

Title: Girl, you don't always have to be the one to save the world.

Track: Personal Well-Being

Abstract

The “strong Black woman” identity has been embraced by the Black community after years of recognizing societies failure to support our basic needs. While the Black woman is strong and resilient, we often are not taught that we need to rest. When we are not taught how to rest, we cheat everything we do. Everything we do can be better when we realize the value of our menstrual/moon cycle; the self-love/self-care system divinely embedded within us. The value we place on menstruation has a direct correlation with the value we place on ourselves and care for ourselves as women. In a societal lineage that honors the male over the female, our cycle has been mis-storied, mis-represented, and pathologized. This session will engage participants in an investigation of their own accepted beliefs of menstruation. We will re-claim, re-imagine and re-cover messages to the woman about her childhood menstruation narratives; by doing so, we choose to not miss out on the highly creative, reflective, and restorative gift of this time of month. Just like the moon, we go through phases. Black girl do you know about your rest phase; the time when its ok to keep your magic tucked away?

Overview

The “strong Black woman” identity has been embraced by the Black community after years of recognizing societies failure to support our basic needs (Kaltefleiter & Alexander, 2019). While the Black community is strong and resilient, we often fail to realize or be taught that we need to rest. Our menstrual cycle and the perception we carry about it is a story of rest, acceptance of self, self-love and self-care. Unfortunately, this natural force of nature in the

reproductive cycle of women has been negatively surrounded by secrecy, myths and taboo (Johnston-Robledo, 2011). The stigmatized condition of being “unclean”, “disgusting”, “blemished”, “needing to be concealed” and even poisonous have been permeated into the minds of girls and women in our society and worldwide. However, if we look at the matrifocal, earth centered societies that many of our ancestors were a part of, menstruation is the sabbath of women, a door into oneself. In this, our moon cycle time pulls us back in order. We are invited into a time of slow down and stillness so that we don’t give from the depths of our wells. The primary purpose for this presentation is to remind black women of the gift of their moon cycle, to introduce conscious menstruation and discover activities to enhance the personal growth, the self-love/self-care system divinely embedded within us.

Delivery Methods: Discussion and experiential activities

Learning Outcomes

The participants will:

1. Explore the personal experiences/narratives/messages of their moon cycle.
2. Investigate personal values of imposed social messages about menstruation.
3. Explore ways to increase their understanding of themselves through conscious menstruation rituals, practices, and meditation.

Presentation Outline/ Timeframe:

1. Introductions, connection activity (10 mins)
2. Brief history of bleeding and stigmatization of menstruation. (5 mins)
3. Define and discuss conscious menstruation rituals, practices, and meditations - including an experiential activity (10 mins)
4. Outline nine non-toxic natural remedies for menstrual healing activities that will wake us to our power. (10 mins)
5. Conclusion & Questions (10 mins)