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

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

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

- Asexual Mammy
- Hypersexual Jezebel
- Angry Sapphire

https://youtu.be/qbl1sqsApfU

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SUPERWOMAN

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SUPERWOMAN

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AphKUK8twg

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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

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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?

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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

Society of Spartan Sisters

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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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Unmasking the Strong Black Woman Stereotype

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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Q & A
References


Thank you!

See you next year in Austin, Texas!