



IDVAAC
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Institute on Domestic Violence In
The African American Community

Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement by Dr. Oliver Williams, Executive Director, Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community concerning the alleged domestic dispute between Chris Brown and Rihanna

Last week we heard of the alleged beating of a pop star at the hands of her equally famous boyfriend. As more information is revealed, it appears that their relationship is a reflection of what many young people in our community are enduring on a regular basis.

This incident speaks to a troubling trend that is especially pervasive in the African-American community—intimate partner violence (IPV). IPV has been a prevalent issue among younger people, especially in communities of color. Statistics show that one in three teenagers reports knowing a friend or peer who has been hit, punched, kicked, slapped, choked or physically hurt by a partner* Further, Black youth are overrepresented as victims of dating violence. The prevalence rate of dating violence was highest among black youth in 2007 (14.1%) compared to Hispanic (11.1%) and White (8.4%) – This includes males and females. **

Although Rihanna and Chris Brown's situation has brought much needed attention to this issue, we cannot afford to wait until another high profile individual is impacted by IPV before we act. With women between the ages of 16 and 24 experiencing the highest rates of IPV,*** we must address the issue in a way that is effective and relevant. Our communities must seize this opportunity to mobilize toward developing strategies that focus on prevention, intervention, and solutions, not only for victims, but for offenders as well.

*Liz Claiborne Inc, Study on Teen Dating Abuse, conducted by Teenage Research Unlimited, Feb. 2008)

** Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – 2007. Department of Health and Human Services, Center For Disease Control & Prevention

*** Rennison, C.M., and S. Welchans. Intimate Partner Violence. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report (2000)

About IDVAAC

IDVAAC is a pioneering national organization focused on the unique circumstances of African Americans as they face issues related to intimate partner violence, child abuse, elder maltreatment, and community violence. IDVAAC's mission is to enhance society's understanding of and ability to end violence in the African-American community. Within this context, IDVAAC works with families, individuals, and organizations serving the target population; legal and criminal justice systems; faith- and community-based organizations; researchers; and policymakers toward building the knowledge base regarding African Americans and domestic violence and to develop strategies to meet the service needs of this population.



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