Anti-Racist Strategies for Supporting Black Women Rape Survivors

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Access Check-In & Positionality

● Recognizing the heaviness of the topic and the individual lived experiences of everyone in the room. Consider our proximal relationship to the topic.

● Encourage you to check in with your own breathing, ability to focus and increased stress levels or anxiety. Only you know how you are feeling about the content.

● Recognition of positionality and how this maps on identity, life histories, roles you serve in and levels of vulnerability we might experience or share in this space.
What We Will Do Together - Purpose

- Explore concepts of anti-racism and how they can be applicable in the work of supporting survivors.

- Examine concepts of race, its social construction and the historic legacies of rape as it relates to marginalized communities, as a case study on race/racism - we will analyze the case of Recy Taylor and contemporary linkages to the #MuteRKelly movement - we will also discuss the case of Tyler Clementi and complexities of sexual intrusion steeped in homophobia and heteronormativity.

- Create opportunities for an open dialogue on policies and practices that are rooted in cissexism, heteronormativity, racism, classism, etc.

- Discuss important strategies for developing a better understanding of the complex and nuanced support systems needed for people who experience sexual abuse and assault across the spectrums of identity.
My Positionality

- Vested Interest
- Direct Personal and Professional Experience
- Gender Based Justice Lens
- Title IX Coordinator/Equity and Inclusion
- Black Woman/Femme
- Critical Pedagogue
Phrases and Terminology

- Community Silence
- Emotional Labor
- Rape
- Sexual Assault
- Predatory
- Hegemonic/Toxic Masculinity
- Cisheteropatriarchy
- Heteronormativity
- White Supremacy
Black Women’s Triangulation of Rape

This model was designed to give service providers, funders, and the community at large a model to understand the barriers that exist for Black Women who need sexual assault services. Black Women who disclose need to receive culturally specific services regarding rape and sexual assault for a full and integrated experience for healing.

Created by the SASHN Model Committee in 2018

- Oppression
- Slavery
- Institution (Religious, Educational, Medical)
Reflective Questions

1. What are the intersections between social identity and Title IX processes?

1. What specific strategies should Title IX Coordinators explore to mitigate bias in the process of working with complainants?

1. How can history, legacy and/or bias impact the decision making process of hearing panels?
Statistics on Black Women Rape Survivors

More than 20% of Black women are raped with a higher percentage over all other women.

For every 15 Black women who are sexually assaulted, only one reports her rape to law enforcement.

Over 18 percent of Black women will be assaulted in their lifetime.

Black Queer and Trans women are subjected to particularistic and specific forms of significant abuse and sexual violence due to homophobia and transphobia in society.

One study found that 40-60% of Black women “report being subjected to coercive sexual contact by age 18”

1 in 5 Black women are survivors of rape.
Examples of Administrator Bias

- Stereotypes about particular groups and crime
- Faith, belief systems and religious practices
- Genders and Sexualities
- Racial History and the Notion of Public Safety/Police in Communities of Color (e.g. Black Lives Matter, Undocumented Students, etc.)
- Assumptions around drinking
- Greek life
- Cultural experiences with policing
- Issues of citizenship status
- Students who are on the spectrum around psychological, physical, and mental health
- Normative behavior around relationships and identity groups
Examining Histories and Legacies

Recy Taylor, #IAmJada, and #MuteRKelly - unpacking the legacy of African American Rape Survivors
According to *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow*, Cole Blease, the governor of South Carolina from 1910-14, made prolific use of his pardoning powers, issuing 1,700 during his tenure. Blease pardoned both black and white men who had been convicted of attacking black women and girls. In an official pardoning statement, *Blease stated*,

“*I am of the opinion, as I have always been, and have very serious doubt as to whether the crime of rape can be committed upon a negro.*”
“It is no wonder that the issues of intraracial sexuality and gender have long been tabooed in public discourse. At the same time, not voicing these concerns have the community especially women, bereft of the help and protection so needed.”

- Paula Giddings
$600 To Rape Wife? Ala. Whites Make Offer To Recy Taylor Mate!

By FRED ATWATER

Montgomery, Ala. — “Nigger—ain’t $600 enough for raping your wife?”

Stocky Willie Lee Taylor considered it.

If he talked to white Marvin Walley, who wanted him to forget prosecuting the six white men who raped and ruptured Recy, his 11-year-old wife.

Walley spoke for his clients, all youths from prominent Alabamians who have been identified by Recy. They were Hugo Wilson, Ernest Hastings, Sam Shippy, Billie Hider, Billy York, and Luther Lee.

They were willing to pay $100 each if Recy Taylor would forget it, Walley said.

By then the rape of Recy, mother of a two-year-old daughter, had become known in every town in Alabama and even Negroes in the state, the Grand Jury was to meet within a week to act upon one of the few cases ever to be brought to court while youths raping a Negro woman.

Walley repeated his $100 offer for each man as a “settlement.” Willie blushed out “No.” But that didn’t end it. White came back and again after more pressure and threats had been leveled at the Taylors, and Willie said, “Come back later and I’ll tell you.” He came back later and Willie answered “Yes.”

Defendants Dismissed

Willie may as well have stuck to his deal no. For the Grand Jury called out on October 9, 1944, dismissed.

First published photo of Mrs. Recy Taylor, victim of six white rapists in Alabama, and her little family. In this picture received from their refuge is an Alabama city some distance from their hometown of Abbeville, where the crime occurred. With the young mother is her daughter, Little Joyce Lee Taylor and her husband, Willie Guy Taylor.
The Case of #IAmJada

- Black girlhood research often demonstrates the vulnerability and precarity of Black girls because of their “adultification”

- In the case of Jada, there is also a generational component of the abuse via social media including the #JadaPose

- When considering the rise of #MuteRKelly movement and the decades where he was allowed to be a predator, we are reminded of the challenges with how Black girls experiences are negated
"Between 1940 and 1975, sexual violence and interracial rape became one crucial battleground upon which African Americans sought to destroy white supremacy and gain personal and political autonomy. ... If we understand the role rape and sexual violence played in African Americans’ daily lives and within the larger freedom struggle, we have to reinterpret, if not rewrite, the history of the civil rights movement.”

- Danielle McGuire
Anti-Racist Considerations

Understanding the specific racialized experiences of Black women and femmes (historically marginalized, targeted and vulnerable) is a reality that TIXC should consciously seek to be aware of.

Recognizing that there is no monolithic experience for Black women but that stereotypes, tropes and historical manifestations of harm exist within the context of state violence and thus are influential in the experiences of Black women who may move through the Title IX process.
Anti-Racist Considerations

- Inclusive training models that incorporate examples with students of diverse identities in case studies and/or for discussion with Title IX Team.
- Composition of the Title IX Team in terms of visibility and identities is critical.
- Open dialogues around the role identities play within cases.
- Diversity education (anti-bias training) of the Title IX teams and professionals is critical (considerations of gender and sexuality, racialized experiences, religious differences, and targeted and vulnerable populations is essential)
- For hearing boards, recognizing that learning edges exist around all sorts of issues that may come up in a case is vital.
Anti-Racist Strategies for TIXC in support of Black Women Rape Survivors

- Be sure you have culturally relevant and specific resources for Black women rape survivors (therapyforblackgirls.com)
- Acknowledge that survivors may have multiple marginalized identities that are distinctly different and overlapping.
- Address where your policies may perpetuate inequities.
- Create restorative justice/transformative justice opportunities for resolution.
- Keep track of how Black women rape survivors report their interactions with systems by disaggregating your data.
- Partner with student organizations and community based organizations.
- Be sure the language you use and programs you create support the complexity and nuance of the experiences of Black women rape survivors.