



"The RHI Ambassadors."

Public Safety Organizers Discussion Series



2021



Conditioning of Black children

*Publication by: Faith Anderson, Public Safety
Organizer.*

Women all over the world are over-sexualized on a daily basis and turned into sexual beings in the media and throughout history. This isn't who is the most oppressed olympics. This is to shine light on aspects of black women's plight.

Hypersexualization of Black girls and policing of us go hand in hand. They are two sides of the same coin. It wasn't fair growing up. I was constantly getting checked by my mother or relatives about how I walked; or certain hairstyles that I could or couldn't wear because it was "too grown". What is too grown about wanting to have color in your hair or wanting to have acrylic nails? Why are adults checking the way I walk? What's sexy about walking? I am literally a child?

Unfortunately, this type of logic is passed down through generations and generations of black women. I don't think it will change. In an individual aspect I would have to change how one navigates this sort of stuff.





Ageism do you think it's a issue in society?

*Publication by: Zhane Ramsey, Public Safety
Organizer.*

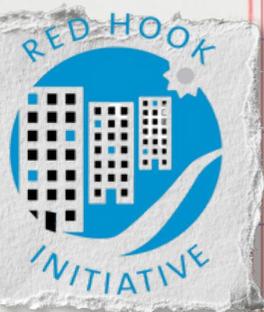
Ageism is based on negative perceptions or attitudes and stereotypes towards people based on their age. While it affects the individual that is being discriminated against, it also perpetuates the very stereotypes and attitudes it is based on. Why should it be that way? Why does age have to play a role in being taken seriously as an adult? As a young adult, why does my age define my position or role in a job? For example, those who have great job experiences and excellent working skills are put into job positions that don't match their experience or skills. Higher ups place these people in these positions that don't relate to their experience knowing that that person deserves a better position. They get stuck with jobs they're overqualified for because of their age. They don't feel as though young people are responsible enough, work hard enough and do their job right like older adults. I want to be taken seriously without having my age always play a big part in how I am treated in the workplace. I want to be recognized for my skills and work ethic. Ageism is real and we need to actually talk about this in society.

First Generation? YES! Struggles? NO!

Publication by: Dylana Bourne, Public Safety Organizer.

I know that many people face first-generation struggles. Many people may be torn between living their dream or staying back with their family. However, for me, that isn't the case. I am the first person in my immediate family to receive a Bachelor's degree, but I am not the only one in my family with a degree. There are members of my family with Doctoral degrees. My parents and siblings are very supportive of me continuing my education. I am 22 years young and now pursuing my Master's degree in Social Work, and for me, it feels amazing, and on behalf of my parents, they can't be any prouder.

My family values education, so it is important to my family that I complete that because no one can ever take that from me. I do not feel bad that I am moving at the pace that I am because one day I will have a career, a home, and my own family to take care of. My family understands that. To me, if you love me that means you want to see me do great and be the best that I can. When I'm secure, my parents and everyone that I love will always be secure. Family is never forgotten about because they taught me everything I know. I don't always give them the credit they deserve. But Mom, Dad, thank you for pushing me. A young Black female from the projects just striving for nothing but greatness!





Self-Love for LGBTQ+ Youth

Publication by: Karla Osorno, Public Safety Organizer.

Finding confidence and self-love while being in the LGBTQ+ community is hard. It is especially hard being a young person of color trying to figure out their identity. Sometimes it feels like we have no support or no one to talk to about the frustrations we feel within ourselves. It's important to take deep breaths and know that there are plenty of young LGBTQ+ people who are also trying to figure out who they are. It's important to find an outlet for dealing with these feelings. There are plenty of online resources, as well as in person communities that are dedicated to finding a safe space for LGBTQ+ youth. Nowadays, there is way more LGBTQ+ representation in the media, so it may help find LGBT role models. Personally, I find representation in the show Brooklyn Nine-Nine, in which a character named Rosa Diaz is a bisexual Latina woman. Rosa Diaz is played by Stephanie Beatriz, who is bisexual in real life and advocates for inclusivity for bisexuals within the LGBTQ+ community. I find it inspiring seeing Beatriz so confident in what she does, which also helped me with my own self-confidence. There is often too much self-doubt and lack of self-esteem within young people of color that are LGBTQ+. It is important to spread self-love instead. In order to continue creating a more inclusive and accepting world, youth should first find that acceptance within themselves. Finding positivity and love within ourselves and who we are will allow us to uplift more youth in the LGBTQ+ community





Generational Wealth and Capitalism

*Publication by: Knowledge Westbrooks, Public
Safety Organizer.*

Generational wealth takes several differing forms. Both tangible and intangible; real and unrealized. Financial values can fluctuate over decades. This may cause Savings, and assets to grow generationally, as can debt and liabilities. People of probably 2014 and beyond judge independent professionals wealth value on NET WORTH. Net worth is the amount left over after liabilities are subtracted from assets and income. Wealth and net worth are harder to track than income and are subject to inflation; further impacting a person's life and work choices.

Generational wealth is a key to financial security and economic success for many reasons. It has an insurance function that can be used to smooth over unexpected income droughts, handle emergencies, and avoid debt. This form of wealth also has an investment function. It can be deployed in ways that bring future benefits. Ex: paying for tuition, making a down payment on a home, a small business enterprise, or buying into other enterprises that can become more profitable over time.

Wealth is looked at as luxury to some however, based on studies it is usually most relevant to those who are less fortunate. Building wealth for future generations is a long-term process. 401k or retirement bank accounts are savings that compound over time. Profits from this are often realized many years later. This is passive income. We should aim for policies to promote wealth building and holding within the already regulated schooling curriculum. I would name it a "stage of the life course."

Most young adults start out neglecting their savings. As they begin to form households and grow their earnings. During their 30s, their assets start to grow in preparation for retirement in the late 60s. This is what's typical. There are many who don't own anything and never will accumulate much wealth. People of this category sometimes have financial roadblocks: getting married, forming households, buying homes, and having children. These socioeconomic trends make this group an outcast to the new age economy norms.

Mental Health (Black woman perspective)

Publication by: Charisma Mcwhorter, Public Safety Organizer.

I'm a black woman with goals, ambitions that I just can't wait for. I have time limitations on my life, and when I don't make them, I shatter into a million pieces. I don't share my emotions because who can really help with what goes on in my own head. I was raised to be strong, independent and fearless. I was raised to not tell another, not even family what goes on in my personal life, to keep my business to myself. I learned that I can't express my frustration on how I feel, not even to my parents because that would be disrespectful. I was taught to always stand out, so I can be noticed. I was raised into the woman I am now.

It's a stigma for any woman to speak their mind, let alone a black one. You are automatically placed into the category as "the angry black women" the women that men hate and other women despise. Growing up in a black household could cause impact in your life, if I had a dollar for every time I heard "stop crying before I give you something to cry about" or "do you have McDonald's money, Better find something in the house" or "you need to hurry up and get a job" I'll be rich by now. Unconsciously, my parents placed the idea in my head that I should not show emotion other than happiness, that I need to always improvise when things are unconventional, that I need to have my own.

As a black girl in society, you are held to low standards, so in any way shape or form you need to prove your point every time. Mental health in black culture is not talked about. As a black woman with standards set high from young when you don't reach them you feel defeated, unworthy and that sense of defeat can lead to depression. Depression is a feeling of severe despondency and dejection. You can't help but to feel defeated when you just want to show your family that you did it. I don't speak on my emotions, growing up I was taught to not speak of my business, I was taught not to cry. Maybe they thought it was good for me. I would toughen up, maybe save me from snakes in the future. Now I'm closed off emotionally detached but stronger than ever.

Yeah some nights I don't know what to do and can't talk to no one because I'm scared that if I do I'll be looked at differently. Yeah sometimes I'm up all night planning my future and setting more unrealistic goals for myself that might flop and lead me to another spiral, or constantly biting my nails and pacing back and forth brainstorming because I don't want to be unsuccessful. Because I want to show my family something different.

Is this anxiety? Anxiety is defined as, a feeling of worry, nervousness or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome. I'm a black woman with a goal, ambition that I can't wait for and I have time limitations on my life. As a black woman I will strive to be great just like my parents taught me.

Mental health in an uprising Queen!





What does Racial Segregation mean to me?

Publication by: Dylana Bourne, Public Safety Organizer.

Racial segregation around the world has always been a massive problem for decades. In schools, children also suffered from racial segregation. Nationwide, minority students continue to be concentrated in high poverty and low-achieving schools. While white students are more likely to attend high-achieving, more affluent schools.

The system is set up to where minority students are made to fail. Often, if you live in a poor neighborhood, the schools in the community will also be poor. There are underpaid teachers, a lack of resources, and violence in and around the school. Different schools have different resources, but not all schools were created to operate equally.

Furthermore, in every community, this has been an issue, but there hasn't been a real solution. Why should our children get less education or opportunity because of where they live or how they look? I, myself, witnessed the scarce resources of schools in low-income communities. I went to a middle school that was not my zone school, and at times I had the opportunity to learn the same thing that my friends, a grade higher than me, were learning at their zone school. When the Algebra and Living environment regents became available to middle school students, my school in Park Slope, Brooklyn, was one of the first schools to get those resources. At the same time, my friends inside schools in low-income communities had to wait until high school. Resources must be distributed equally in schools so we can have a brighter future. Moreover, Black children in racially isolated schools perform less well on standardized tests. Their graduation rates are lower, resulting in a low college attendance rate. This affects income levels and wealth accumulation across generations.





Identifying healthy and Unhealthy relationships

Publication by: Charisma Mcwhorter, Public Safety Organizer.

A healthy relationship is where you can count on and communicate with your partner and build off the foundation you already have. In today's society, the term of a healthy relationship differs. Most relationship goals are based on toxicity. In a heterosexual relationship it is planted that males should have more dominant energy to cancel out feminine energy, and with dominance the sense of control intertwines. It's good to identify "red flags" such as emotional abuse before it gets to physical abuse. Most females overlook the "red flags" because of the love they have for their partner. An example of emotional abuse is your partner blaming you for things they've done, they never take accountability for their own actions and make you question yourself and your reality. Another example of emotional abuse is if they are emotionally available one moment and the next they are distant. This can often look like you guys are doing good, stress-free, a few days to a week later, and suddenly they just emotionally tap out; they may say "I'm going through something right now" and just distance themselves with no explanation. "Red flags" vary. A healthy relationship is unconditional love, mutual respect, trust and honesty. We're caught up in arguments, fighting, kissing and making up. Which just inhibits toxic behavior.

Rikers Island is no place for the Elderly!

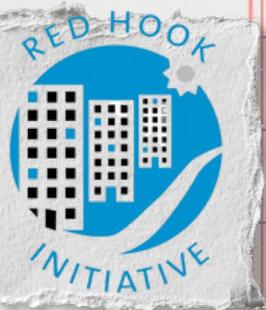
Publication by: Knowledge Westbrooks, Public Safety Organizer.

Rikers Island is no place for the elderly! New York City should revise the day to day operations at Rikers Jail facility to insure the natural safeties of inmates housed there. The high stress of the environment makes the elderly age faster. Rikers Island has major humanitarian issues that date back dozens of years. Inmates are regularly treated like animals; with no access to regular healthcare. It is the primary jail of NYC. The facility is crumbling and suffers from mold and building decay. In 2020 14 inmates died due to those conditions, Four of them ended their own lives. Rikers is overpopulated inmate wise and continues to operate each month short staffed. However, recently more people are returning to work.

In 2016 the "Close Rikers" campaign started. Today, this movement continues to gain strength for our demand that Rikers be closed forever. We have a real opportunity to make this happen. We cannot allow more lives to be harmed by Rikers. We cannot allow New York City to keep caging people in barbaric facilities, Rikers cannot be reformed.

This overflow of prisoners is allowing Rikers to place inmates to be jailed in locked showers. 70% of inmates don't make bail, due to financial hardship. It takes three years on average for an inmate to start their trail for their charge (s).

The government should make the court system more flexible; this will relieve the overpopulation issue. **90% of inmates at Rikers haven't been convicted of a crime yet.**





What is Black oppression ? What is your view on it ?

Publication by: Zhane Ramsey, Public Safety Organizer.

What does black oppression mean to you? Well to be very honest I wouldn't really know how to put it into words. But here's my point of view on black oppression. I feel like as minorities we don't unite enough, uplift, and or try to support our fellow minorities. The pandemic was the perfect time to show the justice system that they are failing us as so-called "protectors" instead of putting so much money into government projects and police forces they should give back to the community. Lately, the police forces have been getting away with killing innocent minorities just because they feel as though they hold that type of power to do so. This is why minorities started protesting, looting and destroying properties because of the constant racism happening in the world. Black people and minorities have gone through so much and still do to this day. Systems in Africa and Libya are messed up, people are being overthrown and dying. It is not right that our people have to go through this. Kids, mothers, our brothers and fathers. Recently the news reported that a police force killed a black baby, an innocent child. What protocol is that? Is this what they mean about protecting and serving? Because this is not it. I want to quote one of history's great leaders Malcolm X he once said..

"I believe that there will ultimately be a clash between the oppressed and those that do the oppressing. I believe that there will be a clash between those who want freedom, justice and equality for everyone and those who want to continue the system exploration." It's true. I feel as if he knew that this pandemic would result in more and more uprisings, protests and lootings. People were tired of not getting the justice they deserved and felt it was time to fight back for what they believe in.





Single Parenthood

Publication by: Faith Anderson, Public Safety Organizer.

Single motherhood isn't anything new or profound. But in the Black community, it is a multi-faceted issue with plenty of variables, too many to put in from my experience. In the Black community, it's quite normal to be a single mother. Regardless of age or status in some cases. My question is normalcy. I also question the stigma that comes with it. We demonize black women for being single mothers and blame them for some shortcomings, mainly in the Black community. The out-of-wedlock rates in our community contribute to this as well. I believe instead of the constant blame and judgment on single mothers, we should dig to the root of the issue and take accountability.

MOM - You're not a slave. Yes, you are a mother, but you are whatever you are immediately after. Being a mom isn't your whole life; you are who you are abside of that. Don't let society's standards for mothers get to you. Don't let the mom guilt get to you, release the guilt for doing things for yourself. Be selfish.

The Disadvantages of Pretrial detention

Publication by: David Adames, Public Safety Organizer.

It's different going to jail for the first time. I've never experienced being in a cell, and I definitely don't want to. I feel like his friend put him in that situation by taking off, but I don't blame his friend for taking off either, because I probably would have done the same thing. I don't think it's fair that he had an expensive bond, that he can't afford because he comes from poverty. I also find it dumb that he's sitting in jail while awaiting his trial. Like the video said, it messed up his job and his life, when in the end he might not even be guilty. To the youth, especially young Black and Latino people, the system is set up for us to fail in any way possible. In some cases it is a misunderstanding that happens and the reason we end up in a trial when we deserve another chance. At the end of the day, people die everyday. You never know when your time is up, and this life that we take for granted is over. I feel as if there should be a change in the way justice is served to certain situations or people. Yes, some people deserve to be behind bars, but who knows what led them to commit that certain crime. Did someone try to kill them and they killed them first? It isn't fair to people that are born into a certain lifestyle. For example, YNW MELLY is currently locked up and facing double murder I don't know the exact details or degree of the charge. He apparently killed his 2 friends and set it up as a drive-by shooting. What if his friends became jealous of his riches and wanted to rob and kill him. What if they were just about to and he killed them and set it up so he wouldn't get in trouble. At that moment white people or nonviolent people would call the cops, but by then he would've been dead. So what would you really do? I think he should have a chance, I don't know.





Toxic Masculinity

Publication by: Karla Osorno, Public Safety Organizer.

As a Latina woman, this topic is so impactful for me. I grew up in a culture that heavily values machismo and male superiority. Machismo is described as strong or aggressive masculine pride. As a result of this, many men end up abusing their wives and kids, rarely or never show vulnerable emotions, and women are viewed as a man's property and expected to do all the housework while men are the financial providers. Older women in my family were abused by their husbands and fathers. These brave women in my family stayed home, took care of the kids and did not work. The men went outside and worked. Many of them were unfaithful, they were not loving to their children or wives, and they had a toxic masculine mindset. Today, I am grateful that I don't have to go through what the women in my family went through.

When men are not held accountable, they begin to treat women objects. A simple example could be made from older comedians with the classic "I hate my wife jokes." When men with a large audience joke about disrespecting their wife, it normalizes negative views from men in the audience.

Toxic masculinity also causes rape culture to continue. Toxic masculinity often associates men with wanting more sex, and even resorting to violent and aggressive ways to obtain sex. Since many men do not hold other men accountable for their harmful actions, rape culture continues. Men need to be held accountable. When women speak up on their abuse, sexual assaults and violence they have received from men, there needs to be accountability. Women deserve to feel safe in their homes, workspaces, and learning environments. Men need to do better.



And this is only the beginning! Please stay tuned for the Auto-Ethnography project, soon to be published by our Public Safety Organizers. The projects allow each of the organizers to explore their own identity intersections that influence their perceptions of safety.

Special Thanks to:

Laikyn Fishburne, Graphics Designer

Khai Galias, Research Mentor

Dina Asfaha, Research Mentor

Christian Alfonso, Research Mentor

Biviana Coyomani, Research Designer