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Similarities are foundational to building and maintaining friendships, but for cross-race friends, differences in experiences related to race are also inevitable. Little is known about how friends approach talking about race-related experiences. We suggest that these conversations are a *threatening opportunity*. Across five studies, we show that they can enhance closeness and intergroup learning among Black and White friends but that these benefits can be accompanied, and sometimes prevented by identity threat. In Study 1, Black ($N = 57$) and White ($N = 59$) adults anticipated both benefits and risks of such conversations, though more benefits than risks. In Study 2A ($N = 143$) and Study 2B ($N = 149$), Black participants reported less willingness to disclose race-related experiences to extant White friends than Black friends and anticipated feeling less comfortable doing so, controlling for closeness. However, they also desired to be understood by Black and White friends equally. In Study 3 ($N = 147$) and Study 4 ($N = 172$), White participants also felt less comfortable when an imagined Black friend disclosed race-related versus nonrace-related experiences to them. However, they felt closer to their friend after the race-related disclosure. Additionally, they felt more comfortable hearing about race-related experiences from a friend than through a third party and they reported learning more when the race-related experience was a friend's than a stranger's. Taken together, the studies highlight the benefits as well as the risks of conversations about race for cross-race friends and the need for future studies that track real-time conversations and test strategies to help friends engage in these conversations productively.

Keywords: cross-race friendship, differences, identity threat, intergroup communication

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Too often, we pour the energy needed for recognizing and exploring difference into pretending those differences are insurmountable barriers, or that they do not exist at all.... Either way, we do not develop tools for using human difference as a springboard for creative change within our lives.

When we define ourselves, when I define myself, the place in which I am like you and the place in which I am not like you, I'm not excluding you from the joining—I'm broadening the joining.

—Audre Lorde (*Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, p. 115, p. 11)

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Close intergroup friendships play a crucial role in improving intergroup relations and attitudes (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) and are thus critical to understand. Such friendships can reduce prejudice among dominant groups (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) and increase a sense of belonging in predominately White settings among marginalized groups (Levin et al., 2003; Mendoza-Denton & Page-Gould, 2008; Shook & Fazio, 2008). Past research has emphasized similarities as a basis for how people form (Gaertner et al., 1996; Mallett et al., 2008) and maintain friendships across racial lines (Trail et al., 2009; West et al., 2014). Yet, although cross-race friends can and do share much in common, people from different racial groups also have systematic differences in how they experience the world, both in positive and negative ways (e.g., Brannon et al., 2015; Cheryan & Monin, 2005; Okonofua et al., 2016; Steele & Aronson, 1995). Despite the reality of these differences, research has not examined how cross-race friends engage with differences in their experiences based in race. In the present research, we consider this question, with a focus on Black and White friends.

We suggest that conversations about race-related experiences present cross-race friends a *threatening opportunity*. Just as conversations between cross-race strangers can provoke identity threat (e.g., Richeson & Shelton, 2007; Shelton et al., 2006), we hypothesize that such dynamics, including discomfort and avoidance, can characterize conversations between close cross-race

friends about experiences related to race. However, friendships also offer a fitting context for conversations about personal experiences. Moreover, conversations about race-related experiences among strangers can, in some circumstances, be supportive, bring people together rather than drive them apart, and offer important opportunities to learn about the lived experience of race (e.g., Brannon & Walton, 2013; Gurin, 2013). Given this complex circumstance, we predicted that both Black and White individuals would anticipate both risks and benefits in conversations with friends about race-related experiences.

In some respects, the relative absence of research on conversations about race-related experiences among friends may parallel the challenges to and infrequency of these conversations in everyday life. Nonetheless, there are surely circumstances in which it will be helpful and appropriate to discuss race-related experiences with cross-race friends. For example, it may be beneficial for Black people to share and feel supported and validated following an experience of discrimination. Moreover, Black people may want to be able to openly share positive experiences relevant to their race, such as experiences connected to pride in Black identity, as important parts of themselves. Conversely, if friends do not share and, thus, understand distinct experiences related to their racial groups, their relationship and their understandings of each other and of the lived experience of race may remain constrained (see Gullett & West, 2016).

As these examples imply, we presume there is a particular structure to how conversations about race-related experiences may typically arise in everyday life. The differences in Black and White experiences in the United States likely create an asymmetry where Black friends are more often in the position of deciding whether or not to share personal race-related experiences. In general, identities are more salient when they are distinctive, that is for groups that are in the minority in a setting (McGuire et al., 1978). Moreover, the persistence of anti-Black racism means that race often plays a more salient role in the daily experiences of Black people and members of other racial-ethnic minority groups than of White people, including in both negative experiences (e.g., being the target of discrimination) and positive experiences (e.g., pride in cultural practices, ingroup solidarity; see Brannon & Lin, 2020; Brannon et al., 2015). As the majority group with relatively more power in American society, White people are socialized to downplay or ignore their own and others' racialized status and experiences (e.g., Burton et al., 2010; Hughes et al., 2006). Thus, our theorizing and studies focus on circumstances in which Black friends consider sharing personal race-related experiences with White friends and White friends' prospective reactions to this sharing.

Identity Threat in Conversations About Race Between Black and White Friends

What challenges do Black and White friends face in acknowledging and talking about race-related experiences? In general, cross-race interactions between strangers are fraught with mistrust and anxiety, especially when race is salient (e.g., Goff et al., 2008; Plant & Devine, 2003; Shelton et al., 2006; Trawalter & Richeson, 2008). Certainly, friends may have greater trust than strangers and the context of a friendship gives rise to important opportunities. However, friendships may also introduce distinct risks. For

example, a valuable relationship could be lost or harmed if a conversation goes poorly. Conversations about race may also highlight a difference that seems significant, even essential or self-defining, and thus threaten a relationship built on similarities. Friendships also presume equal status, but talking about race could highlight differences in individuals' place in a societal hierarchy. Thus, we suggest that the particular history, social roles, and structural context of Black/White friendships give rise to distinct identity concerns for Black and White friends in conversations about race-related experiences, as we discuss next.

Concerns Black Friends May Bring to Sharing Race-Related Experiences With White Friends

Given the reality of racism, Black people often worry about being the target of prejudice and tend to prioritize the desire to be respected in interactions with White strangers (Bergsieker et al., 2010; Richeson & Shelton, 2007).

Although concerns about prejudice and disrespect may decrease in cross-race friendships, where people have individuated representations of and relationships with each other (Page-Gould et al., 2008; Richeson & Shelton, 2007), Black people may still have concerns about sharing a race-related experience with a White friend. They may worry that their friend could disrespect them, dismiss their perspective, or lack a meaningful understanding of their experience, even if inadvertently. Black people may also anticipate that sharing race-related experiences with White friends could be burdensome. Having to translate experiences to even a well-meaning but ignorant White friend could leave Black people feeling depleted rather than authentic and understood when hoping for support following a negative experience or when trying to relate a positive experience (e.g., Schmader & Sedikides, 2018).

Thus, we predict that Black people will anticipate risks, such as experiencing prejudice or a lack of common ground, to sharing race-related experiences with White friends and will be less likely to and feel less comfortable sharing them with White friends than with Black friends.

Concerns White Friends May Have in Responding to Black Friends' Disclosure of Race-Related Experiences

In interactions with Black strangers, White people tend to be concerned about appearing prejudiced and, when this concern is triggered, avoid cross-race interactions or act less warmly toward a Black conversation partner (Carr et al., 2012; Goff et al., 2008). In addition, White people tend to avoid conversations about race in which they expect to feel anxious (Schultz et al., 2015). Thus, we theorize that, when talking about race with Black friends, White people may worry that they could say or do something that could come off as prejudiced or naïve. They might worry about saying something that could make their friend feel worse following a negative experience or coming off as ignorant in discussing positive aspects of Black identity.

Thus, we predict that White people will also anticipate risks, such as appearing prejudiced or a lack of common ground, to talking with Black friends about these friends' race-related experiences and feel less comfortable doing so, as compared with talking with Black friends about their personal experiences not directly tied to race.

Opportunities in Conversations About Race Between Cross-Race Friends

Talking about race-related experiences may also present cross-race friends opportunities. Although past research has not examined this question among friends, engaging with differences among strangers in structured educational settings can facilitate more positive intergroup attitudes and relationships (e.g., Gurin et al., 2013). Engaging with cultural products across group lines can also reduce intergroup prejudice (Brannon & Walton, 2013). Moreover, the current studies examine the potential for increased personal connection and closeness, which is underexplored in previous intergroup contact literature.

Indeed, even as conversations about race-related experiences can be threatening, close friendships may be particularly well-positioned for these conversations. Friendships are, by definition, relationships of mutual care and commitment. Thus, people tend to assume the perspective of friends and are motivated to understand and to take on friends' emotional experiences and goals for themselves (Cwir et al., 2011; Walton et al., 2012). As a consequence, people may be motivated to understand the race-related experiences of cross-race friends and to share their perspective on these experiences. If so, the disclosure of race-related experiences may have the potential to help Black friends feel more understood by a White friend and to help White friends understand race-related experiences as had and felt by their friend.

Further, disclosure itself, both disclosing and being disclosed to, triggers important processes in friendships (Collins & Miller, 1994; Laurenceau et al., 1998). It helps build intimacy, closeness, and trust (Aron et al., 1997) as it helps people feel understood, cared for, and valued (Reis & Shaver, 1988). Given their mutual commitment, cross-race friends may be motivated to seek opportunities to build intimacy, particularly as cross-race friends tend to lack intimacy-building behaviors relative to same-race friends (Trail et al., 2009). Indeed, personal disclosure about nonracial topics can build intimacy for cross-group friends (Page-Gould et al., 2008; Turner et al., 2007). Disclosure about race, precisely because it is a perennial source of misunderstanding, may have the potential to be a uniquely powerful means for cross-race friends to care for each other, to understand each other, and to be understood.

Thus, even as Black and White friends may feel less comfortable discussing race-related experiences with each other and perceive risks in these conversations, they may also perceive opportunities and benefits such as greater closeness, learning, and understanding.

Simultaneous Threat and Opportunity

How might the theorized threats and opportunities come together for Black people in considering sharing a race-related experience with a White friend and for White people in responding to such a disclosure? While the full range of these processes goes beyond the scope of the present article, we summarize here some of the key processes our studies will explore.

Black people may see an opportunity to feel closer to and be better understood by their White friend with time, for instance as common ground is forged. They may also expect that their White friend can come to better understand the experiences of Black people more broadly, and in turn, become more antiracist. As a consequence, Black people may *desire* for their White friend to understand their race-related experiences, even if they are hesitant to share and feel less comfortable doing so.

While White friends may feel less comfortable at the prospect of a Black friend sharing race-related than nonrace-related experiences with them, this sharing itself may also cause them to feel *closer* to their Black friend. This boost in closeness as a result of disclosure may arise, ironically, from the identity-threat dynamics that White people tend to experience in cross-race interactions. Personal sharing of race-related experiences may signal to White friends that their Black friend might not, in fact, see them as prejudiced or naïve, or at least not unmitigatedly so. The act may seem trusting in a context that is otherwise threatening. If so, it should be the act of disclosure, not simply learning about a friend's race-related experience, that enhances closeness, a hypothesis we test in Study 4.

In addition, White people may feel they are learning more from a friend's experience than if the same experience were had by a stranger. This could be because they are learning about the experience of someone in their social circle and, thus, that people close to them, not just distant others, have race-related experiences. Moreover, they may be disposed to accept and share a friend's perspective on their experience rather than persist in viewing it from their own point of view. Although we do not isolate these processes in the present research, Study 4 tests whether White people's reports of learning are tied to the fact that the experience is had by a friend rather than by a stranger (or, alternately, that it is a function of disclosure per se).

Contributions

The present research makes two primary contributions to the literature on intergroup relationships. First, whereas almost all past work on intergroup contact and friendships has focused on interpersonal similarities, common identities, and friendship-formation (e.g., Gaertner, 1996; Mallett, 2008; Page-Gould et al., 2008), we explore how extant cross-race friends can contend with racial differences in experience, including the challenges and barriers to talking about experiences of difference and some of the interpersonal and intergroup benefits that may arise if these can be overcome (see also Trail et al., 2009). In doing so, we hope to shed light on how cross-group friendships can deepen in ways that both strengthen personal ties and enhance intergroup understanding and attitudes.

Second, whereas past research has examined identity threat in intergroup interactions between strangers (e.g., Shelton et al., 2006), we consider these processes within consequential and personally meaningful relationships. We thus bring together literatures on intergroup identity-threat and close relationships. In so doing, we expand the literature to suggest that identity-threat processes remain at play even among close cross-group friends. Yet we also propose a complex tension system for both Black and White friends in talking about Black people's race-related experiences, one in which both parties bring a commitment to their friendship and to each other that motivates a desire to share, to learn about, and to understand each other's experiences, even as both also experience the fears of misunderstanding, disrespect, and negative judgment that color intergroup interactions in general.

Overview of Studies

Because these are among the first studies to explore conversations about race-related experiences between friends, we focus on the prospect of such conversations. This approach provides an efficient way to learn without causing inadvertent harm to extant cross-race friendships. It also allows us to a take wide-angle lens. Rather than focusing only on one outcome or psychological process, we aimed to begin to understand the network of processes that shape Black people's decision to share a race-related experience with a White friend and White friends' response to this decision.

In Study 1, we give Black and White participants voice to describe the benefits and the risks they anticipate from talking about race-related experiences with cross-group friends. Studies 2–4 examine in more detail the simultaneous benefits and risks that unfold for Black and White friends, considering their typical roles in such conversations. Studies 2A and 2B ask Black adults about their willingness to and comfort in disclosing positive and negative race-related experiences to Black, White, and other-race friends. We were interested in the overall proportion of Black and White friends that Black participants would disclose their experiences to and their feelings of comfort in doing so. We anticipated that Black people might be less willing and comfortable disclosing to White friends than to Black friends, but equally desirous for their White friends to understand their experiences.

Using Black participants' stories from Study 2 and additional pilot studies, Studies 3 and 4 present White women a race-related personal disclosure from an imagined Black friend, or a personal nonrace-related disclosure from the same friend and ask them about their feelings of comfort and learning from the experience.

To provide ecological validity, we asked Black participants in Studies 2A and 2B to describe both positive and negative experiences related to race and examined our predictions for both Black and White participants with regard to both kinds of experiences. Although positive and negative experiences differ from each other in many ways, we theorized that they feed into similar threat and opportunity processes for both Black and White friends. Thus, we did not predict specific valence differences, although we test for their presence. With this broad-angle approach, we can begin to understand key processes and outcomes in context of each other and point the way toward more narrowly focused future research.

Study 1: Benefits and Risks Black and White People Perceive in Talking About Race-Related Experiences With Cross-Group Friends

What benefits and risks do Black and White people perceive in conversations about race-related experiences with cross-race friends? To help people consider such benefits and risks without implying any particular content, we asked participants to consider potential benefits and risks for themselves, their friend, the friendship, and otherwise in conversations about both positive and negative race-related experiences. Subsequent open-ended questions allowed participants to further specify the benefits and risks they considered.

Method

Participants

Fifty-seven Black (47% women) and 59 White (73% women) U.S. adults between the ages 18 and 30 were recruited through Qualtrics Panel, a targeted survey recruitment platform. Given the exploratory nature of this study, we did not specify an effect size in advance. Instead, we aimed to collect a minimum of 50 participants per racial group, which yields 80% power to detect a medium effect size for differences between two groups, providing a benchmark for our repeated measures design ($d = .57$).

We chose young adults because this is a transitional life stage in which friendship formation occurs frequently (Hartup & Stevens, 1997). Participants were not aware of these inclusion criteria.

Procedure

After agreeing to participate, eligible participants were told the following: "We are interested in people's thoughts about talking about experiences related to their race or ethnicity with different kinds of friends." Black participants were then told: "Right now we are interested in Black people's thoughts about sharing these experiences with White friends." White participants were told: "Right now we are interested in White Americans' thoughts about talking about their Black friends' experiences with them."

Measures

Endorsement of Benefits and Risks. Participants were asked 16 questions. Benefits and risks were crossed with 4 targets and with valence of experience, such that Black participants were asked, "Do you think there could be [benefits or value/risks or negative consequences] for [you/your friend/your friendship/beyond you, your friend, or your friendship] from talking with your White friends about your [positive/negative] race-related experiences?" White participants were asked, "Do you think there could be [benefits or value/risks or negative consequences] for [you/your friend/your friendship/beyond you, your friend, or your friendship] from talking with your Black friends about their [positive/negative] race-related experiences?" (16 questions). All questions were answered dichotomously (0 = *no*, 1 = *yes*). Participants first identified the possibility of benefits and risks to talking about positive experiences related to race, and then benefits and risks to talking about negative experiences related to race.

Open-Ended Elaboration. We asked participants four open-ended questions to elaborate on the benefits and risks they perceived. We asked Black participants, "Considering yourself, your friend, your friendship, and anything beyond you and your friend, what [benefits or value/risks or negative consequences], if any, do you think could result from talking with White friends about [positive/negative] experiences related to your race or ethnicity?"

Similarly, we asked White participants, "Considering yourself, your friend, your friendship, and anything beyond you and your friend, what [benefits or values/risks or negative consequences], if any, do you think could result from talking with Black friends about [positive/negative] experiences related to their race or ethnicity?"

Finally, we asked why ingroup members in general might feel uncomfortable talking about Black people's race-related experiences. We did this to supplement the first questions about risks in

case participants might be more willing to note risks and reasons for discomfort when discussing other ingroup members rather than themselves. We asked Black participants, "Sometimes people say they feel uncomfortable talking about their experiences with race or ethnicity with White friends. We are trying to better understand how people feel about these conversations. Why do you think people might feel uncomfortable talking with a White friend about [positive/negative] experiences related to their race or ethnicity?" Similarly, we asked White participants, "Sometimes people say they feel uncomfortable talking about Black frends' experiences with race or ethnicity with them. We are trying to better understand how people feel about these conversations. Why do you think people might feel uncomfortable talking with a Black friend about [positive/negative] experiences related to their race or ethnicity?"

Results

Endorsement of Benefits and Risks

By and large, both Black and White adults perceived both benefits and risks. In total, 85.96% of Black participants and 91.53% of White participants endorsed at least one benefit. Additionally, 71.93% of Black adults and 69.49% White adults recognized at least one risk. For the proportion of participants who perceived a benefit and a risk for each target by valence, see Table S1 in the online supplemental materials.

We examined whether Black and White adults endorsed more benefits or risks and whether this varied by the valence of the experience and participant race (see Figure 1). We summed the number of benefits and the number of risks people perceived for positive experiences and for negative experiences (0 = answered "no" to all four targets, 4 = answered "yes" to all), and ran a multilevel regression with sum as the dependent variable and participant race, benefit/risk, and valence as main effects and all interaction terms. We included a random intercept for participant.

Overall, participants perceived more benefits than risks, $b = .55$, $SE = .06$, $t(342) = 9.60$, $p < .0001$; $d = 1.04$, 95% CI [.81, 1.26]. There was also a significant Race × Benefit/Risk interaction, $b = .24$, $SE = .06$, $t(342) = 4.20$, $p < .0001$; $d = .45$, 95% CI [.24, .67]. White adults perceived more benefits than Black adults, $b = .50$, $SE = .12$, $t(186) = 4.11$, $p < .0001$; $d = .60$, 95% CI [.31, .90], but White and Black adults perceived similar numbers of risks, $b = .02$, $SE = .12$, $t(186) = .19$, $p = .851$; $d = .03$, 95% CI [−.26, .32].
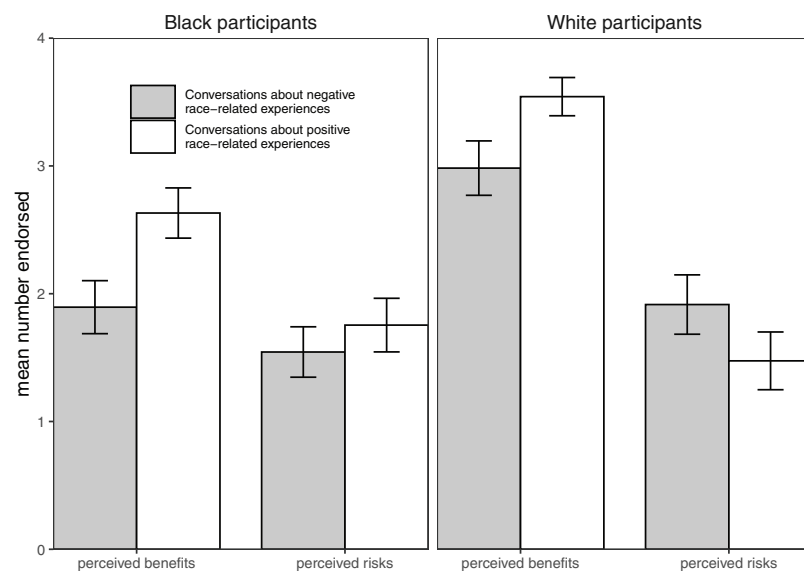
There was also a significant Valence × Benefit/Risk interaction, $b = .19$, $SE = .06$, $t(342) = 3.36$, $p = .001$, $d = .36$, 95% CI [.15, .58]. All participants perceived more benefits in talking about positive than negative race-related experiences, $b = .32$, $SE = .08$, $t(345) = 3.92$, $p = .0001$; $d = .42$, 95% CI [.21, .64]. However, perceived risks did not differ by valence, $b = −.06$, $SE = .08$, $t(345) = −.73$, $p = .47$, $d = .08$, 95% CI [−.13, .29].

The three-way (participant race, benefit/risk, experience valence) interaction was not significant, $b = .06$, $SE = .06$, $t(342) = 1.04$, $p = .30$, $d = .11$, 95% CI [−.10, .32].

Open-Ended Elaboration on Benefits and Risks

Two trained undergraduate research assistants identified themes that emerged from the qualitative data. Cohen's Kappas ranged from .70–1.00. See Table 1 for all themes assessed and their frequencies. As noted, we asked participants to elaborate on perceived risks in two ways: on risks for the self and on reasons why other ingroup members might feel uncomfortable. We combined responses to these questions as the same themes emerged from

Figure 1
Mean Number of Benefits Endorsed by Participant Race and Experience Valence (Study 1)

Note. The y axis depicts the full range of the scale. Error bars depict standard errors.

Table 1

Summary of Qualitative Responses About Anticipated Benefits and Risks (Study 1)

Benefit/Risk	Black participants		White participants		Effect of participant race (χ^2 Test)
	Prop. of respondents	Sample responses	Prop. of respondents	Sample responses	
Anticipated benefits: Coding category and definition					
Closer relationship: closeness or stronger relationships or mentioned behaviors that build intimacy or trust (kappa = 0.77)	0.17	We could do more things together. Treating them like family.	0.15	. . .allowing for a more open and vulnerable discussion. . . .we would feel more comfortable to talk about it with each other.	$\chi^2(1, N = 95) = 0.0002$, $p = .99$
Interpersonal learning: learning about or better understanding individual perspectives or experiences (kappa = 0.95)	0.07	Them being able to understand from my perspective. That's when you start to see and realize if your white friends see things the way you do.	0.46	I think that it could help me better understand their struggles and how I could help them or support them. I think that it could help both of us understand each other and our friendship or relationship better.	$\chi^2(1, N = 95) = 15.21$, $p < .0001$
Intergroup/societal learning: learning about or better understanding a group's experiences or perspectives, or learning about society broadly (kappa = 0.83)	0.46	They will be able to understand us as a race more and might change whatever thought they have for my race. Both of us could learn more about the other race.	0.63	It's important to understand the actual issues POC [*people of color*] are facing, to see where they stem from, and strive to eliminate those negative things. Learning cultural experiences is very important to ones overall character growth.	$\chi^2(1, N = 95) = 1.98$, $p = .16$
Other benefits/unspecified (kappa = 0.89)	0.34	Love yourself and everybody.	0.26	They could become happier and more sure of themselves.	$\chi^2(1, N = 95) = 0.41$, $p = .52$
Anticipated risks and reasons for ingroup members' discomfort (combined): Coding category and definition					
Anti-Black prejudice: racism or prejudice, or racist/prejudiced behaviors toward Black people (kappa = 0.94; 0.74)	0.30	Because white people have a way of belittling us. There's a risk the experience could fall on deaf ears with no compassion or understanding.	0.13	I am unsure why people may feel uncomfortable. . .other than the fact they may be racist. Taking it the wrong way and seeing [Black people] as less.	$\chi^2(1, N = 95) = 6.79$, $p = .009$
Appearance of prejudice: the possibility of appearing or being perceived as prejudiced (kappa = 0.84; 0.77)	0.07	Race is a sensitive subject because no one wants to be offensive or be offended. Once that line is crossed it seems to define who you are as a person and cause for extreme scrutiny. Them thinking I'm racist.	0.27	If that person is your coworker and they say you are racist your career is over. They might take it personally. They might say I said something racist even though I never did.	$\chi^2(1, N = 95) = 10.39$, $p = .001$
Lack of common ground or misunderstandings: not being able to explain or understand the experience, or misinterpreting the experience (excluding responses that cited appearance of prejudice; kappa = 0.78; 0.80)	0.25	Them not being able to relate There's a risk someone might misunderstand the experience and receive it negatively which could impact how my race is viewed.	0.20	Not understanding. Them getting upset for what you can't relate. Because it's an emotional topic that's hard to express.	$\chi^2(1, N = 95) = 0.31$, $p = .58$

(table continues)

Table 1 (*continued*)

Benefit/Risk	Black participants		White participants		Effect of participant race (χ^2 Test)
	Prop. of respondents	Sample responses	Prop. of respondents	Sample responses	
Strained relationships: interpersonal tension or hostility in the conversation or harm to the friendship (kappa = 1.00; 0.77)	0.13	Only risk is if they don't share the same views a friendship might end. They will probably act funny towards you or they will just end the friendship.	0.14	. . .it may cause a rift in the relationship. Hitting a soft spot. Getting into a fight. . .	$\chi^2(1, N = 95) = 0$, $p = 1$
Other risks/unspecified (kappa = 0.94; 0.70)	0.36	Because our ancestors didn't get along	0.33	It is hard to listen to someone else's hardships and white guilt may set in as well.	$\chi^2(1, N = 95) = 0.09$, $p = .77$

Note. Response rate for anticipated benefits: Black participants = 36% (41 responses), White participants = 46% (54 responses). Response rate for anticipated risks and reasons for ingroup members' discomfort (combined): Black participants = 33% (76 responses), White participants = 37% (88 responses).

them. There were no differences in frequencies by valence, so we collapsed across valence.

The response rates for the qualitative questions ranged from 35% to 41%, perhaps owing to survey fatigue. Thus, the open-ended results may not be representative of the full sample. However, they give insight into some participants' perceptions of conversations about race-related experiences with friends.

As shown in Table 1, Black and White adults agreed on some benefits and risks. Both Black and White adults identified closer relationships and greater intergroup/societal learning as possible benefits. Both groups also noted the possibility of a lack of common ground or misunderstandings and strained relationships as potential risks.

Black and White adults also had some distinct identity-based views. White adults identified interpersonal learning as a benefit more than Black adults. With regard to risks, Black adults cited the possibility of anti-Black prejudice, whereas White adults cited the possibility of appearing prejudiced.

Discussion

Participants' responses reflect considerable complexity. As we theorized, Black and White adults saw both value and risk in conversations about race-related experiences with cross-race friends.

The substance of participants' responses showed similarities and differences across racial lines. Both Black and White people cited societal and intergroup learning and closer relationships as primary benefits of talking about race-related experiences across group lines. Their shared risks paralleled these benefits, such that Black and White adults were concerned about not having enough common understanding for successful conversations and worried that such conversations could harm their relationships.

There were also identity-based differences. Black and White adults' perceptions of risks with regard to prejudice aligned with literature on identity threat in intergroup interactions (Richeson & Shelton, 2007). Black adults were concerned about experiencing prejudice in sharing race-related experiences with White friends, whereas White adults were concerned about appearing prejudiced in response to such a disclosure. In terms of benefits, White adults viewed interpersonal learning as more of a benefit than Black adults.

It was noteworthy that, although both Black and White participants saw more benefits to talking about positive experiences than

negative experiences, in general participants' reasoning about positive and negative experiences was similar.

Studies 2A and 2B: How Do Black People Think About Disclosing Personal Race-Related Experiences to Diverse Friends?

Study 1 showed that both Black and White people think that conversations about race-related experiences can be beneficial but also pose risks. Given that both groups see more benefits than risks, we sought in Study 2 to examine in greater detail how Black people think about disclosing personal race-related experiences to White friends. Studies 2A and 2B examine how likely Black adults are to share these experiences with their actual friends and how they expect to feel doing so.

Our interests were twofold. First, we were interested in the absolute levels of participants' responses. Little work to date has examined how Black adults think about disclosing their race-related experiences. Thus, it was important to explore the extent to which disclosing race-related experiences with diverse friends is a reasonable possibility for Black adults. Second, we focused on comparisons across friends of different racial groups. Given the identity-based concerns that Black adults reported in Study 1, we hypothesized that they would be more willing and more comfortable disclosing personal race-related experiences, both positive and negative, to Black friends than to White friends and that this difference would hold above and beyond their closeness to each friend.

We also explored Black participants' willingness to disclose to other-race (e.g., nonBlack Latinx, Asian) friends. We did not have strong predictions about such friends, but they provide a way to begin to differentiate in-group preferences, which may motivate a willingness to share with Black friends, from a preference to avoid sharing with White friends in particular.

The two studies were identical but for the inclusion of several additional measures in Study 2B. A prior pilot study (*N* = 100) reported in the supplement examined Black adults' willingness to disclose to friends in different racial categories (e.g., "Black friends," "White friends"). In contrast, Studies 2A and 2B asked participants about particular friends whom they identified by name and whose race they specified at the end of the study. A strength of this design is that it allows participants to consider a real experience that they have had and to consider a conversation about this

experience with an existing friend. The pilot results are similar to those of Studies 2A and 2B.

Method

Participants

One hundred forty-three Black adults (80.42% women; M_{age} = 35–44) took part in Study 2A and 149 Black adults (85.91% women, M_{age} = 35–44) took part in Study 2B. These studies were exploratory, so we aimed for 70 participants per cell in each study. In a simple design this yields 80% power to detect a small to medium effect size of d = .48, providing a benchmark for our multilevel design. Participants in both samples were U.S. residents 18 and older recruited using Qualtrics Panel. Participants were not aware of the selection criteria or primary research question.

Design and Procedure

Both studies used a 2 (valence: positive experiences, negative experiences) × 3 (friend race: Black, White, other-race) mixed design with valence as the between-subjects variable and friend race as the within-subjects variable. The primary contrast of interest was White versus Black friends, whereas the valence effect and interaction were secondary.

First, participants provided the first names and last initials of up to 10 friends, excluding family members. Participants were told, "These can be people of varying closeness to you and can include friends, coworkers, classmates, roommates/dormmates, acquaintances or any others you like or spend time with regularly." Next, participants were randomly assigned to write a journal entry about either a positive or a negative race-related experience. They were told, "Now, take a moment to think about a [positive/negative] experience you had that was, or seemed like it might be related to your racial-ethnic identity, that [made you feel good/bothered you or made you feel negative]. In a letter to yourself, like a journal entry, tell the story of how it happened, where you were, and how it made you feel. It could be one event, repeated events, or a series of events." See Table S8 in the online supplemental materials for sample responses.

Finally, for each friend they had listed, participants were asked to, "imagine you're talking one-on-one with [friend]. You've recently experienced the event [you wrote about], and it's been on your mind." Then they completed each of the following measures for each friend.

Measures

Except where noted, the measures were identical across both studies. All measures were assessed with single, face-valid items to reduce the burden on participants, as the task required them to complete each item for up to ten friends.

Primary Measures.

Decision to Disclose. First, we asked participants, "Would you tell [friend] about this experience?" (0 = *no*, 1 = *yes*).

Expected Comfort in Disclosing. We asked, "How comfortable or uncomfortable would you feel talking with [friend] about it?" (1 = *very uncomfortable*, 6 = *very comfortable*).

Additional Measures.

Expectations of Being Understood, of Benefits for the Self and the Friend, and Effort to Bridge Common Ground. Next, we measured four kinds of expectations participants might have about disclosing their experience to each friend: (a) *being understood* ("How well would [friend] understand your experience?"); (b) *personal benefit* ("How much do you think you could benefit from talking to [friend] about it?"); (c) *benefit for the friend* ("How much do you think [friend] could benefit from learning about your experience?"; Study 2B only); and (d) *effort needed to bridge common ground*, which was assessed differently in the two studies. In Study 2A we asked, "If you talked to [friend] about it, how much would you have to explain it to them?" However, this item does not directly assess effort. Thus, in Study 2B we asked, "How difficult would it be to explain your experience to [friend] enough for them to get it?" All questions were measured on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *very much*).

Desire to Explain and Desire to Be Understood. In Study 2B only, we measured (a) the *desire to explain* ("How much would you want to explain your experiences to [friend]?"; 1 = *not at all*, 5 = *very much*) and (b) the *desire for the friend to understand* their experiences ("How much would you want [friend] to understand what experiences like this are like for people like you?"; 1 = *not at all*, 5 = *very much*).

Friendship Measures.

Closeness. Immediately after listing each friend and before writing about a race-related experience, one item assessed how close participants felt to each friend ("How close are you and this person?"; 1 = *not at all close*, 5 = *extremely close*).

Friend Race. After completing all measures, participants reported the race of each friend they had listed ("For each friend, please indicate their race/ethnicity"; dropdown list: Asian/Asian American, Black/African American/African, Latinx/Hispanic, Native American/American Indian/Indigenous, Middle Eastern, Multiracial, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, White/European, Identifies another way).

Results

Descriptive Results

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation for the average number of friends and closeness by friend race (i.e., Black, White, other-race). Because Black adults reported being closer to their Black friends than their White friends on average, and because closeness predicted disclosure in both studies (Study 2A: b = .98, SE = .11, z = 9.02, p < .0001; OR = 2.66, 95% CI [2.15, 3.28]; Study 2B: b = .81, SE = .11, z = 7.62, p < .0001; OR = 2.24, 95% CI [1.82, 2.76]), we controlled for closeness in all models.

Primary Analyses

Table 3 summarizes the statistical results. It shows adjusted means and standard errors for all outcomes controlling for closeness. For decision to disclose, we used a multilevel binomial logistic regression model. For all other outcomes we used linear mixed-effects models. All models included friend race, a main effect and interaction term for valence, a random intercept for participant to account for individual-level variance, and closeness as a covariate. Overall, we found inconsistent interaction effects for valence, so we briefly discuss these as secondary analysis and report them

Table 2

Descriptive Summary of Friends by Friend Race

	Study 2A				Study 2B			
Measure	Total	Black friends	White friends	Other-race friends	Total	Black friends	White friends	Other-race friends
Mean number of friends listed (max = 10)	6.46 (3.61)	4.22[a] (3.33)	0.91[b] (1.64)	1.17[b] (1.99)	6.40 (3.68)	4.48[a] (3.55)	0.88[b] (1.59)	0.76[b] (1.39)
Mean closeness (1–5 scale)	3.61 (1.29)	3.73[a] (1.19)	3.42[b] (1.26)	3.56[a,b]* (1.45)	3.66 (1.28)	3.93[a] (1.10)	3.24[b] (1.43)	3.47[b] (1.18)

Note. Means with different superscripts within row and study differ at $p < .05$. Means with the same superscript but an * differ marginally at $p < .10$. The mean number of friends for each racial group does not sum to the total mean number of friends reported because a few participants in each study did not report their friends' race (4 in Study 2A, 6 in Study 2B).

fully in the supplement. All effects observed were similar without controlling for closeness.

For all measures, participants' average response generally fell near the middle of the scale. Thus, Black adults, on average, expected at least some degree of comfort, understanding, benefit to self and to friend for both Black and White friends. They also expected at least some difficulty and effort in explaining.

Our primary contrast of interest compared Black versus White friends. Secondarily, we examined comparisons with other-race friends.

Decision to Disclose. Adjusting for closeness, participants in both samples said they would disclose their race-related experiences to most of both their Black friends (Study 2A: 80%; Study 2B: 80%) and to most of their White friends (Study 2A: 62%; Study 2B: 66%). Yet, as predicted, the difference by friend race was significant (Study 2A: $b = 1.44$, $SE = .36$, $z = 4.01$, $p < .0001$; $OR = 4.22$, 95% CI [2.09, 8.53]; Study 2B: $b = .91$, $SE = .34$, $z = 2.66$, $p = .008$; $OR = 2.47$, 95% CI [1.27, 4.82]).

Expected Comfort in Disclosing. In both samples participants expected to feel less comfortable disclosing to a White friend than to a Black friend (Study 2A: $b = -.76$, $SE = .16$, $t(890.79) = -4.59$, $p < .0001$; $d = .31$, 95% CI [.18, .44]; Study

2B: $b = -.59$, $SE = .16$, $t(903.99) = -3.63$, $p = .0003$; $d = .24$, 95% CI [.11, .37]).

Secondary Analyses

Expectations of Being Understood, of Benefits for the Self and Friend, and of Effort Needed to Bridge Common Ground. Participants expected to be understood less and to personally benefit less if they disclosed to a White friend than if they disclosed to a Black friend. However, they expected their White and Black friends to benefit from the disclosure equally.

Regarding expected effort needed to bridge common ground, when asked how much they would have to explain their experience to each friend (Study 2A), Black participants reported no difference between Black and White friends, $b = .13$, $SE = .15$, $t(890) = .90$, $p = .37$, $d = .06$, 95% CI [-.07, .19]. However, when asked how *difficult* it would be to explain their experience enough for their friend "to get it" (Study 2B), Black participants reported that it would be more difficult to explain to White friends than to Black friends, $b = .56$, $SE = .14$, $t(876.04) = 4.04$, $p < .0001$, $d = .27$, 95% CI [.14, .41].

Desire to Explain and to Be Understood. In Study 2B, Black adults reported wanting to explain their experience to Black friends more than to White friends, $b = .47$, $SE = .12$, $t(883.77) =$

Table 3

Choice to Disclose, Expectations, and Desires by Friend Race (Studies 2A and 2B)

	Study 2A				Study 2B			
Outcome	All friends	Black friends	White friends	Other-race friends	All friends	Black friends	White friends	Other-race friends
Decision to disclose (0–1)	0.76 (0.02)	0.80[a] (0.03)	0.66[b] (0.04)	0.74[a] (0.04)	0.75 (0.03)	0.80[a] (0.03)	0.63[b] (0.04)	0.71[b]* (.04)
Expected comfort	4.64 (0.10)	4.86[a] (0.11)	3.95[b] (0.16)	4.63[a] (0.15)	4.72 (0.09)	4.94[a] (0.10)	4.32[b] (0.16)	4.37[b] (0.17)
Expected understanding	3.75 (0.07)	3.99[a] (0.08)	2.89[b] (0.13)	3.74[a]* (0.12)	3.88 (0.07)	4.10[a] (0.08)	3.32[b] (0.13)	3.61[c] (0.13)
Expected benefit for the self	3.40 (0.08)	3.56[a] (0.09)	2.89[b] (0.13)	3.38[a] (0.13)	3.34 (0.09)	3.46[a] (0.09)	3.13[b] (0.13)	3.25[a,b]* (0.14)
Expected benefit for friend	NA	NA	NA	NA	3.49 (0.08)	3.59[a] (0.09)	3.37[a] (0.13)	3.48[a] (0.13)
Expectation of having to explain	3.20 (0.09)	3.14[a] (0.10)	3.41[a] (0.15)	3.33[a] (0.14)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Expected difficulty of explaining	NA	NA	NA	NA	2.43 (0.10)	2.23[a] (0.11)	2.76[b] (0.15)	2.69[b] (0.16)
Desire to explain	NA	NA	NA	NA	3.58 (0.08)	3.71[a] (0.08)	3.23[b] (0.13)	3.41[b] (0.13)
Desire for friend to understand	NA	NA	NA	NA	3.71 (0.09)	3.79[a] (0.09)	3.81[a] (0.13)	3.71[a] (0.13)

Note. Means are adjusted for closeness and within-participant variance. Standard errors are in parentheses. Other-race friends are neither Black nor White. The results collapse across valence because it did not consistently moderate the results. Means with different superscripts within row (excluding "all friends" column) and study differ at $p < .05$. Means with the same superscript but an * differ marginally at $p < .10$. Decision to disclose is a dichotomous scale (0 = *no*, 1 = *yes*); expected comfort is on a 1–6 scale; all other measures are on a 1–5 scale.

3.81, $p = .0002$; $d = .26$, 95% CI [.12, .39]. However, they wanted their White and Black friends to understand their race-related experiences equally, $b = .06$, $SE = .12$, $t(874.68) = .53$, $p = .60$, $d = .04$; 95% CI [−.10, .17].

What Predicted Black Adults' Choice to Disclose, Above and Beyond Closeness? To examine the extent to which each of the assessed expectations and desires predicted Black adults' decision to disclose to each friend, we ran a multilevel binomial multiple regression model with fixed effect predictors for each expectation/desire, friend race (Black vs. White), and interaction terms between friend race and each expectation/desire. We also included closeness as a covariate and a random intercept for each participant. In general, anticipated comfort was the strongest and most consistent predictor across studies. Table S3 in the online supplemental materials summarizes the results.

Valence Interactions. Table S4 and S5 in the online supplemental materials report interactions with valence. In brief, in Study 2A, Black adults expected to feel least comfortable and least understood, expected to benefit least, and expected to have to explain most when disclosing negative race-related experiences to White friends as compared with positive experiences, whereas they expected to feel similarly disclosing positive and negative experiences to Black friends. However, Study 2B did not yield these interactions. Thus, interaction patterns should be interpreted with caution.

Other-Race Friends. In general, Black adults' choice to disclose and expectations about disclosing to other-race friends fluctuated across samples and measures, sometimes paralleling Black friends, sometimes paralleling White friends, and sometimes falling in between (see Table 3).

Discussion

Overall, Black adults anticipated disclosing personal race-related experiences to a majority of both their Black and their White friends. They also expected to feel some degree of comfort in disclosing to friends, expected their friends to benefit, and wanted their friends to understand their experiences. Importantly, Black adults also desired for their Black and White friends to understand their experience equally and thought that their Black and White friends could benefit equally from hearing about their experience.

However, Black adults were less willing to and felt less comfortable disclosing race-related experiences to White friends than to Black friends. They also expected to be understood less, to benefit less, and to experience more difficulty in explaining the experience to their White friends. These differences by friend race were found above and beyond the closeness of the friendship. Moreover, the decreased comfort that Black adults anticipated in sharing a race-related experience was the strongest predictor of a reluctance to share with friends. Taken together, these results are consistent with the threatening opportunity we have theorized characterize conversations about race-related experiences between Black and White friends.

An important note about these results is that participants with relatively more White friends provided more of the data for the friend-race comparisons. In exploratory analyses, we examined whether the number of White friends that Black participants reported related to their willingness and comfort sharing across group lines. Although at every representation of White friends Black participants showed a gap in their decision to disclose to Black versus White friends and in their expected comfort doing so, interestingly this gap was greatest for participants with more White friends (see Figure S1 in the online supplemental materials).

The comparison with other-race friends was also informative, as Black participants' decision to disclose to other-race friends and disclosure-related expectations for them fell in between those for Black and White friends, varying some across measures and studies. The findings suggest that Black adults' hesitation to disclose race-related experiences to White friends is not just a neat reflection of a preference for sharing with the in-group but may also reflect the particular dynamics between White and Black people.

Interestingly, although there was some variability across studies, the results generally held across both positive and negative race-related experiences.

Study 3: White Women's Responses to the Disclosure of a Race-Related Experience From a Black Friend

Studies 2A and 2B showed that, even as Black adults reported they would share their race-related experiences with a majority of their White friends, they were less likely to share with White friends than with Black friends and had less positive expectations about disclosing to White friends. In Study 3, we examined how White women expect to feel if a Black friend disclosed race-related experiences to them.

In Study 1, White adults reported identity-based concerns and a lack of common ground as risks in conversations about Black friends' race-related experiences. They also anticipated greater closeness and learning as potential benefits. In Study 3, we placed White women in the position of responding to the disclosure of two specific race or nonrace-related experiences (one positive, one negative) from an imagined close Black friend. We drew these experiences from stories Black women provided in Studies 2A and 2B and additional pilot surveys. A limitation of this method is that it asks people to imagine a friendship and then an event within this friendship; still, this methodology provides a first test of how White people might respond to the disclosure of race-related experiences from a Black friend. To make the situation as realistic and personal as possible, we initiated the description of the relationship but allowed participants to personalize and thus coconstruct it. We focused on women in same-gender friendships to simplify our design and to highlight the often over-looked race-related experiences of Black women in particular (Crenshaw, 1991).

Building on Study 1, we examined White participants' anticipated comfort in these interactions as well as whether they would feel closer to their Black friend after her disclosure of race-related experiences to them and whether they felt like they learned in the conversation. A pattern of some discomfort with greater closeness and/or learning would reveal the simultaneous threat and benefits posed by conversations about race-related experiences with Black friends for White people. We also explored whether hearing about race-related experiences might open White women up to more conversations about race in the future, relative to hearing about nonrace-related experiences.

Method

Participants

One hundred forty-seven White U.S. women age 18–30 were recruited through Qualtrics Panel. Twelve percent of participants reported having no Black friends when asked, "About how many friends do you have that are part of each of the following groups?" (White, Black, Latinx, Asian, Democrat, Republican; 1 = *none at all,* 5 = *very many*). Analyses did not differ when we excluded these participants, so we retained them to maximize statistical power. This study was exploratory, so we aimed for 70 participants per cell, which yields 80% power to detect a small to medium effect size of $d = .48$.

Design and Procedure

White adults were randomly assigned to either a race-related disclosure condition or a nonrace-related disclosure condition with an imagined Black friend. Participants were asked to imagine interacting with two people with whom they were "close friends." We gave participants minimal and generic information about each friend and instead used prompts to allow participants to describe the friend and their relationship for themselves.

We first introduced a White friend as a way to mask the focus on cross-race dynamics and introduce the Black friend in a naturalistic manner. Participants saw a picture of a White woman ("Michelle" or "Colleen") described as a "good" friend (Bainbridge et al., 2013). They read a short profile about this friendship (see Table 4) on which

they were asked to elaborate: "Given what you know about [Michelle/Colleen], describe what your relationship with her is like in a couple sentences. What kinds of things do you do together? What do you like about her?" Participants then reported how close they felt to her.

Next, participants saw a photo of a Black woman ("Colleen" or "Michelle"), whom they were told they had met through the first friend and also considered a close friend. They completed the same open-ended description and closeness items. Photos were obtained from the 10k U.S. Adult Faces Database and matched on perceived friendliness, interestingness, and sociability (Bainbridge et al., 2013). The name and brief profile attributed to the White and Black friend were counterbalanced. See Table 4 for both versions of the friend profiles.

The rest of the procedure focused on the Black friend. Participants were told, "Next, we're going to focus on your friendship with [Colleen/Michelle]. In addition to spending time together, you and [Colleen/Michelle] have had the opportunity to get to know each other more personally. You've become comfortable sharing important things with each other, and you value each other's perspectives." This message aimed to facilitate a feeling of intimacy and a norm of disclosure within the imagined friendship.

Next came the manipulation. In the nonrace-related disclosure condition, participants were told, "You're talking one day, and some topics you haven't really talked about before come up. [Colleen/Michelle] shares some of her personal experiences with you." In the race-related disclosure condition, participants read, "You're

Table 4
Friend Profiles, Counterbalanced (Study 3)

	White friend (Always introduced first)	Black friend
Counterbalancing version A	[Michelle/Colleen] is one of your good friends. You have a similar sense of humor and taste in movies and TV. You see each other often and like to try new activities together. You have known [Michelle/Colleen] for a little while now, and you like her a lot and trust her.	This is [Colleen/Michelle]. You met [Colleen/Michelle] through [Michelle/Colleen]. She likes the same music as you and she has a lot of similar interests. You enjoy spending time together and you value her opinions. She is also a close friend.
Counterbalancing version B	[Michelle/Colleen] is one of your good friends. She likes the same music as you and she has a lot of similar interests. You enjoy spending time together and you value her opinions. You have known [Michelle/Colleen] for a little while now, and you like her a lot and trust her.	This is [Colleen/Michelle]. You met [Colleen/Michelle] through [Michelle/Colleen]. You have a similar sense of humor and taste in movies and TV. You see each other often and like to try new activities together. She is also a close friend.
Prompt to promote personalization	Given what you know about [Michelle/Colleen], describe what your relationship with her is like in a couple sentences. What kinds of things do you do together? What do you like about her?	Given what you know about [Colleen/Michelle], describe what your relationship with her is like in a couple sentences. What kinds of things do you do together? What do you like about her?
Sample participant response	"We enjoy going out to restaurants and bars together, going to the orchestra, and she's super open minded and intelligent. I love that she's frank like me, and that she's more extroverted to balance out my introversion."	"She's into documentaries and deep discussions. She's more experienced at life than me, so she's not about to let anyone push her around. She's goal oriented but diplomatic at the same time."

Note. Faces were obtained from the open use subset of the 10k U.S. Adult Faces Database (Bainbridge et al., 2013). See the online article for the color version of this table.

talking one day, and the topic of race comes up. You haven't really talked about race before. [Colleen/Michelle] shares some personal experiences with you."

Participants were randomized to read two of 16 stories, one positive and one negative, either both explicitly race-related or both not. Order was counterbalanced. The content, participants were told, was based on stories from real people but modified for privacy, as was the case.

Materials

The eight race-related stories were drawn from the stories collected in Studies 2A and 2B. The eight nonrace-related stories were drawn from pilot surveys asking Black participants to write about either a positive or a negative experience related to their "personality or personal life" or to their age. We began by selecting stories that had a clear narrative and were longer than three sentences ($N_{stories} = 79$). We pilot tested these stories on MTurk. Raters scored how positive and how negative (separate scales) each story was ($N_{participants} = 172$; 64.5% White, 13.4% Black). Ultimately, we selected 16 stories that were most similar to each other on either positivity (range for positive stories: Ms = 3.31–3.59; 1–5 scale) or negativity scores (range for negative stories: Ms = 2.68–3.67, 1–5 scale), and in length (range = 40–105 words, $M_{words} = 66.31$, $SD_{words} = 19.74$). We selected stories that had similar content across conditions and were emblematic of common stories in our larger dataset. Half of the negative stories in each condition were stories from childhood and half were experienced as an adult. One positive story in each condition was about family, and three emphasized community and/or service. See Table 5 for examples from each condition. The supplement provides all of the selected stories.

Measures

Comfort. Following disclosure, participants responded to the question, "How comfortable or uncomfortable do you feel talking with [Michelle/Colleen] about these stories?" (1 = *extremely uncomfortable*, 7 = *extremely comfortable*).

Learning. For each of the two stories, participants were asked, "How much did you learn from hearing about this experience?" and "How surprising was that kind of experience to you?" (α = .75; 1 = *not at all*, 5 = *a great deal*). These items were averaged across stories. A third question ("How often have you heard stories like this?"; reverse-coded) whose inclusion reduced reliability (α = .63) was excluded.

Closeness. Participants completed three items assessing their felt closeness to the imagined Black friend both before and after hearing about her experiences. Following Shelton et al.'s (2010) and colleagues' "intimacy scale," we asked, "How much do you like [Michelle/Colleen]?" and "How close do you feel to [Michelle/Colleen]?" We also added a third item, "How warm do you feel toward [Michelle/Colleen]?" (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *a great deal*, $\alpha_{before} = .87$, $\alpha_{after} = .92$).

Future Conversations About Race With Friends From Other Racial Groups. Ten items assessed participants' comfort and openness to talking about race with friends in the future (α = .88; e.g., "I would feel comfortable asking friends from other racial groups about their perspectives about issues involving their race"; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*; Gurin, 2013). Eight of the

items assessed comfort and openness to future conversations about race with friends in general. Two assessed conversations specifically with the imagined friend. The two measures correlated highly (r = .73), and the patterns of results were the same, so we combined them in a single measure.[1,2]

Results

Did White Women Anticipate Feeling Less Comfortable Talking About Race-Related Versus Nonrace-Related Personal Experiences With a Black Friend?

Yes (see Figure 2A). Even as White women anticipated feeling relatively comfortable in both conditions, they anticipated feeling less comfortable talking about race-related experiences with the Black friend ($M = 5.05$, $SD = 1.74$; scale midpoint = 4) than talking about nonrace related experiences with her ($M = 5.76$, $SD = 1.44$), $b = -.35$, $SE = .13$, $t(145) = -2.66$, $p = .009$, $d = .44$, 95% CI [.11, .77].

Did White Women Report Learning Upon Hearing About Race-Related and Nonrace-Related Personal Experiences?

White women anticipated learning moderately in both conditions ($M = 3.22$, $SD = .93$; scale midpoint = 3), and this did not differ with whether they heard about race-related ($M = 3.10$, $SD = .91$) and nonrace-related ($M = 3.34$, $SD = .95$) experiences, $b = -.12$, $SE = .08$, $t(144) = -1.54$, $p = .13$, $d = .26$, 95% CI [−.07, .58].

Did White Women Feel Closer to a Black Friend After She Disclosed Personal Race-Related Experiences to Them?

Yes (see Figure 2B). A multilevel linear regression predicted closeness, with time (before/after disclosure) and condition (race, nonrace) as main effects and interaction terms, and a random intercept for participant. We found a main effect of time such that closeness significantly increased with disclosure, $b = .09$, $SE = .04$, $t(145) = 2.40$, $p = .02$, $d = .40$, 95% CI [.07, .73]. This main effect was moderated marginally by condition, $b = .07$, $SE = .04$, $t(145) = 1.94$, $p = .054$, $d = .32$, 95% CI [−.01, .65]. Although the interaction did not reach significance, we explored the contrasts because our primary question was whether closeness increased with race-related disclosure. Indeed, White adults reported feeling significantly closer to their Black friend after she had disclosed race-related experiences to them than before, $b = .31$, $SE = .10$, $t(145) = 3.14$, $p = .002$, $d = .52$, 95% CI [.19, .85]. In the nonrace disclosure condition, there was not a significant change in

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[1] An additional item attempted to assess participants' thoughts about the continuing friendship, but this item was poorly formed so we report it in the online supplemental materials.

[2] At the end of the study, we assessed two potential moderators of White participants' response to a Black friends' disclosure of race-related experiences: anti-Black prejudice (as measured with a difference score between warmth toward Black Americans and warmth toward White Americans on a feeling thermometer (Carr et al., 2012) and implicit theories of prejudice. In general, we did not find moderation, with few exceptions. However, our ability to examine these factors was constrained because participants in this sample generally did not distinguish White people and Black people on the feeling thermometer and generally reported malleable theories of prejudice. These analyses are reported in full in the online supplemental materials.

Table 5
Sample Disclosure Stories (Study 3)

Valence of experience	Race-related condition	Nonrace-related condition
Positive experience	My family sponsors a gathering that highlights our ancestors. With this gathering family members from all over the United States comes together and talk about our families history. Also allows us to come together with family members that have not been in contact for many years. This event takes place in Georgia as that is where it all started. I felt very happy to know the story of my family and interact with so many family members.	I traveled with my family and went to a beautiful beach. I enjoyed most of the attraction in the area, there's entertainers everywhere and a lot of people are gathering with music bands partying. It was a pleasant experience and I hope to return there anytime soon. There's a lot of people coming from different places and everyone's just enjoying their time.
Negative experience	I remember being in elementary school and a girl told me she could not play with me because I was Black. I didn't know what that meant. I told her I was brown but she said her mom said she couldn't play with me. I went home sad and told my mom about it.	In third grade, I was bullied by two fifth graders one day in the sandbox. They poured sand down my shirt and laughed at me. I distinctly remember looking around for help, but no one really seemed to care, nor help me. This was a one-time incident but still a vivid memory.

closeness from before to after disclosure, $b = .03$, $SE = .10$, $t(145) = .32$, $p = .75$, $d = .05$, 95% CI [$-.27, .38$].

Did White Women Feel More Comfortable and Open to Talking About Race With Friends in the Future After a Black Friend Disclosed Race-Related Versus Nonrace-Related Experiences to Them?

No. Participants reported being equally comfortable and open to talking about race in the future in the race-related disclosure ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 1.19$; scale midpoint: 4) and nonrace-related disclosure conditions ($M = 4.52$, $SD = 1.25$), $b = .10$, $SE = .10$, $t(143) = .98$, $p = .33$, $d = .16$, 95% CI [$-.16, .49$].

Discussion

Extending Study 1, Study 3 provides evidence for some of the simultaneous risks and benefits that White people experience in talking with a Black friend about her race-related experiences. In Study 1, White participants anticipated the risks of being seen as prejudiced and of lacking common ground in conversations about race-related experiences, whereas both Black and White participants viewed closer relationships and learning as primary benefits of talking about race-related experiences. In Study 3, in response to a disclosure from an imagined Black friend, White women anticipated feeling less comfortable in a conversation about race-related experiences as compared with one about nonrace-related experiences, a finding that also parallels Black adults' reports in Study 2 of their own relative discomfort sharing a race-related experience with White as compared with Black friends. However, White women also reported feeling closer to an imagined Black friend following her disclosure of race-related experiences to them. They also reported learning moderately, and neither more nor less when the disclosure was race-related or not. Certainly, the content of this learning may differ, though our measure was not designed to capture this.

An exploratory hypothesis was that a conversation about race with a Black friend might open White women up to feel more open to future conversations about race. We did not find evidence of this, perhaps because of the limitations of a hypothetical scenario focused on the prospect of an interaction. Perhaps an actual

interaction with an extant friend, especially if it goes well, would cause this broader change.

Study 4: Isolating the Role of Self-Disclosure

Study 4 sought to replicate Study 3 and to isolate the roles of disclosure and friendship per se in White women's experience. There were four conditions: the same nonrace-related disclosure and race-related disclosure conditions in Study 3 (conditions 1 and 2; see Table 6) plus conditions in which White women learned about the same race-related experiences but either as disclosed by their Black friend to a third-party (condition 3) or as had by a stranger and disclosed to the third-party (condition 4). In addition to replicating Study 3, these conditions allowed us to explore three primary questions.
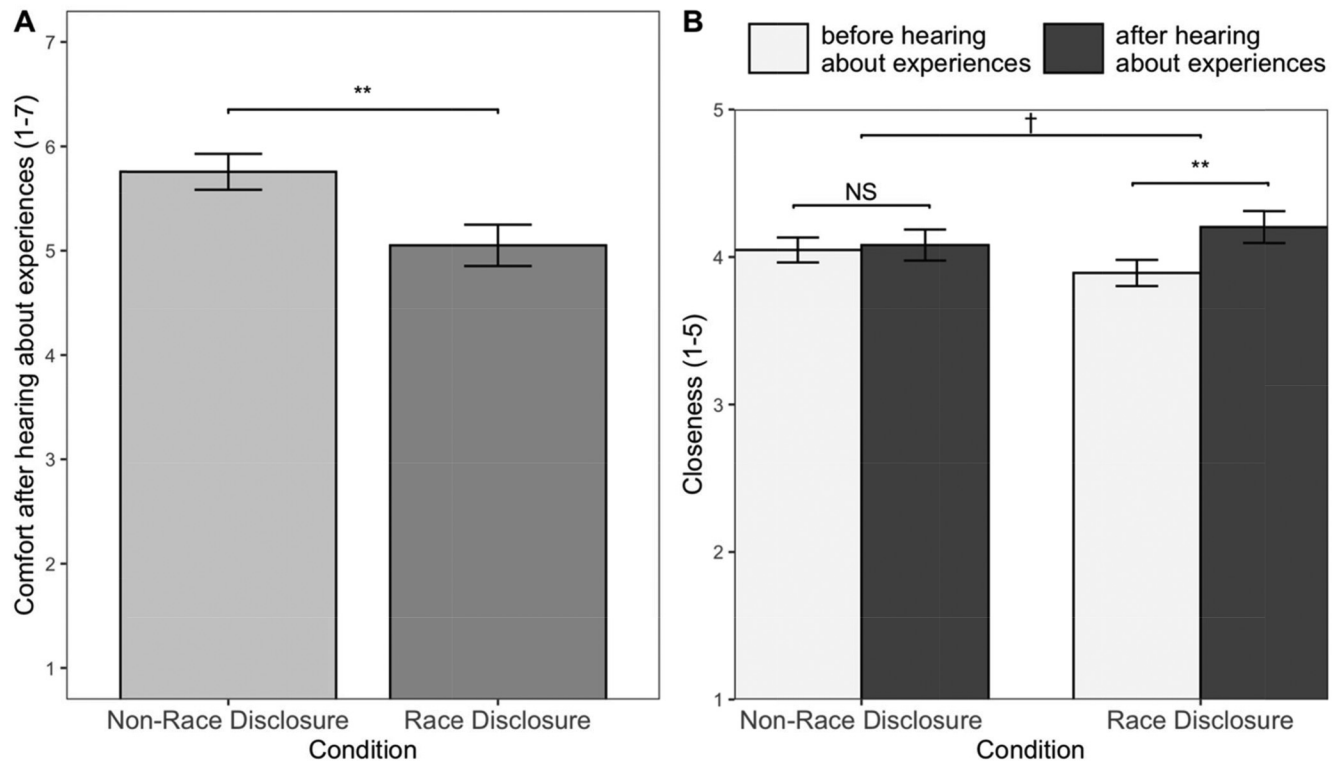
First, we tested the role of friendship and the role of disclosure on White women's comfort. If, as we have suggested, friendships are well-positioned to support conversations about personal race-related experiences, White women may feel more comfortable when a Black friend personally discloses her race-related experiences to them (condition 2) than when they hear about the same friend's experiences as disclosed to a third party (condition 3) or when they hear about a stranger's experiences (condition 4). That is, when race is the topic, it may be handled more comfortably through disclosure by a friend than otherwise.

Second, we explored the role of the friendship in learning. We have suggested that learning about race-related experiences from a friend may support White women's learning about race both because they can learn about race-related experiences that happen to someone close to them and because people are disposed to take a friend's perspective (rather than dismiss it). If so, White women should report greater learning both when a Black friend discloses race-related experiences to them (condition 2) and when they hear about the same friend's experiences as disclosed to a third party (condition 3) as compared with when they hear about the same experiences as had by a stranger (condition 4).

Third, we sought to isolate the role of disclosure in the increased closeness White women reported after hearing about a Black friend's race-related experiences in Study 3. We have theorized that this increased closeness reflects an awareness that their Black friend has entrusted them with experiences related to her race. If

Figure 2

White Adults' Comfort Talking With a Black Friend About Her Nonrace-Related and Race-Related Experiences (A) and White Adults' Feelings of Closeness to a Black Friend Before and After an Imagined Conversation About Her Nonrace- and Race-Related Experiences (B; Study 3)

Note. N.S. = not significant. The *y* axes depict the full range of each scale. Error bars depict standard errors.
† *p* = .06. ** *p* < .01. *** *p* < .001.

so, the disclosure itself should be important, and hearing about the same experiences as had by the same friend through a third party (condition 3) should not produce the same effect.

Method

Participants

One hundred seventy-two White U.S. women age 18–30 were recruited through Qualtrics Panel. Eight percent of participants said they had no Black friends. As in Study 3, results did not differ when we excluded these participants, so we retained them. Power analysis using G*Power software revealed that forty participants per condition yields 80% power to detect a medium effect of *d* = .63.

Procedure

The procedure for Study 4 was identical to Study 3 with the addition of two new conditions (see Table 6). In condition 3, a friendship was coconstructed just as in conditions 1 and 2 and in Study 3; however, instead of a personal disclosure, White women read of their friend's race-related experiences in an interview with a reporter. Participants were told, "One day you discover that [Colleen/Michelle] has been interviewed by a reporter in which she shared some experiences she has had related to her race. You have never talked with her about these experiences. But you come across the article and read about some of [Colleen/Michelle]'s experiences."

Table 6

Summary of Conditions (Study 4)

Condition 1: Nonrace-related disclosure (identical to study 3)	Condition 2: Race-related disclosure (identical to study 3)	Condition 3: Friend race interview	Condition 4: Stranger race interview
Black friend discloses a positive and a negative personal experience not explicitly related to her race to the participant.	Black friend discloses a positive and a negative personal experience explicitly related to her race to the participant.	Participant reads an interview in which a Black friend tells a reporter about a positive and a negative personal experience explicitly related to her race.	Participant reads an interview in which a Black stranger tells a reporter about a positive and a negative personal experience explicitly related to her race.

No such friendship was introduced in condition 4. In this condition, participants were simply introduced to either Colleen and Michelle and her stories: "This is [Colleen/Michelle]. [Colleen/Michelle] was recently interviewed by a reporter in which she shared lots of different kinds of experiences. You come across the article, and you read about some of [Colleen/Michelle]'s experiences. We have randomly selected a small part of the interview to show you. In her interview, [Colleen/Michelle] shared some experiences related to her race."

In all four conditions, participants read stories from the same sets in Study 3. The difference was whether they imagined hearing them directly from their friend (conditions 1 and 2) or reading about them in an interview (conditions 3 and 4). The same pairs of experiences appeared equally in conditions 2–4.

Measures

Comfort. As in Study 3, participants reported their comfort, but the question was rephrased to reference "hearing about" instead of "talking with" since participants in the "friend race interview" and "stranger race interview" conditions imagined reading about the experiences rather than discussing them: "How comfortable or uncomfortable do you feel hearing about these experiences?" ($1 =$ *extremely uncomfortable*, $7 =$ *extremely comfortable*).

Learning. Participants completed the same items used to assess anticipated learning for each story as in Study 3 ($\alpha = .76$).

Closeness. Participants completed the same three closeness items from Study 3 in the "nonrace disclosure," "race disclosure," and "friend race interview" conditions before and after hearing about their imagined friend's experiences ($\alpha_{before} = .90$, $\alpha_{after} = .90$). Additionally, after reading about the experiences, participants completed items assessing their motivation to "hang out more" (reported in the online supplemental materials). Participants in the "stranger race interview" condition did not complete these measures.

Future Conversations About Race. As in Study 3, we assessed participants' comfort and openness to talking about race with friends of other races in the future ($\alpha = .85$).

Results

Comfort Upon Hearing About a Friend's Experiences

Replicating Study 3, White women anticipated feeling less comfortable when their Black friend disclosed race-related experiences to them than when she disclosed nonrace-related experiences to them, $b = .75$, $SE = .37$, $t(165) = 2.06$, $p = .04$, $d = .32$, 95% CI [.01, .63].

However, as expected, comparing the three race conditions, White women reported feeling most comfortable when the friend disclosed her race-related experiences directly to them (race-related disclosure), as compared with both when they heard about her experiences through a third party (friend race interview), $b = -.88$, $SE = .36$, $t(165) = -2.43$, $p = .02$, $d = .38$, 95% CI [.07, .69], and when they heard about a stranger's experiences through a third party (stranger race interview), $b = -1.24$, $SE = .37$, $t(165) = -3.37$, $p = .001$, $d = .52$, 95% CI [.21, .83]. The latter two conditions did not differ, $b = .37$, $SE = .37$, $t(165) = 1.00$, $p = .32$, $d = .16$, 95% CI [−.15, .46] (see Figure 3A).

Learning

Replicating Study 3, participants reported learning moderately in both the "race-related disclosure" condition ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 0.90$) and the "nonrace-related disclosure" conditions ($M = 3.46$, $SD = .76$; scale-midpoint = 3), with no difference between the two, $b = .24$, $SE = .20$, $t(165) = 1.25$, $p = .21$, $d = .19$, 95% CI [−.11, .50].

As hypothesized, comparing the three race conditions, participants reported learning more when the experience was had by their friend, whether disclosed to them directly or communicated through a third party, as compared with when they heard about the same experiences as had by a stranger (effect of race disclosure; $b = -.74$, $SE = .20$, $t(165) = -3.74$, $p = .0003$; $d = .58$, 95% CI [.27, .89]; effect of friend race interview; $b = -.59$, $SE = .20$, $t(165) = -2.99$, $p = .003$, $d = .47$, 95% CI [.16, .77]). The race-disclosure and friend-race interview conditions did not differ, $b = -.15$, $SE = .20$, $t(165) = -.791$, $p = .43$, $d = .12$, 95% CI [−.18, .43] (see Figure 3B).

Change in Closeness

Replicating Study 3, White women reported significantly greater closeness to their Black friend after she disclosed race-related experiences to them (race-related disclosure) than before, $b = .14$, $SE = .05$, $t(126) = 2.77$, $p = .006$, $d = .49$, 95% CI [.14, .85]. By contrast, there was no change in closeness when the friend disclosed nonrace-related experiences to them (nonrace-related disclosure), $b = .02$, $SE = .05$, $t(126) = .45$, $p = .65$, $d = .08$, 95% CI [−.27, .43]. However, because the trend was positive in both cases, the "Race-Related Disclosure" vs. "Nonrace-Related Disclosure" × Time interaction did not reach significance, $b = -.12$, $SE = .07$, $t(126) = -1.62$, $p = .11$, $d = .29$, 95% CI [−.06, .64] (see Figure 4).

We explored the reliability of the interaction across Studies 3 and 4 by combining data from the two studies, increasing power for this test across our full data. Across studies, the Time × Condition interaction was significant, $b = -.07$, $SE = .03$, $t(230) = -2.54$, $p = .01$, $d = .33$, 95% CI [.07, .59]. White women reported an increase in closeness when a Black friend shared race-related experiences with them, $b = .15$, $SE = .04$, $t(230) = 4.19$, $p < .0001$; $d = .55$, 95% CI [.29, .82], but not when she shared non–race-related experiences, $b = .02$, $SE = .04$, $t(230) = .52$, $p = .61$, $d = .07$, 95% CI [−.19, .33] (see Figure S2 in the online supplemental materials).

Examining the "friend-race interview" condition in Study 4, there was no change in closeness by time, $b = -.03$, $SE = .05$, $t(126) = -.67$, $p = .51$, $d = .12$, 95% CI [−.23, .47]. The "Race-Related Disclosure" versus "Friend Race Interview" by Time interaction was significant, $b = .18$, $SE = .07$, $t(126) = 2.44$, $p = .016$, $d = .43$, 95% CI [.08, .79].
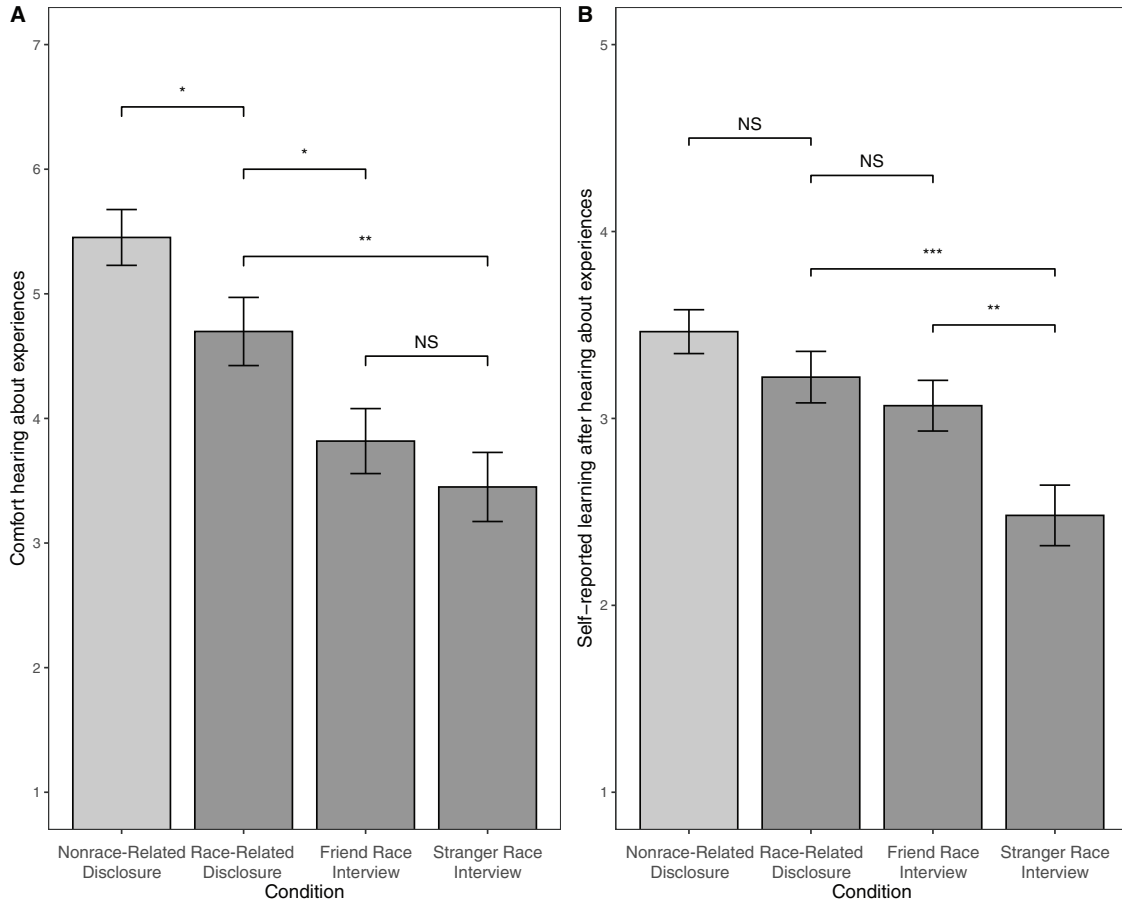
Future Conversations About Race

There were no differences between conditions on participants' comfort in future conversations about race ($ts < 1$).

Discussion

Study 4 replicated and extended the primary findings in Study 3. White women felt less comfortable when a Black friend disclosed race-related than nonrace-related experiences to them.

Figure 3

White Adults' (A) Comfort Hearing About an Imagined Black Friend's or Black Stranger's Experiences and (B) Self-Reported Learning After Hearing About the Imagined Friend's or Stranger's Experience (Study 4)

Note. N.S. = not significant. The *y* axes depict the full range of each scale. Error bars depict standard errors.
* *p* < .05. ** *p* < .01. *** *p* < .001.

However, when hearing about race-related experiences, White women were most comfortable when a Black friend directly disclosed her experiences to them.

Again, the disclosure of race-related experiences increased White women's feelings of closeness to their Black friend. Study 4 further confirmed that it is the disclosure of race-related experiences that increased White friends' feelings of closeness. When White women imagined hearing about a Black friend's race-related experiences through a third party, they showed no increase in closeness.

Finally, White women viewed hearing about a friend's race-related experiences as more of a learning experience than hearing about the same experiences as had by stranger. This was the case whether their friend disclosed these experiences directly to them or if they heard about them through a third party.
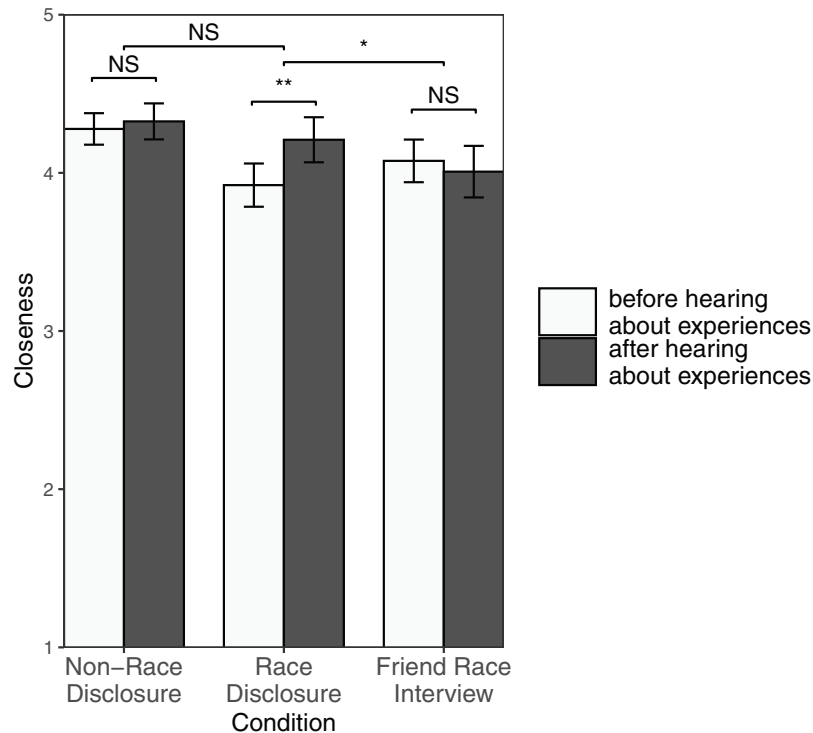
Taken together, the results suggest that personal disclosure of Black friends' race-related experiences may have unique benefits for White friends—in greater comfort and closeness—relative to other types of intergroup communication, and hearing about

friends' experiences may have some unique benefits for White friends' learning compared with other types of intergroup education.

General Discussion

We have suggested that conversations about race-related experiences pose a threatening opportunity for both Black and White friends. In Study 1, Black and White adults perceived a complex mix of both benefits and risks in conversations about race-related experiences. Some they shared—including greater closeness and learning, but a lack of common ground and strained relationships—and some were identity-specific—being the target of prejudice for Black people, appearing prejudiced among White people. In Study 2, Black adults were relatively willing to share their race-related experiences with both their Black and White friends, wanted their Black and White friends to understand their experiences equally, and thought their Black and White friends could benefit equally from hearing about their race-related experiences.

Figure 4
White Women's Feelings of Closeness to an Imagined Black Friend by Time and Condition (Not Measured in Stranger Condition; Study 4)

Note. N.S. = not significant. The y-axis depicts the full range of the scale. Error bars depict standard errors.
$* p < .05. ** p < .01.$

However, they also expected to feel less comfortable, generally had less positive expectations about sharing, and were less likely to share with their White friends than their Black friends, even friends of equal closeness.

In Studies 3 and 4, White women demonstrated similar complexity as they imagined hearing about a Black friend's race-related experiences. They reported feeling less comfortable when their friend disclosed race-related experiences than when she disclosed nonrace-related experiences. However, when race was on the table, White women were most comfortable when these experiences were had by their friend and personally disclosed to them, as compared with when they heard about the same experiences through a third party. White women also reported feeling closer to their Black friend following her disclosure of race-related experiences than before. Increased closeness was a primary benefit both Black and White participants anticipated in Study 1. Studies 3 and 4 showed that, for White women, greater closeness arose from the act of direct disclosure of race-related experiences from an imagined Black friend. White women also viewed hearing about the race-related experiences of a friend as a learning experience, another benefit that participants anticipated in Study 1, and more so than hearing about the same experiences as had by a stranger. The results suggest a unique role of friendship and disclosure in providing benefits for White women as they engage with race.

One contribution of the present research is to show that identity threat in interpersonal interactions is not restricted to interactions among strangers, as examined in past research (Richeson & Shelton, 2007). Identity threat can also arise even between friends when race-related experiences are on the table. Such identity threat can manifest in the discomfort that both Black and White people expect in such conversations. Yet this identity threat co-occurs for both groups with the desire to share and to be understood and to be shared with and to understand a friend's experience.

In taking a broad-angle lens, the present research opens up many questions for future research seeking to further understand conversations about race between cross-race friends.

Limitations and Future Directions
Disclosure and Comfort

Whereas Study 2 found that anticipated discomfort was the strongest assessed predictor of Black adults' decision to disclose a race-related experience to a White friend, future research may use experimental approaches to examine its causal role. For instance, could strategies to reappraise anxiety and arousal as normal and not necessarily problematic, as an opportunity, or as a reflection of one's caring and commitment to the relationship lead Black adults to be more willing to disclose to White friends (see Green et al., 2021; Jamieson et al., 2013; Johns et al., 2008; Walton & Brady,

2020)? Additionally, past research suggests that reappraisals of anxiety can also lead White people to choose to interact more with Black strangers (Schultz et al., 2015; see also Carr et al., 2012; Goff et al., 2008). Could similar strategies also help White people respond in engaged and productive ways in conversations about race-related experiences with Black friends?

Conversation Quality and Outcomes

However, research should not presume that conversations about race-related experiences are always beneficial, for either Black or White people. A further important question is to understand how these conversations go, and when they are beneficial and when they are not and along what metrics, by examining actual conversations among friends. A limitation of the present studies is that they examined only participants' expectations; moreover, Studies 3 and 4 assessed White women's reactions to an imagined situation with an imagined friend. However, these studies lay the groundwork for future studies that vary whether friends talk about race-related or nonrace-related experiences. Such studies may further test reappraisal-of-anxiety or other manipulations, and assess the quality of the subsequent interaction (Schultz et al., 2015), including real-time psychological and behavioral responses, and friends' summative or gestalt evaluations afterward for their sense of self (e.g., authenticity), the interaction, the relationship (e.g., feelings of closeness), and intergroup learning. Given that such conversations tend to begin with Black people's experiences and place them in a vulnerable position of sharing, this work should prioritize benefits for Black individuals and their choice in whether and how to disclose, while minimizing psychological burden.

Authenticity and Closeness

Although not examined here, an outcome that may be of particular interest for Black friends is their sense of authenticity in the relationship. Being able to talk openly about race-related experiences with cross-race friends, and to be received positively in doing so, may facilitate greater authenticity. Further, authenticity predicts higher quality relationships and psychological and physical health (see Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Schmader & Sedikides, 2018). Perhaps the more conversations about race-related experiences are successful in increasing a genuine sense of authenticity, the closer Black people will feel to their White friends.

Future research may also zero in on the identity-threat dynamics that we have suggested contribute to the greater closeness Whites experience upon disclosure of race-related experiences. For instance, is this effect greatest in situations that otherwise evoke identity threat in interpersonal interactions for White people (Goff et al., 2008)? Or, in samples with more individual variability, are White people who are more vulnerable to identity threat, such as those with more fixed theories of prejudice (Carr et al., 2012), more likely to show this effect?

Learning

It may also be fruitful to further explore what and how White people learn when they learn of Black friends' race-related experiences, as compared with when the same experiences are had by Black strangers. We have suggested that White people may both (a) learn about their friends' race-related experiences—and, thus, that people in their immediate social circle have these experiences, not just generic strangers—and (b) be more apt to take a friend's perspective on their experience, and thus to learn from it. Future research may explore both processes. For instance, if seeing an experience from their friend's perspective contributes to White people's learning, then the extent to which White people begin with a different perspective than their Black friend but shift to their friend's perspective may index their learning. It is also exciting to consider whether White people might then seek out or defer to a Black friend in making sense of a new race-related event, or if there would be circumstances in which White people would adopt a perspective more like their Black friend's on a new race-related event even with minimal or no input from their friend.

Time

It is also important to examine the role of conversations about race-related experiences in friendships over time in longitudinal designs. Relationships are inherently recursive, where positive and negative experiences can build upon each other and common ground, once forged, can accrue. Perhaps an initial conversation about race-related experiences, if it goes well, could help the topic of race become more normative and integrated into the friendship over time. Such conversations could lead to benefits over time, such as increased closeness and authenticity and a greater openness to further conversations about race. Given the traditional role of personal disclosure and ongoing social support in friendships, White people may also learn over time how their Black friends actively contend with race-related experiences as they occur, rather than just about a past series of events or the culmination of a psychological process in a settled judgment, decision, or behavior. Alternately, if initial conversations about race-related experiences go poorly, do they foreclose race as a topic of conversation and constrain or undermine the relationship?

Although we assessed White women's anticipated comfort in future conversations about race in Studies 3 and 4, our design did not allow us to capture these processes as they would unfold over time. To explore these questions, rigorous experimental studies that manipulate whether cross-race friends talk about race-related or personal experiences, or that additionally manipulate reappraisal-of-anxiety or other strategies to improve these interactions, may also include downstream longitudinal assessments.

Intraminority Friends

Finally, how might intraminority cross-race friends—such as Black and nonBlack Latinx friends—share race-related experiences? Racial-minority groups in the United States tend to experience some overlapping and some distinct stereotype-based treatment (Zou & Cheryan, 2017). If such conversations illuminate shared experiences, they may bolster intraminority solidarity. Yet do conversations about race-related experiences in which there is relatively less common ground risk threatening a sense of shared experience between minority groups? If race-related experiences differ, are there ways to identify similarities at a higher level of abstraction or to benefit from an understanding of difference?

Conclusions

In the film *The Hate U Give*, the protagonist, Starr Carter, a Black teenager, tells her White boyfriend, "If you do not see my

Blackness, you do not see me." An exclusive focus on similarities in cross-race friendships and other close relationships risks downplaying or ignoring meaningful aspects of racial-ethnic minority group members' lives and selves. For instance, when acts of racial violence flood the news, this disproportionately affects African Americans' well-being (Bor et al., 2018). Being able to share and discuss these experiences with close friends who are White, when appropriate, is increasingly important in a country that continues to reckon with systematic racism. The current work suggests that conversations about race-related experiences may have significant benefits for friendships and for Black and White individuals. These conversations have the potential to enhance closeness between cross-race friends, to provide an opportunity for Black friends to share rather than hide an important aspect of themselves in a relationship in which personal disclosure and mutual understanding and support are appropriate and fitting, and to provide White friends an opportunity to learn about their friend and the lived experience of race. If people in close relationships do not acknowledge and try to understand race-related parts of each other, they may fail to connect with and support each other in important ways. Yet to do so requires understanding the risks that arise to friends in these conversations and how these risks can be effectively mitigated. It is our hope that by surfacing these risks and opportunities, the present research can open up pathways for improving communication between cross-race friends.

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