

Our Movement.
Our Moment.

 **2019 NAMI**
National
Convention
JUNE 19–22 • SEATTLE

Is Anyone Listening?

The Silencing of African American
Women and Girls with Mental Health
Issues

Drs. Shemya Vaughn and Christie Cruise

Today, you will learn about:

1. Mental illness among African American women/girls.
2. Invisibility and silencing of African American women/girls.
3. Symptoms experienced by African American women/girls.
4. Mental health resources for African American women/girls.



Perceptions of Black Women



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Halle Berry



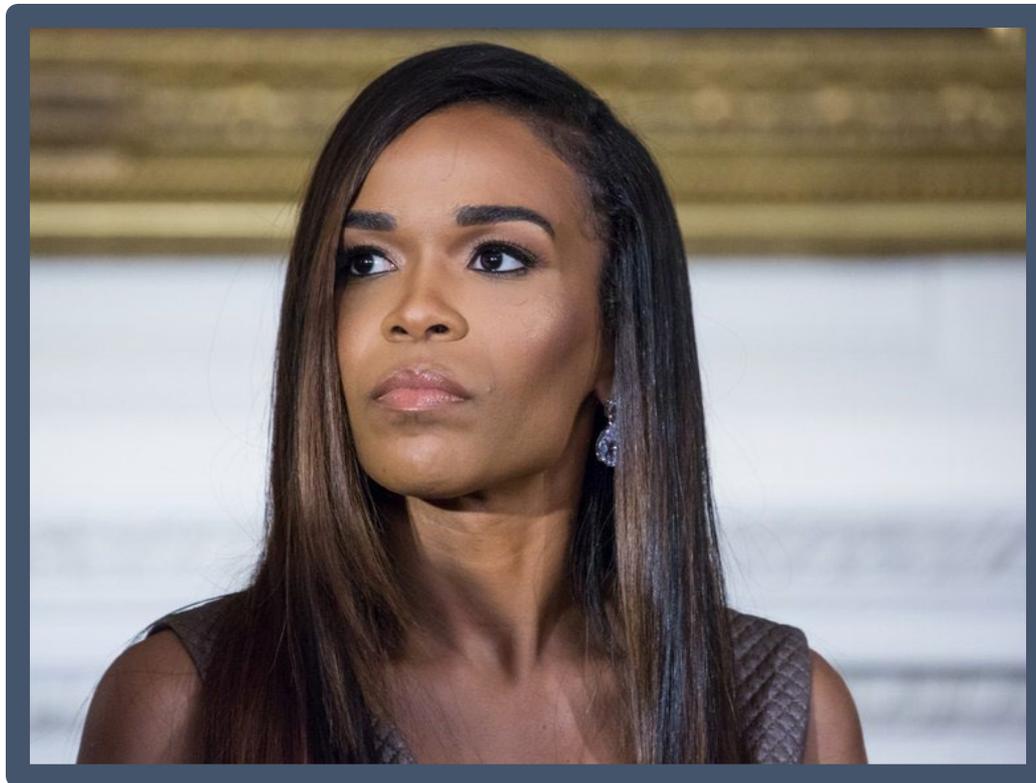
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Michelle Williams



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Alicia Keys



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Jenifer Lewis



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Lisa Nicole Carson

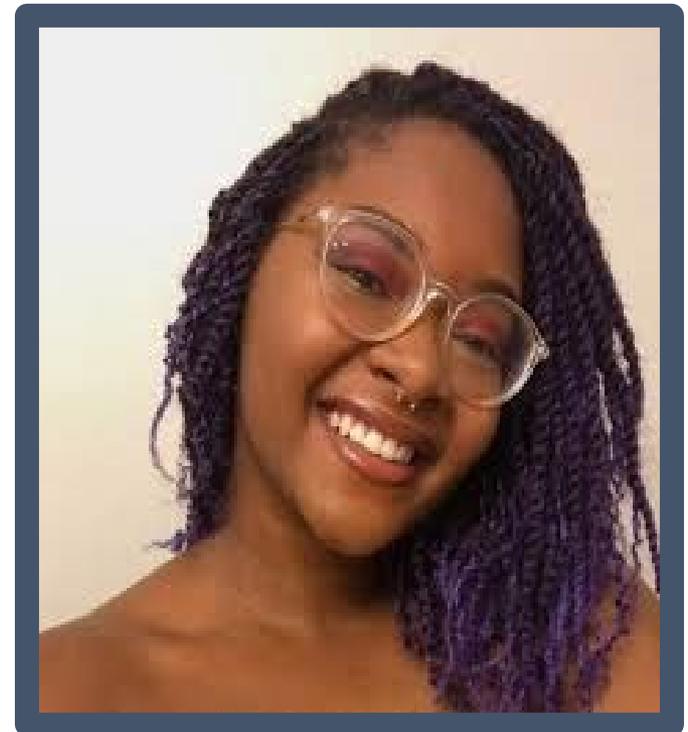




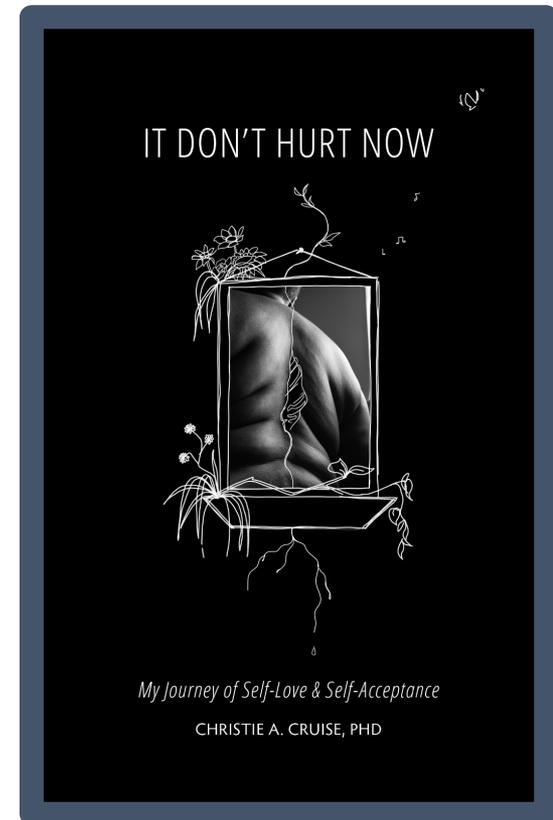
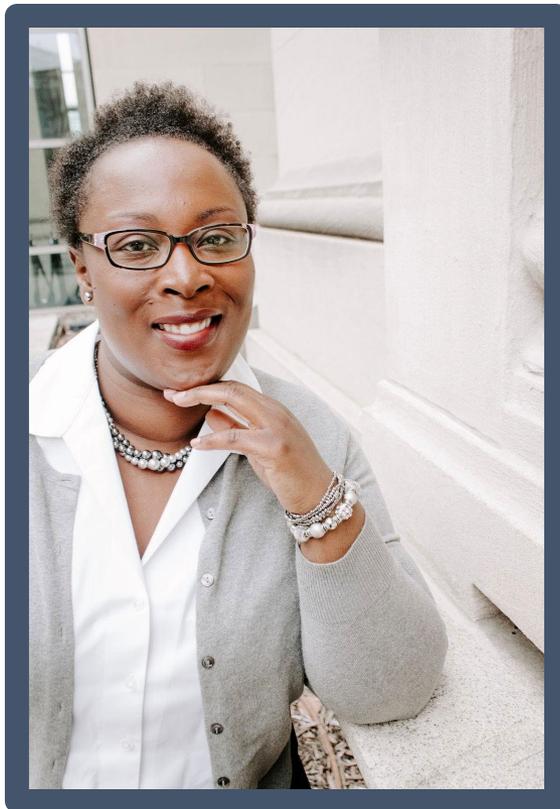
Creating a Safe Space

3-Minute Body Scan Guided Meditation

- Believe other people's narratives.
- Listen more than talk.
- Avoid judging, criticizing, and shaming.

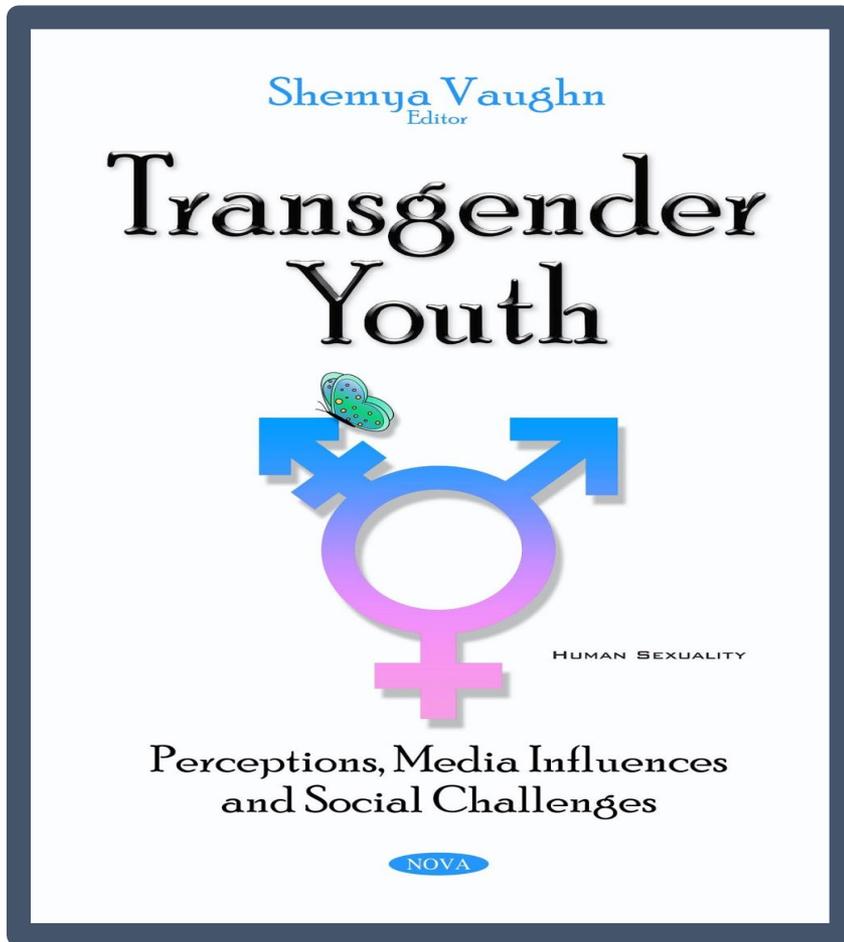


My Story: Self-Disclosure



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Presentation Intention & Goals

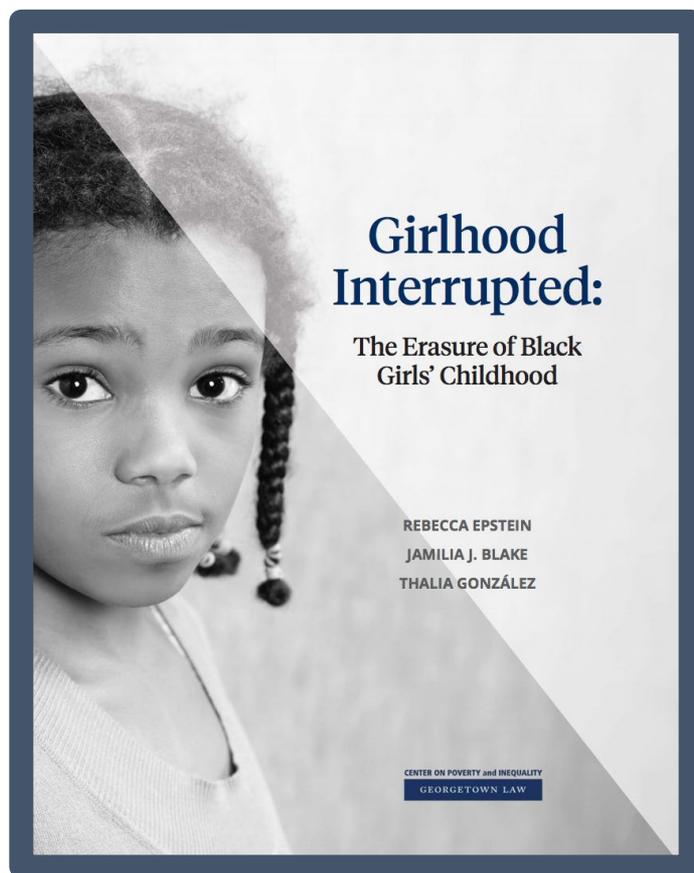
- **Be more aware.**
- **Participate in future conversations.**
- **Take action.**
- **Understand the negative effects.**





Black Girls, Black Women and Mental Illness

Adultification





Black Girls and Adultification

- Includes the assignment of adult-like characteristics
- Culturally rooted fantasies of Black girls' sexualization
- Commonly held stereotypes of Black girls as hypersexualized
- Leads to age compression, strips away childhood freedoms
- Makes Black childhood interchangeable with Black womanhood

R. Epstein, J.J. Blake, & T. González, *Girlhood Interrupted: The Erasure of Black Girls' Childhood*, 2017



Black Girls and Adultification

Compared to white girls of the same age:

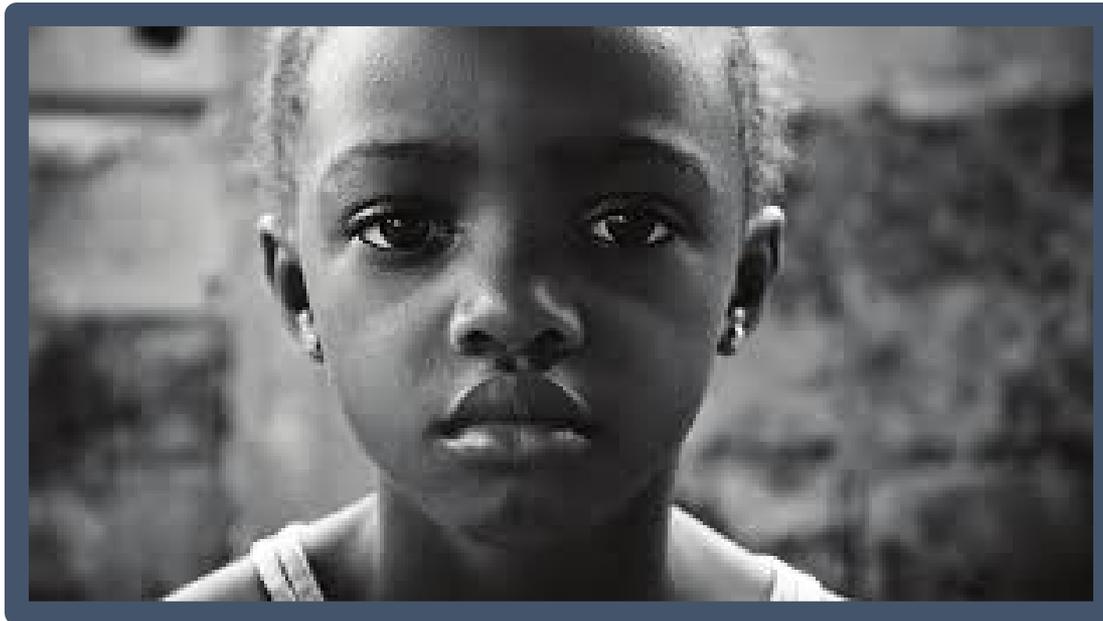
- Black girls need less nurturing
- Black girls need less protection
- Black girls need to be supported less
- Black girls need to be comforted less
- Black girls are more independent
- Black girls know more about adult topics
- Black girls know more about sex

Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality, 2017



Black Girls and Adultification

The most significant differences were found in ages
5 - 9 and 10 - 14.



Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality, 2017



Black Girls and Suicide

- Rates doubled among black children 5 - 11 years old
- Rates tripled among black girls 10 - 14 years old



J.A. Bridge, L.M. Horowitz, C.A. Fontanella. (2018, July).

Age-related racial disparity in suicide rates among US youth. *JAMA Pediatrics*.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, 2018



Black Girls and Suicide

Suicide Rates Spike Among Black Girls



Stormiyah, 12



McKenzie, 9



Naika (Nakia), 14

Black Women: Myths and Stereotypes

Three dominant paradigms of Black femininity

- Sapphire - emasculating, loud, aggressive, angry, stubborn, and unfeminine
- Jezebel - hypersexualized, seductive and exploiter of men's weaknesses
- Mammy - self-sacrificing, nurturing, loving, asexual





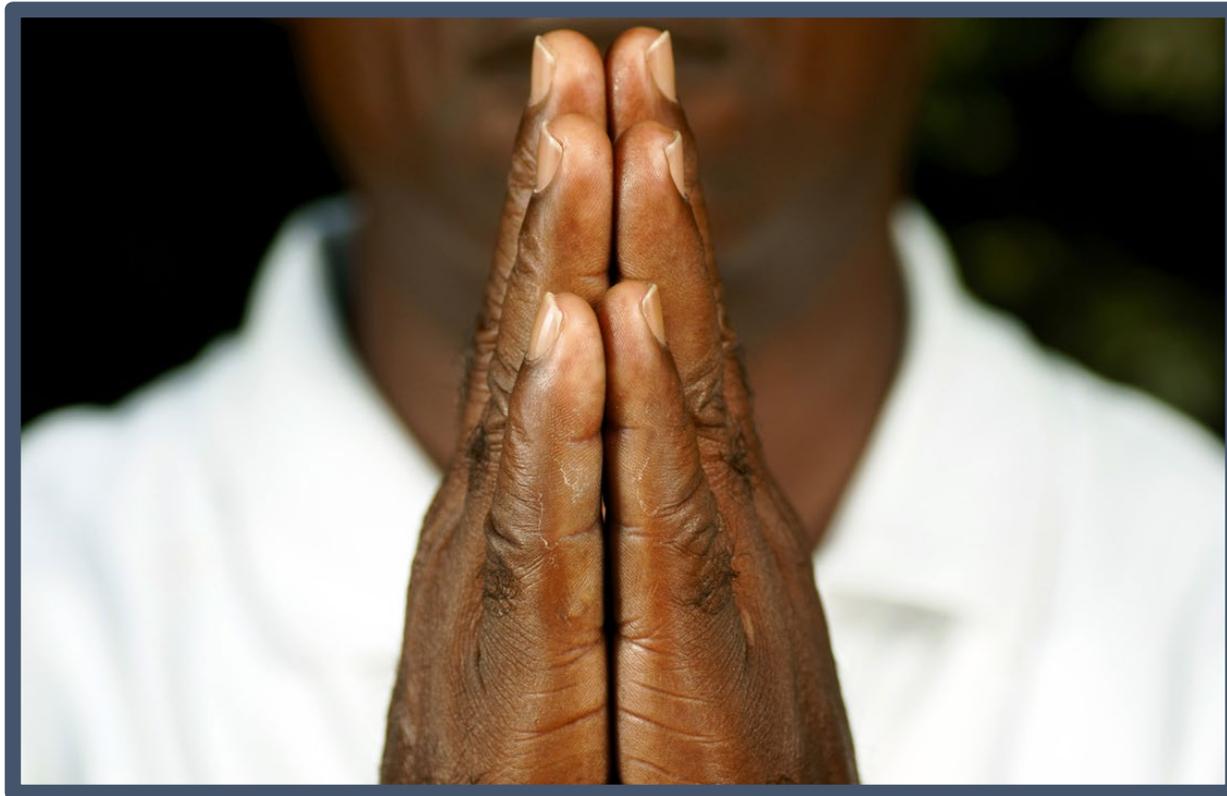
The Myth of the Strong, Black Woman





The Myth of the Strong, Black Woman

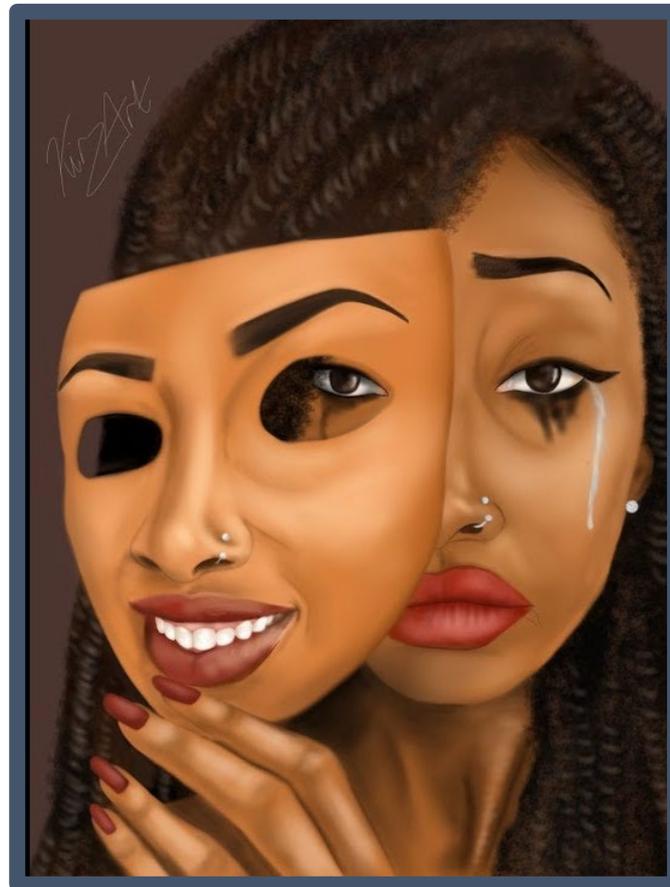
Internal Myth





The Myth of the Strong, Black Woman

External Myth





Silencing by Mental Health Professionals

Issues Black women face when seeking help

- Provider Bias
- Misdiagnosis, Mistrust
- Socio-economic Factors
- Lack of Providers of Color





Adverse Childhood Events

How childhood trauma affects our health (2015)



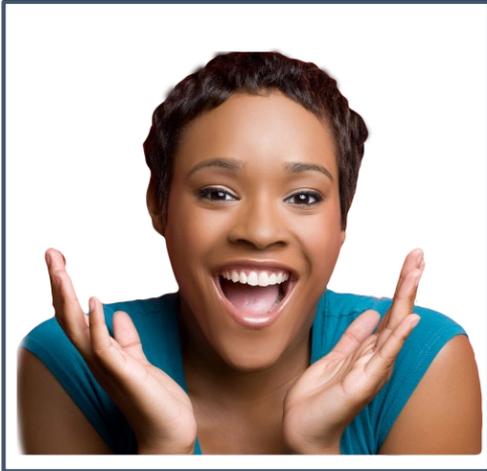
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A Call to Action

What can society do?



What can you do?



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2. You can also evaluate the session on your computer. Go to: www.nami.org/sessioneval, select the session and click “Rate This Session.”