go.

INTERVIEWER: So now could mean an hour from now?

BOB: No, now could mean -- if I'm giving drugs and you tell me to go now, I put my drugs away, and then I go to the Pharmacy. If you said stat, I leave the drugs and you put them away or you watch them until I get back. So I mean, you've got to use the right terminology.

INTERVIEWER: If you go tell somebody in your current workplace to take this instrument set now, some place, how soon do you expect that to happen?

BOB: As soon as they terminate what their current activity is, unless it's going to take more then a few minutes to terminate that.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that now has a cultural difference in meaning?

BOB: If now, now means, when you can, take it now. But in nursing it kind of means, I think the same thing. It doesn't constitute immediacy to people. But if you want to have something happen more immediately than now, you should say immediately or STAT, you know, and then people will all go running off doing things.

BOB: Yeah, why does everything got to be now? Why do I always have to go do things now? Susie don't have to go do things now. You give Susie a list of things, and she is able to prioritize her work, and get it done. But I've got to go now. That kind of stuff. I've heard that before, your know, people react to that.

CHESTER (black officer): If I was that charge nurse, you know, I would run after that PFC, like hey, you know, what are you doing? I just gave you an instruction to go, you know, pick up some medications from the pharmacy and you're going the wrong way. What's the problem?

INTERVIEWER: So what's now mean?

CHESTER: Now means, it needs to happen right now. It needs to be STAT, you know. It doesn't mean running to the bathroom. You know, I need this medication right now. You go and pick it up and then go to the bathroom.

INTERVIEWER: But what's the difference between, I need you go now, I need you to go ASAP, and I need you to go immediately?

CHESTER: I would say ASAP, that word is more -- I think it's more urgent to me, you need to go ASAP. Now I would say -- okay, now -- you need it now so I could run around, and while I'm going there, go grab me a soda on the way. But even though ASAP -- you know, it means as soon as possible but for me, the way I perceive it is ASAP, right now. Now, yeah, okay, I'll go do it.

INTERVIEWER: What's now mean to you?

DERRICK: Like immediately.

INTERVIEWER: Does everybody have that same understanding of now?

DERRICK: Not necessarily. I don't think so.

INTERVIEWER: What's the difference between now, ASAP, and immediately?

DERRICK: Really nothing.

INTERVIEWER: Tone?

DERRICK: Yeah, tone could play a part in that.

INTERVIEWER: Is it conceivable that now might mean, when I get through with something else that I'm doing and then I'll go?

DERRICK: Depending on the way the message is relayed, it could be taken that way.

ALEX (black officer): And on the other hand I've had some young white enlisted soldiers who worked for me who there was constantly tension. And this was kinda learned what being an officer really is. And I had to pull them in and I had to tell them, "Look, we can cut to the chase right now, I'm in charge. Okay, first and foremost, I'm in charge, Okay, but our relationship does not have to be like it is now, Okay, the only way that it is going to end is you're going to have to respect the fact I'm in charge. I'll respect what you do, and I'll value what you do, Okay, but let there not be any mistake that I'm in charge. We can continue on working together, just got to get past that, you ain't gonna be in charge of me. Just get past that, because everything that we do on this floor, on this ward, we gonna continue to do, you know, you just gotta get past that."

INTERVIEWER: They don't want you to be in charge because you're black?

ALEX: Right, I mean I've caught a tension because I was a black officer.

INTERVIEWER: "I'm just not going to be caught dead working for any black guy?"

ALEX: You ain't going to tell me what to do." Right

INTERVIEWER: Is that common or, or...?

ALEX: YES, Yes. Black officers, any African-American who is in charge, especially with the persons who they in charge of, are white.....you'll catch that a

lot. But it's not 100% because, that officer, the one in charge may be a complete ass, you know. It depends, it's never 100% you have to look at the entire picture. It may be miscommunications.

INTERVIEWER: Do you see any issues with a black male working for a black female or does,... are there any combinations that just don't work?

ALEX (black officer): (Very long pause) I think there will be issues, not blown out issues, but issues, if you have a black man working for a black woman. I don't think it will be the same issue if you have that black man working for a white woman.

INTERVIEWER: What is the difference?

ALEX: Somewhat that with a black woman being in charge of a black man there may be that tendency to be hard on him or harder on him. And the fact that they are in that situation where they are the boss, I could see them making it extra clear to that black man, who is in charge this time. I could see that.

INTERVIEWER: If Dorothy is black?

ARTHUR (black enlisted): If Dorothy's black I think she would call probably on both. She would call, "Where are you going. Why are you going to the other side?"

INTERVIEWER: If Dorothy's black?

ARTHUR: Dorothy's black, right.

INTERVIEWER: And why would it be different?

ARTHUR: I guess she is trying to solidify her title in a way. They think she is black and female. I see that kind a lot of black females come into the workplace, mainly military. They try to solidify that they're -- you know, "I'm serious and I'm going show my superiority no matter black/white, they can choose."

White Females

ANGELA (white enlisted): Well to me now means that you stop doing whatever you're doing and take care of what needs to be taken care of at that moment.

INTERVIEWER: Does the terms now mean the same to everybody?

ANGELA: Probably not.

INTERVIEWER: What if Dorothy's white and Thomas is black?

ANGELA: I would think that Dorothy would probably see it more as his defiance or disrespect.

INTERVIEWER: If Dorothy's black and Thomas is white, then what?

ANGELA: I still would see it as a kind of disrespect.

BRENDA (white enlisted): Okay, if I was Dorothy I would say, "Where are you going because I need this done ASAP? And if they were lollygagging around then, I would want to know their purpose.

INTERVIEWER: What other words would you use to describe the word now?

BRENDA: You know, as soon as possible -- well not really as soon as possible because that means whenever you get to it.

INTERVIEWER: How many interpretations for now?



BRENDA: I would just think one. I would go right then. Right now as in, in the moment.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think the term now does in fact mean the same thing to everybody?

BRENDA: I think it does, but I think some people choose to ignore it. As whatever -- like if you say, get to it right now and someone's in the middle of something, then they don't -- I recognize some people kind of downplay the word now. To some people now means right then. Stop what you're doing. Go do it. Other people they kind of downplay the importance of it, and just feel that whatever they're doing is necessary, and then they'll get to it directly after.

INTERVIEWER: Is it possible that culturally, now can mean different things to different cultures?

BRENDA: I don't know if particularly the word now could mean a number of things. I don't believe so. I think people just kind of shrug it off and ignore the true meaning of it.

INTERVIEWER: I need you to go ASAP to the pharmacy, or if I said under the same conditions, I need you to go now to the pharmacy, what's the difference between those two?

CHRISTINE (white enlisted): There is a difference. As soon as possible means as soon it's possible for you. To say now, it doesn't mean, like when you have time, it's go right now.

INTERVIEWER: If we made all different kinds of combinations about Dorothy being black and Thomas being black or -- would any of that change any of this now business?

CHRISTINE: No. Now means now.

CATHY (white officer): I guess I would be like, "Private, you know, the pharmacy is that way," and hopefully that would prompt him to say, "Oh, I need to do this first, or I need to -- I was going here, or oh, you're right." I mean I guess I would see what his response would be.

INTERVIEWER: Would you be more likely to say, go ASAP or go now, if you needed something? What does now mean to you?

CATHY: Right now. The time that the clock says. I need you to go right now.

CATHY: Well if there was something else he was doing, obviously he would tell me, you know, but I can't imagine waiting that long. But now could mean three minutes, but it shouldn't be more than five minutes probably.

INTERVIEWER: Does ASAP and now mean the same thing to you?

CATHY: No. It depends on how it's used in the context. ASPA could mean as soon as you have a chance but now means I need you to get it immediately.

INTERVIEWER: Is there a possibility that there are multiple understandings of what now might be, and that might be along racial lines?

CATHY: No, probably not. Another white person could think it's different and another black person could think it's different.

INTERVIEWER: Different in any direction?

CATHY: Right.

INTERVIEWER: But let's say hypothetically, you were not necessarily aware of it, and not you being you but put it in the context of workplace, that a white person --if you followed them around with a tape recorder all day, that they said to a black person, I need you to go now, and in the same general context if they were asking a white person subordinate to them to do something, they would say I need you to do it. In other words, the now being a little extra kick, or a little extra whip. Is that possible that that occurs?

BECKY (white officer): Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Is it probably that that kind of thing occurs?

BECKY: Oh, absolutely, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Between the races?

BECKY: Yes, it would be a white person saying to a black person now, as opposed to ASAP.

INTERVIEWER: Does a black person not understand what now is, or is it just a different interpretation?

BECKY: I've seen an assumption that black people are lazy, and so I need to add that additional "now," so that they'll do it right away as opposed to not doing it. And it has been my experience while I was in military -- civilians -- that there

is an assumption that black people are lazy and that when you want them to do something you have to ask them a different way to get them to do it.

INTERVIEWER: Is it a matter of being lazy or is it a matter of understanding and having a different reference for time?

BECKY: No, I think it's an assumption that they're lazy.

INTERVIEWER: But is it possible that the other explanation is more reasonable?

BECKY: Oh, sure.

The next two excerpts were classic.

INTERVIEWER: If you said to me, and I'm trying to make this a neutral tone of voice, if you said to me that you need me to go now, to go some place, or to go ASAP some place, what's the difference between those two in terms of urgency?

DEBORAH (white officer): There's not. I don't see a difference.

INTERVIEWER: They're synonymous?

DEBORAH: In my mind.

INTERVIEWER: Does everybody perceive that the same way?

DEBORAH: Maybe not. I mean you could argue that now is STAT, and ASAP gives you a little bit of extra time I suppose!

INTERVIEWER: About how much?

DEBORAH: I have no idea. I never thought about it because, if I bother to say, you know, something like ASAP out loud, in my mind that means now.

INTERVIEWER: Maybe I don't interpret it that way.

DEBORAH: Right.

INTERVIEWER: So how many interpretations are there for now?

DEBORAH: For now, I wouldn't think there would be but one. Now is now. I guess ASAP -- you could think of ASAP as, I need you to go do this ASAP and get it back to me ASAP. So it gives them a period of time to, you know, accomplish something as opposed to, sit right down right this second and finish it and give it back to me. Or go to the pharmacy -- finish what you're doing, go to the pharmacy and come right back.

INTERVIEWER: If I said to you, "I need this ASAP" or if I said "I need this now", in that same tone of voice, is there a difference in when I want it?

BECKY (white officer): Yes. I think your tone as opposed to the words -- I would queue in on the tone of your voice.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, but I did not intend to change my -- I said ASAP or I said now. Are those interchangeable?

BECKY: No, to me now implies, I need it soon, but not right this minute. If you say ASAP then it's like, I need it right this minute.

INTERVIEWER: The words are almost exactly opposite in their meaning.

BECKY: I think it's just the context of how it's used (unintelligible) in nursing because now to me almost means stat. Whereas ASAP means like a little --

INTERVIEWER: Well that isn't what you just said though. What you said was ASAP means I want it as quick as you can get it and now means whenever you get around to it.

BECKY: No, it's just the opposite.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. But they're not synonymous.

BECKY: Not in the context that I've used it in nursing, they're not. To an untrained ear maybe they are.

BECKY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: How many interpretations of now are possible?

BECKY: Oh, numerous. Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: Is it harder for a young black male enlisted to work for a black female officer than it would be if that officer is white or male, or another black male officer?

DIANE: I think initially, like in that basic training, you know, the whole AIT (Advanced Individual Training) environment when they're first getting introduced to the Army, it would probably be hard to work for a female, regardless if they were black or if they were white -- for a black male. White males too, but probably a little more for a black male.

White Females

INTERVIEWER: What if Dorothy's white and Thomas is black?

ANGELA (white enlisted): I would think that Dorothy would probably see it more as his defiance or disrespect.

INTERVIEWER: What's the more likely response initiative or action if Dorothy is white and Thomas is black? Is Thomas going to be more likely to respond more quickly if it's a black female versus a white female asking him to do something?

BECKY (white officer): I think if it was a black female asking for something and it was a white male, unless they had a history of working together and they knew each other, that a white male would not respond as quickly to a black female's request as a white female's request.

INTERVIEWER: All right. What about a black male, between a black or white female?

BECKY: I think the black male would respond quicker to a white female's request than a black female's request.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So both of them are responding less quickly to the black female?

BECKY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Now what if the charge nurse is a male, black or white?

BECKY: I don't think it would matter. I think a male request to another male, whether either one of them was black or white would be the same.

INTERVIEWER: Now that drags us into the fact that a female is giving an order to somebody else. Are there issues with that?

DEBORAH: Sometimes.

INTERVIEWER: Be more specific.

DEBORAH: It's been my experience sometimes that some men are less receptive to receiving direction from women than others.

INTERVIEWER: Can you be more specific in terms of racial --

DEBORAH: No, I think it's a gender thing.

Bill proposed to respond to the various terms for immediacy based upon his assessment of the competency of his supervisor, adding another interesting, heretofore not suggested variable in an already confused situation.

BILL (white enlisted): If one of my lieutenants came down and said I need you to go to the pharmacy now, if I didn't have anything to do, bam, off I go.

INTERVIEWER: And if you did have something to do, would you state it?

BILL: If I did have something to do, yes, I would say -- I'd be like, I need to go hang this on a patient real quick or I need to go dump this urinal. I need to go do this really quick, and then I'll go then. And I mean I would definitely give an explanation, and then as soon as I said, I'd be on my way, *be a camouflage blur* trying to get that done and getting to the pharmacy.

INTERVIEWER: Generally speaking, would the word now kind of take on a tone of its own so to speak?



BILL: It can but if -- you need to go -- like I need you to go to the pharmacy now. It would depend on how the word now is worded. If it's, I need you to go to the pharmacy now and pick this up, then there's a sense of urgency and it needs to be done quick and they can't do -- it's me.

If it's, you need to go right now -- it depends on how they say it once again. Or if it's just, go now, then yeah, I'm going to be like, "Oh, you're giving me a tude." You know, you're kind of giving me an attitude that -- but I would still just -- you know, I need to do this first and then I can go.

INTERVIEWER: And I said to you, specialist, I need you to go to the pharmacy to pick up a medication, in just that tone of voice, as I'm just using. Or I said, Specialist, I need you to go ASAP to get this medication, or I said to you, Specialist, I need you to go NOW and get this medication. Which of the three of those requests is different if any?

BILL: I don't think there's any difference. I'd react the same to all three of those in the same tone of voice, because, if you're a competent nurse, whether you're new or not and you're asking me to go do that, however you put it, I know there's a sense of urgency to it. By saying "Specialist, I need you to go get this medication," that means you need me to pick it up and there's no sense of urgency. Once you add the word now, to me, that means, hey, I need this really quick, and in that tone of voice and knowing that you're a competent nurse that

says I need this really quick. And I'm hurting right now and I'm backed up and I need you to get this for me.

INTERVIEWER: Is it ever possible that the terms ASAP and now are synonymous?

BILL: Yes. That's what I take ASAP as almost because as soon as possible is basically now. I mean, you're saying -- like a lot of times when you say now, it's not cut -- like when you say, hey, I need this now -- now, I'm going to contradict myself here. ASAP and now can be synonymous but a lot of times when you're using the word now, that means I need it yesterday. It needs to be here this second, you know, especially in our situation on this type of ward. When you're saying now, than yesterday. ASAP, that gives you a little bit of, as soon as I can get to it.

Dustin added confusion to confusion by stating, "we kind of -- being in the military, we just define differently than it really is defined." I could not have said it better myself.

DUSTIN: To me there's a difference. I need you to go now means okay, I need you to go very soon, within, you know, a couple of minutes. When you say ASAP that means there's more of an urgency, there's more of an emergency pending. So that would be a quicker response for me. I would do that now.

DUSTIN: I think it's possible that we use the term ASAP and it has more of a meaning than the term now. As far as, is it going to make a difference if the

person is African American or Caucasian, or male or female, I don't think so.

And I haven't seen that experience -- my experience is that if someone asks me to do something now, or asks someone to do something now, and they say ASAP, whatever they want them to do, ASAP gets done first. It's more of just a general understanding that something that needs to be done ASAP, you drop everything you're doing and you do it.

INTERVIEWER: So if I say to you I need something done ASAP or I say I need something done now, you've got more time with now, but what's the leeway on now?

DUSTIN: There's really no answer. I really don't have an answer for that because I think when someone says I need you to do something now, it's up to that individual to subjectively interpret that. Me personally when someone asks me to do something now, I try to do it as quickly as I can. If I'm already engaged in something, I try to finish what I'm doing and then I do it, or if I see someone standing around and not doing something, I'll ask them to do it. Whereas if someone says I need you to do this ASAP, I'm pretty much stopping whatever I'm doing and I'm going to do whatever they asked me to do because I guess my expectation is that when they're saying to do it ASAP, that means it's more important than whatever I'm doing now, whereas -- you know, whatever the circumstances -- whatever the situation is. So I guess maybe that's one of those

terminologies that we kind of -- being in the military, we just define differently than it really is defined.

EVERITT: Now means exactly right now unless you have something more important that you'd want to express that has to be done, that you're actually working on right now, but it actually means this second.

INTERVIEWER: Does that mean the same thing to everybody?

EVERITT: Well, yes. I would say yes.

INTERVIEWER: Culturally?

EVERITT: Maybe not -- but I would say yes.

INTERVIEWER: What's the difference between my saying to you, I need you to go now and I need you to go ASAP?

EVERITT: For me actually ASAP and now are kind of the same unless you actually have said, go as soon as possible. I generalize those as the same.

INTERVIEWER: All right. If I said to you, I need you to go now, I need you to go ASAP, and I need you to go immediately, which has the greater urgency?

EVERITT: Definitely the immediately.

INTERVIEWER: What does the word "now" mean to you?

ALLEN (white officer): The word now means, I need you to go now. You need to get there -- look I need you to go now down there, and they go the opposite direction. If I said STAT that would be a different term. If I said, okay I need you to go now down there, and he walked off in a different direction, I don't

know what that means necessarily. He walked down a different direction to do what, take a pee? You know, to hang up a jacket -- you know what I'm saying? I don't know. You know, if it's an emergency, and I say go now, well I'll tell you what now means, now means now.

INTERVIEWER: Does now mean the same thing to everybody?

ALLEN: No, it doesn't.

Allen added an interesting dimension and that was urgency terms may take on added value and interpretation in particular work settings that appreciably differ from other hospital locations. For example, the operating room, emergency room and labor & delivery.

ALLEN: Okay, now put me in a operating room and ask me what now means and I'll give you a different scenario. In the operating room if I say now, I mean now. And if somebody's going the opposite direction I don't care who they are, as you all know too well, now means now, because something can be going down the rat hole quickly. And the time constraint and the expectation in the operating room culturally within that -- behind the red line, devoid of culture, has a completely different sense of meaning. And if you don't have an appreciation of the word "now" behind the red line, you'll probably be removed from the red line because you cannot function as a circulator or a scrub. If the surgeon says I need this now, it's not rocket science, and you're not going to last if you don't understand the immediacy of that request.

Chuck was lacking in his interpersonal relationship approach.

CHUCK (white officer): Well that happens here all the time so that's -- I would have to stop him and say, "Where in the hell are you going?"

INTERVIEWER: What does now mean to you?

CHUCK: Like right now, in a hurry. Like stop what you're doing and go do it now. Like this takes priority because if it didn't I would say whenever you get a second, whenever you get time.

INTERVIEWER: Does now mean the same thing to everybody?

DAVID (white officer): No. Every word means something different to everybody.

INTERVIEWER: So what are the variations that now might take on?

DAVID: One to ten minutes I would say would be -- okay, I get to finish what I'm doing and then go. Okay, let me go to the bathroom before I go. Let me -- you know, I think those are the kind of variations that you could find.

INTERVIEWER: Would your expectation of him be the same as if Private Thomas were black or would there be a possibility that now might mean something different to either one of them based on culture or not?

ALLEN (white officer): Truth be told I think I would anticipate that the white person would respond more immediately and the black person might have more of a delay. And I'm not sure why I believe that. I think it might be based on an experience.

INTERVIEWER: All right. Elaborate on that if you would.

ALLEN: I'm trying to think. I think I've seen slower responses over time amongst some of my black workers to respond to something like now, as opposed to some of the other people I've worked with, to include other cultures.

INTERVIEWER: Would there be variability in the enlisted group with respect to either rank or ethnicity? In other words would a black sergeant be more likely to blow off a white lieutenant versus a white sergeant or any other kind of combination?

BRYAN (white officer): I think it's kind of equal on that. I would say it could happen on either way. I think that's where people get confused when they think that it's, you know, a gender, it's a race. It's not. It's competence in my book. That's what causes the problem. When they're totally incompetent or, you know, don't know what they're doing, that's where the problem comes. So it wouldn't make any difference who was there. If they didn't know what they were doing, the person under is going to have a tough time.

INTERVIEWER: And anybody who doesn't understand --

BRYAN: Is being, you know, just either obstinate, or passive aggressive, or just whatever.

BRYAN: I don't see it as a color -- racial. I see it as an enlisted- officer thing and the thing about the authority and no, I'm just going to not do it. And I do see that fairly often. And it's not -- it could be any officer, it could be any enlisted.

INTERVIEWER: Dorothy is a white -- I said military, so let's make her a white captain. And she says this to Thomas, who for the purposes of discussion we'll make any of the four possibilities, white female, black, female, white male, black male.

INTERVIEWER: Who is more likely than another if any, to do just what I've described, turn slowly, agree, walk off in the opposite direction?

CHARLES: In my experience I would say that the black female. Among those four, which one is most likely, it would probably be the black female.

INTERVIEWER: Followed by?

CHARLES: Probably followed by the white female.

INTERVIEWER: If Dorothy is a male, is that same thing going to be true?

CHARLES: Yes, in my experience I'd tend to say it is.

#### bSupervisor/Subordinate Preferences

BOB (Black officer): You know, I think I would probably want to work for a black male because -- just due to the fact that I haven't done it yet. You know, as a major in the Army and as a captain, most of the black males I see are my peers and as you go up, there is none above you. You know, they all get out as Majors or retire because they were prior enlisted or whatever. But you look up and you don't see any black men. I don't know if there are any black male Colonels in the Army, in the Nurse Corps.



INTERVIEWER: Who you're going to want to work for time, after time, after time.

CHESTER (black officer): I would say work for an African-American male -- I would say.

INTERVIEWER: Why do you say that?

CHESTER: I say that because I feel that an African-American male would be more understanding of both me being a male and also being an African American -- and he'll be more understanding as far as whatever issues that I might be having or concerns. Maybe it might be easier to, you know, understand, you know, what I'm going through.

INTERVIEWER: What would be your second choice?

CHESTER: My second choice would be white male.

INTERVIEWER: Who would you choose most consistently to work for if you had your choice?

CATHY (white officer): Probably a female but I really don't know. It depends on the character of that person.

INTERVIEWER: Who would you prefer to work for from now on, a male or female and then would that person be black or white?

DIXIE (black enlisted): You know, I really can't say because I worked for a black female before and she was like the worst. I mean she didn't want to help me with anything or -- you know, just nothing. And so, like we always had conflicts.

But then after she left I worked for a black male and anything that I needed like help with as far as -- and I mean -- when I say like help, I mean, you know, promotion wise or getting things done when it was time for me to leave, you know, when it's time for me to PCS (permanent change of station). I got more help from him and more guidance from him then I did when I worked for her and I worked for her longer than I had worked for him. So I mean it would all depend on what type of person. If you've got somebody who's willing to work with you and just willing to -- you know, who's about the soldiers, then I don't care what race they are, what gender they are. They can be transsexuals as far as I'm concerned. If they're going to help me out to where I need to get to, then that's who I'm going to work for.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, but just based on what you know right now, who would you choose?

DIXIE (black enlisted): I would probably choose a male.

INTERVIEWER: All right. And would it make any difference the race?

DIXIE: No

BEN (black enlisted): Okay, I would choose to have a male.

INTERVIEWER: You said earlier that you would prefer to work for a male.

Does your preference run black or white?

BEN: No.

DERRICK (black officer): I'm going to choose to work with men and honestly speaking, whether they're black or white -- I mean I would need to know work who they were, you know what I mean? If I knew specifically I would be working for this black person or I'd be working for this white person, then I would pick and choose that way. I wouldn't necessarily pick and choose based on the fact that he was a black guy or he was a white guy. Me personally, I wouldn't choose that way. I honestly feel like, you know, if there's someone out there that's going to be a good leader, it doesn't have a color on it. It's not whether he is a black or a white person. It's whether he is a good leader.

BRENDA (white enlisted): I have no doubt it would be male and I don't really care if it's black or white. I've had both that are equally as good as leaders, you know. My supervisor now is a white male and he gets the job done and I'm perfectly happy with him.

DIANE (white enlisted): I don't know. I would have to say male but I really don't think it would make a difference if they were black or white, so I can't really give you an answer on that one.

BETH (Black officer): And you don't want to hear I don't have a preference do you? I really don't. I really don't because, you know you have to be careful what you ask for because you might get it regardless of whether they're male or female or Caucasian or black.

CASTLE (black enlisted): It really doesn't matter. I think it's important that the person -- that they care about their people, the nature of the mission, and given a vision, a shared idea that everybody working for that person regardless of sex or race, they share that same vision of success, wanting to make an organization successful. I don't care about race or color. The best qualified to get the job done.

CHARLES (white enlisted): To be honest I don't know that I would have a preference.

DAVID (white officer): It really wouldn't matter to me. I mean my basis for who I'd work for really wouldn't depend on black or white, male or female but the attitude. I don't know who I'd choose. I haven't thought about it.

BRYAN (white officer): No, it doesn't make a difference. I mean I've worked for everything you've described. I've had it and there has been good and bad and it doesn't make a difference. The only thing that makes a difference is for yourself and if you're going to sit there and do what you have to do, then it wouldn't make a big difference anyway. If you think you're right, you're going to do it. It does not make a difference to me. I know that for probably some people it does. I know that certain cultures cannot work for another and I've seen that. But it does not make a difference to me.

INTERVIEWER: What would be your choice in gender and race if you could have that consistently from now on?

DEBORAH (white officer): A white female.

INTERVIEWER: But that you could choose a male or a female and that person is white or black, who would be the person that you would select to work for if you had your choice from now on?

DAN (black enlisted): Probably would be a white male.

INTERVIEWER: All right, and for what reason?

DAN: For one, I'm not -- I don't see myself being confrontational with a white male. Two, this is just from my point of view, I think they are a little bit more astute, a little bit more learned and I could probably get a little bit more -- learn a little bit more or something from them.

EVERITT (white enlisted): I actually would have to say a strong leader because I've seen some females that were really fun and exciting to work with and also some males too. But generally I'd probably say a male and as far as the racial thing, if I didn't actually know the person I would generally if I had to say, I'd probably feel more comfortable with a white person. But it's that individual thing. I'm not really sure if it's actually like that.

INTERVIEWER: Who would be the person that you think you could best work with and for from now on?

CHUCK (white officer): I'd go with the white male.

INTERVIEWER: Who would be the last you would want to work for?

DIXIE (black enlisted): I probably wouldn't want to work for a black female.

INTERVIEWER: All right. And other than your own personal experience, is there a reason that you say that?

DIXIE: I mean just like I say, attitudes just clash because I know my attitude is just going to clash with that other female's attitude and we're just not going to work right.

INTERVIEWER: But one of the things that have come out that I didn't expect to see or hear, but the majority of people no matter what, don't want to work for a black female. Now I would think that that would be interesting information. I mean if I were to tell you nobody wants to work for you, whether you're an officer or enlisted, that is -- and then you even said that. So what needs to be done to make that so that people don't mind working for --

DIXIE: It's nothing that really can be done. I mean it's just the -- I guess I will say a stereotype that we've been put into. I mean because, you know, if you come across so many black females who have attitude you're going to think all black females have attitude. So most black females who I know and who I've encountered have attitude. I have one. So for me to be working underneath another female or even working with another black female, we're going to clash somewhere. I mean I clash with my friends because our attitude -- you know, we

have attitude. So it's like we clash. I mean like I say, even my friends I clash with so --

INTERVIEWER: But is that helpful in the military situations?

DIXIE: It's not and -- you know, it's not but it's not going to change anything.

INTERVIEWER: It can't be fixed?

DIXIE: It's nothing that can be fixed unless you can change where we grew up at, put us all, you know, somewhere else -- or where you've grown up and, you know, what kind of values you've come up with -- then the majority of your black females you come across are going to have attitude. And nobody really wants to work with them. My soldiers -- I don't think that they have a problem working for me because I'm not like hard going -- So it's just like, you know, you get here and you've got people who have been here for umpteen years and --

INTERVIEWER: Do you want people to want to work for you?

DIXIE: Honestly -- I mean yeah, I want them to work for me, but if they don't want to work for me, I really don't care, because my paycheck is still going to come on the 1st and the 15th whether they work for me or not. And that may be a bad way of looking at it but if you don't want to work for me, fine. Because I've even asked my soldiers -- I'm like, if you don't want to work for me, just let me know. I will ask to see if I can put you on another shift.

INTERVIEWER: Is that kind of thing more pronounced among white females, or black females, or does it matter?

BEN (black enlisted): Mostly blacks because a lot of times you put a black female in power -- sometimes, you know, oh, she is going to definitely run with it because, I'm a female, and I'm black, and I've got to make my mark.

INTERVIEWER: All right. Who would be generically the last person you would want to work for?

CHRISTINE (white enlisted): Again it would be black female at the other end of the spectrum I guess.

CHRISTINE: The two black females that have been up in charge on our ward have been night and day. One was -- she was awesome. Everybody loved her. We still talk about her. Everybody's like, oh, I wish so and so was back. And now the new one we have is just like a monster. She is horrible to everybody. At least she is equally horrible I guess.

AMY (white officer): So I have had some pretty miserable experiences with black females, but in the military, where I think they have gotten to the rank of Major or Lieutenant Colonel, and as successful as that is, that was the highest anyone in their family had ever done and they, in their minds were like a little Napoleon. And they were very, very difficult to work for. You couldn't work with them, and their expectations were always somewhere different than even the rest of the worker-bees. I mean, no one could satisfy them.

INTERVIEWER: What would be your last choice?

DEBORAH (white officer): A black female.



INTERVIEWER: Okay. Any particular reason that you would prefer not to work for a black female?

DEBORAH: I had a bad experience at another installation working for a black female.

INTERVIEWER: And what were the dynamics of that?

DEBORAH: Hostile, I couldn't do anything right. She didn't want me in the position. She wanted a black female in my position. Instead the black female worked for me. Just non-nurturing, non-mentoring, non-supportive, hostile.

INTERVIEWER: Have you seen any of that kind of thing, not necessarily personal but in other work relationships in other places?

DEBORAH: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Same dynamics?

DEBORAH: Not to that extent. When I was a recruiter, most of the other officers in the office were black except for one and I was friends with -- the MSC officers were both black females and they were very exclusionary, non-participative with the rest of us, especially me. It was not a positive experience in the office.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, what was the disconnect would you suspect?

DEBORAH: That I was white. Is that what you mean?

INTERVIEWER: Well okay but deeper than that?

DEBORAH: I don't know that it was deeper than that. The other nurse in the office was black female. We were very good friends. We remain very good friends. It wasn't that I don't -- my boss was a black female and she and I got along fine. It wasn't that -- I don't think they perceived me as being unwilling to socialize with African-Americans because I certainly did. They just were -- I don't know. I don't know. They were just hostile. Non-communicative and exclusionary.

INTERVIEWER: The flip side of that is then, would you like to avoid perhaps one category?

CHARLES (white enlisted): I think specifically when I was in the LPN course, the group that I had the most difficult time with, generally tended to be the black females. They were the ones that tended to -- they tended to be the ones that if I said hey, we need to get such and such done, they would be the ones to slowly turn around and go about taking care of the task more than any other group. I mean there were a number of black females that were great but there were also probably a higher percentage of black females that, you know, military bearing was something that they didn't necessarily

CHUCK (white officer): But if either a black or white female under a black female -- I mean you've got to have your ducks in a row and your stuff together or -- and either one of those would have a hard time under a superior that was a black female.

INTERVIEWER: Is that problematic in the workplace?

CHUCK: Yeah. I'm thinking, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: On a scale of one to ten, you know, across the board how much of a problem is it?

CHUCK: I'm going to say a seven. It's right about a seven.

INTERVIEWER: Is it a cultural issue or is it a --

CHUCK: I don't think it's a cultural issue. I think it's just a black female in the military has got something to prove. That they need to, that I've got this rank because I'm tough, and I can do the job and nobody's taking it away from me. And I want all the stuff --

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And in one respect -- let's put it this way. African Americans in the U.S. military probably have more respect and more ability to achieve rank, and status, and success, then generally speaking they can do in society, okay?

CHUCK: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So that the opportunity -- and they've earned it. I'm not saying they were given it. I'm not even suggesting that. But if they ruin it by being overbearing or out to prove, then it's defeated in a sense from what you're saying, and so how can we fix that?

CHUCK: The only way to fix it, like the superior -- nothing's going to happen to the superior. The only thing you can do is to try to get out from under them and

get somebody else in there. You know, you're assigned a different job or a different place to work. That's the only way it will get fixed because the superior's not going to change.

INTERVIEWER: They're going to have to.

CHUCK: Well I know they're going to have to, but I mean, the only way the superior will have to change is if somebody higher than them says, "Hey, you need to like tighten up, calm down, and lay off of your troop." But it's not going to happen, not as long as the work is getting done, everything's on time, you know, whatever. You know, they don't care who works in there or what happens as long as all the stuff is good, all the records are right. You know, everything's on time. I mean what are you going to do? If you're in charge of the -- if you're say the colonel in charge of that whole unit and your supply office is great, nothing's the matter with it except you have one specialist that's complaining because her sergeant is always on her about stuff or whatever.

The only thing the Sergeant's got to say is, "hey, that soldier's a piece of crap. I've always got to be on him to get stuff done. What's the matter? You know, all my stuff is okay." So that sergeant's not going anywhere. The only thing that's going to happen is that soldier is going to get moved out of that position into another position. And then here comes another one right into there and the same thing -- if that one complains, they'll move that one out and bring you another

one. As long as you've got all your stuff in a row then nothing's going to happen to you.

INTERVIEWER: If I could say you can avoid something, what would you want to avoid?

DAVID (white officer): The race/gender thing, black female.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. What would be the rationale for that?

DAVID: I've found them to be a little more abrasive, especially to work for. I think if you're overcoming the role of a black individual in today's society, and then on top of that overcoming the role of a woman, that compounds together and makes them difficult to get along with superiority wise.

INTERVIEWER: But what would a black female that wants to be successful need to know, if nobody wants to work for them?

DAVID: That's a very broad question because I mean you really just can't take the spunk and the personality out of somebody. I mean obviously they've risen to the rank or the position that they're at and what they've done hopefully --

INTERVIEWER: Are you implying that they're giving it by race?

DAVID: I've seen it. Of course there's always valid and exceptions to the rules, but in the military in general I've found in my vast experience of two years, a lot of people are given positions just because it's there and they're there, not because they deserve it. So that's race or gender. But yes, equal opportunity does factor into that.

INTERVIEWER: Back to the original question, what do they need to know?

DAVID: Really just public relation skills, interpersonal relations. That you don't always need to be the proud black female. That you can be the boss or you can be -- you know, there's an easier way to say things then obviously the tactics that you're using that aren't working.

Avoid a Black Male Supervisor

ARLEEN (black enlisted): My last choice would be a black male.

INTERVIEWER: And?

ARLEEN: Because they're dominant and I guess that is the biggest thing. I just don't think I could work -- what do I want to say -- fully to my potential having -- I don't think he would be as adequate to assist me with becoming -- with growing in the company or in the Army as well as a black female would. I've kind of seen a little bit of that already with me.

ANGELA (white enlisted): If there was one thing I had to choose to avoid it would be a black male. Because I've had a bad experience that way. I had one black male that was a supervisor that treated me like dirt and it didn't matter what I did or where I did it, it was wrong.

INTERVIEWER: Did that individual do that same thing to all employees, or you in particular, or white females in general?

ANGELA: Females in general.

INTERVIEWER: All females?

ANGELA: All females.

INTERVIEWER: Regardless.

EVERITT (white enlisted): I actually would have to say a strong leader because I've seen some females that were really fun and exciting to work with and also some males too. But generally I'd probably say a male and as far as the racial thing, if I didn't actually know the person I would generally if I had to say, I'd probably feel more comfortable with a white person. But it's that individual thing. I'm not really sure if it's actually like that.

Avoid a Female Supervisor, no Racial Preference

BRENDA (white enlisted): Just I've gotten overreacted attitudes over minute things. Just more dramatic, the females that I've worked with were more dramatic about little issues and even big issues. You know, it was just kind of blown up out of proportion and that's why I would like to work with males because I think they don't stress out as much or at least don't show it.

CRYSTAL (black enlisted): So I'd have to say there's really not nobody I'd try to avoid or anything like that except for women. I don't work well with women. Women are too picky about stuff. My goodness, you can't expect to come to work and expect the same accommodations that you have at home to be at work.

INTERVIEWER: Who would be the last person you would choose to work for?

DELORES (Black officer): It would be a female. In terms of the race, I'm not sure because (unintelligible) for me equally bad. It can be equally bad.

BEN (black enlisted): They tend to hold tension more towards each other.

Because I've seen where a lot of females get along with the males better than the females. Not because it's something sexual it's just because they feel -- even the women themselves will tell you that they have more male friends than females, or they can get along with males, or they can work better with males.

Because they themselves -- they call themselves back stabbers because they are just backstabbing and two-faced. They can't get along amongst themselves and they admit it. Like it's human nature. I've had female leaders, you know, no doubt and the ones I have had they've been great leaders but I've seen some things elsewhere. My thing is if you're in charge, I know who you are. You don't have to keep flexing. Some females tend to constantly flex just to show their superiority. They're constantly making their presence known and stuff, in some aggressive way. It's like -- you know, it's competitive enough but she want to be in charge of males and they have to put on this front constantly. You know, basically making everyone miserable because they want to be seen and heard. For the most part a lot of females are disrespected in the workplace if they're in charge. But my thing is, if you're in charge, you're in charge. Now I won't put a female in that position to make her want to constantly flex but it just so happens that some of the ones I've seen, they've had some sort of bad experience and that's all they know. They have to make their presence known constantly you see.



BOB (Black officer): Well I guess I would like to work with females less than males.

BRENDA (white enlisted): Just I've gotten overreacted attitudes over minute things. Just more dramatic, the females that I've worked with were more dramatic about little issues and even big issues. You know, it was just kind of blown up out of proportion and that's why I would like to work with males because I think they don't stress out as much or at least don't show it.

INTERVIEWER: All right. Who do you want to work with the least -- or for?

BRANDI (black enlisted): A white female.

INTERVIEWER: Who would be the very last person you want to work for?

DAN (black enlisted): A white female.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And what's the reason for that?

INTERVIEWER: Personally I think they're very emotional. They tend to act a lot out of fear and feelings than from fact. And just as a general thing in society, the black male and the white female thing is just not going -- automatically the black male is in the wrong no matter what goes on. Before the fact was proven or found out, until he is proven innocent, he is already guilty so I would never want to be in that situation.

INTERVIEWER: Who would be the person that you'd least care to work for?

BOB (Black officer): I would think white females just because that's the norm and I like to break the norm. That's what you always get is white females.

Avoidance White Males

INTERVIEWER: Who would you prefer not to work for if you could have your desires?

DELORES (black officer): White male.