

September 2018 Webinar

# **The Impact of Relationship Education on Predictors of Adolescent Dating Violence**

**Rachel Savasuk-Luxton, Ph.D.**

*Research Specialist & Master Trainer*

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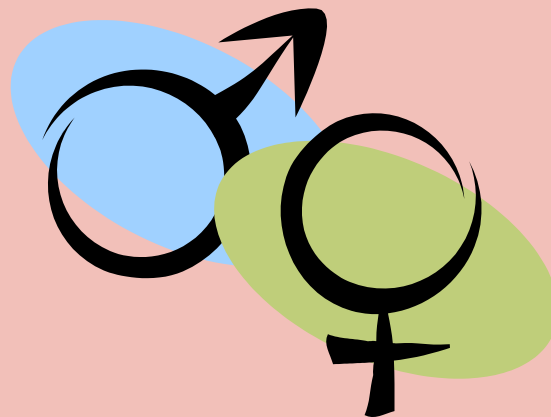
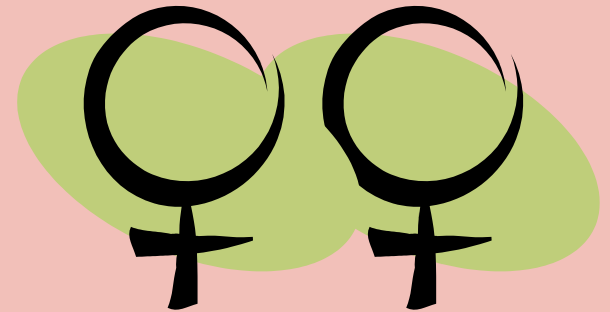
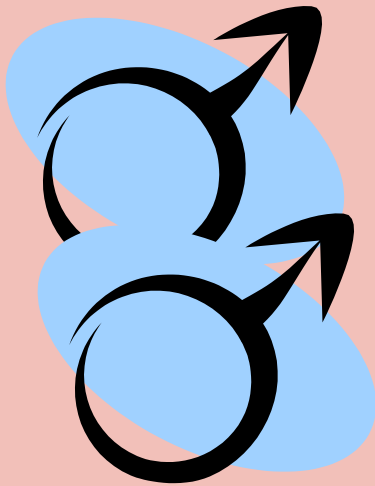
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**Rachel Savasuk-Luxton , PhD**

*Research Specialist & Master Trainer*



# **Changing Attitudes: The Impact of Relationship Education on Predictors of Adolescent Dating Violence**

**Rachel Savasuk-Luxton, Ph.D.**  
*Research Specialist & Master Trainer*

# Adolescent Dating Violence

- Adolescent dating violence (DV) has become a significant public health concern
- Over 70% of adolescents report having a romantic relationship by age 18<sup>1</sup>
- Sets the foundation for future relationships<sup>2,3</sup>



# Predictors of Adolescent DV

- Two key attitudes:
  - DV acceptance (DVA)
  - Traditional gender role beliefs (GRB)
- DVA
  - Violent and aggressive behaviors are acceptable under certain circumstances<sup>4</sup>



# Predictors of Adolescent DV

- Traditional GRB
  - Operate as scripts<sup>5,6</sup>
  - Differentials of authority and power
  - Gender intensification hypothesis<sup>7</sup>

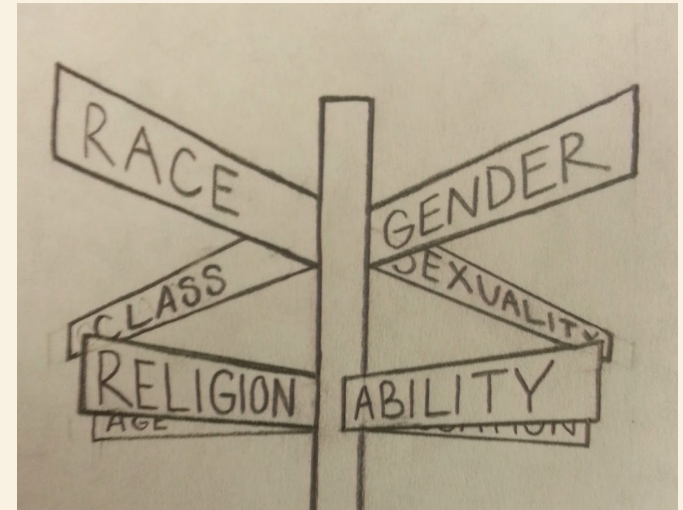


# **Sociodemographic Differences**

- **Gender**
  - Males more traditional and more accepting of DV than females<sup>8,9</sup>
  - Theory of gender and power<sup>10</sup>
- **Race/ethnicity:**
  - African American males more traditional and more accepting of DV than European American adolescents<sup>11</sup>
- **Socioeconomic status (SES):**
  - Lower SES adolescents more traditional and more accepting of DV than higher SES adolescents<sup>12</sup>

# Theoretical Framework: Intersectionality

- Research should move beyond singular demographic identities
- Socialization differs by intersecting identities<sup>13,14</sup>



- Current evidence:
  - GRB vary by the intersection of gender and race<sup>13,14</sup>
  - DVA varies by the intersection of gender and race<sup>15,16</sup>

# Relationship Education and Violence-Related Attitudes

- RE programs focus on healthy relationships and skills training<sup>17,18</sup>
- Research to date:
  - Significant change in **DVA** following RE participation<sup>19,20</sup>
  - Support for the malleability of **GRB** following RE<sup>21,22</sup>
- Lessons on mutual respect and principles of healthy relationships may help





# The Current Study

- Hypothesis:

1. RE participants will report *less DVA* and *less traditional GRB* than non-RE participants.

- Research Questions:

1. Does change in violence-related attitudes following RE differ by gender, race, and SES *independently*?
2. Does change in violence-related attitudes following RE differ by the *two-way interaction* of these identities (i.e., gender x race, gender x SES, and race x SES)?
3. Does change in violence-related attitudes following RE differ by the *intersection of all three identities* (i.e., gender x race x SES)?

# Sample

- Total sample (N = 2, 167)
  - Participants ( $n = 1,645$ ); Comparison ( $n = 522$ )
  - 58% girls; 42% boys
  - 58% White/European American; 42% Black/African American
  - 38% lower SES, 52% higher SES
  - *Mage* = 15.66 years

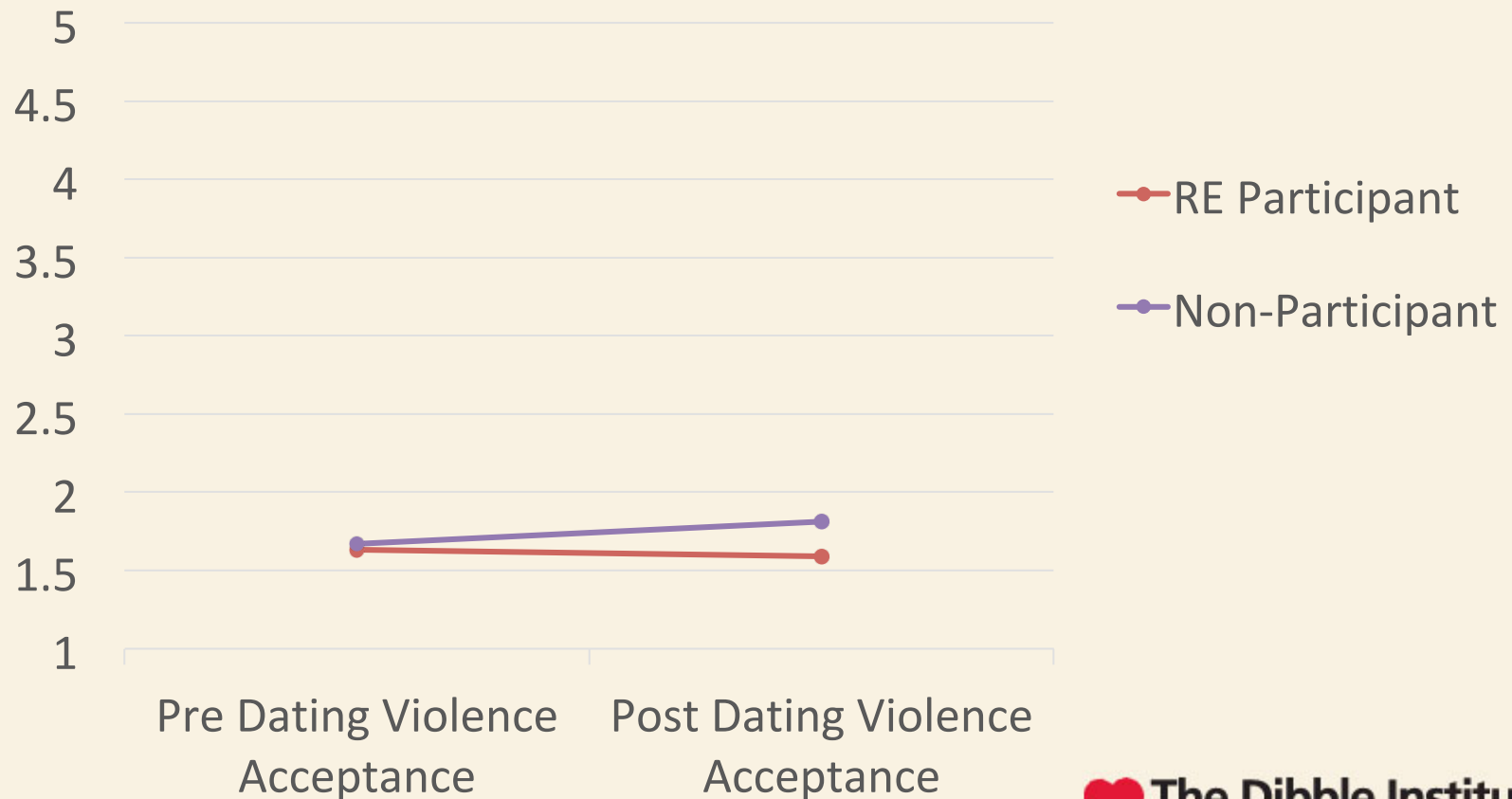
# Measures

- **DVA<sup>17</sup>:**
  - 2 items ( $\alpha = .91$ ); Pre- and post-test
  - E.g., “In today’s society, slapping a spouse or dating partner is understandable under some circumstances”
  - 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*
- **GRB<sup>23</sup>:**
  - 3 items ( $\alpha = .91$ ); Pre- and post-test
  - E.g., “Ultimately a woman should always submit to a husband’s decision”
  - 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 7 = *Strongly Agree*
- **Demographic characteristics:**
  - Gender (0 = male, 1 = female); race/ethnicity (0 = White/European American, 1 = Black/African American); SES (0 = lower, 1 = higher)
  - RE participant (0 = no, 1 = yes)

## **Hypothesis 1:**

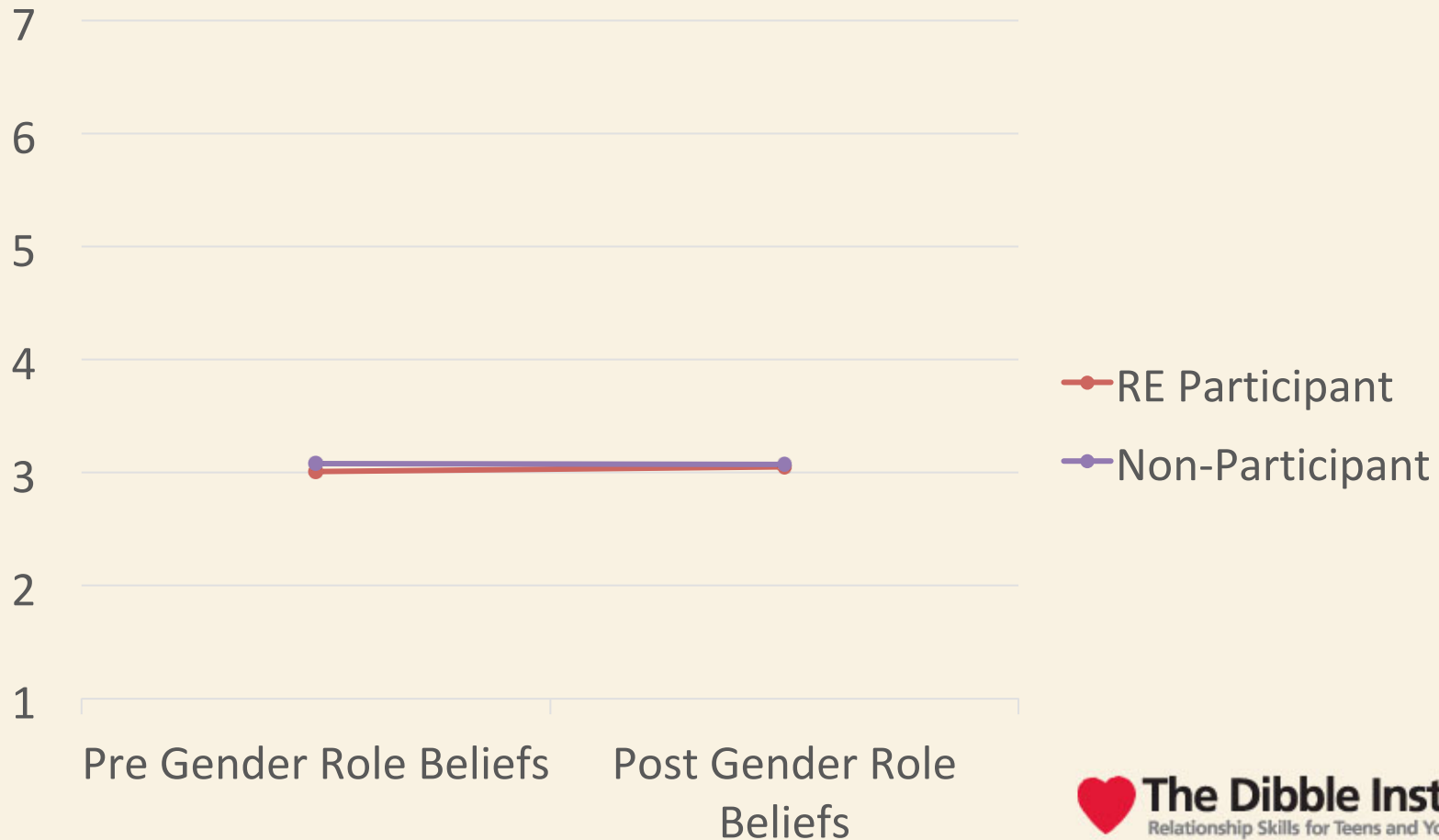
**Change in DVA and GRB for RE  
Participants vs. Non-Participants**

# Change in **DVA** for RE Participants versus Non-Participants



# Change in **GRB** for RE Participants versus Non-Participants

## Gender Role Beliefs

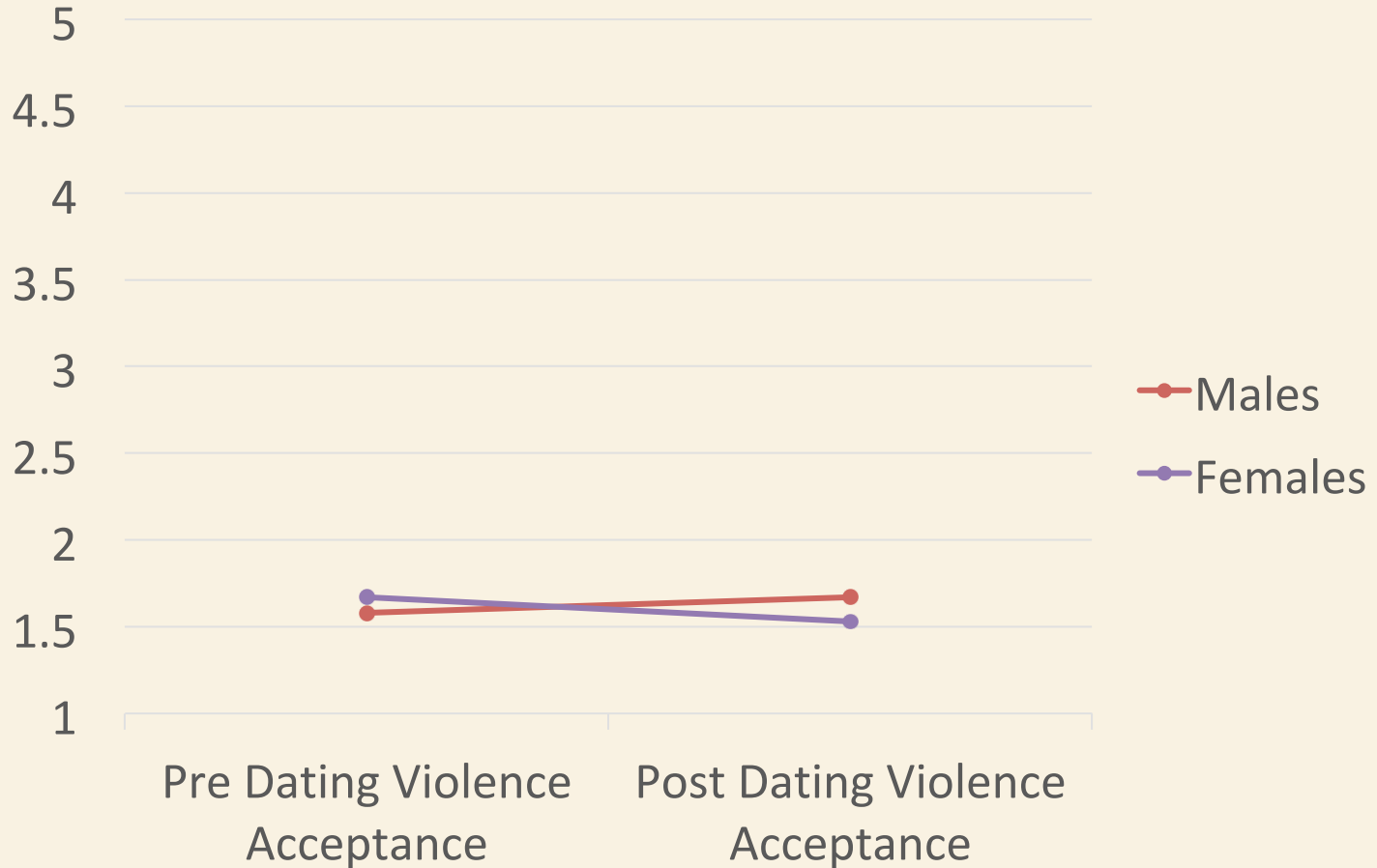


## **Research Question 1:**

**Independent effect of gender,  
race, and SES on change in DVA**

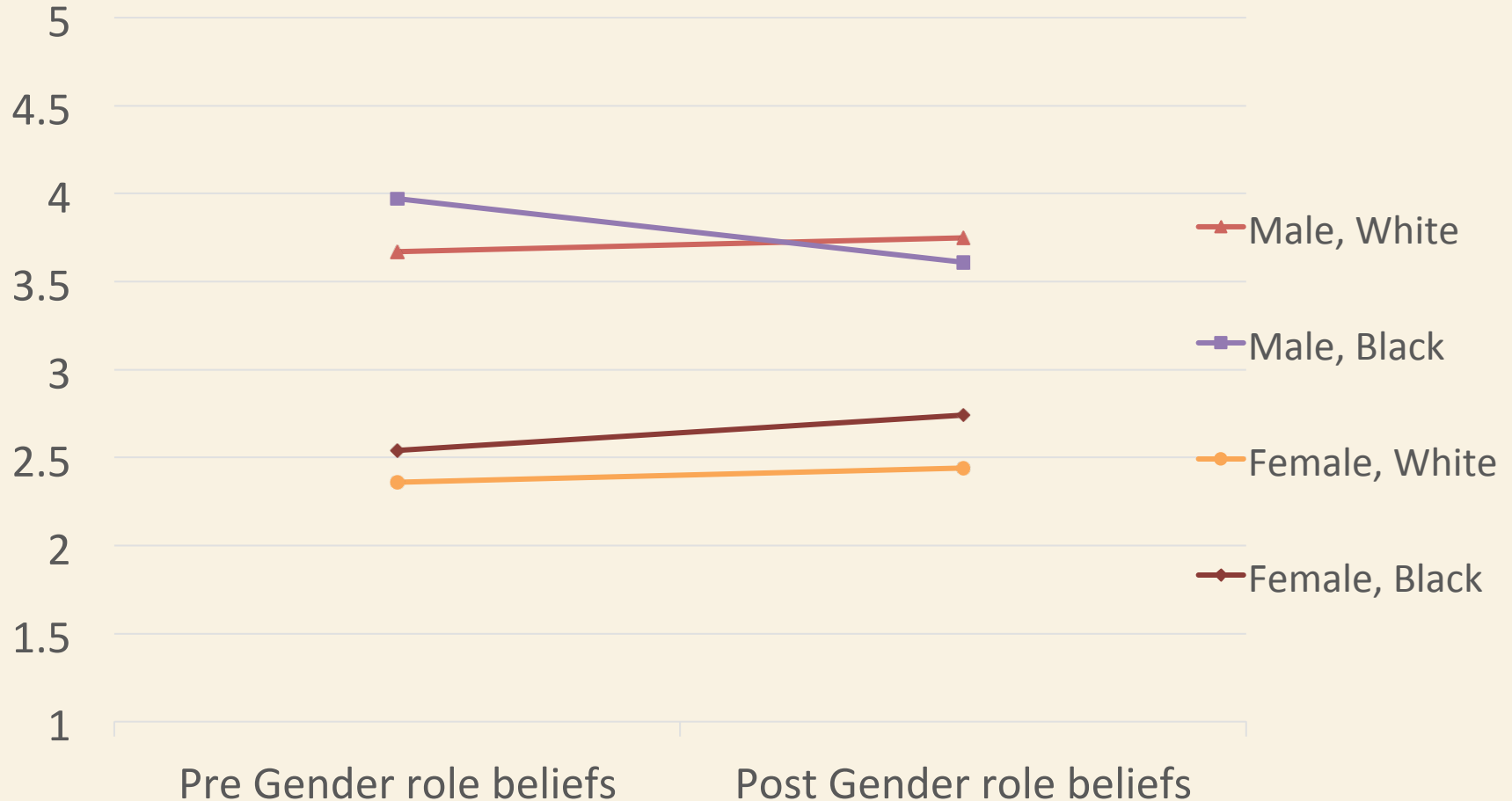


# Change in DVA by Gender



**Research Question 2:**  
**Impact of Gender x Race on**  
**change in GRB**

# Change in **GRB** based on **Gender x Race** interaction



# Summary of Findings and Discussion

- DVA
  - Significant differences between RE participant and comparison group
  - Females **decreased**, males **increased**
    - *Identification with social norms regarding male power?*
  - **No difference** in change patterns by *race* or **SES**.

# Summary of Findings and Discussion

- GRB
  - No difference in change patterns between RE and comparison group.
  - Black males became **less traditional**; Black females became **more traditional**
  - **No change** for White males or females
- Interaction of gender, race, and SES **was not** related to change in either outcome.

# **Limitations and Future Directions**

- **Limitations**

- Lack of randomization
- Immediate post
- Low scores on both measures
- Measurement of SES

- **Future Directions**

- More research on intersectionality
- Account for class-level factors and participant-facilitator “match”
- Longer-term longitudinal and randomized control design

# **Practical Implications**

- Infusion of messages regarding unhealthy relationship behaviors throughout programming
- Early assessment of group needs
- Participant-facilitator match<sup>26</sup>
- Incorporate unit on gender role beliefs (e.g., male power and privilege)
- Use of critical self-reflection for educators



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- Article reference: Savasuk-Luxton, R., Adler-Baeder, F., & Haselschwerdt, M.L. (2018). Understanding change in violence-related attitudes for adolescents in relationship education. *Journal of Adolescence*, 63, 153-164. doi: 10.1016/j.adolescence.2017.12.012

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With

**Desiree W. Murray, PhD**

Senior Research Scientist

Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill