

Black Womens Healthcare Policy Reform: Navigating their Sexual and Reproductive Care Needs

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Abstract : This presentation seeks to highlight an arts-based, Black feminist, and community based participatory approach to exploring the strengths and pleasures, concerns and barriers, and wants and needs of diverse Black women in navigating formal and informal sexual and reproductive healthcare continuums. Recognizing the ongoing intersectional discrimination that Black women face interpersonally and systemically in community and healthcare spaces that service needs such as, early and unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted infection (STI) treatment and testing, human immune-deficiency virus (HIV) treatment and testing, pre and post-natal care, gynecology and obstetrics, sex education, sexual violence and assault reporting and support, gender affirming spaces and more, this presentation unveils the community and embodied pathways to caring for the sexual self through cultural practices, advocacy and peer support. The presentation will be grounded in the arts and lived experience of 8 Black women, aiming to highlight the sexual and reproductive subjectivities of Black women, through the application and discussion of Black feminist arts-based methodology and praxis. The presentation not only seeks to illuminate methods and grammars of Blackness but so too, invite practitioners to engage in cultural and community-based methods to care. There are many themes of the conference covered in this presentation; feminist methodologies revealing narratives community and inclusion, how the utilization of technology, social media and cultural forces can drive community feminist activism and self-advocacy, how feminist methodologies can uncover opportunities for anti-racist praxis, and lastly enhancing collaboration in research. Specifically revealing how Black feminist thought and associated methods can be enhanced through community based participatory action (CBPAR) research approaches such as, photovoice, this presentation reveals the systemic histories and modern-day experiences of Black women when accessing sexual and reproductive care whilst also uncovering embodied and community-based strengths that produce grassroots, digital, and self-advocacy within healthcare systems. The ways in which the arts, digital age, cultural influences, and lived experiences can come to the fore in collaborative data collection and analysis with research participants, will be the crux of my presentation, bridging to how both Black feminist, CBPAR, and arts-based methods can create tangible, anti-racist and racially reflexive implications for the healthcare and community sector seeking to pedestal Black women's strengths and resilience's and corroborate with their lived experiences. This conversation will center around 3 of the 9 themes derived from my dissertation research, which focuses on the strengths of Black women's community care, culturally informed self-care practices, and communication and vocal pathways to strengthen their sexual and reproductive self-concept and navigational skills in the face of intersectional discrimination in care continuums.

Keywords : sexual and reproductive healthcare, black feminisms, black feminist research, antiracist healthcare policy, antiracist healthcare delivery, arts based research, photovoice

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