A common approach to understanding youth growing up in poverty is to focus on the disadvantages they encounter and the limited opportunities hindering healthy and successful development. While these are important to recognize, this focus may have important limitations for understanding the contributors to resilience and health and for most effective interventions. This symposium takes an alternative frame, positive youth development, to identify longitudinal predictors of healthy and successful development among youth in poverty and to then relate those to intervention implications. Each presentation traces predictors of adequate or exceptional functioning in emotional regulation, behavior, and/or school engagement and behavior of youth facing economic and social disparities. For example, one presentation will focus on the transition to elementary school. A second will examine the long-term effects of parent involvement in school for inner-city children and its modification by a parent-support intervention. A third will focus on the impact of a family intervention that promotes and supports vigilant involved parenting for promoting pathways to successful development for rural African-American youth. The fourth presentation will focus on the protective role of racial identity in the relation of discrimination experiences with mental health problems. Implications for approaching child and adolescent health and clinical interventions will be emphasized.

**C045. LONG TERM EFFECTS OF A SCHOOL TRANSITION FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR INNER-CITY CHILDREN**

Tolan, P. H. Youth-Nex Center, University of Virginia, United States

Children in high-risk communities face multiple impediments to successful development. It is very important to identify support mechanisms that might mitigate that risk. 482 families residing in impoverished urban communities with elevated rates of violence and school failure were engaged to participate in a randomized control trial of the SAFEChildren program. SAFEChildren is a 15-session group-family support program offered to families with a child starting first grade in the 8 participating schools. The sample was approximately 60% African American and 40% Latino, with 50% males. The goals of the family intervention included increasing social connection among families and facilitating efficacy for school involvement. In addition, students assigned to the program were also offered twice weekly mastery learning oriented reading tutoring. Students were randomized within school to the intervention and no-intervention control during first grade. Follow up for immediate effects was measured until the end of the second grade. Intent to treat analyses showed significantly greater maintenance of parental enthusiasm about and involvement in school and child reading capabilities. More recently, the sample was engaged for long term follow in 11th and 12th grade with measurement of violence, school completion, risky sex practices, and substance use (alcohol, tobacco, other substances). This presentation will review the long-term effects (11 years post intervention) on multiple outcomes marking developmental success/risk and tests of the mediation of these long-term outcomes by short-term intervention differences in parental involvement and child-reading level (found at second grade). For example, intervention students had lower rates of violent behavior at follow-up and the early intervention effects on parental involvement mediated this impact. Both direct mediation and indirect effects will be described. Implications of engaging families in group-based support programs for protection of healthy development in high-risk communities will be discussed.

**C046. EXPLAINING THE PATTERN OF CONDUCT PROBLEMS OBSERVED IN AFRICAN AMERICAN BOYS: THE ROLE OF STRESS AND PREMATURE DEVELOPMENT**

Barbarin, O. A. Department of African American Studies, University of Maryland, United States

The socio-emotional development of African American (AA) males from early childhood through adolescence is inherently puzzling. This puzzle arises from the startling contrast between the relatively unremarkable early development and the high prevalence behavioral and socio-emotional difficulties that differentiate young AA men as a group from peers belonging to other ethnic groups. Hints about the timing of this rather dramatic turnabout in development are available both from cross-sectional studies of emotional functioning across different age cohorts and from several longitudinal studies that follow reveal downward developmental trajectory during this period they evidence higher rates of internalizing and externalizing problems than other groups of boys than African American girls. While acknowledging these adverse trends this adverse trajectory is not absolute. A majority of AA boys evidence patterns that are typical of development in other groups. Research on the socio-emotional development of AA boys provides some hints about what the conditions that give rise to and maintain the increasing trajectory of maladjustment that characterizes development between the ages of five and fifteen when antisocial behavior reaches its peak prevalence. This presentation reviews the research on
the developmental status of AA boys, proposes a set of processes to account for adverse development. Family socio-economic status (SES) and poverty have been offered as explanations. However, economic factors are too global and imprecise. Moreover poverty and SES fail to account for within group differences. Biological processes related to early development and social mechanisms related to environmental stress may plausibly explain the shift from what appears to be rather typical early development to the host of socio-emotional difficulties that arise in middle childhood and blossom into a range of behavioral difficulties that place them at risk for maladjustment and poor outcomes across the life span.

C047. PROMOTING RESILIENCE DEVELOPMENT AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN YOUTH THROUGH FAMILY-BASED PREVENTIVE INTERVENTIONS

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African American youth are among the most at risk for acquiring STIs, including HIV infection. Efforts to reduce new cases of HIV/AIDS among African American youth are challenged by barriers associated with poor access to preventive interventions. The contributions of technology as a venue for tailored preventive interventions for those most at risk for contracting the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and other sexually transmitted diseases have received increase consideration over the past few years. Increase access to and familiarity with computer technology make computer-based prevention a feasible option among rural Africans to overcome the logistical and practical barriers that limit program participation for a segment of rural African American families. The Pathways for African American Success (PAAS) program is a second generation of the Strong African American Families (SAAF) program, which is the only universal preventive intervention designed to deter HIV-related risk behavior specifically among rural African American youth that has been evaluated in a randomized prevention trial. The current study tested the efficacy of PAAS in producing changes in the intervention-targeted mediators that were hypothesized to promote resilience in youth to safeguard them from HIV-related risk behaviors. Compared to PAAS group, instructional led participants, PAAS tech participants evinced greater change in both parent and youth intervention targeted behaviors at post-intervention, and PAAS tech youth which predicted with sustained effects in delayed sexual onset and substance use and HIV risk prevention patterns 18 months post-intervention, compared to PAAS group, instructional-led delivery format.

C048. RACIAL IDENTITY CAN MODERATE RACISM EXPERIENCES IN ADOLESCENTS

Neblett, E. W. University of North Carolina, United States

Racism-related stress constitutes a significant risk to the mental health functioning of African American children and adolescents. In light of theoretical predictions that personal and social factors might influence the association between racial discrimination and youths’ health outcomes (e.g., García Coll et al., 1996), and given the extensive literature suggesting the protective effects of racial identity for African American youth, we examined the moderating role of racial identity and socioeconomic status (SES) in the prospective association between racial discrimination experiences and anxiety in a sample of late African American adolescents. Participants were 170 African American teenagers (68% female; mean age at Wave 1 = 18.3) in their first year of attendance at a predominately White southeastern university in the United States. Regression analyses indicated that racial identity during the first semester of university attendance moderated the impact of high school (i.e., senior year) racial discrimination experiences on youths’ anxiety levels at the end of the first year. Contrary to expectations, high levels of nationalist ideology — identity attitudes emphasizing the uniqueness of being African American — exacerbated the racial discrimination-anxiety link, but only for African American youth from poor and working class socioeconomic backgrounds. These findings suggest a complex interplay between racism-related stress experiences, racial identity, and SES to influence mental health functioning following exposure to racism-related stress. We discuss how this knowledge might be used to inform assessment, optimal racial identity, and cultural adaptations of evidenced-based treatment for African American youth from lower SES backgrounds during the transition to young adulthood.