

Black **British**
Female
Managers –
The Silent
Catastrophe

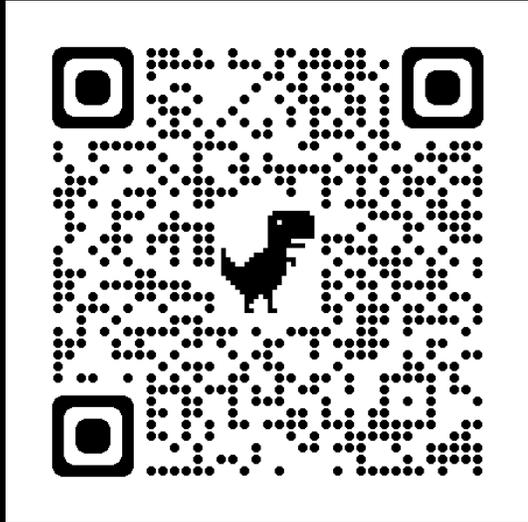
Dr Denise A Miller

Associate Professor of
Child and Educational
Psychology



Objectives...

- Background to the study
- Explanation of Constructivist Grounded Theory
- Methodology
- Key findings - Black British Female Managers
- Implications
- Free guide – Methods 4 Change
- Q&A



Black British Female Managers – The Silent Catastrophe



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“Our stories as Black people and as Black women have power”

“We often don’t get to see ourselves; we don’t hear ourselves because we don’t control the narrative...how rare it is that a Black [British] woman, a modern-day woman, gets an opportunity to tell her own story” Michelle Obama.



Research evidence...

- 1 in 8 (12.1%) BME women working in the UK are employed in insecure jobs compared to 1 in 16 (6.4%) white women and 1 in 17 (5.5%) white men ([TUC, 2020](#)).
- BAME women suffer from cultural stereotyping by employers that results in them having to take jobs at a lower skills level than they are qualified for ([TUC, 2016](#))
- Black women are the least likely to be among the UK's top earners compared to any other racial or gender group, according to a new LSE report.
- 50% of women of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage and 48% of women of Black African heritage stated that they had been criticised for behaviours other colleagues get away with at work, compared to 29% of White British women.



Research evidence...

- Black women in Britain are five times more likely to die in childbirth and during postpartum period than their white counterparts.
- Black women of African heritage were most likely to change by a 'a great deal' or 'quite a bit', their clothes (54% did so), the language they use (50%), the topics they talk about (46%), their hairstyle (39%), and accent (29%).

Stumbling blocks...



- Explicit and conscious forms of racism have been replaced by **aversive, implicit, unconscious**, and **subtle** practices; collectively known as racial microaggressions.
- According to [Sue et al. \(2007\)](#) **microaggressions** are, “Verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults” (Sue et al., 2007).
- Daily **slights, assaults, indignities**, and **condescending** remarks ([Lifelong Learning UK, 2011](#)).
- “**Concrete ceiling**” in contrast to “glass ceiling” that White women encounter ([Davidson, 1977](#))

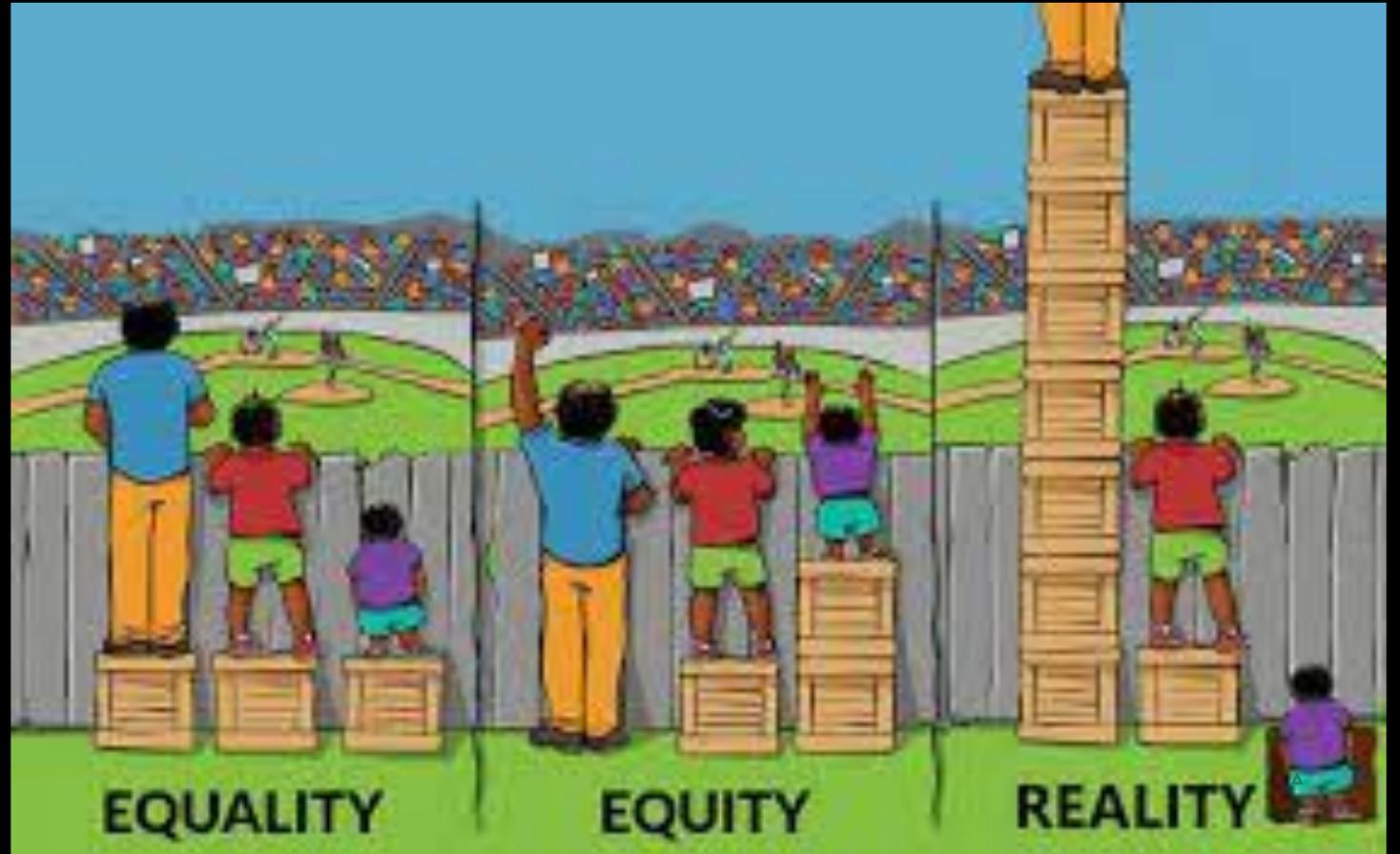
Why Black **British** managers?

Historical context
of racism

Contributing to
Black British
identity literature

Workforce
understanding
and recruitment

Why Black British women?



Research Aims and Question

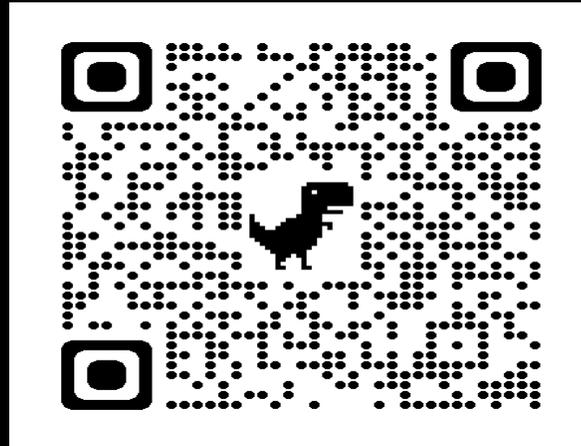
To expand knowledge of BAME women's experiences

To help CYPS employers better understand a workforce that will increasingly contain BAME women at all levels

To gain insight into whether Black British female managers are doubly disadvantaged due to their gender and racial identities

How do Black British women become and experience being managers of CYPS?

A Method for Change



- Qualitative
- Constructivism (Chamaz)
- Data collection and analysis
- Constant comparative analysis
- Focus on context
- Theoretical sampling
- **The role of the researcher**
- Theory building

Recruit Participants

Name	Age	Occupation
Shirley	60+	FE lecturer
Patricia	50+	FE lecturer
Jenny	40+	Deputy head teacher
Amber	40+	Senior Educational psychologist
Sian	40+	Senior Educational psychologist
Leanne	40+	Senior Educational psychologist
Brenda	50+	Senior Educational psychologist
Georgina	40+	Deputy head teacher
Maxine	50+	HE lecturer
Ann	40+	HE lecturer



Interviews: Apprehension

'I know I've had like negative impact. I don't know if it has held me back' (Jenny).

'Negative impact, how does that look...?' (Researcher).

'I think it makes, I am quite cynical I think, I think it makes me quite cynical yeah, but I am not someone that gives up' (Jenny).

Are you tired? (Researcher)

'Yeah, and I feel it's grossly unfair and it's grossly unjust and I don't want to play that game. I feel like, I'm playing a game and I don't feel like I should have to' (Jenny).



Interviews: Exploration

“I remember being kicked in the shins and things... there was one other Black family at school and we were very well aware of racial abuse... I mean I must have been 4 or something... kids call you names... as you get older you're well aware of the different perceptions that dark skin signify as you walk into a room, it's a very obvious tangible signifier of difference” (Sian).

‘Yeah...I agree with what you said basically... although it's really important to guard against... your energy then becomes toxic, and I don't want that because you don't want to be smirched by the fallibility of people’ (Amber).



Interviews: Co-operation

'...they cared about their kids—all three of us, three girls—and it was a fairly strict upbringing, at the time I thought it was strict, but now I understand why they were strict because they were preparing for the future'
(Ann).

"We do live in a country where Black people are not represented at the highest echelons in great numbers. So there are some things to be aware of, so it's... we're still... there's still ceilings that we have to break through...you really need to take it into account when you analyse these transcripts... around the systems which enable Black people to make it to positions of leadership and the exploration of that' (Amber).



Keep notes



Example of a field note:

Jenny took the interview to new directions as it progressed. This was a good thing.

I need to update the list of questions for the interview. I do not need to follow this list exactly because clearly other more pertinent questions will arise during the interview.

Listen to recordings straight away and make a list of questions in time for the next interview.

Do not ask, 'How do you deliberately take a stand against racism?' but rather ask 'What is your attitude towards taking a stand against racism?'

Theoretical sampling



Theoretical sampling is a method used in qualitative research, particularly in grounded theory approaches, to guide the selection of data or participants for further investigation.

It focuses on the quality of information gathered to develop or test emerging theories.

Transcribe interviews

Efficient and accurate transcription lays the groundwork for insightful and thorough qualitative analysis.



Comparing, coding and sorting data

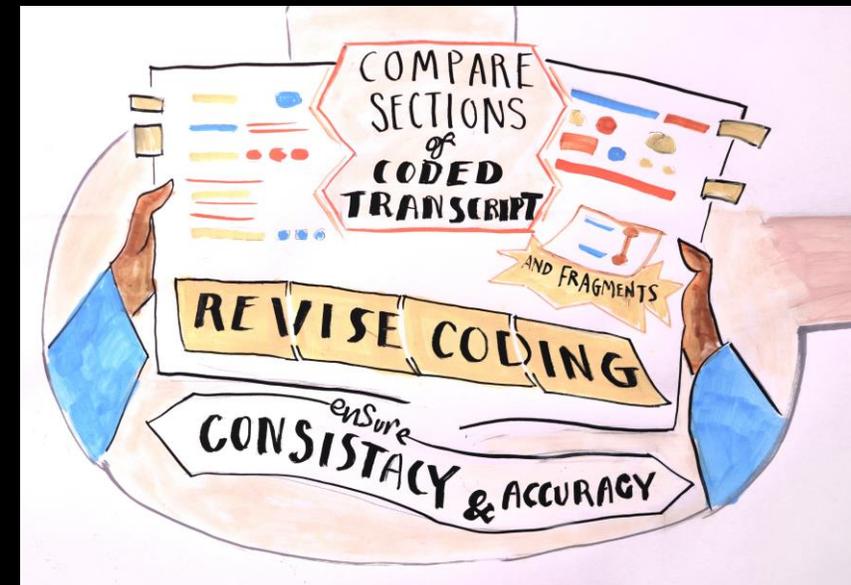
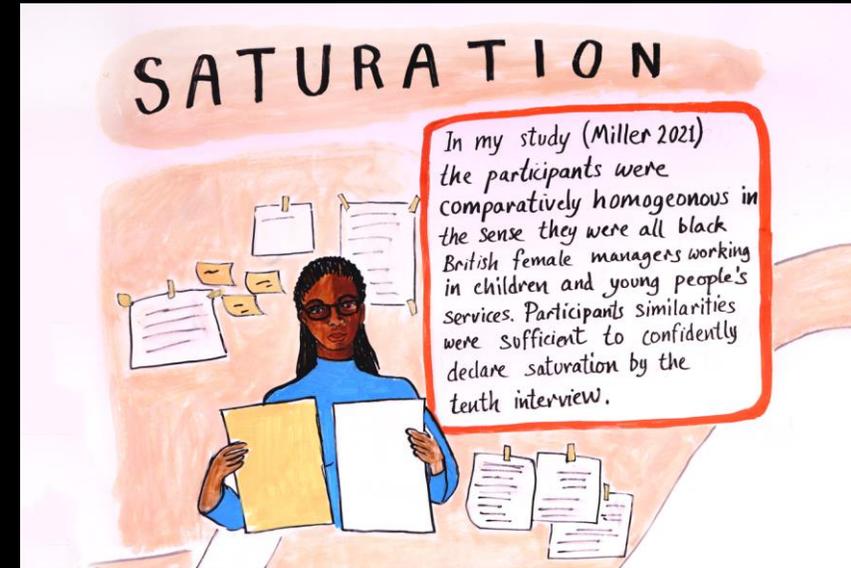
- “Fracturing the data” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 160).
- Line-by-line and issue-by-issue analyses
- Underlining of words and extracts
- In vivo codes



Memo writing

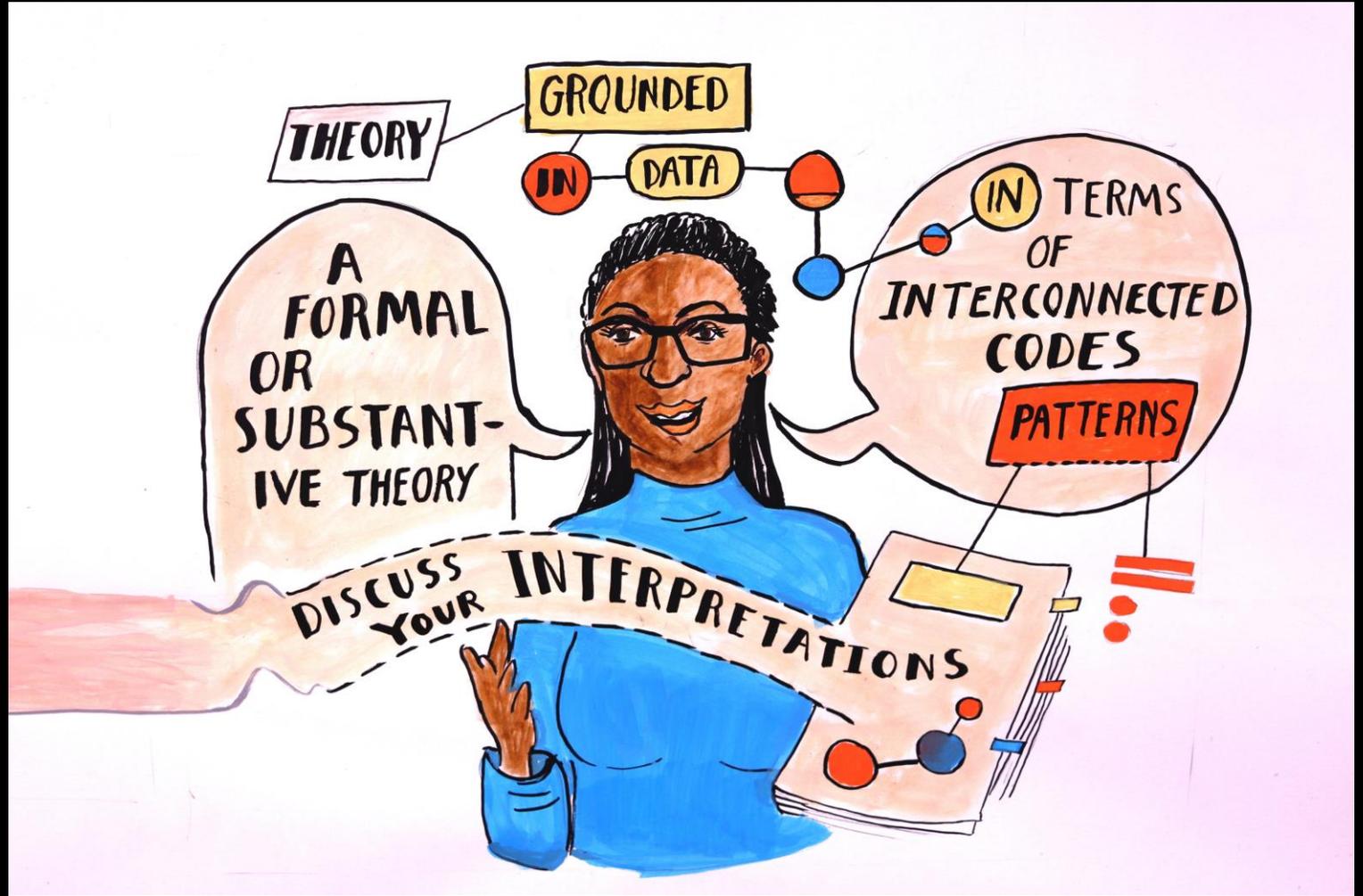
When can I stop?

Charmaz (2006) advises that when a researcher has examined straightforward research questions that aspire to resolve practice issues in applied fields, a small number of interviews may be sufficient. Ragin and Becker (1992) suggest that researchers and students ought to collect enough data to prevent criticism from the most ardent critics of their research. With these pieces of advice in mind, I stopped after the tenth interview when saturation was reached.



A Grounded Theory

Formal or Substantive



A Grounded Theory...

Siblings and prominent community representatives, taught them about what it means to be a member of a minority ethnic group in the UK.



Blatant and aversive acts of racism that were perpetuated by their school-aged peers and their teachers.



Black students were incapable of learning the English language, suffering from poor self-esteem and lacking a sense of identity (Christian, 2005).

A Grounded Theory...

Desire to achieve educational and occupational success remained unswerving.



Steadfastness, resilience and sense of determination has enabled them to break through concrete ceilings.



Modern-day versions of racism much more difficult to recognise, prove and challenge.

Institutional racism subtly persists.



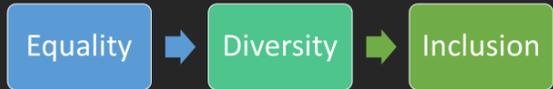
Black British female managers endeavour to walk a precariously fine line between showing self-confidence, determination and assertiveness, and being labelled as 'aggressive'.



They held off threats from negative stereotypes (Aronson and Steele, 2005), questions concerning their capabilities, and behaviours that challenge their authority, by working "20 times harder" (Leanne)".

Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities

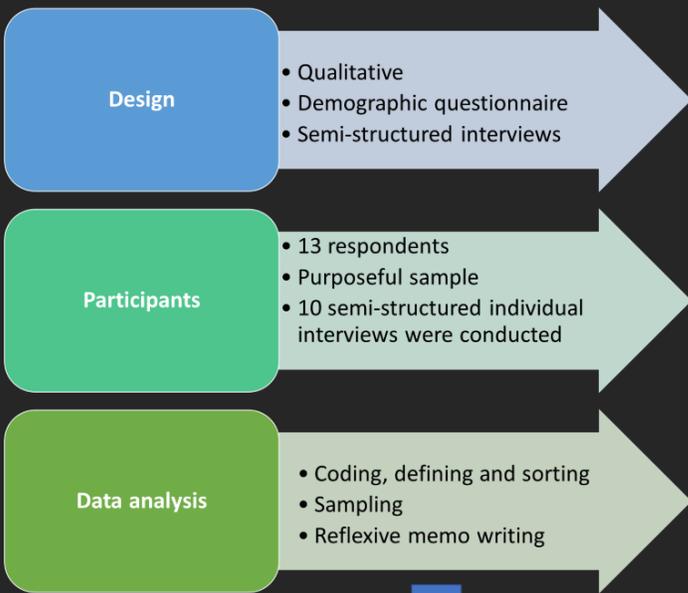
“Put simply we no longer see a Britain where the system is deliberately rigged against ethnic minorities. The impediments and disparities do exist, they are varied, and ironically very few of them are directly to do with racism. Too often ‘racism’ is the catch-all explanation, and can be simply implicitly accepted rather than explicitly examined” (2021, p. 8).



Research findings

- “on average BAME [female] respondents were more ambitious and career-focused than others, especially white British, but in certain respects reported less support” (Arnold et al., 2019, p. 4).
- Black female participants in Showunmi’s study reported how racial discrimination was far more “vociferous” than gender-based discrimination (2020, p. 58).
- *Endemic institutional racism is also cited by numerous researchers as one of the main reasons causing disproportionality in positions of leadership in the British school system (e.g., Elonga Mboyo, 2019; Joseph-Salisbury, 2020).*
- When Haque and Elliott (2016) examined research literature and findings from various sources, they surmised that racial discrimination was one of the more significant and deep-rooted factors that adversely affected BME teachers’ career progression.
- *In an open letter to White psychologists, M’gadzah (2020), a Black female academic and senior educational psychologist, questions why is it that “BAME professionals disappear from the profession? [and] when this pattern of exclusion is repeated time and time again why do psychologists remain silent?” (p. 1).*

Methods for Change



Conclusions

“CGT guidelines for conducting research offers helpful approaches for collecting, managing, categorizing, and interpreting interview data in relation to Black British female managers in CYPS. In particular, the notion of reflexive memo-writing was a key component that enabled interpretations to be comprehensively grounded in data. However, I recommend that researcher’s support networks should be explicitly embedded within the reflexive and ethical approval processes, acknowledging how sensitive topics impact both the researched and the researcher’s well-being” (Miller, 2022, p. 2151).

Themes



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Strengths and limitations

- ✓ Recognition of subjectivity
- ✓ Active role of the researcher and incorporation of preconceived notions
- ✓ Emphasis on multiple realities
- ✓ Theoretical sensitivity
- ✓ Flexibility and accessibility
- ✓ Rich contextual findings
- ✗ Subjectivity and bias
- ✗ Lack of prescriptive procedures
- ✗ Potential overreliance on researcher's insight
- ✗ Time and complexity
- ✗ Limited generalizability and replicability

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Further reading

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In what ways has this presentation impacted
your personal growth and development?

Waiting for responses ...

Thank you!

Q&A

