



The Woman of Color Caucus is taking an active stance against R. Kelly, standing in solidarity with survivors of color in Ohio. All too often, their voices are silenced, rape kits are left untested and their needs are the last to be addressed.¹ Ohio can and must do better and we are here to move the Victim Services field towards equity and inclusion for Black and Brown girls.

The #MeToo movement, similarly to many social justice movements in our history,² was created by a woman of color, Tarana Burke, to raise the voices of black and brown girls who continue to not be heard or adequately served in the sexual violence movement.³ This is a symptom of greater issue, a societal one, that crosses a multitude of realms, starting from childhood⁴ societal oppression is a form of trauma. We must remember that and use the trauma-informed care model which encourages a shift in focus from questions like “what’s wrong with you” to “what’s happened” to better understand and respond to the victim-blaming and minimizing that is heard from members of the African-American and Latino communities.

So many adult WOC survivors of sexual abuse have never been heard. That have t not been told what has happened to you is wrong. There are many adult WOC survivors that have not received any or adequate treatment.⁵ There continues to be a disparity in access to healthcare, especially mental health care, between races and the continued stigmatizing of seeking mental health services makes that disparity ever more difficult to reduce.⁶ We must do better.

This April, during Sexual Assault Awareness Month, WOCC encourages everyone to consider taking the following actions:

- Advocate for institutional changes that work against women of color when finding healing from trauma by utilizing the numerous resources in this document.
- Have conversations around the #MeToo movement and consider outsourcing professionals in the field to come have those conversations with your agency.
- Acknowledge that intersectional feminism is important when discussing this issue. Women of color stand at the intersection of protecting themselves and not continuing the systematic oppression that mass incarceration holds in the United States. With black men in mind, it is still important to uphold black and brown women and girls.

¹ <https://www.iamevidencethemovie.com/>

² <https://bit.ly/2KvfPza>

³ https://cffpp.org/wp-content/uploads/Safety_and_Services.pdf

⁴ <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/racial-disproportionality-in-school-discipline-implicit-bias-is-heavily-implicated/>

⁵ http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/docs/sobo/state_of_black_oh_march2010_section9.pdf

⁶ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1470581/>



- Educate your counties about intersectionality and hold accountability for anyone who is violent against women. There is a significant need to teach tolerance around what a survivor looks like and to create and implement equitable services to any survivor who needs help.
- Start internally and support the black and brown women that work in your organizations. If you have black women in your organization, they should have access to the Women of Color Caucus.
- Start focusing on the implicit bias and racism in our own movement as a way to change the bigger system.
- Educate our children about appropriate sexuality and encourage open and honest communication to ensure they come to you without fear of repercussions.
- Remove items that hypersexualize girls, especially black and brown girls, from your environment.
- Doublethink and do not send/forward social media that dismisses, hypersexualizes, or minimized the victimization of girls.
- Use best practice when responding to survivors of color i.e. safety planning around working with the criminal justice system.

Here are some additional resources that you can use when having these conversations and to educate yourself and your community:

1. OAESV: *From #MeToo to #BlaseyFord to #SurvivingRKelly: Connecting Rape Crisis Centers to Black Survivors in this Moment*
<https://bit.ly/2Ggv0lj>
2. Black Women's Blueprint: Beyond Lights, Camera, Action & Surviving R. Kelly
https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/f0223e_a8a07bd525ef4ce0922f6b898be837c3.pdf
3. The Kirwan Institute for Race and Ethnic Studies: *Race Matters and So Does Gender*
<http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/a-reflective-response-to-race-matters-and-so-does-gender/>
4. The Kirwan Institute for Race and Ethnic Studies: *2017/2018 Annual Report- Race in Conversation. Equity in Practice.* <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/2018-kirwan-institute-annual-report/>
5. Building Movement Project: *Race to Lead Women of Color in the nonprofit Sector*
<http://racetolead.org/race-to-lead-women-of-color-in-the-nonprofit-sector/>
6. SASHA Centers: Black Women's Triangulation of Rape model
<https://www.sashacenter.org/>