5-11-2023

You have every right to be angry: Impacts of the angry Black woman stereotype and counseling considerations for helping Black women honor their anger

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You Have Every Right to be Angry: Impacts of the Angry Black Woman Stereotype and Counseling Considerations for Helping Black Women Honor Their Anger

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A research project submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

In

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the degree of

Educational Specialist

Department of Graduate Psychology

May 2023

FACULTY COMMITTEE:

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Dedication

To Black women.

To anyone who has ever been silenced.

Your voice is important.

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Abstract

The Angry Black Woman (ABW) stereotype depicts Black women as hostile and aggressive. It is rooted in slavery and functions to silence and invalidate Black women. The ABW stereotype perpetuates racist ideology and is used to control the narrative of Black women and justify their mistreatment. Black women are faced with the impacts of the ABW stereotype throughout different areas of their life, beginning in childhood. Because of the risk of being negatively and inaccurately perceived, Black women have had to filter themselves to not be labeled as aggressive, hyperemotional, and/or the "angry" Black woman. This paper explores the history of the ABW stereotype, how this stereotype influences treatment towards Black women, and the impact on Black women's health. This paper also shares ways that mental health counselors can help Black women honor their anger and express themselves.

You Have Every Right to be Angry: Impacts of the Angry Black Woman Stereotype and Counseling Considerations for Helping Black Women Honor Their Anger

Anger is a natural, human emotion. It is an emotional response to provocation (Novaco, 1976), perceived injustice (Thompson, 2006), and an adaptive response to a threat (Thomas & González-Prendes, 2008). Thomas and González-Prendes (2008) share that anger can be empowering for individuals who have experienced injustice as an impetus to develop methods of amending the issue for themselves. However, those who are a part of marginalized groups and who have a history of experiencing injustice at the hands of oppressors and the dominant culture are obstructed from expressing their anger which forbids them from accessing those solutions. This silences them, making them more susceptible and defenseless to the experiences of anger (Thomas & González-Prendes, 2008).

Black women, in particular, have experienced racism in the form of stereotypes that are used to marginalize and silence them (Walley-Jean, 2009). The angry Black woman (ABW) stereotype is one of the most pervasive stereotypes that serve to objectify Black women (Lewis et al., 2016). This stereotype is one of several controlling images, spread by the white, dominant society, that suppresses the ideas and voices of Black women and keeps them in a place of subordination. Stereotypes and controlling images are one aspect of a larger system that function to perpetuate white supremacy and make racist and sexist ideology and misogynoir appear natural, normal, and unavoidable (Collins, 1999).

Specifically, the ABW stereotype portrays Black women as hostile, aggressive, emasculating, domineering, and hyperemotional. It paints Black women in a negative

light and exists to justify their oppression and mistreatment. The ABW stereotype allows others to dismiss Black women's words, concerns, and emotional expression as a result of this myth that they are hyperemotional and combative. Further, by making anger appear as something that is inherent and deep-rooted in the nature and character of Black women, it demonizes them, and any instance in which they do feel or express anger, it is diminished as a byproduct of their assigned nature (Corbin et al., 2018). Her anger is attributed to her living out the stereotype instead of any external factors that may be upsetting her. And, contrary to what the ABW stereotype portrays, there are no findings that support the claim that Black women have higher intensities of anger or express anger more than women of other racial groups (Walley-Jean, 2009). In a study conducted by Walley-Jean (2009), results showed that Black women are less likely to experience angry feelings even when provoked, faced with criticism, or disrespected. This further shows that the ABW stereotype is a myth used to depict Black women as innately contrarian, bitter and unworthy of being listened to.

Because of the way the ABW stereotype disparages Black women's anger, Black women are oftentimes made to feel like they are not allowed to feel or express it. It seems that the words of Black women can only be palatable if they are said in a way that accommodates the comfort of those around them instead of honoring how they truly feel. An insidious implication of these controlling images is that they put blame on the Black woman, and instead of the focus being placed on her words, the focus is placed on how the other person feels about her words. In response, Black women must filter their words and emotions in order to not be labeled as aggressive and/or the stereotypical "angry, Black woman." This paper discusses the stereotype of the angry Black woman and

explores how this stereotype influences treatment towards Black women, the toll that this has on Black women throughout their life, and the ways in which counselors can help Black women honor their anger and express themselves in ways that best serve them. It also discusses how counselors can be advocates for Black women in helping to address the mistreatment and discrimination towards them.

History of the Angry Black Woman Stereotype

The depiction of Black women as angry and hostile began in slavery and has been reinforced in the media (Motro et al., 2022). Black women were depicted in the media as "sassy mammies" who were loud, sassy, rude, and stubborn. In the radio show *Amos 'n' Andy*, which aired from 1928-1960, Sapphire, who was a caricature of a Black woman portrayed by white actors, Amos Jones and Andy, was portrayed as aggressive, angry, emasculating, and domineering, especially towards her husband. Amos and Andy mocked and overdramatized the behaviors of Black women when acting as Sapphire. This show popularized these racial stereotypes and, unfortunately, influenced how Black people, and particularly Black women, were both viewed and treated (Pilgrim, 2008; Walley-Jean, 2009).

The Sapphire image contrasted with the "mammy" image, which portrayed Black women in a nurturing role. Black women were expected to care for others, particularly the white children of white families. They were expected to be kind, friendly, jovial, and agreeable. This is what was deemed as a "good" Black woman. If a Black woman was acting in any way that appeared to be opposite of this, then they were condemned. This stereotype, along with others, was used as a strategy to keep Black women from achieving political, economic, and societal gains. It was another tool used to justify the

mistreatment, discrimination, and oppression of Black women who did not conform to the subordinate, “mammy” role. It kept Black women controlled within the margins of their social status and what white people needed them to be (Ashley, 2013).

White people, who held the most power and authority over societal values and norms (Collins, 1999), were the ones who determined who was allowed to express anger and how it could be expressed (Ashley, 2013). By labeling Black women with negative stereotypes such as angry, irate, or hostile, oppressors were allowed to belittle them and flip the narrative to present the Black woman as the aggressor and unworthy of humane treatment. These stereotypes also exclude Black women from the standards of femininity defined by white people. Doing so enabled white people to feel justified in their actions to dismiss Black women as people. Corbin et al., (2018) writes that even though Black women and white women may share female anatomy, the Black woman archetype created by white people characterizes Black women as masculine and “overly assertive... and therefore, not wholly female” (p. 628). Feminine virtues were something only white women were allowed to possess. In being viewed as not wholly female, Black women are therefore not treated with the same grace as white women. Instead, they were treated with hostility and portrayed as the attacker even when on the defense of attack.

Because of the way the ABW stereotype invalidated the emotional expression of Black women, Black women learned early on to filter themselves to be heard. The ABW stereotype has always had both internal and external impacts for Black women. It affected how they explain and express themselves, how they show up in different environments, and how others treat them. An article by Wilson (2021) shared how emotional standards, set by the white majority, restricted the ways in which formerly

enslaved women were able to discuss their experiences. Interviews from three formerly enslaved Black women reveal how they had to consider the restraints that were placed on Black women's anger before sharing their experiences with White violence. Even when speaking their truth about racial violence, they had to filter themselves and keep in regard "white reactions to their testimony" (p. 309). Speaking out against white violence and expressing hatred and/or rage towards their mistreatment would have been seen as threatening, which would be a risk to their life and safety. Additionally, Wilson (2021) writes that the women would make "truth-telling" comments such as "tain't no use to lie," "may as well tell the truth," and "ice not ashamed" (p. 314) to preface their stories. These statements demonstrate the ways in which societal standards limit how Black women can express anger and how Black women are forced to dispel the angry Black woman archetype.

The Adultification of Black Girls

Black women still feel the impact of the ABW stereotype today, and it shows up early in Black girls' lives. Black girls as young as five are often adultified and viewed as less innocent, more mature, and older than their same-age white peers (Pappas, 2021). This bias toward Black girls peaks at ages 10-14 (Rebecca Epstein et al., 2017). A study by Rebecca Epstein et al (2017) explored adults' perceptions of Black girls and revealed that, compared to white girls of the same age, Black girls are viewed as needing less nurturing, protection, and support. They were also seen as needing to be comforted less, being more independent, and being more knowledgeable about adult topics, including sex. Through this lens, Black girls are not viewed as people who are able to be harmed and in need of care.

Stereotypes, like the ABW stereotype, influence white people's view of Black women as loud and hostile and having bad attitudes (Blake & Epstein, 2019). These stereotypes of Black women are often placed on little Black girls who are then punished and judged through the lens of the ABW stereotype. Black girls' behaviors are scrutinized more and are held to a different, harsher standard than their white peers when exhibiting challenging behaviors. According to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (2018), 14% of Black girls received out-of-school suspensions in the 2015–2016 school year, compared with only 8% of White girls, even though Black girls represented only 8% of the student population that year and White girls represented 24%. Adultification and the biased belief that Black women are inherently hostile, places Black girls within a narrative that they are purposefully being malicious whenever they act against set rules. Their behaviors are seen more often as an attack to authority rather than a result of their childlike nature (Rebecca Epstein et al., 2017). Black girls are not given the grace to make mistakes or behave like children who are learning about themselves and how to navigate their environments. They are not afforded the explanation that their behaviors are just a part of their self-expression and continuing development (Epstein et al., 2017).

Due to this pattern of harsh and unfair treatment toward Black girls, Black parents, particularly Black mothers, may work to protect Black girls from the harmful effects of the ABW stereotype and the risk of adultification (Dow, 2019). To do so, Black families attempt to create distance between their daughter and the ABW stereotype. Black families may use practices such as placing their child in positive race-related group activities, teaching them how to govern their behavior, appearance, and emotions, and

telling cautionary tales about people, especially those in authority positions who may criminalize Black girls based on their racist perceptions of them (Malone Gonzalez, 2020). While these practices are done in effort to protect Black girls from being mistreated and discriminated against, it unfortunately teaches them that they must change and adapt themselves to safely exist. This socialization will carry on to their adulthood.

The Pervasiveness of the ABW Stereotype Through Adulthood

As Black girls grow into women, the judgement and discrimination that result from the ABW stereotype is still very present. As explained by parallel-constraint-satisfaction theory, stereotypes can impact the ways in which behaviors and traits are viewed and can influence the impressions of individuals (Kunda & Thagard, 1996). Furthermore, as people try to make sense of others, they may rely on information that they have gathered through their observations and develop a hypothesis or assumption based on the behavior they observed integrated with the stereotypes that exist about their social group (Thagard & Kunda, 1998). Motro et al. (2022) explains that stereotypes influence people's expectations of how others behave and oftentimes make meaning of how others are acting in a way that is consistent with the stereotype. A study conducted by Lewis et al (2016) shows how this theory shows up in the ways that people interact with Black women based on the existing and widespread stereotypes. It examines Black women's experiences of microaggressions while attending a predominantly white university. One theme highlighted in the study was Black women's experience of being perceived as or expected to fulfill the ABW stereotype. One participant reported that a white, male counterpart would become apologetic or overly cautious with her, as if expecting her to react in a hostile manner. Another participant shared that she feels

required to suppress her passion for a topic out of fear she will be viewed as angry or aggressive. Many Black women report instances in which their emotions or intentions are misinterpreted due to this stereotype (Ashley, 2013). Because people have been socialized to view Black women as controlling, hostile, and perpetually unsatisfied (Witherspoon & Speight, 2004), they view Black women's behaviors and reactions as evidence for those stereotypes.

Additionally, when Black women do express anger, they are not met with the understanding that their anger could be warranted or explained. One study reported that observers are more likely to attribute Black women's anger to internal factors or a perceived trait rather than external factors (Motro et al., 2022). People tend to disregard any consideration of negative, frustrating, or hurtful incidents that could have caused Black women to express their anger. This biased perspective has detrimental consequences for Black women. For instance, the ABW stereotype and the pattern of viewing Black women's anger as intrinsic leads employers and supervisors to giving them lower performance evaluations and poorer assessments (Motro et al., 2022).

With their experiences of being treated through the lens of the ABW stereotype, Black women learn that it is not safe to express any level of anger, especially in predominantly white spaces. They receive messages that anger is an emotion reserved for white people and that they must filter themselves in a way that is acceptable to the dominant culture to avoid judgement, mistreatment, and discrimination. Wingfield (2010) writes that there are "feeling rules" which are standards of emotional expression created by the dominant culture. These feeling rules govern what emotions are appropriate to express, and by whom. Wingfield explains that within corporate culture, standards for

emotional expression are often built around white, middle-class norms. The issue for Black professionals is that it is difficult for them to adhere to any expectations around emotional expression because of the racism they face and the racial disparity in how emotions are perceived.

Regarding anger, Black professionals report that standards of expression set by white, corporate culture do not apply to them because they are not allowed to display any sort of anger at all (Windfield, 2010). Black professionals report instances when they have witnessed their white counterparts expressing anger, frustration, or disagreement in a way that is not permissible to them. This is especially true for Black women whose expression of anger runs the risk of fulfilling the stereotype. Black people are aware that they are scrutinized in a harsher way than their white counterparts and have learned that there are unfair consequences for them in displaying anger. In addition to the standards for anger, there are also standards for maintaining a positive attitude. If Black people do not consistently appear as pleasant and jovial, they are automatically viewed as having a bad attitude and unfit within the company culture. This experience of facing emotional standards that are rooted in racial bias is not just limited to the corporate workplace or academic settings. It is an issue faced in various settings.

Effect on Black Women's Health

As previously mentioned, anger is a normal reaction and not being able to express it, especially in instances that warrant anger, can be detrimental. Witherspoon et al (2004) studied how Black women internalize stereotypes and found that the "Sapphire stereotype," also considered the ABW stereotype, was one of the two that had significant negative impacts on Black women's self-esteem. They report that women who internalize

the stereotype may worry about being viewed as overly aggressive and have anxiety about expressing their anger out of fear of being met with invalidation or other harmful treatment. Black women experience feeling unsafe as a result of being stereotyped and may have anxiety towards the anticipation of future stereotyping (Ashley, 2013). Additionally, the impacts of the ABW of being silenced, judged, and oppressed can add to the experience of racial battle fatigue. Racial battle fatigue (RBF) is described as the result of being consistently faced with gendered and racialized microaggressions and the adverse effects this has on the health of marginalized groups (Corbin et al., 2018). Racial battle fatigue can provide explanations for some of the "psychosocial stress responses" exhibited by Black women, including frustration, sadness, shock, and helplessness in encounters and/or environments rife with misogynoir (Corbin et al., 2018).

Because of the awareness of the ABW stereotype and the ways that Black women are treated and perceived when it comes to the expression of anger, Black women may conceal disclosures of anger, conceal its impact in their lives (Ashley, 2013) and adjust the way they behave to appear nonthreatening (Walley-Jean, 2009). One study by Scott (2013) explored ways in which Black women use communication strategies to deconstruct the view that dominant society has about them being angry, hostile, and domineering. Strategies include methods of "shifting," such as changing their outward behavior, attitude, and tone. Black women have learned to shift to survive and have their voice be seriously considered as well as to ensure that their demeanor is accurately interpreted. This can be emotionally taxing because as Black women are trying to navigate day to day life like everyone else, they must also worry about the scrutiny they are under and spend energy to ensure that they are not being viewed negatively. This

study reveals that these communication strategies are used “to construct an alternate identity of a Black woman and redefine Black womanhood” (p. 318). The issue with these efforts is that Black women are spending so much energy to adapt themselves and change the narrative that dominant culture has of them when it should be the responsibility of dominant culture to shift that narrative themselves. Black women should not have to create an alternate identity to be respected, especially when the identity is based on stereotypes derived from slavery and the need for white people to maintain power. Black women should be allowed to show up as they are, just as others are able to. Additionally, constantly suppressing and bottling up their genuine feelings could lead Black women to feel out of control and lose their temper, which could then induce feelings of guilt, lowered self-esteem (Childs & Palmer, 2001), and even shame for appearing to fulfill the ABW stereotype.

The ABW stereotype also affects the physical health of Black women. Racial battle fatigue occurs from the constant exposure to racial microaggressions. The ABW stereotype is a microaggression that Black women encounter in various forms. Microaggressions like this one can be subtle, unconscious, spoken and unspoken, explicit, or covert, and can cause physical stress to the Black body. Smith (2004) explains that the consistent threat and exposure to racial microaggressions can cause chronic RBF due to either being actively harmed by microaggressions or remaining in anticipation of a racist event. Symptoms include rapid breathing, upset stomach, frequent diarrhea, urination, tension headaches, constant anxiety, ulcers, insomnia, rapid mood swings, difficulty thinking or speaking, and social withdrawal (Smith, 2004).

Counseling Considerations

It is important to acknowledge that Black women have a plethora of reasons to be angry. In addition to being emotionally policed, they are constantly witnessing traumatic news stories of police brutality and are often overlooked in the media after an event of being murdered and mistreated at the hands of police (Williams, 2016). They also experience maternal mortality at more than twice the rate of White women (Pappas, 2021) and are faced with other barriers within the healthcare system due to racism and racial-gendered stereotypes. This leads to Black women to being denied the health care that they need and in turn they experience a higher rate of detrimental health conditions including heart disease, stroke, cancers, diabetes, maternal morbidities, obesity, and stress (Chinn et al., 2021). Additionally, Black women occupy 7% of the workforce and are significantly underrepresented in leadership positions (Motro et al., 2022). They also earn about $5,500 less per year and experience higher unemployment and poverty rates than the U.S. average for women (Chinn et al., 2021). Furthermore, Black women are more often the head of household than their White counterparts and are caring for more dependents with fewer resources and with more judgement and stigma (Chinn et al., 2021). There is no regard for how experiences of social, economic, and political oppression may lead to anger and there is a lack of understanding of how real or perceived hostility may be the result of survival skills developed in the face of those challenges.

Black women are faced with unfair challenges in multiple sectors of their life that would warrant feelings of anger. Yet, when faced with the ABW stereotype, they are not given the permission to express the anger they so rightfully feel. The silencing of Black

women through the utilization and pervasiveness of the ABW stereotype has caused significant negative impact to the mental health of Black women and has affected the way they share their genuine emotions. It is important for counselors to be aware of those impacts and provide a counseling space that can support, validate, and provide safety for the emotional expression for Black women.

Building Rapport

According to research, a strong therapeutic alliance is the most crucial factor in successful treatment outcomes (Stubbe, 2018) regardless of the theoretical approach (Battaglia, 2019). A strong therapeutic alliance is more likely to lead to client completion of therapy (Battaglia, 2019), improvement in mental well-being, a decrease in depressive symptoms, a decrease in anxiety symptoms (Sagui-Henson et al., 2022), and emotional safety (Geller & Porges, 2014). When working with Black women clients, a key component in building rapport and fostering trust within the counseling relationship is allowing space for the discussion of racial issues. If counselors neglect to acknowledge the impact of racist tools of oppressions, such as the ABW stereotype, then Black women will not feel like the topic is welcomed within the space and may feel uncomfortable in introducing the topic themselves (Pappas, 2021). Not being open and willing to have those conversations can negatively affect the therapeutic alliance and can be another instance in which Black women feel silenced and prohibited from expressing themselves.

Day-Vines et al. (2007) coined the term broaching, which refers to a counselor's effort in addressing racial, ethnic, and cultural (REC) issues/factors that impact a client's lived experience and presenting concerns. There are several strategies that counselors can use to broach these factors. Day-Vines et al. (2021) developed the multidimensional

model of broaching behavior (MMBB) as a tool for counselors to utilize when discussing REC concerns. The MMBB involves four broaching dimensions: intracounseling, intra-individual, intra-REC, and inter-REC. The intracounseling broaching dimensions are used when the counselor acknowledges and introduces discussion around the interpersonal dynamics in the counselor-client relationship, explores the client's thoughts and reactions toward their shared and/or differing identities, and allows space for the client to discuss their experiences and REC concerns (Day-Vines et al., 2021). Intraindividual broaching dimensions are used when the counselor invites the client to discuss their intersecting identities and the impact these identities have had on their experience (Day-Vines et al., 2021). Intra-REC broaching dimensions are used to address within-group dynamics and concerns that affect clients and their relationship with others who have shared REC identities. Inter-REC broaching dimensions are used to explore the ways in which racism, discrimination, and other various forms of oppression affect the client (Day-Vines et al., 2021). These four dimensions within the MMBB provide guidance in how counselors can explore the intersection of race and gender with Black women clients and the impact of oppressive systems on their lives and mental health.

Self-Awareness

A major step in being able to have discussions on Black women's experiences with racist and gendered ideologies is for counselors, particularly white and non-Black counselors, to become more aware of their own racial biases and how their own cultural identity and experiences may show up within the counseling space (Singh et al., 2012). When counselors neglect to engage in that introspection, they could fail to recognize whether they have done or said something that perpetuates the oppressive experiences

and stereotypes that Black women deal with. Counselors could then miss the opportunity to explore and unpack that experience with the client. This leaves the client to process what happened on their own and that experience could negatively impact clients' satisfaction about the therapeutic relationship and their belief in the value of counseling. Constantine (2007) found that perceived racial microaggressions significantly negatively impacted client satisfaction even with the mediation of counselors' multicultural competence and perceived therapeutic alliance. In other words, even if counselors have built rapport with their Black client and have educated themselves on issues of diversity and multiculturalism, perceived racial microaggressions can disrupt the counseling relationship and the client's satisfaction. It is important for counselors to continue to identify, track, and then discuss the microaggressions they may have brought into the therapy space to not damage the client's experience and perception of therapy (Sue et al., 2007).

Culturally Responsive Approach

In addition to being aware of their own cultural biases, a culturally responsive counselor is always seeking to understand the beliefs, values, and cultural contexts of their clients. They continue to engage in training and other educational opportunities to expand their skills to work with culturally diverse clients (Sue & Sue, 2016). Counselors should increase their knowledge and awareness on the history of the ABW stereotype, the ways in which it permeates society in various forms and settings, the impact that it has on Black women's emotional expression and mental health, and the ways in which others' treat and respond to them. Naming the social norms and emotional standards established by dominant, white culture for how Black women should express their anger can allow

Black women to feel understood and safe to further explore the damaging consequences of the ABW stereotype (Ashley, 2013).

Also, counselors should ensure they are not addressing Black womanhood as something to be fixed or changed. Instead, they should place the ownership and responsibility of the issue on the dominant, white supremist culture that created and upheld it.

Interventions

Validation can be an important foundation to any counseling intervention and can facilitate healing and empowerment to Black female clients impacted by harmful stereotypes (Ashley, 2013). Normalizing and validating anger as an appropriate response to the variety of ways in which Black women have been targets of racism and misogynoir can help to combat the experiences of being dismissed, gaslit, silenced, and invalidated.

Storytelling

There are several counseling interventions building on validation that could be implemented into counseling sessions to address the myth of the ABW stereotype and the impact on the lives of Black female clients. One option is storytelling. Storytelling is a practice within various cultural groups such as African, Native American, and Indigenous, and Latinx cultures, and is used to share ideas, values, experiences, and heritage (Palacios et al., 2014). As previously mentioned, the use of the ABW to suppress the emotional expression of Black women lead to Back women feeling silenced and dismissed. Black women learn to filter themselves and take on the adaptive response of self-silencing. Allowing space for storytelling can give Black female clients permission

to express their true emotions and share their experiences of existing as a Black woman in a society that works to keep them in a place of subordination. Storytelling is a tool that can empower Black women to discuss the messages they received around expressing anger, the impact of the ABW myth, their experiences of mistreatment and oppression, and the anxieties they feel about being negatively and inaccurately perceived. The art of storytelling can lead to feelings of validation, affirmation, resilience, empathy, catharsis, resistance against societal standards, belonging, and the formation or validation of identity (Palacios et al., 2014).

This intervention is used within various counseling frameworks, such as Narrative and Feminist Therapy, and can be beneficial for working with Black women who have been marginalized and suppressed (Jacobs & Davis, 2017). Storytelling allows Black women to detail their experiences with racism and misogynoir and the ways in which their interactions with institutions of power have impacted them (Fripp & Adams, 2022). This can promote healing by encouraging Black women to find their voice and giving them power and agency within the counseling space, something they may not receive in other spaces. Storytelling can also be a corrective experience and allow them to fully express their anger without having to filter or adapt to the expectations or standards of others.

Counselors can aid in the process of storytelling by asking open questions and expressing their curiosity about the lived experiences of their Black female clients and their relationship with anger. Questions could include asking clients about their thoughts and associations with anger, their experience in feeling/expressing anger, the last time they were angry and what that was like for them, and their encounters with being viewed

and treated through the lens of the ABW stereotype (Ashley, 2013). Asking open questions allows the counselor to gain great insight into the lived experiences of their clients.

Furthermore, throughout the counseling relationship, as counselors are working with Black women to process through their relationship with anger, it is important to acknowledge that while the counseling space is safe for expressing their anger and true emotions, this may not be the case in settings outside of the counseling space where societal expectations of the emotional expression for Black women are still upheld.

Expressive Practices

Creative and expressive interventions can provide therapeutic benefits for Black women (Kilgore et al., 2020). Expressive writing, for instance, can provide a space for Black women to safely express their anger and experiences with marginalization. Kilgore et al. (2020) write that journaling allows Black women to narrate their life events, document how they responded to an angering event and how they truly wanted to respond, and minimize feelings of invalidation. Writing can provide an outlet for Black women to use their voice and release any thoughts or emotions they may have withheld. Similarly, the creation of art can be beneficial in expressing feelings and experiences that are more challenging to put into words (Jacobs & Davis, 2017). This can be helpful for Black women who have had to self-silence so often and in turn have a harder time identifying their true feelings. Art forms like sketching, drawing, and painting can be used as a method to visually express and release emotions that have been suppressed or are harder to access (Gladding & Newsome, 2003).

Advocacy

As counselors continue to become more self-aware of their own biases and how they may show up within the counseling relationship and continue to increase their knowledge and understanding of Black women and their lived experiences, they may then begin to advocate for social change within the mental health field and other systems of power (Fripp & Adams, 2022). Counselors should engage in genuine efforts to examine and dismantle the systems of power, including the mental health care field, that uphold racist ideology and refuse to provide culturally responsive care. Sue and Sue (2016) emphasize the importance of counselors continuing to expand their knowledge about prejudice, recognize how it shows up within their communities, and understand the negative effects it has on oppressed and marginalized groups, including Black women. Sue and Sue (2016) also state that it is imperative that counselors apply this knowledge to enact long-term positive changes to legislative policy to protect civil rights in general and ensure the equitable access and distribution of resources to improve their clients' quality of life. Counselors could also advocate for Black female clients within their counseling workplace. For instance, counselors could share information about the racism and misogynoir that Black women face and educate them on the ABW stereotype and the impacts it has on Black women's mental health, especially if a colleague is describing a Black female client as resistant.

Conclusion

The Angry Black Woman stereotype is rooted in racist, white supremacist ideology and works to spread the myth that Black women are inherently bad, hostile people. It is used to control the narrative of Black women and justify their oppression and

mistreatment in efforts to keep them in a place of subordination. The widespread belief that Black women are aggressive people leads people to invalidate and dismiss them. Black women learn that their words can only be heard if they are said in a way that accommodates misogynoir. Black women have had to filter themselves as to not be labeled as aggressive, hyperemotional, and/or the stereotypical "angry, Black woman." Through culturally responsive care, counselors can provide their Black female clients who have been negatively impacted by the ABW stereotype with a space to safely explore ways to honor their anger and express themselves in ways that best serve them.

Limitations

While this paper outlines many parts of the experiences of Black women and their encounters with the ABW stereotype, it is important to note that Black women are not a monolith, and this paper does not discuss the experiences of all Black women. Additionally, the research used in developing this paper does not discuss other intersections of identity within Black womanhood that may interplay in the ways that the ABW stereotype show up within their lived experiences. Ethnicity, LGBTQ+ identity, socio-economic status, physical appearance (e.g., skin color, hair texture, facial features), place of residence, and other individual and unique aspects of identity and culture all play into the ways in which Black women are treated and how they navigate the world around them. Another limitation is that this paper focuses on Black women's experiences with white and non-Black people or in predominantly white spaces. Outside of the socialization of Black girls within Black families, it does not explore how the ABW stereotype may show up within Black communities and spaces.

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