Surviving in Silence: Unmasking the Strong Black Woman Stereotype

Tuesday, March 12, 2019 | 11:15 AM – 12:05 PM
LACC, 512

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Institutional Profile

Location: Norfolk, Virginia
Historically Black University (State-funded)
Student Population/FTE: 5,204
Avg. SAT: 946 M/V   Avg. High School GPA: 2.9
Financial Aid: 88% receive financial assistance (67% Pell-eligible)
Racial Composition: 84% Black; 3.8% White; and 12.2% Other
   65.5% Female; 34.5% Male
FTF On-Campus Residency Requirement
Percentage On-Campus Residency: 50%
Residency: 77% VA; 22% Out-of-State; 1% International

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Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
Divisional Initiatives

Male Initiative

Women’s Initiative

LGBTQIA+ Initiative

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“As a group, black women are in an unusual place in this society, for not only are we collectively at the bottom of the occupational ladder, but our overall social status is lower than that of any other group. Occupying such a position, we bear the brunt of sexist, racist, and classist oppression. At the same time, we are the group that has not been socialized to assume the role of exploit/oppression in that we are allowed no institutionalized “other” that we can exploit or oppress.” ~Bell Hooks
## Characteristics of the Strong Black Woman

### Positive Characteristics
1. Independent
2. Spiritual Alignment
3. Nurturing/Care-Taker
4. High Level of Responsibility
5. Responsible
6. Strong Work Ethic
7. Self-Reliant

### Adverse Outcomes
1. Interpersonal conflict
2. Physiological stress
3. Maladaptive coping strategies
4. High-risk behaviors
5. Elevated health risks
6. Relationship Issues
7. Self-Sacrificing

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The Strong Black Superwoman Schema

- Determination to Succeed Despite Lack of Resources
- Obligation to Manifest Strength
- Obligation to Suppress Emotions
- Resistance to Vulnerability or Dependability
- Neglects Her Own Self-Care
- Obligation to Help Others

(Woods-Giscombe, 2010)
Historical Perspectives
From Mammy to Jezebel to Sapphire

- Asexual Mammy
- Hypersexual Jezebel
- Angry Sapphire

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SUPERWOMAN

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SUPERWOMAN
Women’s Initiative

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NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S INITIATIVE PRESENTS

a SEAT at the TABLE

SUNDAY | JANUARY 21, 2018
STUDENT CENTER
BUSINESS CASUAL ATTIRE - NO JEANS

THIS EVENT BEGINS AT 2:00PM
DOORS OPEN AT 1:00PM
CONCLUDES AT 6:00PM

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A SEAT AT THE TABLE
Focus Groups and Semi-Structured Interviews

1. What type of programs would be most beneficial for your personal development?
2. How can we help improve your student experience?
3. In what ways can we assist you with readiness for life after college?
4. What coping strategies have you used to help you deal with stress?
5. In what ways, if any, has being a “daddy-less daughter” impacted your academic performance? Relationships?
6. How do you feel about using the Counseling Center as a resource? Why or why would you not use its services?
7. What is your view of finding a potential life partner on campus?
8. What is your experience with financial responsibility?
Theoretical Frameworks

- Theory of Self Authorship
- Theory of Intersectionality
- Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Thought
- Cross and Fhagen-Smith’s Model of Black Identity Development
Women’s Initiative Program Overview
Student Affairs-Academic Affairs Collaborative Partnership

Mentoring Programs
► Faculty/Staff-Students
► Peer-to-peer
► Adopt-a-School (K-12)

Learning Community
► Society of Spartan Sisters LC
► Paired Course Design
► Co-curricular Experiences
► Academic Tutoring

Social Justice/Advocacy
► Say Her Name
► Walk-A-Mile In Her Shoes
► “Daddy-less Daughters” Psychoeducational Group (Counseling Center)

General Program Curriculum
► “A Seat at the Table” Annual Conference
► Wellness Programs/Activities
► Financial Literacy
► CHARM School

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Unmasking the Strong Black Woman Stereotype Study

Research Questions

1. Do Black Women students on campus perceive themselves to be a Strong Black Woman/Black Superwoman? Why or why not?
2. What effects, if any, does self-silencing have on Black women students within the Women’s Initiative?
3. What coping strategies have Black Women within the Women’s Initiative used to deal with stress?
4. In what ways do you feel challenged to live up to the ideal of being a Strong Black Woman/Black Superwoman?
5. What is your experience as a Black Woman on campus?

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Study Overview/Significance of the Study

Methodology

Data Collection and Analysis

Results/Themes

Implications/Limitations

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Future Goals
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Group Activity

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References


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Thank you!

See you next year in Austin, Texas!