UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Through the Looking Glass
Benjamin Franklin High School
Photovoice Project

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Background

- How do urban adolescents in a resource-poor environment define, perceive, and experience coping, agency, and well-being?[1,2]

- Research used photovoice, a method that employs co-creation of meaning and knowledge around pictorial images [3]

- Participants (N=12), were in the 9th-11th grades, and diverse in terms of gender and race

[1]Benson, Leffert, Scales, & Blyth, 2012
[2]Flannery, Singer & Wester, 2003
[3]Strack, McGill, & McDonagh, 2004

Methods

- Participants photographed images representing coping, agency, and well-being.

- Discussion of how their pictures reflected those constructs

- Focus group data were transcribed and analyzed thematically together with the photographs

- Codes across respondents were compiled based on sensitizing concepts of coping, agency, and well-being and emergent themes[4]

[4]Miles & Huberman, 1994

Coping

- <u>D*efinition*</u>: managing stress

- <u>*Types of coping*</u>: communal coping, observing others, symbolic rituals

- <u>*Coping resources*</u>: who or what helped them cope *(e.g., school, peers)*

- <u>*Good/bad coping strategies*</u>: listening to music, drawing, talking it out, eating, drug use, fighting

- <u>*Evolution and consequences of coping*</u>: coping changes as you mature and helps you make better decisions
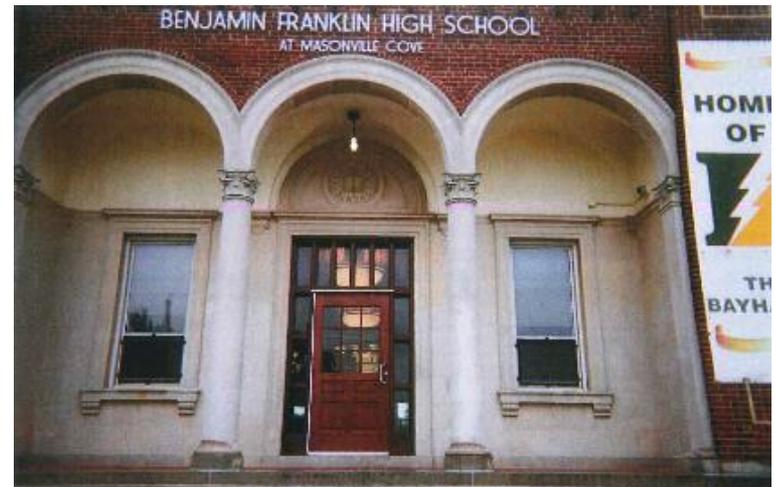
Agency

- *Definition:* "something that can be changed" or "make different"
- *Good/bad agency:* actions that improved and harmed their communities
- *Impact of agency*: the creation of safe spaces for teens to engage in positive and productive activities
- *Power to change:* change was possible, despite limitations
- *Obligation to change:* collective responsibility to act

Wellbeing

- *Definition:* taking care of self and being happy
- *Individual wellbeing:* techniques like "fixing your mind"
- *Community wellbeing:* playground and environment
- *Where wellbeing is fostered:* school as a haven

Conclusion/Next Steps

- Overarching idea of _future orientation_, which is in contrast to the idea that youth tend to be present-oriented

- Development and/or adaptation of school and community programs
  - Presentation of findings to broader audience (e.g., school board, city council)
  - In school sessions on coping, agency, wellbeing led by students, outside experts