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Pamoja Editors

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PAMOJA

A JOURNAL FOR KSU STUDENT VOICES



ON:
INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE

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Cover Image

“Damage” by Devyn Springer, student at Kennesaw State University

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INTRODUCTIONS

Jesse Benjamin and Aajay Murphy

Editors

This issue of *Pamoja* marks an entirely new chapter in its history, a reworking of its mission and audience in a way that reflects organic growth and development among the students who have been and will continue to be central to its direction. *Pamoja's* roots go back to Fall 2010, when African and African Diaspora Studies (AADS) launched its own newsletter for the first time, and was at first called the Interchange. By 2012, the newsletter name had changed to *Pamoja*, the Swahili word for 'unity,' 'togetherness,' or 'pulling together,' even: 'strength in numbers.' The use of a Swahili title signified a non-Western epistemology and orientation, an East African cosmopolitan view from one of the world's great African cultures and civilizations. It also symbolized the growing collaboration among student leaders and their organizations in the education and social justice work they were converging to address in their own lives, on campus and also mediated out to the society as a whole. An unprecedented degree of student collaboration and coalition and organizing around pressing social issues, and even a few Civil Rights style protests have emerged in the past few years on our campus, as reflects a wider phenomenon across the country.

In this context, and also in the context of a transition in AADS leadership and the continuing growth of Interdisciplinary Studies (ISD) as a whole, including its own newsletter, students continued to express a desire for an additional media forum at KSU in which to address the links between their studies and the pressing social justice issues of our times. Specific ideas and plans were debated last year, and again this year when Fall classes started up, especially in light of the returning to what was not only now a fully consolidated KSU, but also a serious and persistent stream of sexual assault notifications on our campus email. KSU is a part of this national trend, in which awareness of the problem of sexual assault on college campus is finally growing a little, but solutions are not always keeping pace. Thus, faster than we ever would have planned, and at the very same time as we were forming the Editorial Board and general organizational structure of the relaunched *Pamoja*, we also managed to put together our first issue, which we think, under the circumstances, is pretty amazing.

We still have a lot to figure out about the exact mechanics of producing issues for our new publication, but we are already figuring it out on the fly, so we expect it to get better, and bigger, as we move forward. One of the things we have managed to conceptualize and bring into fruition is an innovative Editorial Board structure in which a Student Editorial Collective is central to all aspects of producing *Pamoja*. This is why we have two introductions for this special relaunch issue, one by us, the Editors, explaining our new concept, and one by the new Student Editorial Collective, explaining the details of this special issue, where it came from, and what its purpose is.

As you will see, this issue of *Pamoja* addresses the difficult and critical issues of sexual assault, consent, and related societal norms, practices and potentialities. This is a very difficult and fraught terrain, and therefore one that requires far more attention, discussion, delineation, and deliberation. We are awed by the seriousness and honesty with which our contributors address these most difficult and important contemporary challenges. We have interspersed poetry with short essays, both of which make strong points in the ongoing and heightening debates around our societal understandings, definitions and negotiations of sexual assault, consent, campus climate initiatives, legal rulings and precedents, and a host of related dynamics. This collection of essays makes contributions to the debates now raging across the country, and clearly shows how inadequate many of our understandings of even key terms and concepts may be, and how complex some of this discussion needs to be, but somehow rarely finds space to do so in most of contemporary culture and its media.

Moving forward, we hope and expect to see issues like this one, addressing whatever topics are on the minds and hearts of our students, whatever social justice matters might need some illumination or discussion. We are open to almost any direction this takes, and we hope you will join us with your ideas and energy, as we seek to build this space with and for our community.

Student Editorial Collective

During the first weeks of class, students should be worried about buying textbooks and reading syllabi. Typically the first week is spent waiting in line at the financial aid office, figuring out where their classes are, and attempting to navigate the overcrowded parking decks. However, the first weeks of Fall semester 2015 were instead spent worrying about our safety on campus and participating in uncomfortable conversations about two reported sexual assaults that took place the first weekend. Students were forced to confront important but trigger-inducing public notices about a flurry of reported instances in a short span of time. With the start of this dreaded conversation, we realized that thirteen instances of sexual or interpersonal violence had been reported on campus in the span of just five months. These reports consisted of incidents of stalking, sexual assault, groping, gender-based violence, and rape. So, despite the usual stresses of a new semester, student activists scrambled to create a safe and healthy way to add to the conversation regarding what changes needed to be made to make our campus a safer place for all.

Over the next few weeks, many conversations and meetings took place between student activists and non-affiliated students who were concerned by the number of reported sexual assaults. Student activists created a hashtag called #HowSafeAreWe in order to provide a space for students to speak out, as well as to ask for a response from the campus administration on the issue. Although the response from the university administration was not what activists had hoped for, the conversations must continue. As the editors of *Pamoja*, and as some of the writers in this issue, we wanted to contribute to the conversation regarding sexual assault, because we feel that students' voices, especially those of victims of sexual assault and of student activists are underrepresented on our campus. This coincided fortuitously with the relaunch of *Pamoja*, as a broader voice of engaged student leadership at KSU, which had been underway for a few months at that point. So we set to work, and soon we were producing this inaugural issue of the new publication.

Trying to develop an innovative organizational model, and bringing a politically engaged style with us, we decided to form a Student Editorial Collective that would work

closely on all aspects of running our new publication. This issue of *Pamoja* is dedicated to the issues of interpersonal violence – when one person uses power and control over another through physical, sexual, mental or emotional threats or actions – and serves as a platform for the devoted students who deserve to be heard. This issue was an intensive labor of love, a call for student voices to be added to the conversation about safety on campuses, and provides unique perspective from student activists who want to effect definite change.

Interpersonal violence affects everyone on campus, both directly and indirectly, and we believe that student voices on this issue are just as important as administrative ones. The “culture” of your typical college campus can be hostile in many ways. It can be particularly hostile when we enter the muddy waters of sexual misconduct. These conversations are not normalized in modern university environments – everything from rape jokes to slut shaming to victim blaming can be seen on Yik Yak and other social media right here in the 30144 – and the “culture” of your average college campus is not welcoming to overt discussions about interpersonal violence, especially when discussed from an intersectional perspective.

The courage, honesty, and groundbreaking resistance found in this issue is not to be taken lightly. In this issue of *Pamoja*, you will witness poets sharing their personal stories with profound detail and writers tactfully informing the campus community about how to comprehensively discuss interpersonal violence. The poetry in this issue illustrates lived experiences of sexual assault and interpersonal violence. It is advisable to take caution before reading them, as they may be trigger inducing for some readers. The articles in this issue cover specific controversies that may be encountered while addressing interpersonal violence and provide suggestions for how to improve the way we discuss relationships and sex, as well as how to prevent sexual assault and interpersonal violence. It is nothing short of spectacular to have so many voices uniting on this important topic. We wish to add these voices, and we know that there is much more conversation to be had, here and well beyond.

This issue of *Pamoja* formed itself through students united with a common dedication to resistance. Enjoy.

BACKBONE

Scarlett Peterson

Poise and grace mean nothing
To the one who holds you down;
There is nothing safe
But the inside of your eyelids.

The one who holds you down
Hides in your dreams, images dancing
On the inside of your eyelids.
No escape from the crawling of your skin.

Images hiding in your dreams
Have no control over you.
There is no escape from the crawling of your skin
But to find solace in the shards of those beside you.

That person has no control over you.
No greater strength than
Those beside you
And the backbone you're building.

ON SLUT SHAMING AND RAPE CULTURE

Scarlett Peterson

“Why rape someone when there’s plenty of hoes throwing it out and giving it up,” says the anonymous post on YikYak, “She doesn’t seem like the type to be raped, she seems like the type to give it up,” says the man sitting across the room from me in class. “It’s a convenient way to justify being a slut, and ultimately regretting the mutual decision you made...,” says another anonymous post. So where do these attitudes develop? When we as a society discuss rape and sex, why do the two have to overlap in insult and shame?

Slut-shaming is common; the idea that a person who owns their sexuality and engages in sex for fun is something to be ashamed of is nothing new. It’s a learned behaviour, but a rampant way of thinking. But how does slut-shaming relate to rape? Let’s think about it. If she’s such a “dirty” person because she’s had sex with so many people, she’s not seen to have the same value that a chaste, “pure” girl would. She’s not something to be cherished, treasured or protected by society. By relating a woman’s value to her sexual purity, we are indirectly showing a specific group of women that not only do we not support them, we don’t protect them, and we don’t believe that they have the same inherent value that their purity-oriented counterparts do. This attitude isn’t just harmful in terms of self-esteem and mental well being; it’s harmful in terms of sexual violence and the likelihood that women who engage in “risky behaviors” will become targets.

Women who engage in “risky behaviors” such as attending parties, drinking recreationally, staying out all night, walking alone on campus, and trusting male friends... Wait, that last behaviour sounds fairly safe, doesn’t it? Shouldn’t all of these behaviors be fairly safe? According to the rates of acquaintance rapes in comparison to stranger rapes, it doesn’t seem to be safe at all. Returning to YikYak, our collegiate pot of gold for asinine comments from anonymous posters, we have another gem; in an instance where a survivor of sexual assault posted asking for advice, a charming commenter responded with “just don’t date tall blonde guys,” in the thread, alluding to the description of one of the perpetrators of sexual assault on campus this semester.

There seems to be a disconnect here; we're not only shaming the women who have sex when they want it, we're not just creating a grey area that leads to a whole new way of looking at these women, we're also telling these women that the assaults and violence that they experience are somehow their fault. This victim-blaming leads many women who experience acts of sexual violence to believe that they did something wrong. There is no instance in which it's acceptable to blame the victim of any crime for what happened to them. When someone is murdered, beaten, or robbed people don't criticise them like they criticize rape victims. There isn't the same generalized flurry of questions ranging from "Did you tease them?" or "What were you wearing?" and "How much did you have to drink?" when someone is stabbed or beaten. We do not question the judgment of murder victims the same way that we judge victims of sexual assault. The added scrutiny does nothing to help the victim, it simply attempts to help excuse the perpetrator.

So here's the real question; why does it matter what she was wearing? Why does it matter if she'd had two beers or ten? So what if she did flirt with the guy sitting next to her on the couch? Do any of those things excuse an act of sexual violence? Does a past full of lovers and promiscuity mean that he doesn't need her consent? Does that make a woman unrapeable?

Carlynn Sharpe

It's not what we expected.
Expected it to be like those crime shows,
Expected it to hurt physically, a lot,
Expected to feel angry and sad,
Expected to want justice,
Expected to refrain from sex for years,
And to go to church.

But we didn't feel anything at first,
Except regret.
And then we felt sick.
Not about them,
Not about how sick humanity can be,
About ourself for repeating the same mistakes,
Not saying no loudly enough,
Being weak,
Being a slut,
Being flirty,
Being human.

The next day or the next week we felt mad at ourself.
Maybe even mad at our friends who we thought should have known,
They should have protected us.
They ditched us,
Were hooking up in the other room,
Were busy fighting with their boyfriend.
Maybe we were angry at our mom who drove us to our boyfriend's house.
Our sister who didn't tell us not to go and who didn't want to know.
Our dad for not teaching us to be unashamed to want and unashamed to disappoint.

And then maybe we felt sad.
Very very very sad.
And then destructive
And ugly
And used
And needy
And owned.

And then maybe we spent years punishing ourself,
For the sin we never chose to commit,
For refusing to repent,
For not crying, not praying,
Not being a lady,
Not bruising like a lily,

Our punishment was long,
Getting drunk and getting touched,
Getting used.
Entitled hands of strangers all over our body,
Entitled lips telling us who we were,
Telling us we were communal property.
Reliving our past every night,
By day pretending to be who we had been,
And then one night we said it.
No.

Three, four, five years had passed,
We finally felt angry at the right person,
All the right people,
All the ones with entitled hands.
The one who put their fingers inside of us while we were sleeping in our friend's bed,
And then when we stopped them said "I didn't think you would wake up".
The coworker who said hang out when they meant coercion.
The partner who criticized our lack of purity,

Who said we should have waited,
Who never knew that we had intended to.
The one who took us out to dinner and said “Let’s take things slow”,
Before deciding slow was relative.
The one who dedicated “Drunk In Love” to us every Saturday,
And forgot to call during the week.
The one who took us out to their car to “get some air”.

They smelled it on us.
Knew our body belonged to anyone who touched it.
Knew our words meant nothing.
Knew our mind was easily changed.
They knew we didn’t feel much.

But most of all,
We saw the fault now.
Saw the one who whispered love before ruining love,
Who took what wasn’t his,
Even years of waiting didn’t make our body belong to you,
What you took from us didn’t make our body public property.
This is our body.
Never yours.

Mine.

ENTITLEMENT AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Carlynn Sharpe

Contrary to the widely held belief that rape is usually committed by strangers, according to the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN), one in four rapes takes place between intimate partners. The other misconception that can inhibit proper discussions of sexual assault is that rape cannot take place between two people who are in a relationship, who are married, or who have had consensual sexual intercourse before. This common misconception is revealing of a larger problem: entitlement.

Entitlement to sex or to someone else's body is a harmful mentality that plays a role in a vast number of rapes and sexual assaults. Date rapes, partner rapes, acquaintance rapes, and rapes involving alcohol and drugs like "ruff" are all examples of sexual assaults caused by feeling entitled to someone else's body. In the case of date rapes, perpetrators may feel entitled to sex because they took their victim out on a date, paid for dinner, drove them home, etc. In the case of partner rapes or rapes perpetrated by past partners, perpetrators may feel entitled to their victim's body, because they had consensual intercourse in the past. Perpetrators disregard the fact that consent is necessary each time, because they feel they have partial ownership of their partner's body. Many acquaintances who commit rape feel entitled to the victim's body due to feeling "led on", feeling like they "earned it" through favors or friendship, feeling their victim's sexual history invalidates the victim's refusal to have sex, or because they feel there is no reason for their rejection. For sexual assaults that take place at parties or clubs or that involve alcohol or drugs, the perpetrator may feel entitled to a victim's body because of what they are wearing or how much they drank. The perpetrator also may feel entitled because of what they perceive the moral conduct of the victim to be, or if the perpetrator feels like the victim led them on.

For several of these cases, entitlement often overlaps with victim blaming. Victim blaming is when the victim of rape or sexual assault is blamed for their attack. Victim blaming is rarely blatant, but often appears when questions arise, such as "What were they wearing?", or "But why did they drink?", or "Were they flirting?" These questions

insinuate that the perpetrator was entitled to the victim's body due to choices made by the victim prior to the attack. Victim blaming reveals that our society feels that perpetrators are entitled to another person's body if that person does not fit society's definition of victimhood, such as if the victim is the spouse or partner of the perpetrator, if the victim is perceived as promiscuous, if the victim and the perpetrator have had consensual sex in the past, if the victim was dressed provocatively, if the victim was drunk or using drugs, or if we feel that the victim led the perpetrator to believe sex was going to take place.

Entitlement to a person's body and victim blaming are never legitimate in the case of rape or sexual assault. These are dangerous and problematic mentalities that prevent our society from having healthy discussions about consent and sexual misconduct. Furthermore, entitlement and victim blaming inhibit us from creating comprehensive ways of preventing sexual assault. In order to address the problem of sexual assault, we must first understand consent and dismantle the belief that anyone is ever entitled to sex.

CIGARETTE SCARS

Devyn Springer

He drops cigarette ashes on my legs from time to time,
I tell him 'I know it's an accident, so I don't mind.'
Each small burn mark leaves behind a reminder,
Telling me it wasn't a dream:
You did sit beside me and smoke your cigarettes
With my feet in your lap. You did rest
Your hand on my thigh and smoke a cigarette
With me at your side. It was real, and these
cigarette scars constantly remind me.

These scars remind me that
I had to take a break from you.
I had to take a break.
I had to break.
I had to,
I had to.

STOP

Stormy Kage

Monsters don't hide under her bed anymore. He debuts on top of it. When the moon shines only she is there to witness the build-up of fur on human fingertips, pinching her lips shut, and canines. Claws don't gently unhook bra straps, like her high school darling, they dig for blood as red as octagonal street signs-not hearts or first times. They say for what it's worth, she should not be a walking raven on the darkened side of the street. No one will believe her when she says they are no longer in hiding. Except for maybe her father, who, whenever she is telling, checks under the mattress with a shotgun to get them, like a spider, she stares at on the ceiling.

ON SAVING KIDS FROM 'BROKEN HEARTS' & TEACHING KIDS ABOUT CONSENT

James Monroe

Q: How do I keep my kid from getting their heart broken?

A: You don't. It is impossible and damaging to try. Instead, teach them what can damage them, how to spot warning signs, and how to heal if their heart is broken.

I'm tired of watching parents ask this question as they determine the level of control they're going to try to implement over their kids' life (usually just the kids that they assume to be girls). There is no level of control that will prevent your kids from getting hurt. You can only provide them with knowledge and skills so that they can avoid it sometimes and heal from it other times.

Here's some harmful and very common advice about sex: "boys only want one thing," "don't get some girl pregnant," or "wait for someone special."

"Boys only want one thing," implies that it is inevitable for men to treat people as sexual objects; people taking this as advice will dismiss any red flags that deal with being dehumanized. It's not true and it's not acceptable, both of which are implied by this phrase. Instead people should tell their children that cis (non-trans) boys are socialized to get whatever they want, and if you're going to have sex with them you need to be very sure of your boundaries beforehand and able to communicate with them in a way a toddler would understand, not by using euphemisms or excuses.

Telling kids not "to get some girl pregnant," or "not get anyone pregnant," implies that the only mistake they can make in sex is in failing to use birth control; consent violation is far worse and more common. All people need to be taught that the worst mistake you can make in sex is consent violation, not making a pregnancy or getting an STI.

Telling someone to "wait for someone special," encourages people who want sex to have low expectations for anyone they sleep with who they are not intending to commit to. Instead of only having boundaries in regards to this mythic future person, people need to learn to set boundaries and decency standards with any sexual partner;

including casual hookups.

In talking about sex to teenagers, do not use euphemisms at all. Be willing to have frank conversations about difficult subjects or hire a therapist to do it. Don't be in denial about the idea of your kid having consensual sex with someone they chose. Statistically, they're gonna do it.

The best plan is to train kids in how to be good at consent from the time they are toddlers. Train them to not hit others because it is a violation of consent, not because "hitting is bad." Explain that you do not ever touch anyone in any way unless they have told you that they want you to. This is not hard to understand, but we train kids from very early that some kinds of touch are okay to foist on others (hugs, kisses, pats (especially from older people)) and others are not (hitting, pinching). Explain to your kids that a lot of people don't understand how to respect other people's bodies, and if someone ever touches them in a way they didn't say was okay, to talk with a trusted adult about it. Explain that if you cannot escape and you are in danger, this is the one situation where it is okay to fight back, but first always try to solve it with words (either talking to the attacker or talking to someone else who can stop them), or leaving, unless those aren't options. Train your kids that everyone's body belongs only to that person, no matter what, and that they have no right to ever expect any kind of touch from anyone.

Teach them that other people are sometimes bad at communicating and they might need to look for non-verbal cues that another person is done with the situation. This could start as easily as a kid being "mine mine" about all their toys -- you can tell from this that they are done playing with you, and you shouldn't try to play with them any more for a while (maybe ever, if the behavior repeats). Do not force kids to share (do encourage them to have empathy and share if the other kid is lacking, but do not force it!).

----- Trigger Warning: Discussion of Rape Prevalence and Aftermath -----

When your kids get to an age where they wanted to date or have sex, tell them the plain truth. Remind them that most people don't have the skill of respecting other people's bodies, and that when this comes to sex it can lead to rape. Tell them frankly that most rape happens with people you know, in supposedly 'safe' places, and that most people who have committed rape don't think that they have raped. Tell them that rapists are not people you can pick from a crowd, and that the more power someone has, the more likely that they think they are entitled to other people's bodies.

Also teach them not to be so terrified of rape. Being raised with the idea that rape ruins your life forever and breaks you irreparably can make recovery far more painful

and difficult. If your kid does get raped, they need to know that they can recover and have a good life afterward.

----- **End TW** -----

Teach your kids how to spot red flags for people being bad at consent. Those people will not respect your “no” in general, so always test them out first by saying an unexcused, unequivocal “no” to something they want. If they push for a reason, say “I don’t want to” -- for someone with the basics of consent, they’ll drop it, and if they try to talk you into it, they won’t listen to what you want in sex either. If you don’t feel comfortable saying no without giving some excuse, that is also a red flag, because a lover should always be someone you feel comfortable saying no to for any reason.

Other red flags: they’ll make jokes about boundary violations, especially rape; they’ll cut you off in conversation and talk over you; they’ll put you down; they will follow you with their touch if you pull away (kisses especially); they’ll respond to your arguments dismissively rather than actually considering anything you say; they’ll sulk if they don’t get their way; they will say things that invalidate your identity; they’ll touch you without permission in non-sexual ways; they’ll touch animals or friends in ways that bother the animal/friend; they will call names and/or mock people; they’ll do things deliberately to cause someone to be uncomfortable/annoyed (especially as a ‘joke’ reaction to someone setting a boundary); they won’t stop doing annoying behavior when asked; they will use things that don’t belong to them without permission; they will make sexual innuendos and find it funny if someone gets uncomfortable; they will show no interest in your thoughts/opinions; they’ll get offended when you don’t laugh at their jokes or tell them it isn’t funny; they won’t show remorse when you tell them they hurt you; they will get angry when you tell them they hurt you; they’ll interrupt a conversation you are having by turning away and ceasing to engage, especially if you are saying something they don’t like (note: this can be a healthy choice but it can also be a control tactic); they’ll ignore you and/or make you repeat yourself; they won’t notice if you get upset.

Anything that shows that they aren’t checking in with how their actions are affecting you or anything that shows that they think their opinion/desire is more important than yours is a giant red flag for being bad at consent. Of course, this is just a red flag, not an automatic marker, so check to see if there could be another reason for the red flag. For instance, they might communicate differently due to a neurological difference, which could be worked out with discussions about how you both want to converse. BUT if there is more than one red flag take it VERY seriously. Listen to your gut and don’t dismiss their negative behavior with “that’s just how they are.”

NAMES YOU GAVE ME

Carlynn Sharpe

I am still fond of the smell of whiskey,
Though the smell of your breath is what I remember most;
Better to focus on the smell of Jack or Jim.
I could have chosen to lock my mind on your sister
Sleeping on the other side of the room.
Nothing more between us than ten feet of hardwood floor,
And her brother's naked body.

I could have thought of her brown eyes.
Or our five years of friendship.
Friction of the mismatched sheets underneath me,
Knotted up uncomfortably where you had tossed them off.
The stubble on your face cutting into my skin.
Those animal sounds escaping your mouth.
The rolls on my stomach smooshed all together.

The names you had given me could have resounded:
Slut, n***** lover, fat bitch, beautiful, race traitor.
Baby.
I could have been reciting them, so as not to forget what I am.
But I did forget what I am.
It was hard to remember.
It always is.

I did not fight like I thought I would.
I did not push you off of me like I thought I would.
I did nothing.
I was busy being quiet.

I was busy being still.

I just thought about the smell of whiskey.

I did not estimate the number of drinks you'd had.

I did not try to remember the way I had always pictured my first time.

I did not count how many times you had promised me we would wait.

I was busy being quiet.

I was busy being still.

I just focused on the smell of that whiskey.

Jack or Jim.

It was easy to forget.

I forgot how much you loved me.

I forgot all you had given me.

I forgot who you were to me completely.

I forgot your name.

I forgot to fight.

I forgot what I am.

It was easy to remember how much I love the smell of whiskey.

It wasn't easy to be raped.

YESTERDAY

Sarah Barnett



COERCION IS *NOT* CONSENT

Jessica Fisher

Emory University's public health documents¹ define coercion as, "A tactic that perpetrators use to exert power and control over another person. Coercion occurs when a person intimidates, tricks, forces, or manipulates someone into engaging in sexual activity without the use of physical force." The definition goes on to say that, "Perpetrators may also use threats of violence, blackmail, drugs, and/or alcohol to coerce someone into sexual activity." Additionally, coercive statements may be used against someone. Emory lists four examples:

"If you really loved me, you would have sex with me."

"If you won't have sex with me, I'll find someone who will."

"But you've been flirting with me all night."

"I didn't realize you were such a prude."

According to the Adolescent Sexual Coercion Fact Sheet released by the Oregon Health Authority, "Victims of peer sexual coercion often experience heightened psychological symptoms of depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress."²

According to the website, "Talk with Your Kids," the CDC has found that, "1 in 10 teens said they had coerced another person into some form of sexual activity." Similarly, "... among teens who have had sex before 15, over 40% of girls reported being forced to have sex and over 5% of boys reported being forced to have sex."³

Coercion happens most often because none of the parties involved understand that what is happening is coercion. Further, coercion happens because none of the parties involved understand that coercion is not consent. This occurs because there is a lack of comprehensive education around consent and what consent is and why it's necessary.

I was 16 before I ever had sex. After suffering sexual abuse as a young kid, and dealing with the confusion of physical and social dysphoria (which I spent a long time interpreting as "insanity"), I was not gung-ho about participating in sex, especially if it

1 "Consent Vs. Coercion". Office of Health Promotion. Emory University.
http://studenthealth.emory.edu/hp/respect_program/consent_vs_coercion.html

2 <https://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyPeopleFamilies/ReproductiveSexualHealth/Documents/edmat/adolescentsexualcoercion.pdf>

3 "Sexual Coercion". Talk With Your Kids.
<http://www.talkwithyourkids.org/pages/sexual-coercion/sexual-coercion.html>

involved my penis. I found out many years later that I identify along the asexual spectrum, as a demisexual.

My girlfriend when I was 16 was very forceful about us having sex. She was so ready to have sex that she was prepared to do it in my room at my dad's house, with the door open, and four other people in the house. She couldn't fathom why I was apprehensive about that, or apprehensive about doing it at her house, where her dad could come home, or walk in on us.

My girlfriend asked me if I loved her. She asked me if I wanted to make her happy. She asked me if I wanted to take our relationship to the next level, and if I said no, she got pouty. I felt like I couldn't tell her no, I felt like if I wanted to keep the relationship, I had to have sex with her, and because of this anxiety, and her persistence, my first time ended up being in the back of the cab of a pick-up truck in a supermarket shopping center parking lot.

"Talk with Your Kids,"⁴ goes on to say that teens are five times more likely to be coerced if they have a history of sexual abuse.

Consent needs to be conscious, constant, emphatic and sober. Consent can only happen amongst two sober adults. Consent can only happen with constant reaffirmed yesses (this has been affirmed in one case by the California government, with the passage of their 'Yes means Yes' law).⁵ If someone says no and you ask them again and then they say yes, that's coercion.

And coercion is not consent.

4 Ibid.

5 Senate Bill No. 967.

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140SB967

THE RITUAL OF BREAKING

Anonymous

I loved you hard that winter.
I took everything you had. Everything you threw at me including the punches,
And I found beauty in your fists.
Saw you as a shattered Mona Lisa only needing to be swept back together,
So I searched for every broom, vacuum, dustpan.
Cleaning supplies can't hold broken people,
I needed them for myself.
There were days I laid in bed scavenging for strength to clean myself up,
To clean this mess you made of me...
But every ounce of courage I had I gave to you.
I confused the alcohol with water.
The smell on your breath no longer smelled toxic.
It smelled like Home.
And we buried ourselves in this toxic love.
We turned each other into monsters, poems into death threats,
But you were always the most creative...
Could transform "I love you" into "I'll KILL you."
But all I heard was "I" and "You,"
And that was enough to get me through the bad days.
The bad days,
Stung like fire.
They came so often I was never done cleaning up Wednesday's mess,
And here is Thursday morning,
With more blood,
And more scattered rooms,
And more broken souls.
And here is Thursday afternoon,
Smiles big + pretty,

And holding hands,
And skipping 'round,
And folks coming up to us talking 'bout "relationship goals."
I wanted to cry out for help every time.
Warn every girl that big eyes will swallow you in.
You will want to glue, hammer, nail back together his pieces,
But you are not a carpenter, love.
And here is Thursday night.
Finding yourself in the bathtub trying to drown out the bruises.
Your lungs once breathed his air and you want it all out.
And you will sit in the bathtub, sick.
Smiling at how loving him was the best thing you've ever done.
I loved you hard that winter.
This,
Is for colored girls who consider suicide
Every time he knocks a hue out of her rainbow.
You loved him hard that winter, didn't you.

PUSH

Carlynn Sharpe



KNUCKLES

Devyn Springer

I remember the first time he hit me—
It was his ruby red lips
Against the pumping veins
Underneath my warm neck,
Sloppy and pulsing with innocence.

And then the next time
It was much more of a hit.
(His Knuckles carved his name into my ribs
And his hands told my heart
That they owned me).

His words dripped poison onto my spine
And it crippled me into believing
I deserved all that he had to give me,
And I made the mistake of thinking his Knuckles
Were the gods I deserved to worship.

SEXUAL ASSAULT AND OUR INEFFECTIVE SOLIDARITY

Earnest Aaron

Lately there tends to be allies for every issue, yet allies have not been able to shift the tide on sexual assault. The social justice community as a whole has pondered, questioned, and debated what it means to be a good and effective ally. As I think more about what does it takes to be a good and effective ally in regard to Sexual Assault, I'm confronted with the idea that perhaps I'm asking the wrong question. Allies stand alongside you, but inevitably are not directly affected by the outcome of your efforts. Sexual assault however requires solidarity because we are all – no matter how minisculely – affected by sexual assault. The revelation then posed the question, what does sexual assault solidarity look like? This question perhaps might be easier.

The foundation to sexual assault solidarity must lie in effective and quick reporting. We must shift the conversation of sexual assault from a 'person A said,' 'person B said,' type of narrative. Having physical evidence provided by a rape kit helps shift the conversation in the case of most rapes, but it'll never cover all. However, doing such requires some additional steps. It also requires us to examine some of the narratives surrounding sexual assault. One of the most prominent is the false accusation narrative. Which usually insist that the victim wasn't raped; the victim is simply reluctant to admit their sexual behavior. In that theory lays a major problem, essentially we're saying someone would rather deal with the social pressure and stigmata that come with being raped than deal with the social pressure and stigmata that comes with enjoying sex. So here is our first additional step, standing in solidarity means encouraging the choices people make regarding sex and their body. It means doing your part to put an end to slut shaming. Reporting can happen quicker and smoother when victims don't have to think about the social repercussions of reporting their assault. We can eliminate the theory of false reporting and become more aware of when we should report.

While it might seem like it goes without saying, we've got to understand the diversity of sexual assault victims. If we're going to stand in solidarity, we've got to understand sexual assault can happen to anyone. Sexual assault happens to every gender,

race, sexuality, ability level, religion, spirituality, and sex; as such we cannot focus on a narrative of “this is” sexual assault. Every case of sexual assault is unique and deserves unique attention. When we start focusing on how the person was dressed or what activity they were doing, this causes us to focus on a sexual assault narrative that has very little to do with the actual sexual assault.

While undermining the theory of false accusing goes a long way in changing the way we talk about sexual assault, such actions alone doesn't mean we've mastered solidarity. Effective and quick reporting is just the foundation, so next we've got to tackle the “I know them” theory. Another prevailing theme surrounding sexual assault is the belief that the accused would never do such a thing. Unsurprisingly, this theory is used when talking about several violent crimes. In all of these cases, we have to understand: no matter how much we know people we don't exactly know what they're capable of. Even more so we've yet to ask: would the victim seek to utilize the resources of our justice system to punish someone? In theory there are very few instances where we could answer yes to this question. But solidarity isn't about this question, it's about ensuring that victims feel safe and comfortable sharing their story of what happened. If you want to do something about sexual assault, it's about time to stand in solidarity instead of just being an ally. Claim the fact that every case of sexual assault involves you.

RESOURCES AND REMINDERS

Helpful websites for victims, family and friends, or anyone else interested in advocacy against sexual violence.

On Campus Resources:

<http://tellksu.kennesaw.edu> – Tell KSU serves as a resource for students, faculty, staff and visitors who have either been impacted by or would like to learn more about interpersonal violence. The website includes information on your rights, options for reporting, and support services available. Additionally, the site includes information on how to get involved in violence prevention, including how to become an ACTive bystander.

<http://sss.kennesaw.edu/wrc> – The Women’s Resource and Violence Prevention Center is a KSU resource dedicated to enhancing academic performance, empowering the campus community, and creating an inclusive and violence free campus. The WRC supports survivors of sexual assault and interpersonal violence, refers students to on and off campus resources, provides education and training about gender issues, and promotes awareness of gender issues on campus.

http://www.kennesaw.edu/stu_dev/glbtiq/mission.shtml – The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Questioning and Queer (GLBTIQ) Student Resource Center provides support, resources, referrals and space to students of all gender identities, expressions, and sexual orientations. The GLBTIQ Student Resource Center provides a supportive, safe, and inclusive environment for all to maximize their potential as students.

<http://gwst.hss.kennesaw.edu/program> – KSU’s Gender and Women’s Studies Program is part of the Interdisciplinary Studies Department. The GWST Program offers a minor to KSU students and gives them the opportunity to learn about gender and the intersections of race, class, sexuality, and other social identities, as well as providing education about social justice and activism.

<http://www.kennesaw.edu/studentssuccessservices/cps> – KSU Counseling and Psychological Services provides students with a variety of resources, including one-on-one counseling, group counseling, couples counseling, the CARE Center for homeless students, psychiatric services, and referrals.

State and National Resources:

<http://www.thehotline.org> – The National Domestic Violence Hotline is a service that operates 7 days a week 24 hours a day. The website and hotline (1-800-799-SAFE(7233)) provide victims with an array of tools including information about domestic violence, safety planning, and local resources and support organizations.

<http://www.nsvrc.org> – The National Sexual Violence Resource Center is a site that provides information on all forms of sexual violence. Visitors can find information on current news, projects, publications, and events concerning the fight against sexual violence.

<https://rainn.org> – The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network is a resource for victims, as well as their families and friends, to find information, share their stories, and access help. They have a hotline (1-800-656-HOPE(4673)) which anyone can call 7 days a week 24 hours a day. They also offer links to counseling resources by state at: <https://rainn.org/get-help/local-counseling-centers/state-sexual-assault-resources>

<https://www.notalone.gov> – Not Alone is a government resource which works to provide students, schools, and anyone else interested with information on how to respond to and prevent sexual assault and violence specifically in schools.

<http://www.sarcbv.org> – The Sexual Assault Resource Center is a resource for victims which provides pertinent information for immediate response to incidents of sexual assault through a 24 hour a day local hotline (1-979-731-1000) as well as access to 24 hour a day accompaniment to medical facilities or law enforcement for victims. They also provide information to the community both through their website and through community outreach programs.

<http://www.gnesa.org> – The Georgia Network to End Sexual Assault is a Georgia specific resource which provides information and resources to victims along with opportunities for those interested to get involved with the cause locally. They also have links to training programs directed towards teaching law enforcement officials and medical professionals how to appropriately respond to incidents of sexual assault.



Fall & Spring Excursion

Each year the African American Student Alliance embarks on two adventures. Both are geared toward giving students an opportunity to experience a place rich in history and develop a better understanding of the history each of the destinations possess. The Fall Excursion is generally to another state or country and as implied by the name takes place in the fall. The Spring Excursion on the other hand is typically local and allows for students to experience history right here in their backyards.

Purpose

The African American Student Alliance (AASA) was founded in the interest of creating a multicultural college environment from the African Diaspora perspective. AASA will accomplish this by fostering self-understanding and pride amongst people of African ancestry and individuals interested in the African culture and heritage with substantive and ongoing evidence of educational and social programming which promote diversity, enhance literacy and understanding between cultural entities. Having the duties of government prescribed by Kennesaw State University and monitored by the Assistant Director for Multicultural Student Retention Services under the Department of Student Development in conjunction with the Vice President for Student Success and Enrollment Services, we do hereby enact these bylaws.

Visit Us In Our Office

We are located on the 3rd floor of the Student Center Room 371

Follow us on  @ksuaasa

General Body Meetings

Held every other Thursday at 12:30pm.

Below are the dates.

FALL SEMESTER

- August 27
- September 10
- September 24
- October 8
- October 22
- November 5
- November 19

Spring Semester

- January 4
- January 28
- February 11
- February 25
- March 10
- March 24

Join us and become a registered member on Owl Life today!

DO YOU REPRESENT A UNIQUE OR MISUNDERSTOOD DEMOGRAPHIC?

The **Anti-Assimilationist
Non-Normative Students of KSU**
work to advocate and educate on behalf of
non-normative students, ensuring that their
voices are heard by the KSU community.

Do you need a design like this?
Contact Celia Fisher:
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We are a safe and welcoming place for
racial, ethnic, spiritual, sexual, and religious
minorities, as well as people of all genders
and ability levels.

Come see what we're all about:

| | | |
|-------|--------|---------------------------------------|
| 10/1 | 5-7 PM | J.M. WILSON STUDENT CENTER (M) - A215 |
| 10/15 | 5-7 PM | STUDENT CENTER ADDITION - STA301 |
| 10/29 | 5-7 PM | STUDENT CENTER ADDITION - STA301 |
| 11/12 | 5-7 PM | STUDENT CENTER ADDITION - STA301 |
| 12/10 | 5-7 PM | STUDENT CENTER ADDITION - STA301 |

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Join us for An Evening Of...

Poetic



EXPRESSIONS



Celebrating the Musical, Magical, Artistic,
and Poetic gifts of Black People.

November 5, 2015

Social Science Room 1019

7:30-9:30pm

Hosted by The African American Student Alliance



IntersectionalFeminism **Nondiscriminatory**
SexAndBody+ **AntiRacism** **TransInclusion**
GenderEquality **Peace**
AntiStateViolence **Environmentalism**
LGBTIQ+ **DisabilityAdvocacy&AntiAbleism**
ImmigrationReform

CALLING ALL ACTIVISTS.
We're all in this together.

ksuyesbody.official@gmail.com **YESbody!** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/KSUYESbody/>

KSU Walks *in their* Atlanta Pride Parade

B.O.B Shuttle Schedule

The B.O.B Bus will run on a loop between the Kennesaw Campus, Marietta Campus, and Piedmont Park. Route Info on TransLoc App (**PINK** Route)

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Bus Schedule</p> <p>Saturday: 10 AM - 2 PM, 5 PM - 9 PM</p> <p>Sunday: 9:30 AM - 12 PM (drop off @ parade assembly) 5 PM - 10 PM</p> | <p>Pick Up/Drop Off Locations</p> <p>Kennesaw: Burruss/Commons Marietta: Student Center Piedmont Park: Botanical Gardens SAGE Parking Deck</p> |
|--|--|

For Updates follow us on Twitter! @GLBTIQKSU