

PERFECTIONISM, SELF-DISCREPANCY, AND DISORDERED EATING
IN BLACK AND WHITE WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The current study investigates the relation between perfectionism and self-discrepancy, and whether their confluence predicts later disordered eating in a sample of Black and White college women. The combination of high perfectionism and high self-discrepancy was expected to prospectively predict dieting and bulimic symptoms after controlling for baseline dieting and bulimic symptoms. *Method:* Self-report questionnaires were administered to 97 Black and 179 White college women at two time points spaced about five months apart. Maladaptive and adaptive perfectionism and ideal and ought self-discrepancies were assessed. Dieting was measured using the Restraint subscale of the Three-Factor Eating Questionnaire (TFEQ) and bulimic symptoms were measured using the Bulimia Test-Revised (BULIT-R). *Results:* In general the study hypotheses were not observed. However, important racial differences in the interaction of these risk factors were evidenced. *Conclusion:* Ideal and ought self-discrepancies, alone and in interaction with perfectionism, were consistent predictors of subsequent dieting and bulimic symptoms, though not always in the hypothesized directions. These risk factors seem to function differently for Black women compared to White women.