

Serwaa Speaks with Sisters

Cultivating a Culture of Post-Assault Care in the Afro-Canadian Community Toolkit

The Voice Reclamation Campaign



Initiate Vocality Within your "ACB" Community.

Silence chokes survivors of African descent. Family and community members need to be aware that there are times when “it’s ok to not be ok.” Survivors need space to heal, and it is easier to heal in an informed community environment where people are aware that those who ‘suddenly disappear’ from social functions, or are no longer their ‘cheerful, happy selves’ may be silently suffering the effects of post-assault trauma. We can no longer allow silence to isolate survivors within their families and "ACB" (African, Caribbean, Black) communities.

Healing Takes Time.

Healing is not a "one-size-fits-all" formula. Everyone’s journey is different. It is extremely harmful to tell a victim-survivor to “get over it.” Be gentle.

Challenge and Dismantle “Rape Culture.”

“Rape culture” (i.e. blaming women who were abused because of how they dressed, whether they drank alcohol, or where they were located at the time of the assault) must be stopped. We should rather be focusing our attention on how to reach and teach men and boys to value and respect women to stop the violence.

Check-In.

Check-In. Be intentional in "checking in" on your sister. Text or call her while understanding that support is a fluid relationship for the survivor. At times, this support may exist from a distance when they need space within their healing journey. Let them set boundaries.

Talk About Mental Health.

Understand the effects of Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in a survivor’s daily life and coping. Triggers may be caused by certain sights, sounds, or aromas.

Understand the Trajectory of Shame.

Be sensitive to fears surrounding “purity culture” within religious communities for Christian, Muslim, and Jewish survivors of sexual assault. This fear may influence whether survivors disclose their abuse.

Spread Awareness.

Social media is a great educational tool. Use the platform to share and reshare relevant resources that educate the public, your community, and familial networks to understand what it means to be sexually assaulted. The diversity of women’s experiences with sexual violence and recovery can exist within a continuum ranging from molestation to gang rape.

Ask.

If you feel uninformed about what sexual violence is, or would like to learn more about its effect on Afro-Canadian women, ask to set up a meeting with an advocate, activist, or community leader that you know so that you can become a better-informed ally.

Speak. Inspire. Empower. One Life at a Time.

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