

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: Perceived Stigmatization and Coping of African American women
with Breast Cancer

STUDENT: Aikaterini Psarropoulou

DEGREE: Doctor of Philosophy

COLLEGE: Teachers College

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Experiences of stigmatization are common among African American women with breast cancer, yet they are insufficiently explored. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the experiences of African American women with breast cancer, with emphasis on their experiences of stigma and their coping strategies. To achieve this purpose, eleven African American women survivors of breast cancer were interviewed. Data were analyzed using consensual qualitative research. Three major themes emerged, reflecting experiences of stigma: (1) changes in relationships, (2) perceptions of the disease, and (3) issues of culture. Additionally, several themes emerged reflecting personal experiences and coping strategies. Implications, limitations, and directions for future research are discussed.