The goal of the present study was to investigate the role of two types of stereotype threat on implicit racial bias in African-American college students. Research studies have shown that even those people who openly espouse egalitarian values can endorse racial preferences or biases on an implicit level. Furthermore, when an implicit measure shows that African-Americans have a stronger preference for Whites than their own group and/or believe negative stereotypes about their own race, this concept is called internalized racism. Research has also shown that negative stereotypes about the intelligence of African-Americans can impair performance when the threat of confirmation in the relevant domain is activated. This concept is known as stereotype threat.

Using an experimental design, the present study determined whether exposure to two stereotypically negative conditions of threat would affect those participants’ responses on a test of implicit racial bias (i.e. Implicit Association Test), and whether the potential effects of internalized racism would be mitigated by a strong affiliation with one’s own internalized racial identity. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: 1) internalized racism stereotype threat; 2) intellectual ability stereotype threat; and 3) no information given (i.e. the control). Students also completed the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) and the Appropriated Racial Oppression Scale (AROS). This study did not find support for the hypotheses that IAT scores of pro-White bias would be greater for the stereotype threat.
conditions than for the control condition, that stereotype threat would decrease post-IAT MIBI scores compared to the control, and that stereotype threat would increase post-IAT AROS scores compared to the control. Additionally, the findings did not support the hypotheses that overall IAT scores would show less pro-White bias when the MIBI was administered pre-IAT than when it was administered post-IAT, and that Pro-White bias would be greater on an implicit measure of racial bias (IAT) than on an explicit measure of internalized racism (AROS). An exploration of the implications of these results for mental health professionals, caregivers and educators is provided.