



NSVRC

national sexual violence resource center

xCHANGE

Join our online forum for the summer series and explore new research.



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Award-winning author and Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Washington. With more than two decades of teaching experience, she writes, trains, consults, and lectures internationally on intimate partner violence and sexual assault.

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Objectives

- Brief **historical overview** of sexual assault and how it shapes the contemporary experiences of Black women.
- Discuss the **characteristics of Black rape survivors** and the environments in which the assaults occur.
- Identify **risk factors** that make Black women vulnerable.
- Review **physical and health** consequences.
- Offer **culturally sensitive treatment**.
- **Resources**



1. Historical Overview



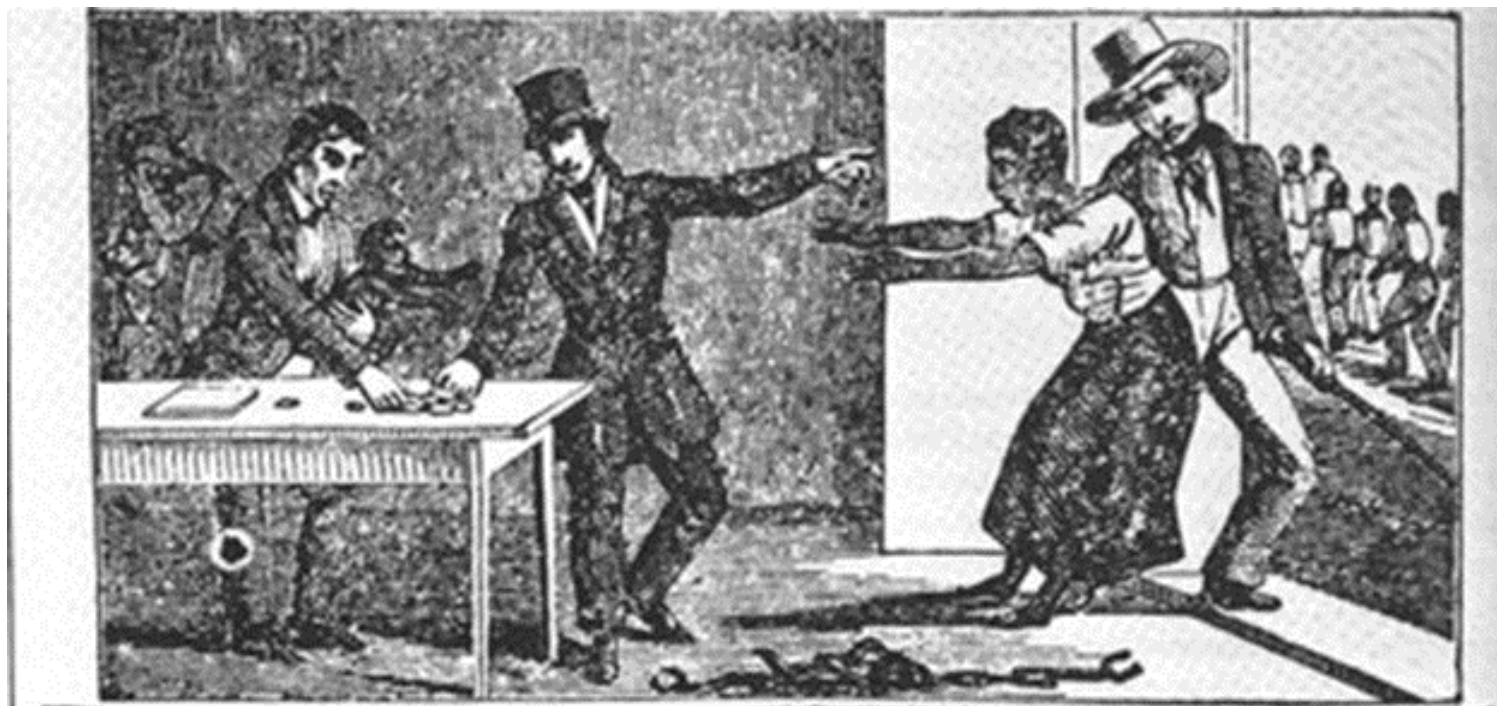
Why consider history?

*“History would become all that men
during the day, but nothing of
what they did during the night”*

--Barbara Omolade

Auction block

Stripped naked
Sold to highest bidder
Family's divided
"Breeders" were valuable



SELLING A MOTHER FROM HER CHILD.

“ ‘Do you often buy the wife without the husband?’ ‘Yes, very often; and frequently, too, they sell me the mother while they keep her children. I have often known them take away the infant from its mother’s breast, and keep it, while they sold her.’ ”—*Prof. Andrews, late of the University*

Rape of enslaved women



According to historians, at least 58% of enslaved Black women between the ages of 15 and 30 had been sexually assaulted by White men.

Sommerville, D. M. (2004). *Rape and race in the nineteenth-century South*. University of North Carolina Press. Chapel Hill, NC.

Intra-racial Rape



The crime of rape does not exist in this State between African slaves...

The regulations of law, as to the white race, on the subject of sexual intercourse, do not and cannot, for obvious reasons, apply to slaves; their intercourse is promiscuous, and the violence of a female slave by a male slave would be a mere assault and battery.

—Mississippi Court (1859)

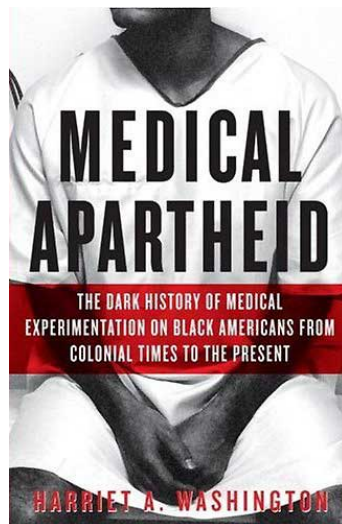
Medical experiments on enslaved women

Dr. J. Marion Sims

‘Father of Gynecology’

Speculum, 1845

Fistula repair on enslaved women





Culture of Silence

“Slaves could either go silently to the grave or go to the grave for breaking the silence.”

Gay, P. L. (1999). Slavery as a sexual atrocity. *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity*, 6, 5-10.

Legacy of Slave Rape



“Although we don't often discuss it, we carry this legacy in our cultural DNA. For me, to think about rape culture is to think about enslaved African women who bore the brunt of this horror. It's a dimension that belongs in the modern conversation just as surely as alcohol and victim-blaming, slut-shaming and rape do.”

--Akiba Solomon

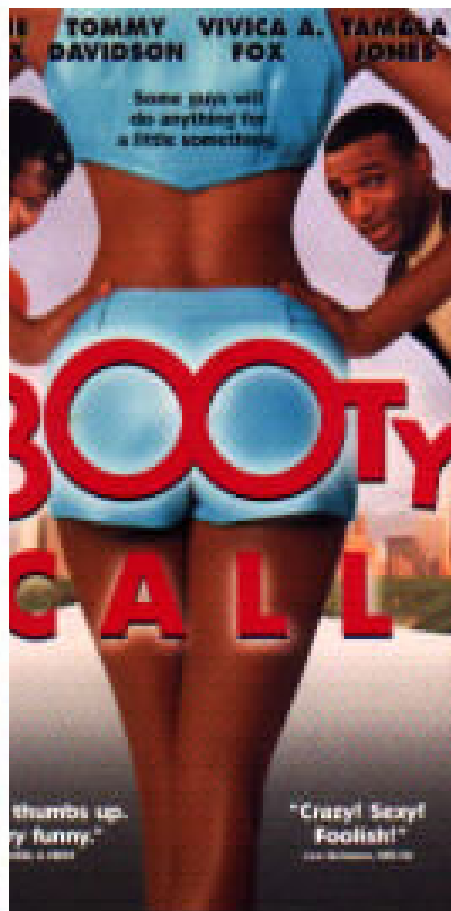
<http://www.colorlines.com/articles/how-12-years-slave-exposes-early-rape-culture>



How has this history influenced Black women **TODAY?**

- Media influences
- Internalization of the Jezebel image
- Culture of silence/Political Gag Order
- Expectation of strength
- Racial loyalty

Contemporary Images/Jezebel



Have their roots
in historical
images and
sexual
stereotypes



2. BLACK RAPE SURVIVORS



National Studies

- In adulthood, **1 in 5** African American women had been raped at some point in their lifetime.
- Estimated **3.1 million** Black rape victims and **5.9 million** Black survivors of other forms of sexual violence.

National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS, 2011)

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6308.pdf>

Why consider racial differences?

Similarities in the prevalence and traumatic aftermath of sexual assault conceal unique racial experiences.



Challenges

- How do we talk about racial **similarities** without being “**color blind?**”

- How do we talk about **racial differences** without reinforcing **stereotypes?**

Diversity among Black Women

- Race/ethnicity
- Social Class
- Marital status
- Gender Identity
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Religious affiliation



Transgender/Gender Nonconforming Women



- Unsolved Black LGBT Murders: Where's the Outrage? (VIDEO)
- <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/earnest-winborne/unsolved-black-lgbt-murders-b-4098430.html>

What about immigrant Black women immigrants?



- How is rape similar and different from U.S. born Black women?
- It's complex—depends on reasons for immigration, generational status, level of acculturation, history.



Other Vulnerable Black Women

- Black college women
- Low-income Black women
- HIV+ Black women
- Incarcerated Black women
- Black women in the military
- Black women with a history of child sexual abuse
- **OTHERS?**



Characteristics of Sexual Assault

- Primarily intra-racial (Black-on-Black)
- Primarily acquaintances, boyfriends, intimate partners
- Range of assaults: attempted/completed, forced oral sex, unwanted genital or breast fondling
- **Other types of sexual violence?**

Reproductive Coercion

When compared to other racial groups, Black women reported higher rates of reproductive coercion in the form of pregnancy coercion (25.9%), birth control sabotage (27%), and unintended pregnancy (49.9%)

Nikoolajski, C. (2015). Race and reproductive coercion. *Women's Health Issues, 25(3)*, 216-223.





Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Kruger, A. (2013). Sexualized and Dangerous Relationships: Listening to the Voices of Low-Income African American Girls Placed at Risk for Sexual Exploitation. *Western Journal of Emerg Med.* 14(4): 370–376.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3735385/>

- In 2010, African American teenagers made up 56.6 percent of the entire arrests for commercial sex or prostitution.



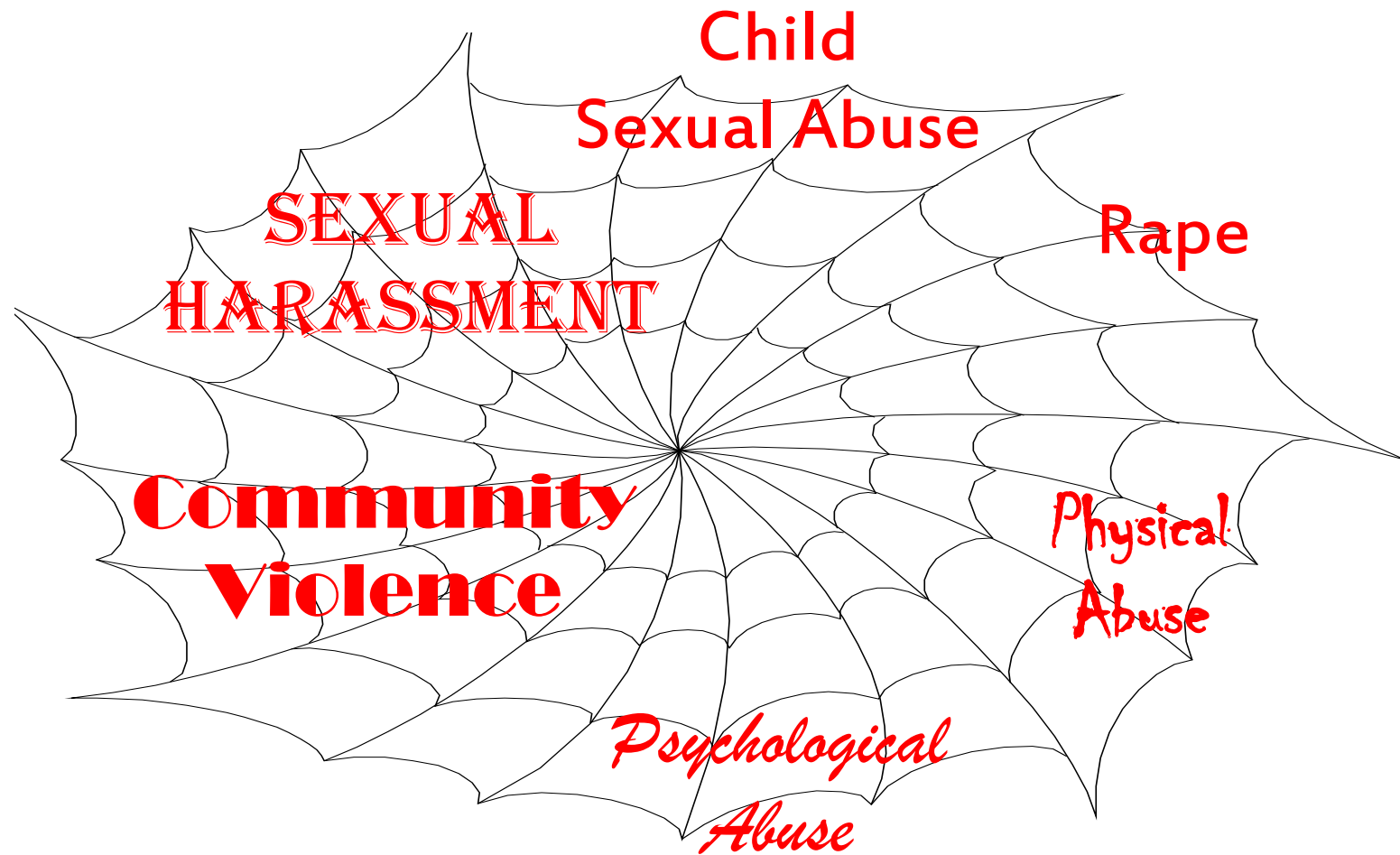
3. RISK FACTORS



Risk Factors...

- Childhood Sexual Abuse
- Poverty
- Incarceration
- Drugs and Alcohol Use/Addiction
- Any others....???

Risk Factors- Web of Trauma





4. PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH CONSEQUENCES



Health

Physical

- Bruises and black eyes
- Reproductive Health problems
- HPV and other STI's
- Unspecified bodily aches and pains
- **Others?**

Mental

- PTSD
- Depression
- Nightmares
- Phobias
- Suicidal
- Fatigue
- Low Self Esteem
- **Others?**



Rape Exams

Black women are less likely than others to have genital injuries identified and treated after sexual assault exam.

Sommers, MS (2006). The effects of age and ethnicity on physical injury from rape. *Journal of Obstetric Gynecologic and Neonatal Nursing*, 35(3), 199-207.

Rape Exam



- rape victims with dark skin are less likely to have their physical injuries detected, treated and documented as evidence by the sexual assault nurse examiners (SANEs) or other health care professionals who examine them.



Health References

- Long, LaDonna & Ullman, Sarah E. (2013). The impact of multiple traumatic victimization on disclosure and coping mechanism for Black women. *Feminist Criminology, 8*(4) 295-319.
- Wadsworth, P. & Records, K. (2013). A review of the health effects of sexual assault on African American women and adolescents. *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic, and Neonatal Nursing, 42*, 249-273.



5. CULTURALLY SENSITIVE TREATMENT

*“Black women were
and continue to
be sorely in need
of an anti-rape
movement.”*

— Angela Davis





Barriers to Disclosure

- Inadequate sexuality socialization
- Rape myth acceptance
- Secondary victimization
- Racist images
- Cultural mandate to protect black men



Barriers to Disclosure

- Culture of Silence
- Expectation of Strength
- Internalized Images of Black Women
- Racial Loyalty/Political Gag order



Racial loyalty

I felt responsible for upholding the image of the strong black man for our young son, and for the white world with whom I had contact... I didn't want to confirm the white belief that all black men rape. Better not talk about it... So I'd kept silent about what happened to me.

Charlotte Pierce-Baker (1998). *Surviving the silence: Black women's stories of rape*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Expectation of Strength

*In a lot of cases Black women are accustomed to hard times. The attitude is Just endure this one
---Dottie*

Washington, P. A. (2001). Disclosure patterns of Black female sexual assault survivors. *Violence Against Women*, 7, 1254-1283.



Internalization of Stereotypes

- Black college women who endorsed beliefs such as “people think Black women are sexually loose” reported more victim blaming, which was related to lower self-esteem.

Neville, H. A. et al. (2004). Generally and culturally specific factors influencing Black and White rape survivors' self-esteem. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 28, 83-94.

Political Gag Order



- Self and community imposed silence to avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes

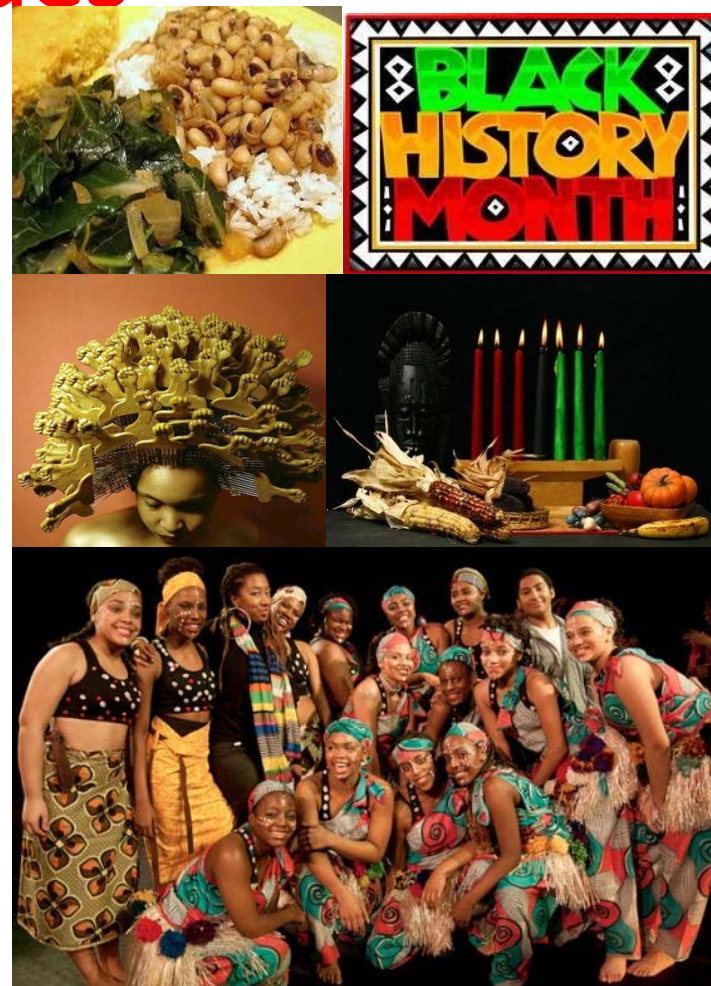


What NOT to do...

- Victim blaming
- Ignoring her history
- Making her invisible-Race, Size, Age, etc.
- Negating her experience
- Assuming she is always angry
- Not fostering self-determination
- Ignoring environmental factors

Culturally Sensitive Techniques

- Story Telling
- Humor, Irony, Satire
- Prayer, Meditation, Quiet Time
- Music, Dance, Art
- Cousins and Dozens
- Writing, Journaling
- Food, Gardening, Sustainability
- Hula Hooping, Biking, Running
- Ancestor Reverence
- Crystals, Water, African Centered Exercise
- Talking Hair, Healing, and Hope
- Accountability
- Urban Legends





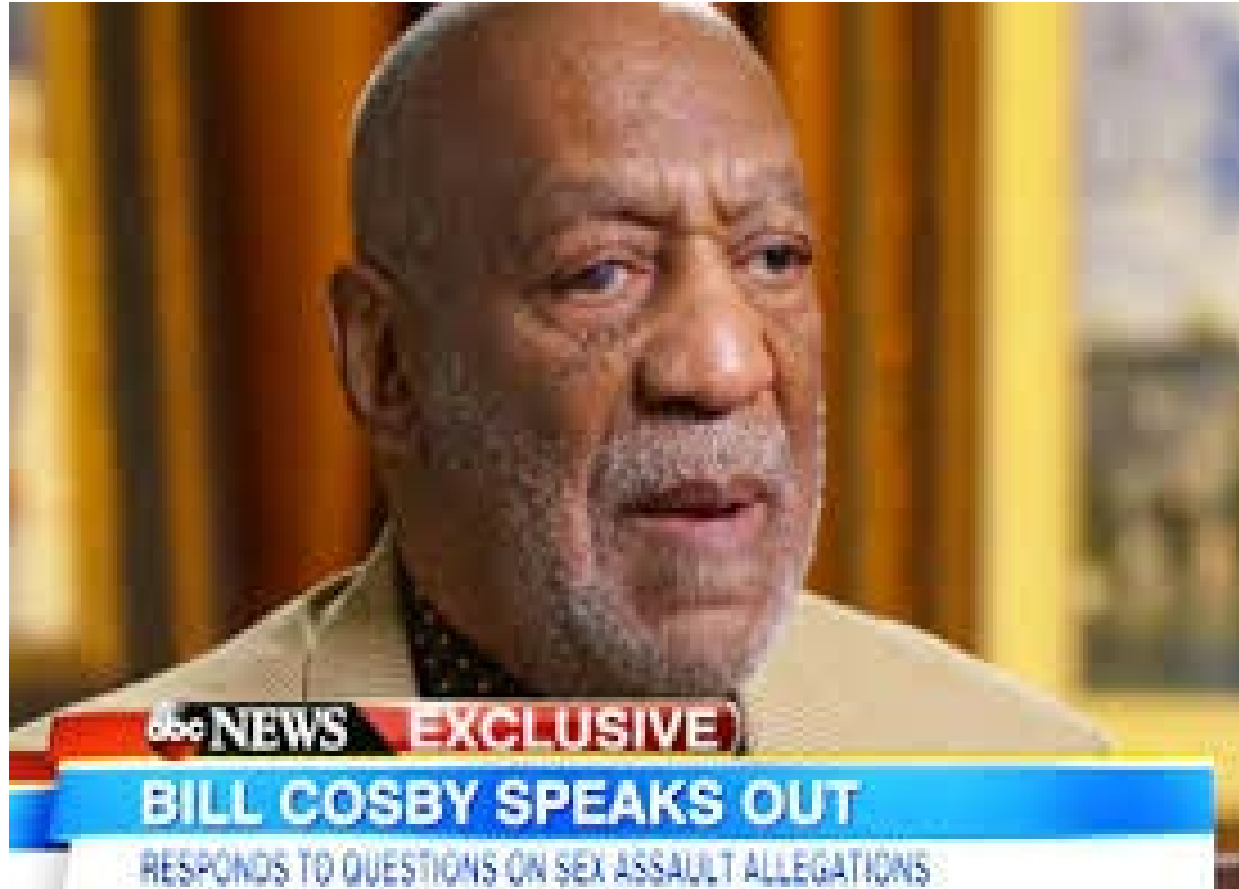
6. RESOURCES



Activities

- Urban Farming
- Hula Hoops
- Ancestor Reverence
- Reiki
- Yoga
- Biking
- Walking
- Cooking Lessons, knitting, spiritual exploration

Brainstorm ways to discuss rape and race in high profile cases



Calderon, L. M. (2004, July 8). Rape, racism, and victim advocacy. *The Black Commentator*, 98.

http://www.blackcommentator.com/98/98_calderon_rape_racism.html

Watch and Discuss



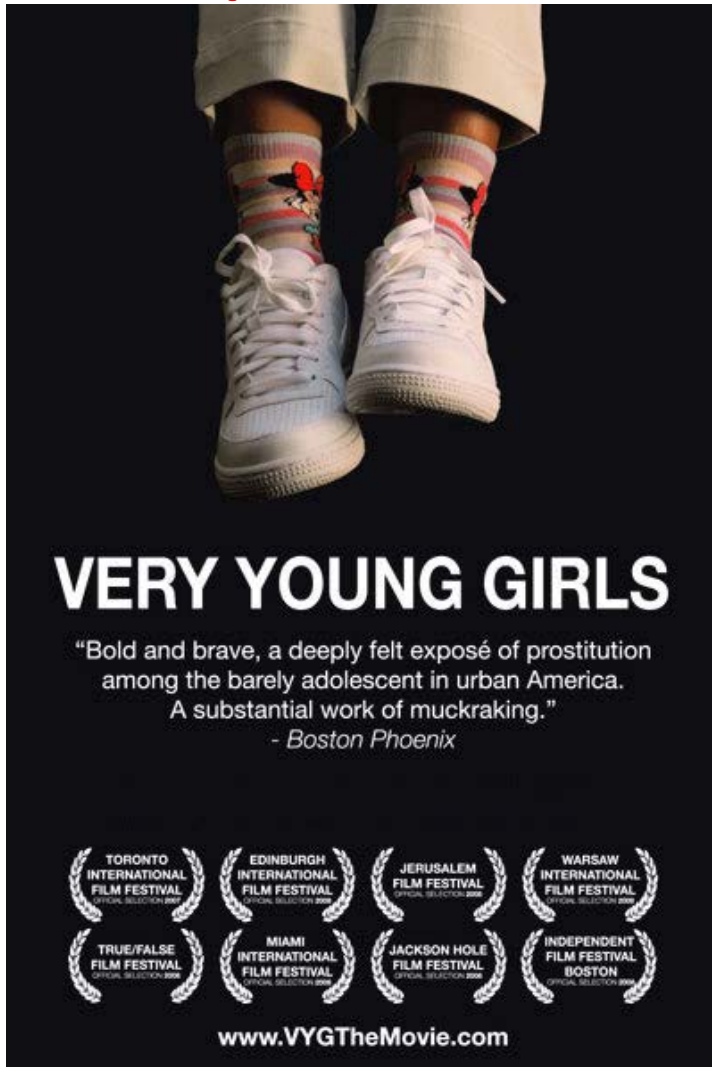
- Watch the Russell Simmons Harriet Tubman Sex Tape.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78OvnOmZvTg>

- Discuss with your organization.
For ideas see:

<http://msmagazine.com/blog/2013/08/17/the-rape-of-harriet-tubman/>

Watch and Discuss- Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children



- Girls Educational & Mentoring Services (GEMS)

(212) 926-8089

- <http://www.gems-girls.org/>

- **See Study guide:**

http://issuu.com/gems/docs/very_younggirls_documentary_campus_guide

Watch and Discuss Legacy of Slavery



ACADEMY AWARD
WINNER

BEST PICTURE

**BEST SUPPORTING
ACTRESS**

BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY

12

YEARS A SLAVE

NOW PLAYING IN THEATERS
&
AVAILABLE ON DIGITAL HD



Activism



- Jada - who believes she was raped at the party - bravely gave an interview with TV station KHOU, in which she showed her face but didn't give her last name. She also invented a new hashtag, #iamjada, and posted a photo of herself in a defiant pose.
- <http://jadapose.com/>

Activism References

- Reger, J. (2015). The story of a slut walk: Sexuality, race, and generational divisions in contemporary feminist activism. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 44(1), 84-112.
- Rapp, L. (2010). The internet as a tool for Black feminist activism: Lessons from an online antirape protest. *Feminist Criminology*, 5(3), 244-262.

Books



AT THE DARK END OF THE STREET



Black Women, Rape, and
Resistance—New History of
the Civil Rights Movement
from Rosa Parks to the Rise of
Black Power

Danielle L. McGuire

ESTELLE B. FREEDMAN

Redefining RAPE

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN

THE ERA OF SUFFRAGE

AND SEGREGATION

CHARLOTTE PIERCE-BAKER

Surviving the Silence



black women's
stories of rape

"A book of such intelligent humanity its shocks strengthen us, and its terrors enlighten us. . . . Demand reading."

—Toxi Mountain

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THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN GUIDE TO
HEALING FROM SEXUAL ASSAULT AND ABUSE

I WILL



SURVIVE

"This powerful book is scientifically accurate, culturally relevant and personally passionate. It is, in the final analysis, a book about healing."

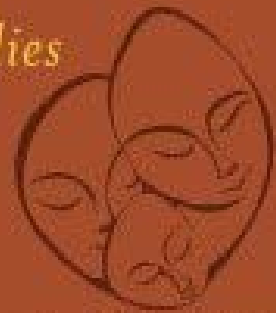
—DR. DAVID SATCHER, FORMER SURGEON GENERAL

LORI S. ROBINSON

FOREWORD BY JULIA A. BOYD

NO SECRETS
NO LIES

*How Black Families
Can Heal from
Sexual Abuse*



"Robin Stone makes a major contribution to the well-being of black children and families. This important book should be widely read and discussed."

—Alvin F. Poussaint, M.D., Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School, and Director of the Medical Center, Judge Baker Children's Center, Boston

ROBIN D. STONE

Foreword by Joycelyn Elders, M.D.

Articles

Sexual Violence in the Lives of African American Women

Carolyn M. West and Kalimah Johnson



--Dr. Angela Davis

“Black women were and continue to be sorely in need of an antirape movement.”

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 13.6% (42 million) of the population self-identified as Black or African American¹ (Rastogi, Johnson, Hoeffel, & Drewery, 2011). African Americans reported substantial rates of criminal victimization, including domestic violence, assault, and robbery (Truman & Planty, 2012). Furthermore, Black women’s sexual victimization has occurred in a unique sociohistorical context. Accordingly, in the first section we will provide a historical overview. Next, we will discuss the characteristics of Black rape survivors² and the environment in which their assaults occurred. In addition, we will identify risk factors that elevate Black women’s vulnerability to rape and review the physical and mental health problems that are associated with their victimization. To conclude, we will offer culturally sensitive techniques that can be used by professionals and highlight the resilience of African American survivors.

Website



Black Sexual Abuse Survivors: A national online support system for African-Americans

<http://www.blacksurvivors.org/home.html>

Video



"...Aishah Shahidah Simmons, producer, writer, and director of **NO! The Rape Documentary**, boldly confronts the scourge of racial, gender, and sexual oppression, and its violent manifestations.

See Study Guide:

<http://notherapedocumentary.org/sexual-assault-documentary-study-guide>



Organizations



SASHA CENTER

SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES FOR
HOLISTIC HEALING AND AWARENESS

To promote and increase healing for survivors of sexual assault by using **alternative/non-traditional techniques** for **women of color communities** with a **special emphasis** on **African American** women, thereby eradicating the fear, shame, and guilt as well as **any barriers** associated with being sexually assaulted through **peer educational support groups** and prevention strategies.



SASHA Center's Work

- 1-888-865-7055
- Our Mission Statement:
 - Our mission at the SASHA Center is to increase awareness, provide resources and educate the public about sexual assault, provide culturally specific peer educational support groups to self identified survivors of rape and to increase justice and visibility for survivors in Southeast Michigan.



SCESA

National Organization of Sisters of Color
Ending Sexual Assault

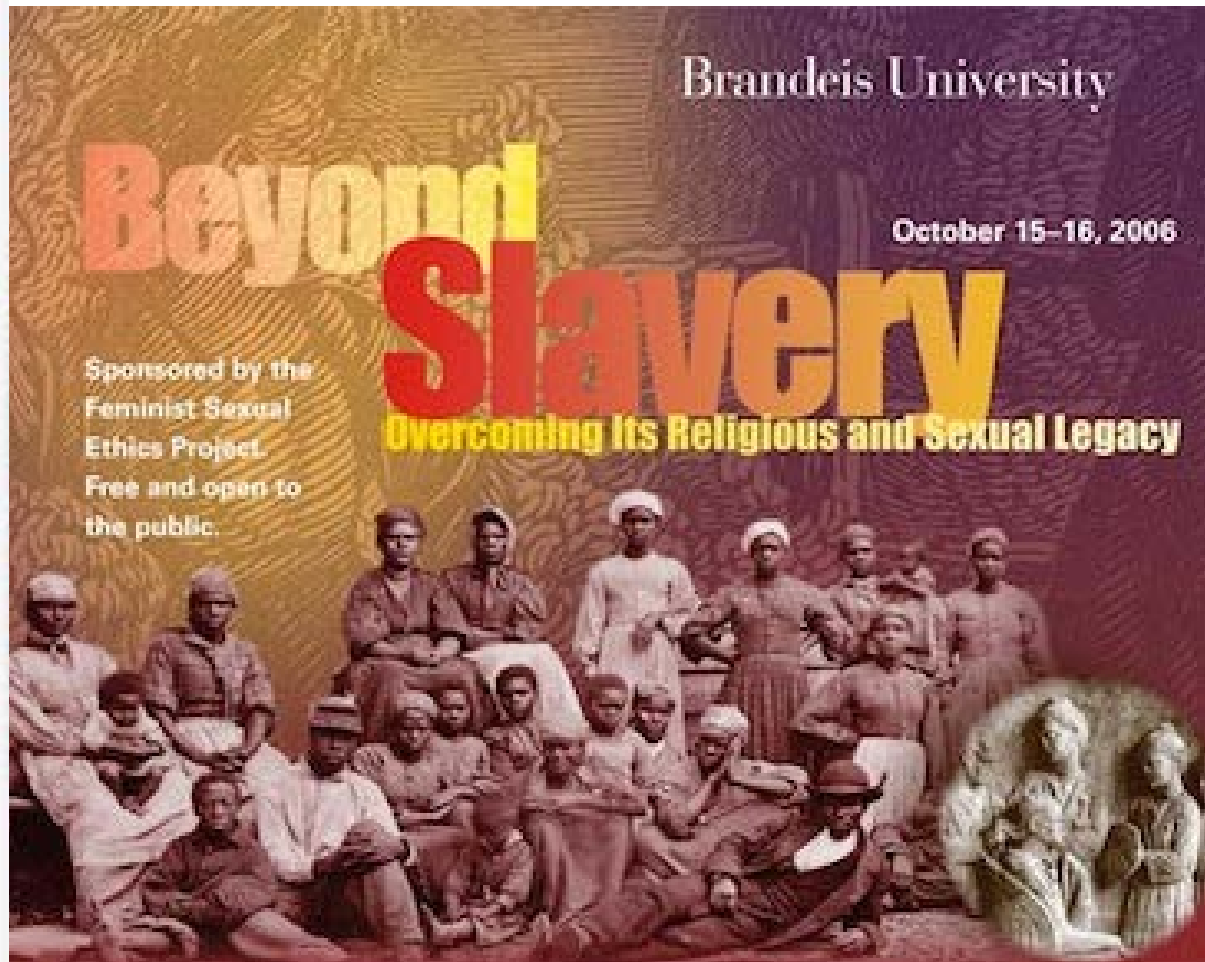
- Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault (SCESA) is a Women of Color-led nonprofit dedicated to working with our communities to create a just society in which Women of Color are able to live healthy lives free of violence.

- <http://www.blackwomensblueprint.org/our-work/>



- We work to end rape/sexual assault in Black communities and on Historically Black College and University (HBCU) campuses. Our Black Women's Truth Commission on Sexual Violence combines civil and human rights research using a critical participatory action model, engages in documentation, community organizing and aggressive public education to prevent sexual assault on Black women and girls. Teach-ins utilizing film, music, dance, theater and other art-making endeavors engage men and women in critical conversations around Black sexual politics as well as the systemic dimensions of violence against women.

Conference



The Beyond Slavery conference focused on providing a forum for leading intellectuals, activists, and the public to discuss overcoming slavery's ongoing impact on sexuality.

<http://www.brandeis.edu/projects/fse/conferences/beyond-slavery/index.html>



Webinar

- Ending Violence Against Black Women: The Movement to Combat Sexual Assault in Intimate Partner Violence in Our Communities

#HerDreamDeferred

**A WEEK-LONG ONLINE SERIES
DEDICATED TO ELEVATING THE
STATUS OF BLACK WOMEN**

MARCH 30 – APRIL 3

<http://www.aapf.org/herdreamdeferred>



Other Resources