

**Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community (IDVAAC)
National 2004 Conference Proceedings**

“Domestic Violence and the Hip-Hop Generation”

**York College
Jamaica Queens, New York
August 8-10, 2004**



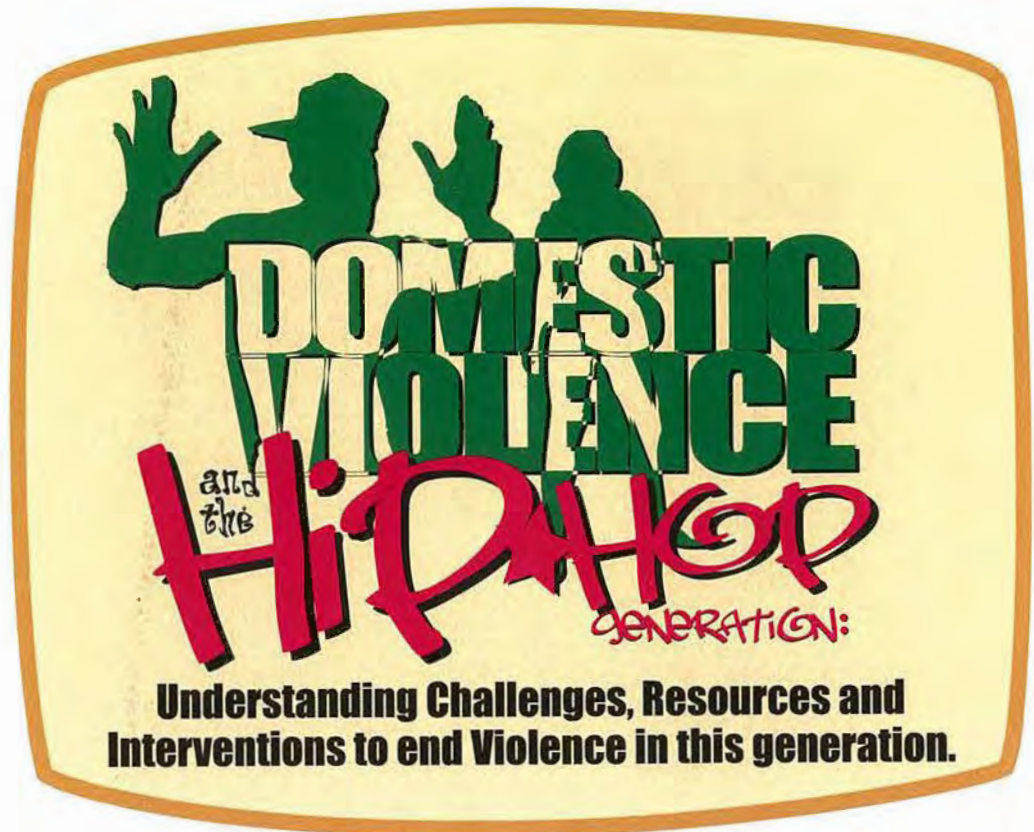
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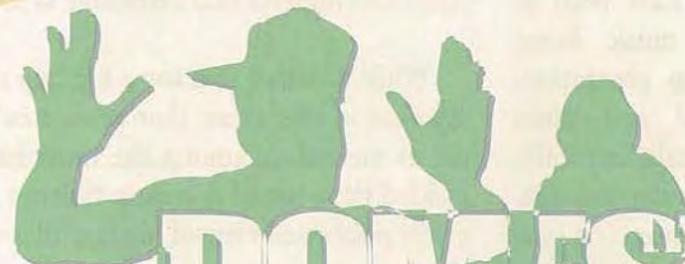
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A RAP ONE



**DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE**
and the
HiP HOP
GENERATION:

**Understanding Challenges, Resources and
Interventions to end Violence in this generation.**

FOREWORD



Oliver J. Williams

For many years, various advocacy groups and politicians have been in an uproar over the music being created by the hip hop generation. These much maligned and often misunderstood individuals, typically African Americans between the ages of 15 and 38, have been on the receiving end of harsh criticism far and wide. The level of attention given to this genre of music begs the question, "So what's the big deal?"

African Americans who are part of the hip hop generation are shouldering responsibility for some not-so-flattering statistics. For example, between 1977 and 1999, African American men and women accounted for 43% of intimate partner homicides – a figure that represents nearly 4 times the rate of African Americans in the general population. For black women, the statistics are even more horrifying. While black women make up only 8% of the U.S. population, they account for more than a third of domestic homicides. In the face of such daunting statistics, can we make the argument that hip hop music substantially influences the violent behaviors of a generation characterized as males who are thugs and females who are sexual objects? The short answer is not necessarily.

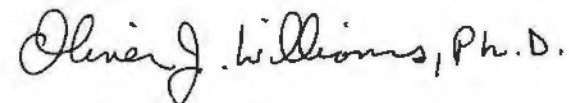
When reported in the media, hip hop music is depicted as a genre that glorifies violence and demeans women. This imagery is sold as an all-encompassing look at what the hip hop generation has to offer. But not all hip hop music is as salacious as the media would have us believe. And

what about other forms of music? Is hip hop just a scapegoat for what America's families find detestable in an increasingly violent world?

While it is true that some hip hop music is divisive on its face, there is a segment in this genre that advocates for social change. There are some artists viewed as among the most hardcore hip hoppers who have even tackled the issue of domestic violence among African Americans. It is this rarely publicized view of hip hop that warrants further examination.

The August 2004 forum, *Domestic Violence and the Hip Hop Generation*, delved into challenges that are creating barriers to positive facets of the hip hop movement. The forum further explored the potential of hip hop music as a vehicle through which to mitigate the violence facing this generation. As you read these proceedings, I encourage you to keep an open mind about a musical genre that has –for better or worse – made a lasting impression on our culture. Focus on the positive energies that can be harnessed to bring about change, because at the end of the day, we'll need to have all segments of the population on board – including the hip hop generation – if we are to end the violence that is destroying the fabric of America.

Sincerely,



Oliver J. Williams, Ph.D.

Executive Director

Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community

FOREWORD



William D. Riley

On behalf of the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community (IDVAAC), it is our pleasure to provide you with proceedings from the 2004 *Domestic Violence and the Hip Hop Generation* conference. As you will note in the proceedings, we examined the hip hop ethos within the context of domestic violence, particularly among hip hop aficionados – generally described as those between the ages of 15 and 38. Hip hop enthusiasts revel in the phenomenon, as evidenced by its stronghold in music, the spoken

word, visual arts, and print media.

At this three-day conference, voices in the field of hip hop, including researchers, master practitioners, and performers, highlighted their work, not limiting the discussion to the negative imagery often associated with the genre, but elucidating its positive energies and potential as well. The first two days of the conference featured plenary and panel presentations, followed by a third day of workshops where IDVAAC, invited presenters, and participants explored both the hindrances and liberating provisions of the hip hop revolution.

It is, again, our pleasure to provide you with proceedings from IDVAAC's *Domestic Violence and the Hip Hop Generation* conference. I am confident the proceedings will assist you in thinking about the serious work that you are currently undertaking in your communities with African-American youth and adults. IDVAAC values your continued efforts to impact valuable, localized expertise. You remain a crucial link for sustaining domestic and community violence on national agendas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "William D. Riley". The signature is stylized and fluid.

William D. Riley
Program Manager
Family Violence Prevention and Services Program

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WELCOME



WELCOME

Dr. Robert Hampton (York College) was joined by Dr. Oliver Williams (IDVAAC) and Nadine Neufville (Department of Justice) in welcoming participants to Jamaica Queens for the Institute for Domestic Violence in the African American Community's National 2004 Conference entitled *Domestic Violence and the Hip-Hop Generation*.



OVERVIEW OF CONFERENCE

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND THE HIP-HOP GENERATION

- Among both teenage Black females and males it has been found that there is a significant relationship between having a high number of sexual partners and being a victim of dating violence.
- In a study of Black college students, it was reported that one third indicated that they had sustained or inflicted physical aggression in a dating relationship, with pushing, slapping, and hitting being reported most often (Clark, Beckett, Wells, & Dungee-Anderson, 1994).
- Black women comprise 8% of the US population but account for over 33% of domestic homicides.
- Between 1977-1999, African American men and women accounted for 43% of intimate partner homicides, nearly 4 times our representation in the general population.
- Among African American women who killed their partners, almost 80% had a history of being abused.
- Intimate partner violence is higher among younger couples, particularly those with low income and couples in which the male partner is unemployed or underemployed.

GUIDING ASSUMPTIONS

- We do not believe that the Hip Hop Generation is a monolithic group. We recognize that there is a great deal of variations in the form of age, class, educational and occupational achievement, lifestyle, attitudes and aspirations among members of the Hip Hop Generation.
- We do not believe that there is a direct relationship between exposure to Hip Hop culture (including music and videos) and violence. That is, we do believe that Hip Hop or Gangsta Rap is a direct cause of intimate partner violence, dating violence or various forms of community violence.
- We do not believe that Hip Hop is bad.



William Oliver (Indiana University) framed the purpose for IDVAAC's hosting of this conference on *Domestic Violence and the Hip-Hop Generation*.

OVERVIEW OF CONFERENCE

WHAT THIS CONFERENCE HAS BEEN ORGANIZED TO DO?

- This conference has been organized to begin a dialogue among domestic violence service providers about ways to increase awareness of “Hip Hop” culture and the various challenges confronting members of the Hip Hop generation.
- This conference will explore the influence that African American youth popular culture as expressed in “Hip Hop” is having on interpersonal relations and the occurrence of intimate partner violence among the “Hip Hop” generation.
- This conference has been organized to challenge domestic violence service providers, clinicians and researchers to develop culture-specific strategies addressing the damage that is done when some forms of “Hip Hop” promote images of women, particularly Black and Latina women, as sex objects and images of Black and Latina men as thugs and pimps.
- This conference has been organized to demonstrate how the strengths of Hip-Hop culture may be used to increase awareness about intimate partner violence in the Hip-Hop generation and how the use of various Hip-Hop cultural products can be used to prevent intimate partner violence among the Hip-Hop generation.
- Furthermore, the conference will consider the challenges that traditional domestic violence service providers are confronting in providing prevention and intervention services to this population.

It is our hope that this conference will increase awareness of the importance of Hip-Hop culture in the lives of the Hip-Hop generation and remove some of the barriers that may have prevented practitioners from responding to intimate partner violence. By presenting this conference, IDVAAC hopes to encourage domestic violence service providers to develop meaningful and competent interventions to more effectively provide prevention and intervention services to this population.

WHAT THIS CONFERENCE IS NOT?

- This conference has not been organized to spend three days putting down Hip-Hop culture or putting the Hip-Hop generation down.
- This conference has not been organized to lecture the Hip-Hop generation about what they should do or not do.

It is our hope that those of you who consider yourselves members of the Hip Hop generation will permit us to engage you in a positive manner for the common good of our common family.



DEFINING HIP HOP

HISTORY

In the beginning...

1979 Sugar Hill Gang

- ✓ It was a monumental year for rap.
- ✓ Communities, teachers, preachers loathed it.
- ✓ But rap was the product of a cultural revolution

✓ Hip Hop Culture: It's Elements.

1. Dee Jay
2. The MC
3. B-Boy or B-Girl (breakdancing)
4. Graffiti

✓ Hip Hop Culture: It's Community

- Several generations make up this culture.
- It has its own unique characteristics, its own values, including spirituality (the belief in a God called by many names)

WITH CHIC SMITH
(csmith@urbanthinktank.org)

✓ Hip Hop started on the heels of disco and turned disco on its head.

It's not about the "look," It's about the music.

Younger people spread it around the world.

✓ Rap is a musical component of Hip Hop but doesn't make it "the" Hip Hop Community.

These baggy pants come from the prison culture not Hip Hop Culture!

• It has its own language.

• Entities from outside this culture have come in and attempted to change it.

★ We are here to explore the Hip Hop generation and culture and it's intersection with intimate partner violence.

★ We are here to learn so we can provide meaningful interventions to this population.

★ Hip Hop culture must be incorporated into this strategy.

CHALLENGES

1. Each one teach one, each one reach one. We must stand as a community.

2. We must know our history of Hip Hop.

3. We must provide outlets for dialogue on the intersection of domestic violence and Hip Hop.

4. We must not believe everything we hear about our community. Investigate & explore what you hear. Then speak truth.

• Political impact?

Puffy & Russell are not business men & entertainers. For political advice, go to those who are qualified.

How to bring awareness to dating violence? The conversation must begin in your local community.

• Depiction of women in Hip Hop Videos? Let's take it to a higher level. Think about how women are portrayed in all music videos. Don't let hip hop be the scape goat.

• Hip Hop & the Church?

We need to persist so churches don't see Hip Hop as a threat but as a cultural contribution.

Q&A

• Dialogue with those we don't like? Anytime we can sit down & have a conversation, no matter with whom, we are making progress.

• More positive Hip Hop on radios?

People control the airwaves. That's cool! Take control and tell your radio station what you want.

• What does Hip Hop mean by respect?

Hip hop does not have a special definition of respect. Respect is respect.

• Spread of Hip Hop?

Black culture has always spread its art forms. It's an honor. We need to know this history.

• Bitches & Niggahs?

We need to know our history to know the meaning of these words.

DEFINING HIP-HOP

Chic Smith (Urban Think Tank Institute) opened the conference with a keynote address which touched on the characteristics of the Hip-Hop generation and a critique of its influence, challenges and links to issues associated with violence.



DEFINING HIP-HOP

- We are here to explore the Hip-Hop generation, culture and it's intersection with intimate partner violence.
- We are here to learn so we can provide meaningful interventions to this population.
- Hip-Hop culture must be incorporated into this strategy.

HISTORY

In the beginning...1979.

- Remember the Sugar Hill Gang?
- 1979 was a monumental year for rap.
- Communities, teachers and preachers loathed it.
- Rap was the product of a cultural revolution.
- Hip-Hop Culture—It's 4 Elements
- Dee Jay
- The MC
- B-Boy or B-Girl (breakdancing)
- Graffiti
- Hip-Hop Culture—It's Community
- Several generations make up this culture.
- It has it's own unique characteristics, it's own values, including spirituality (the belief in a God called by many names).

- It has it's own language.
- Rap is a musical component of Hip-Hop but doesn't make it "the" Hip-Hop community.
- Hip-Hop started on the heels of disco and turned disco on it's head. It's not about the "look," it's about the music. Young people spread it around the world.

OUTSIDE ENTITIES INFLUENCING HIP-HOP

- Those who do not identify with the culture have their hands in it. Entities from outside this culture have come in and attempted to change it.
- Your local radio station will only tell you what they want you to know, as will record companies and video producers.

CHALLENGES

- "Each one teach one, each one reach one." We must stand as a community.
- We must know our history of Hip-Hop.
- We must provide outlets for dialogues on the intersection of domestic violence and Hip-Hop.
- We must not believe everything we hear about our community. Investigate and explore what you hear. Then speak the truth.

Q&A

- Dialogue with those we don't like?
 - Any time we can sit down and have a conversation, no matter with whom, we are making progress.
- More positive Hip-Hop on radios?
 - People control the airwaves. That's you! Take control and tell you radio station what you want.
- What does Hip-Hop mean by respect?
 - Hip-Hop does not have a special definition of respect. Respect is respect is respect.
- Spread of Hip-Hop?
 - Black culture has always spread it's art form! It's an honor. We need to know this history.
- Birches and Niggahs?
 - We need to know our history to know the meaning of these words.
- Political impact?
 - Puffy and Russell are not political. They are business men and entertainers. For political advice, go to those who are qualified.
- How to bring awareness to dating violence?
 - The conversation must begin in your community.
- Depiction of women in Hip-Hop videos?
 - Let's take it to a higher level. Think about how women are portrayed in all music videos. Don't let Hip-Hop be the scapegoat.
- Hip-Hop and the Church?
 - We need to persist so churches don't see Hip-Hop as a threat but as a cultural contribution.

MALES SPEAK OUT

ON IMAGES OF MEN & WOMEN IN HIP HOP & VIOLENCE

LYRICS



LAST POETS

- * We began with the ideal that it takes a village to raise a child. There was a whole value system that our work was based on.
- * Today, **EVERYTHING** is being revealed. Curse words are flung about everywhere.
- * Over 400 years ago, domestic violence was built into the slave-master society. It still lives within us today.
- * We created all kinds of music — blues, jazz, rock, hip hop — to liberate us & take us away from the hell we've been given.

GHANA: One man's experience

- Polygamy exists in this culture.
- Inferiority in women sets in and men use their power negatively.

KNOW YOURSELF

- You must know yourself and live your life.
- No one can define you or tell you what to do.
- Take HipHop as entertainment. Don't live it.

- * We must speak what is **BEAUTIFUL, BLACK** and **BOLD**.

- * We must speak to our young children. Tell them our stories. They come from us.



Q&A

HIP HOP: ENTERTAINMENT OR LIBERATION

- Entertaining ourselves is liberating ourselves.

Saying "fuck" is just putting a chain around our necks.

RESPONSIBILITY OF BLACK DJ'S?

- They're just trying to make a buck at our expense.
- We must be an active audience and speak out.

MUSIC ARTISTS DOING NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE WORK?

- He does the negative to make money and positive so he can sleep at night.
- America is a kind of country where even the best will be schizophrenic.

- We all must learn who we are and control ourselves: the bitch & nigga within us.

- We must create our own agenda!

SHOULD CHURCHES ACCEPT MONEY FROM NEGATIVE HIP HOP ARTISTS?

- This country is built on dirty money. We don't need to forgive these people. We just can take their money and say "thank you!", then use it for the good.



- We are a genius people. They took our music instruments out of the schools and our children became the musical instruments with HipHop.

THE POWER OF OUR MUSIC

- The machinery of the music industry & the supremacist society knows the power of our music.
- They are using this power against us. We are under attack!

We must take action

- ✓ Turn off your radio when you hear offensive music.
- ✓ Join organizations that speak out.
- ✓ Think of reparations around domestic violence.

- We must stop having our priority be the money and have it be the content. Our bottom line has to be **BLACK POWER**.

- We must create our own independent labels. We must understand the economics of how the money system works.

- We must hold onto our intellectual property. We must gain control. We must not give into the negativity.

RESPONSIBILITY OF LYRICISTS?

- We must be responsible to the folks in the community & write things that lift us up.
- We must stop selling each other into slavery.
- If you are preparing my kid to go to prison, you are a public enemy.

- Women should refuse to appear in videos with vulgar language — it's a two-way street.

VIOLENT HIP HOP LYRICS

- If you call your woman a bitch, a ho, and your a man, it's a reflection on yourself. It's what you think of yourself.
- But remember, a lot of people who enjoy hip hop music are not black.