

CROSSING

THE INVISIBLE LINE

2023-2024

ADDRESSING

TOXIC POSITIVITY

A MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO PROVIDING INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION TO WOMEN OF COLOR, WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS. OUR GOAL IS TO EMPOWER AND UPLIFT OUR READERS, PROVIDING THEM WITH THE TOOLS THEY NEED TO LIVE A HOLISTIC LIFESTYLE.



crossing the invisible line

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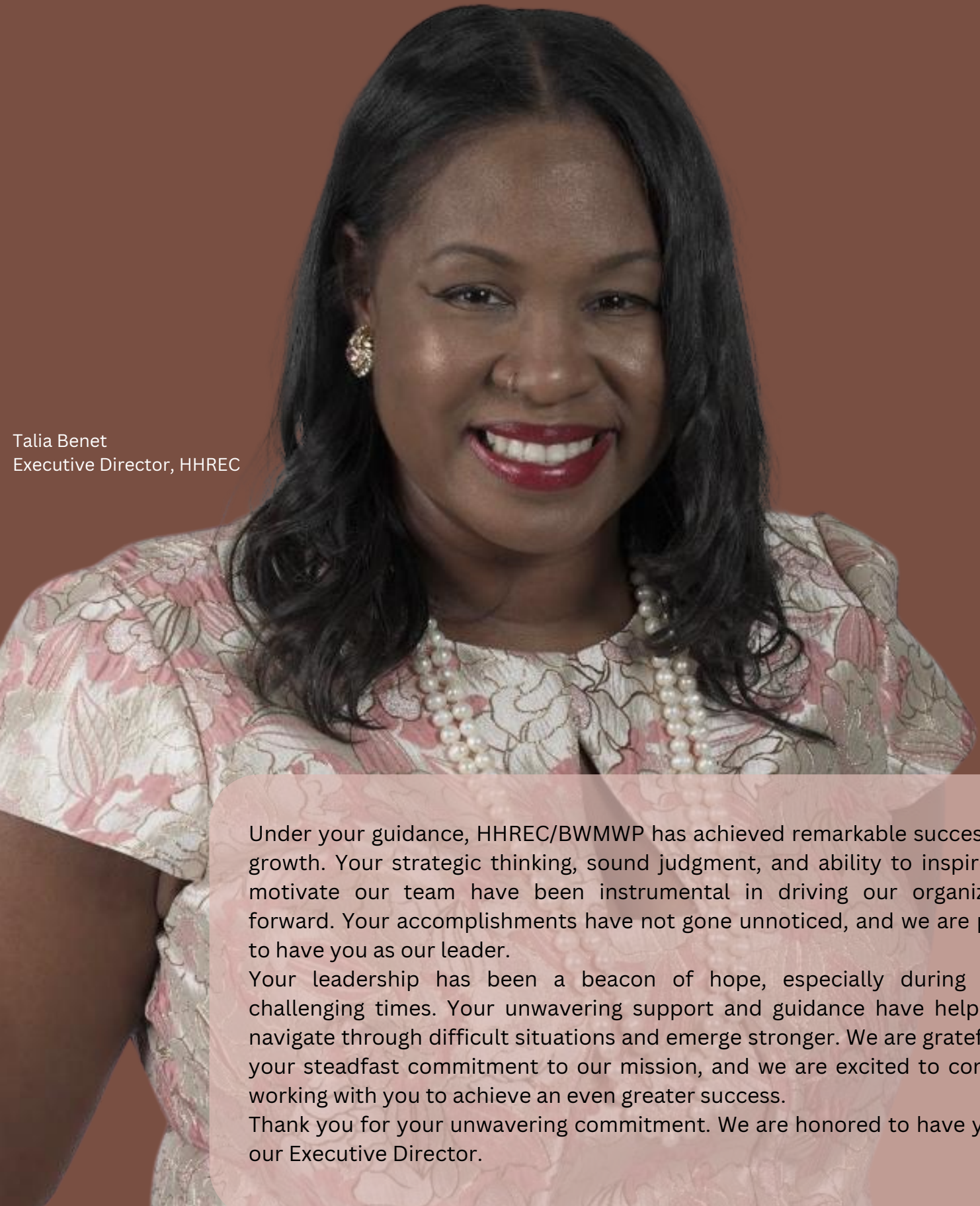
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A SPECIAL THANKS



Talia Benet
Executive Director, HHREC

Under your guidance, HHREC/BWMWP has achieved remarkable success and growth. Your strategic thinking, sound judgment, and ability to inspire and motivate our team have been instrumental in driving our organization forward. Your accomplishments have not gone unnoticed, and we are proud to have you as our leader.

Your leadership has been a beacon of hope, especially during these challenging times. Your unwavering support and guidance have helped us navigate through difficult situations and emerge stronger. We are grateful for your steadfast commitment to our mission, and we are excited to continue working with you to achieve an even greater success.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment. We are honored to have you as our Executive Director.

T H E T E X T U R E O F C H A N G E

Over the years, Crossing the Invisible Line has addressed the ever changing landscape in the awareness and treatment of mental health among Black women. Learning the best techniques and developing healthy coping mechanisms for a thriving mental health is our goal.





Crossing the Invisible Line is a publication produced by the Black Women’s Media and Wellness Project. It presents the voices of women who have known increased mental stress. It explores mental stress, what contributes to it, what it looks like and various ways to overcome it.

Crossing the Invisible Line encourages women to end the silence and open a healthy dialogue to healing.

Current Issue

This edition is intended to touch on taboo topics within the Black community. The latest edition is titled Crossing the Invisible Line IV: Addressing Toxic Positivity. A special thanks to all the contributors’ Latea’s Epiphany, Dr. Carmen McNeil, Dr. Renisha Coleman, Press Body Spa, HHREC staff Be Still Community and BWM Community Advisory Board.

We hope that as the magazine spreads that more women will continue to cross the invisible line and speak about how to overcome toxic positivity.



**“Right now, can you make an unconditional relationship with yourself – just at the height you are, the weight you are, with the intelligence that you have, and your current burden of pain – can you enter into an unconditional relationship with that?”
–Pema Chödrön**

Shanina Shumate
Program Director
HHREC

As we grow, changes in our skin and life events can have us to look at ourselves differently (mind, body and spirit). All of these changes require special attention. It is important to get clarity. Identify and engage in goal activities that will reduce your compassion fatigue and burnout and embrace a professional and personal life that you envision. Dream again... what's your vision and passion to continue or has it morph in a different direction? No matter the direction, let's start making moves.

Remember you are powerful beyond measure!

"The Beauty of Change is how we respond to it." - Shanina

I have a keen awareness of the gaps in culturally-competent mental health services of Black women, shifting the paradigm to elevate the experience in our community and transform the landscape for Black women is key priority. The Black Women's Media and Wellness Project is committed to engaging in work that promotes healing-centered mental health services and remove the veil that allows our surroundings to ignore the need to provide healing in our community.

As we move forward and deepen our work we will continue to fulfill the mission to engage in community-oriented programming that moves us closer to prioritize healing

“Let the healing begin”
-Allison Agbeniyi



Allison Agbeniyi
Program Manager
Black Women's Media & Wellness Project

BOOK READING

Register and get information on how to receive a free copy of **UNDOING CRAZY**
A Journey of transformation set in the bed of political Oakland, California

Black Women's Media & Wellness Project

Black Women's Art & Tea
September 30, 2023
at 11 o'clock

Book Club
Toxic Position

You are invited!
Be Still Retreat

Gratitude and Self-love
US FOR A TIME OF REFLECTION ON THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE. THIS EVENT IS A CHANCE TO COME OUT AND ENJOY SOME FUN, RELAXING WELLNESS ACTIVITIES. THE RETREAT IS A COMMUNITY-DRIVEN EVENT WHERE YOU HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN A FEW RELAXING PROJECTS, CONVERSATION AND RESOURCES.

November 15, 2023
4:00pm - 6:00pm

B-H Brilliant Minds Project Inc
Black Women's Media & Wellness Project

SAVE THE DATE

11TH ANNUAL
PHENOMENAL WOMAN PANEL DISCUSSION
Theme: Sistah You Are My Medicine

FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2024
6pm-9pm

JOYCE GORDON GALLERY
406 14TH STREET
OAKLAND, CA

IN HONOR OF HARRIET TUBMAN'S BIRTHDAY



B-H Brilliant Minds Project Inc.
&
Black Women's Media & Wellness Project's
8th Annual Women Inspiring Women
a Day and Be Still Retreat

Investing Your Transition
With NO LIMITS!!
Come take part in our wellness empowerment stations, hear our speaker and Sistah Circles

ACTIVIST
SCHOLAR
RADICAL FEMINIST
CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER

ANGELA DAVIS BOOK CLUB
APRIL 28

Latea's Epiphany &
Black Women's Media and Wellness Project
Presents

AWAKEN

See What the Community is Saying About Our Program

Meet Author Latea...
from pain to purpose...
ment can lead to a life...
16th, 6PM
email

Saturday May 20, 2023

For more information, please reach out to:



“ i didn't know programs like this existed!! ”

“ this event was awesome; well organized;
professional and fun.”

“ so much fun; so much love; love the
laughter”

“ the event as a big hug; full of love joy
and sistahood. a wonderful retreat “

“keep it coming”




ADDRESSING **TOXIC**
positivity

Positivity is generally considered a good thing, but sometimes it can be taken too far. This is where toxic positivity comes in. Toxic positivity is the belief that no matter how difficult a situation may be, people should maintain a positive attitude and suppress any negative emotions or thoughts. While this may sound good in theory, it can actually be harmful to a person's mental health.

It's important to acknowledge and process negative emotions, as they are a natural part of the human experience. Suppressing these emotions can lead to feelings of guilt, shame, and anxiety. Toxic positivity can also create a culture where people feel like they can't express their true feelings and are pressured to put on a happy face even when they are struggling.

Instead of toxic positivity, it's important to practice healthy positivity. This means acknowledging the difficult emotions that come with challenging situations, but also recognizing that there is still room for hope, growth, and positivity. By allowing ourselves to feel a range of emotions and being compassionate with ourselves and others, we can cultivate a healthier and more authentic form of positivity, which leads to healthier coping mechanisms and a more well-rounded approach to mental health.



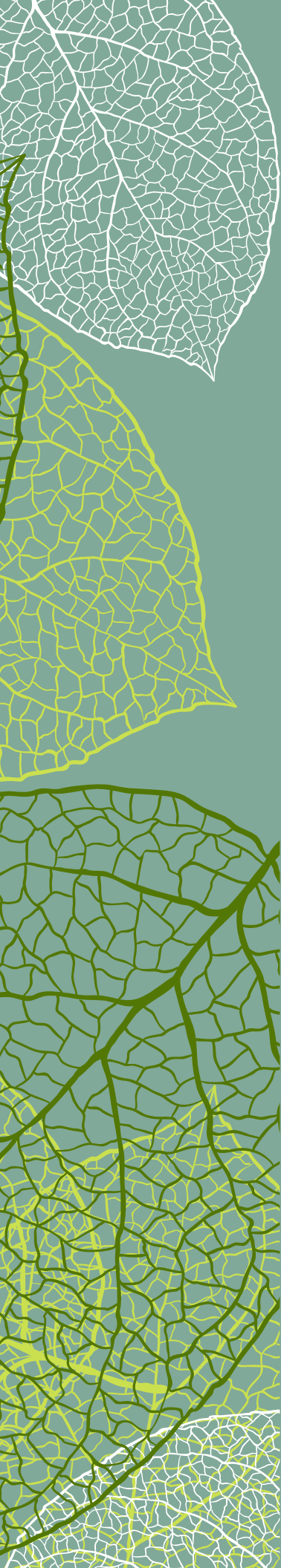


The Black Women's Media & Wellness Project polled several women to understand the effects of toxic positivity and how it has been experienced.

Results showed that 100% of the participants had experienced toxic positivity, but didn't have a name for it. Even without an official name, the effects were clear. It was reported that toxic positivity left them feeling dismissed, unsupported and in a state of confusion which caused them to internalized their emotions .

The women also reported that the toxic positivity they suffered was mostly at the hands of key individuals such as; friends, family, medical professionals and religious organizations. This is especially alarming as these are the very individuals who would normally provide the most support. As a result the women were left being their only source of support. Sounds a lot like the strong Black woman trope.

Black women, like all people, have the right to experience the full range of human emotions and to seek support and care when needed. By rejecting toxic positivity and embracing vulnerability, Black women can create a more authentic and supportive community that allows for true healing and growth



Black women are often expected to be pillars of strength, both in their personal lives and in broader society. This can lead to a pressure to present a facade of strength and positivity, even when they are struggling. This pressure to constantly appear strong and positive can lead to a sense of isolation and alienation, as Black women may feel they have no space to express their true emotions. However, it is important to recognize that strength does not mean invincibility, and that it is okay to not be okay. Exercise self-care.

Self-care involves taking actions and making decisions that promote physical, emotional, and mental well-being. It is important to note that self-care is not just about indulging in luxurious activities, but rather about taking care of oneself in a holistic manner. This can include exercise, healthy eating, meditation, therapy, and setting boundaries. Self-care is not just a one-time act, but rather a continuous practice that requires consistency and effort. However with confidence, a belief in one's abilities and self-worth allows individuals to acknowledge and accept both their strengths and weaknesses, without feeling the need to constantly present a positive facade.

Let's take a look at how our community partners view this subject. How can we redefine a strong Black woman , exercise self-care and build confidence.



“Strong Black Woman”

-A Redefinition

How the ideal Black woman should behave stems from a primitive archetype from the aftershocks of slavery which includes an overabundance of caretaking, self-reliance and silenced emotions.

Women are expected to be strong in all situations wearing a mask of strength, self-sacrificing and free of emotion which created disparities in physical and mental health. Strong Black women has been simultaneously aspirational and overwhelming.

Black women have been unable to prioritize self or find time to relax. Today, however there is a new age Black woman who's combined a legacy of resilience, confidence, care for community with self care, self-love , setting boundaries to protect physical and mental health.

To further examine this ideal we opened this discussion to Dr. Carmen McNeil and Latea's Epiphany.



Latea's Epiphany
Abuse/Trauma Life Coach,
Author and Motivational Speaker

Latea Newhouse, owner of Latea's Epiphany is an abuse/trauma Life coach, author and motivational speaker. Let's hear what she has to say about the evolving definition of a strong Black woman.

"But you have to give yourself permission to not to be ok."

How do you define a strong Black woman?

A woman of resilience who always looks to better herself and grow and learn. A woman who is not opposed to continue being a student of life and doesn't look down on others. She stays humble.

Do you embrace it or is it a myth? Stereotype? Empowering?

It's empowering and I've embraced it. It took a lot of years to get to where I am. I'm surrounded by other strong Black women.

Do you think being a strong Black woman can be harmful to your mental or physical health?

The stereotype of being a strong Black woman can negatively affect one's spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical health. However, there are different definitions by different people about being strong. Either way, you have to give yourself permission to not to be ok. Sometimes you have to tell yourself- "I'm gonna take care of myself today". So, it's the myth of it is that's detrimental, if you fail to exercise self care..

Has there been a time where your limits to being strong were tested?

Yes, in school. It's hard to balance being a business woman, student, mother and wife. Most times, I'm not taken serious as a small entrepreneur especially as a Black woman.

What do you think is a drawback for strong Black women?

....when you have no other choice. When strength is your only option and your back is against the wall, you have to stop crying and get yourself together. How do I manage? God. I learned that how we feel about ourselves matters a lot. So, use affirmations, don't lose yourself, have self esteem , know that you deserve more. Don't take anything less than you deserve.

Who benefits the most from strong Black women?

That's hard to say- society as a whole? Children, maybe? We have our hands in everything, so I would say community benefits the most – which includes everyone.

As a Black woman, what is something you feel you deserve, but haven't received?

Respect. Not enough Black women get acknowledged and receive respect. Typically Black women get overlooked by society. We are more deserving than that.

Any final words?

To all Black women, please continue to thrive, don't just survive, celebrate yourself. If you're an entrepreneur, set money aside to pay yourself first. Value yourself and continue to thrive. Don't be in survival mode so much you forget to thrive. Celebrate small accomplishments. I love you, so Know that someone loves you, until you can get to a place where you can love yourself.



Dr. Carmen McNeil
Facilitator, Educator
Period of Empowerment™ Guide

DR. CARMEN MCNEIL

Dr. Carmen McNeil holds a Ph.D. in Psychology and is a tenured professor. As a facilitator, educator, and Period of Empowerment™ Guide, she has been a featured speaker for conferences, women's organizations, and educational institutions. She pours her 25+ years of teaching, counseling, and training into helping girls and women understand how impressive they really are. Here is her take on how a strong Black woman can be defined.

How do you define a strong black woman?

So this is a great question. I am aware of the stereotype of a strong black woman. And I'm also aware of my redefined concept of a strong black woman. The first thing that comes to mind is this song from the 80s called *Superwoman* by Karen White. And if you're not familiar with the song, essentially what she's saying is I'm doing all this stuff, right? I'm trying to get your meals right, exactly like you wanted, fighting traffic to get your dinner right and get home and get it exactly like you want it. But I'm not getting fed. You know, I'm not getting spiritually fed. And she's saying ...I'm not your superwoman. Like you can't diss me and and think that I'm going to keep smiling, so that's kind of the first thing that comes to mind, this superwoman concept, you know, that really it, to some degree, dismisses our needs. I can't keep doing this. It has to be reciprocal. I'm giving my all for you, but I'm not getting anything in return. and this is hurting me is what she's saying in the song. So I'm very much aware of the stereotype of a strong black woman and we can get more. I'm an educator in psychology, so I could break down the psychological mammy-ism with where that comes from so we can get to that in a second. But as I reframe, because I believe in the power of reframing.

A strong black woman is a person who is proud of her ethnic heritage. She's proud to be Black. She loves her Blackness, you

know, and however, that manifests whether it's through her hair, skin tone or whatever, right? So she has some ethnic pride. And she prioritizes self-care. So that is different than the stereotype of a strong black woman. And so I think in order for us to be strong, self-care has to be at our forefront because we're always teaching people how to interact with us and how to treat us and we're teaching people where our boundaries are- if we have any- which is part of the problem of the strong black woman and the Super. And so when we prioritize self-care, we're letting people know, hey, I'm important to me.

On parenting and modeling Self-Care

If we think about the children that we're raising, we're modeling self-care. Right. So if you're a woman, you're raising daughters, you're modeling. Hey, prioritize yourself. Let other people know that you are on your priority list, right?

And then if we're raising sons, we're saying, hey to our boys. I need some time, right? You cannot expect me to be at your beck and call all the time. So you're gonna need to go to the cabinet and get you some cereal, while I take my 30 minutes. Setting those boundaries is so important. This is something that I do with my son. He's now 16. And so he recognized like, OK, I'm going to come back in 30 minutes.

As a parent, it makes me more present. And I have those self-care moments and then I can really listen to him with my heart. I can really pay attention to his nonverbal communication.

I can pay attention to what he's saying and what he's not saying. And if I'm all, you know, stressed out and discombobulated, I can't be present in that manner. If I'm all stressed out and discombobulated. I'm gonna miss something and it might be critical. So, that's my reframe.

Who do you think benefits the most from being a strong black woman or from strong black women?

So let's talk. About the the caricature of Mammie 1st and now we're gonna get into some little psychology. So you know for folks who you know haven't or not familiar with the Mammy Caricature. You know, this is something that was established during the enslavement time. And this woman was a Black woman who was very loyal the oppressor. She didn't ask any questions, always grinning, always laughing, and so the oppressors would use that caricature to say, see- Black people like slavery. It's helping them. They're happy. Yeah. And so the caricature of, you know, mammy is all about giving all of yourself, getting nothing in return and smiling. That's that. So, she's kind of painted with a rag on her head, she's usually a large woman. Big, full lips. You know, that's the caricature. And in psychology, there is at least Black psychology. Because that's a whole field of study, which I like teaching when it comes to mental health, they took that caricature and said, hey, this is dysfunctional, you know, and they call it mammy-ISM. So it's this dysfunctional assumption of overwhelming caretaking behaviors by the Black woman at the detriment of themselves,. So that's why it's dysfunctional.

It's dysfunctional because it enables other people. They learn that they can't do anything by themselves and become enabled. They can't think for themselves. They can't be resourceful. They can't problem solve cause. Mammy is doing it all. She's taking care of everything at the detriment of her physical well-being, at the detriment of her spiritual well-being, at the detriment of her psychological well-being right. And so these black psychologists have actually named this Mammy- ISM, the dysfunctional assumption of caretaking behaviors by back black women to the detriment of themselves.

So when we think of who benefits from that. Well, on the surface level, the people that are taken care of. They benefit because. They're getting care. So on the surface level, the oppressor. Going back to where the caricature came from, the oppressor is benefiting because they're like, she's not questioning this, none of this.

But then again, when you dig underneath the surface, I'm not really sure that anybody is benefiting because it's definitely to the detriment of mammy's health. So she's not benefiting. It's also to the detriment of the people that she's caring for because again, they don't. Know how to take care of themselves. Where would the oppressor be without Mammy. She doing it all, they're lost without her. So I'm not really sure when we dig deeper if anybody is really benefiting from the strong black woman.

What do you think is like the number one drawback to being a strong black woman?

The number one drawback is not living in reality like it's this false sense of what's going on and in psychology, when you have a break from reality and that's considered psychosis, right, if you can't keep it real. And so I'm kind of using that facetiously to kind of emphasize the fact that when we have this strong Black woman and the people that she's taking care of; if she's doing everything to her own detriment, it's false. It's not real. And a lot of times the strong black woman wants some help, but she wants people to offer. You don't want to have to ask, right? She wants people to offer. She wants people to see that she doing everything, and whether she admits it or not, she wants some acknowledgement.

But because we attempt to live up to the unrealistic strong Black woman stereotype we've taught the people that we're caring for that this is the norm, but it's abnormal. So if they're thinking this is the norm, what are they gonna praise you for? They're not gonna praise you. So that's why I think that the number one drawback is it's a false sense of reality.

What is something that you feel you deserve that you have not yet received?

As a black woman when I'm out and about in public. Why people don't see me? Or they act like they don't see me. So I'll give an example. I'm in the grocery store. This is real. My husband and I, we were in the Safeway or Lucky's wherever we were, I was talking to the clerk, asking them to tell me where something was- what aisle or

something? Or do you have this particular brand or something? And as the clerk and I are engaged in conversation a White person came up and asked the clerk a question. And I was like... you know, like I'm dumbfounded. For me, I really try to give people the benefit of the doubt. And because of my background in psychology, I like process. I probably over processed stuff. Because I like to unpack what's happening in the moment. I'm sure that it's not that she doesn't physically see me because I'm not small. You physically see me. So that's not the issue. Then I was like well, maybe they just don't have no home training. Like, did you not learn some social graces, politeness? In our household we learned our please and thank you's and excuse me and you know, expressing our gratitude like we learned. So I'm looking at this white person because I'm still shocked, right? And the clerk didn't support me. The clerk started talking to them, so now I'm like doubly dumbfounded.

So when I shared this with a group of women at a tea and one of the women, who is biracial, said "that ain't nothing but White privilege. That ain't nothing but White elitism." And so that was just one example. I've had other similar examples as well. And so I feel like as a Black woman, when you ask what is something I feel I deserve but I have not received - its the recognition that I'm here. You know the acknowledgement that I'm here too. We're sharing space in this grocery store. And my question which I asked of the clerk first is just as valid as your question. Absolutely so! So what's the problem here? You didn't learn to wait your turn, like in kindergarten?

Well, I think that's something that I feel like I deserve. I deserve to be seen. I deserve to be acknowledged as an equal, but I don't think I've received that across the board.



Is there anything else you'd like to contribute to the conversation about Strong Black women?

As I think about a strong Black woman I want to include that a lot of times it includes the angry Black woman piece.

The angry black woman I see as a part of this strong Black woman stereotype because we got lots to be mad about. Those scenarios that we've just described they're just disrespectful, you know? And so when you are doing so much to care for your loved ones, if you're caring for your parents, if you're caring for your romantic partner, if you're caring for the kids, you know, and putting yourself on the back burner...then somebody disrespects you like that. So, it's sort of dicey. With the Black woman a piece of that stereotype because, yes, we have a lot to be upset about. But when we express the anger, when it explodes, then we're not heard. And we're just seen as threatening. "That's the crazy Black lady!" So it's really really tough.

So that's why our self-care is so important, so that we can be grounded when these assaults occur.

**“And so when we
prioritize self-care, we're
letting people know hey,
I'm important to me”**

-Dr. Carmen



I AM ENOUGH FINDING CONFIDENCE

“ Confidence can flourish when you know your value and accept that you are enough. ”

~ Dr. Renisha Coleman, DBA

Finding a seat at the table as a black woman in a corporate setting was hard. It was like navigating a complex healthcare system. Hearing the words, “You are not qualified because you lack specific skills and knowledge,” rang in my ears year after year. It made me feel like I was not good enough. It gave me the courage to push myself through school to gain the knowledge and skills to close the gap in my career. As I continued to earn educational milestones, I gained a little confidence and shifted into what I thought was the right direction to get a promotion. Well, I was wrong. I began hearing the total opposite. “You are overqualified.” The little confidence I had quickly diminished. I felt defeated, but I knew that I had to keep going. I had no choice but to keep going because I had promised my late grandmother whatever happened in my life. I would get it done but did not fully know what “get it done” meant.

I found a few mentors: one for my personal life, school, and work. Identifying mentors to help me through this journey called life has been the most excellent decision I ever made. Many of us in the African-American culture learned to keep things to ourselves, in the family, or behind closed doors. Having mentors helped me navigate the complex healthcare system. My mentors encouraged me, cheered me on through school, and advocated for me. They helped me to gain my confidence back.

I eventually “got done” with my schooling. I had finally earned my seat at the table. I have a new level of confidence that is wider than the Mississippi River. I now walk into a room, knowing that I am enough. Through my struggles, challenges, and setbacks, I learned that my confidence was never gone. God redirected me down a path to help me learn and understand my value. My journey taught me that confidence can flourish when you know your value and accept that you are enough. The pearl I want to leave with today is that you are enough. Find your circle and align yourself with positive people. People that can pull the best out of you, be your cheerleader, and help you. Yes, you can have the determination, motivation, and perseverance. However, you cannot become successful alone. Find a mentor or a few to help you find your confidence.

Massage therapy is a practice that has been around for thousands of years, and for good reason. This form of therapy has numerous benefits for both physical and mental health, making it an important aspect of overall wellness. Massage therapy involves the manipulation of soft tissues in the body, including muscles, tendons, and ligaments. By applying pressure, kneading, and stretching, massage therapists can help to relieve pain, reduce stress, and improve overall relaxation. In this article, Press Body Spa helps us explore the importance of massage therapy as Black women.

What led you to the wellness industry?

The simple answer is my love for massage and wellness. As a young kid, I was actively involved in sports such as track and field, dance, and karate. All these activities helped me physically but the real interest grew many years ago before college. I took interest in massage but my family discouraged me at the time stating “I might be a target of abuse”. These were valid concerns my family raised. Fast forward 5 years later, after completing my college education and having 2 children, I decided to solidify my interest in the Wellness industry by attending formal training and certification through National Holistic Institute.

What is your mission/ purpose?

Our mission at Press Body Spa is to provide overall health and wellness through massage.

What are the positive effects of massage therapy - for the client and therapist?

Massage therapy provides physical, mental, emotional and spiritual benefits. For the client receiving massage, there is positive correlation to reduced muscle tension, improved blood circulation, stimulation of the lymphatic system,

reduction of stress hormones, relaxation, increased joint mobility and flexibility, improved skin tone, improved recovery of soft tissue injuries. These are effects everyone needs, even the therapist. To say the least, “Everyone needs a Massage”

What message/ tips/tricks/activities do you have for Black Women regarding mental health, stress reduction/ relaxation etc?

At PressBodySpa, we believe that to overwork oneself is to not practice “Self Love”. Self Love is the first key to improving your mental health and reducing stress levels. Love and give grace to who you were, who you are now and who you are becoming. As black women we need to find the time to “Rest”. Being relaxed or centered has a positive impact on our mental health. It is important to “Connect with Friends” as having a healthy community positively affects you. It is as important to have a banter partner as it is to have someone who inspires you. “Eating healthy and setting healthy boundaries” are also important for our individual and collective wellness.



Quick Tip- “SELF MASSAGE”

- While we so love to receive your payment before or after a massage session, there are simple things we can all do from the comfort of our homes. How about we turn your lotion time to a more intentional attention to the body and muscle. If you have a partner, this becomes a bonding time and stimulant (if you catch my drift...).

- Taking time out of your day, whether it be at break/ lunch time at work, before you pick the kids, or at home during your downtime is important.

- Do simple stretches, extending your arms in the air and free falling them onto your toes.

- Practicing simple hip rotations, circular motions are always a great start.

All these tips are guaranteed to slowly reduce overall stress, tackle inflammation that may be developing in the body.



What do you see in the future for massage therapy?

The future of Massage Therapy presents many potential in advancing the concept of Holistic Wellness through education and incorporation into primary health care. One way to address the lack of education and access is to integrate massage therapy into more primary health-care settings, similar to the way physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy has been incorporated. Having your doctor discuss the benefits of massage therapy with you and then actually refer you to an in-house massage therapist could help drive home the point that massage therapy is indeed important. There are projections that employment into this field will grow in the coming years largely due to the flexibility of the work, the potential generated revenue (Passive or Active) and the true ability to work from home or anywhere. Massage therapists work in an array of settings, such as spas and offices of other health practitioners. Some also travel to local events, clients' homes, or other sites. Part-time work is common, and work schedules may vary. Many massage therapists are self-employed. I also see a future where more black people utilize massage as a wellness tool.

Is there anything else you works like to add to the conversation about massage therapy and the mental health of women?

Changing the wide perception of how the profession of Massage Therapy is viewed never gets old/tiring. Keep in mind the industry

is still plagued with the "Happy Ending" stigma which affects the importance of work..

PressBodySpa believes perception changes come one client at a time through quality work, its resulting effects, maintaining professionalism and integrity through the service interaction between the client and massage therapist.

Is the wellness industry/ massage therapy what you thought it would be?

The Wellness industry is what I thought it would be asides from the negative press of the profession. In the time PressBodySpa has operated, we have seen a lot of areas for growth and expansion. The massage community is equipped with associations who strive to provide beneficial information to its members helping them scale up with the right tools.

What are the challenges you face in the industry as a Black woman ? Victories?

Challenges in the massage industry can range from physical limitation down to access or inclusion. As a black female Massage therapist there have been times where it's been challenging to work with clients. Unfortunately, most massage therapists will experience inappropriate behavior from clients, poor communication, general workplace issues and occupational hazards like osteoarthritis from frequent use of the arms and hands a lot. Fortunately I haven't had difficult challenges since being in the industry. A victory I would like to share would be of a client (let's call him Jim) for confidentiality. I was hired on to Jim's care as his private massage therapist. Jim was a pilot and had a small crash which led him to get some surgeries hence a massage therapist at a phase of his recovery. I worked with Jim twice a week consistently for 6 months. While it was hard watching this person who used to go all over the world not be in a position to help themselves, I held comfort in knowing my work was contributing to his recovery time.

Jim was projected to not need rehabilitation after 8-10 month of post care but we beat those odds and reduced the recovery time. I'd like to HIGHLY think massage played a vital role in it.



PRESS BODY SPA


Press Body Spa was founded with a guiding belief of total and wholesome wellness. Through massage and allied techniques, we hope to provide a valuable healing experience.

MASSAGE:

- FULL BODY MASSAGE
- HEAD MASSAGE
- FOOT MASSAGE
- PRENATAL MASSAGE
- SWEDISH MASSAGE
- SHIATSU MASSAGE

Mobile Massage Services Only

ASK ABOUT OUR HOT STONE
& CUPPING SERVICE

 +925-270-7557

 @PRESSBODYSPA

INSPIRING TALKS

ONE OF THE MOST INSPIRING TALKS YOU CAN HAVE, IS A CONVERSATION WITH YOURSELF. THIS CAN BE REFERRED TO AS MINDFUL REFLECTIONS. ASKING YOURSELF MINDFUL QUESTIONS WILL HELP YOU TO EXAMINE DEEPLY YOUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, EMOTIONS, ASSUMPTIONS AND JUDGEMENTS.

THE BENEFIT OF MINDFUL REFLECTIONS IS THAT IT STRENGTHENS SELF AWARENESS, ENHANCES COMMUNICATION SKILLS, IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS AND FOSTER HEALING. HERE ARE SOME MINDFUL QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:



MINDFUL QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTIONS



-WHAT MAKES ME FEEL ALIVE?

-WHAT ARE MY CORE VALUES?

-WHAT MATTERS MOST TO ME?

-HOW WOULD I DESCRIBE THE RELATIONSHIP I HAVE WITH MYSELF?

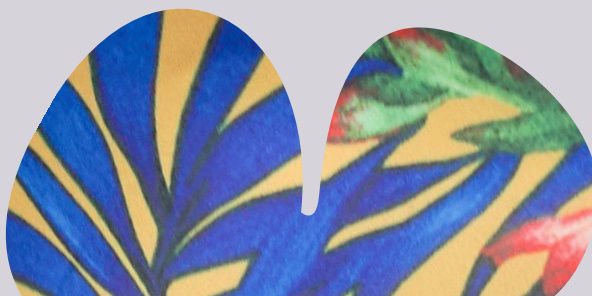
-DO I PRACTICE WHAT I PREACH?


-WHEN DO I FEEL MOST LIKE MYSELF?

-WHAT THOUGHTS OR BELIEFS AM I HOLDING ONTO THAT NO LONGER SERVE ME?

-WHERE IS MY HAPPY PLACE?

-WHAT IS MOST DIFFICULT FOR ME TO ACCEPT ABOUT MYSELF?





Motivational affirmations are powerful statements that can help you stay positive, focused, and motivated. They are short, simple, and easy to repeat to yourself throughout the day. The idea behind affirmations is that by repeating them regularly, you can reprogram your mind to focus on the positive aspects of your life and achieve your goals. Whether you are looking to boost your confidence, increase your productivity, or improve your overall well-being, motivational affirmations can be a helpful tool to help you achieve your goals.

- I am stronger than I know
- I may make mistakes but I can recover and keep going
- I will not dwell on minor setbacks
- Progress is making small steps toward big goals
- I give my time and energy mindfully
- I do what is important to me
- I aim to inspire myself
- I will succeed by attracting people who can help me
- The power of my mind is limitless
- I break free from all that is holding me back
- I know that I have everything I need within myself

KEY TO BALANCED MENTAL HEALTH

POSITIVE
MINDSET

MANAGING
EMOTIONS

HEALTHY
RELATIONSHIPS

Community

resources

Culturally Responsive Resources

*For Black Girls:

www.blackgirlsmile.com
www.blackgirlscodes.com
www.prettybrownngirl.com

Ourselves Black
Ourselvesblack.com

California Black Health Network
www.cablackhealthnetwork.org/

Bay Area Community Health
Advisory Council
www.bachac.org/

Therapy for Black Girls
www.therapyforblackgirls.com

The Safe Place (App)
Download on IOS or Android.

Black Emotional and Mental
Health
www.beam.community/

Alameda County 24hr Crisis Line
1-800-309-2131

San Jose African American
Community Service Agency
www.sjaacsa.com/

Help/Crisis Lines

Childhelp National Child
Abuse Hotline
1-800-4-A-CHILD
www.childhelp.org/hotline/

National Sexual Assault Hotline
www.rainn.org/
1-800-656-HOPE

National Suicide Prevention
Lifeline
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
1-800-272-TALK (8255)

National Youth Crisis Hotline
1-800-448-4663

Parent Hotline
www.parenthotline.net

Teen Lifeline
www.teenlifeline.org
1-800-248-TEEN

Helpful Resources

*Spas
Back 2 Nature Wellness
475 Central Ave. Alameda,
CA 94502
916-617-9003

Hands of Healing
295 W Winton Avenue,
Hayward, CA, 94544
510-408-8613

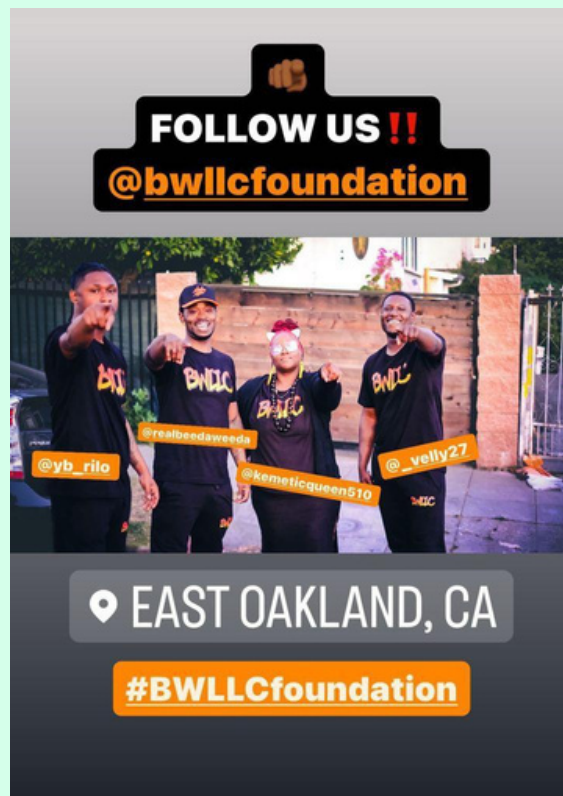
Mental Health America
(Health Screening Tools)
www.mentalhealthamerica.net/
Alameda County Resources
Alameda County 24hr Parent
Support
1-800-829-3777

NUTRITION SUPPORT

- Alameda County referral line - (800) 870-3663
- Project Open Hand/East Bay - 510-622-0221
- Alameda County Community Food Bank 510-635-3663
- Alameda Food Bank - 510 523-5850
- All Saints Episcopal Church Food Pantry at the Neighborhood Center - 510-569-7020
- Berkeley Food Pantry - 510-525-2280
- Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church Community Food Giveaway - 510-893-2932
- Salvation Army - Tri-Cities Corps Community Center USDA Government Commodities; Holiday Toys and Food Baskets - 510-793-6319
- St. Mary's Center/Food for All Ages - 510-923-9600
- Tri-City Volunteers, Inc. Emergency Food, Clothing and Household Items - 510-793-4583
- Alameda County Food Bank/Holiday Food Bank Hotline - 510-635-3663
- Emeryville Citizens Assistance Program (ECAP) 510-499-1263

Community Spotlight

BWLLC (Beeda Weeda, Latrice, Lavell & Cirilio) Foundation was founded 2022 by four Oakland natives who had a passion for philanthropy and authentic connection to the cities' most underserved populations. After identifying the need for resources, centralized education and supportive services, BWLLC became a collective and foundation, providing services to address community needs. BWLLC believes in meeting community members where they are, which is why we offer services in schools, recreation centers and the community.



LET'S TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH



CHECK OUR HHREC PODCAST

[LISTEN NOW](#)

Health & Human Resource Education Center
10 x 10 Wellness Campaign presents:

GET WELL WITH NIFA

Thursdays
3-4:30pm

- Health workshops
- Fitness classes
- 8 dimensions of wellness
- Healing circles
- Rethink Your Drink



For more information:
nakosua.hhrec@gmail.com

1905 San Pablo Ave Oakland

alameda county behavioral health
MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES



B-H Brilliant Minds Project Inc
Black Women's Media & Wellness Project

SAVE THE DATE

11TH ANNUAL
PHENOMENAL WOMAN PANEL DISCUSSION

Theme: Sistah You Are My Medicine

FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2024
6pm-9pm

JOYCE GORDON GALLERY
406 14TH STREET
OAKLAND, CA

IN HONOR OF HARRIET TUBMAN'S BIRTHDAY



Health & Human Resource Education Center
10 X 10 Wellness Campaign Presents:

GET FIT! A PROGRAM FOR OLDER ADULTS



Information

For 18+ participants
Hybrid Exercise & Nutrition Classes
Accountability Check-Ins
Complete Classes earn \$200

EMAIL: nakosua.hhrec@gmail.com

Start Date: 02/05/24

End Date: 03/14/24

Deadline: February 3rd, 2024
or until list is full



Learn more
at
[HHREC.org](https://www.hhrec.org)

For More Information Contact:

The Health and Human Resource Education Center (HHREC)
The Black Women's Media & Wellness Project (BWMWP)
1905 San Pablo Ave
Oakland, CA 94612

Phone: 510-834-5990
Fax: 510-835-0558
www.HHREC.org

Crossing The Invisible Line - Addressing Toxic Positivity
Published by the Health and Human Resource Education Center

Sponsors:
BWMWP
Mental Health Services Act
Alameda County Behavioral Health





Promoting culturally competent and gender responsive mental health services for Black women.

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