

COMMUNICATION MIXTAPE:



An inclusive, affirming sexuality curriculum for our communities.

WoCSHN
WOMEN of COLOR SEXUAL HEALTH

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Introduction

In 1981 Gloria E. Anzaldúa wrote an open letter to women of color. In that letter she wrote: “[w]rite with your eyes like painters, with your ears like musicians, with your feet like dancers. You are the truthsayer with quill and torch. Write with your tongues of fire. Don’t let the pen banish you from yourself. Don’t let the ink coagulate in your pens. Don’t let the censor snuff out the spark, nor the gags muffle your voice. Put your shit on the paper.”

We put our shit on paper in New Orleans at the inaugural WOCSHN (Women of Color Sexual Health Network) Curriculum Lab© in October of 2017. We gathered at the SisterSong Let’s Talk About Sex Conference. The goal of the WOCSHN Curriculum Lab© is to create spaces for educators of color to write their labor and work in a lesson plan, reach wider communities, get published, and to sell for profit.

WOCSHN knows first hand how limited opportunities are for publishing curricula and lesson plans, especially for people of color writers who write for communities of color. We are often shut out and rarely welcomed into such spaces. Some people and organizations have created a monopoly on the sexuality education curricula development and we are here to remind them they do not have one, especially when it comes to the education of communities of color! For three hours we shared space, ideas, and challenges as we agreed to write a communications curriculum on a variety of topics for middle school aged to adult participants. For the month that followed trainer and WOCSHN foundress Bianca I Laureano, the editor of the curricula, worked with individual writers to edit and support the writers as they each completed their lesson plans.

Our process was simple yet impactful: Train educators and facilitators on some basics of writing learning objectives and outcomes, updates on the legal issues of copyright, writing, discussing pricing, and naming the curriculum. In three hours we had solid drafts of lesson plans for 50-minute classes!

We are sexuality educators, counselors, workers, with all levels of expertise and years in the field. Collectively, the writers of this curriculum have over 100 years of experience in the US sexuality field. In the past, we have used evidence based curricula, complementary curricula, and created our own activities to ensure our work is effective for the youth it was expected to reach. Oftentimes the evidence based curricula are exclusive, anti-Black, imperialist, color-free, inaccessible, ableist, elitist, uphold a gender binary, and the list goes on! Yet, we are expected to use these curricula to educate our communities. We know better. And so we do and are better. This

curriculum attempts to bridge the research-to-practice gap that exists in evidence-based interventions by incorporating evidence-informed practice (Nevo & Slonim-Nevo, 2011; Flowers, 2016).

Found in this curriculum are eight lesson plans written by sexuality educators, workers, or counselors of color. Each lesson plan was originally created for 50-minute sessions; however each lesson plan is thoughtful and engaging enough to cover sessions that can exceed two hours. We allow the facilitator to make the decision of how to use the activities and give suggestions of when to wrap up a lesson plan and continue at another part.

Our theme was communication because we believe this is just one way to start these conversations. These are the conversations that can save our lives! Knowing the rates of suicide and death in our communities, we chose to be unapologetic in creating liberatory lesson plans that center the Black, Brown, and Indigenous bodies of the people we are connected to and with whom we collaborate.

Anzaldúa reminds us “[t]he act of writing is the act of making soul, alchemy.” In these lesson plans you will find pieces of our collective and individual brilliance; our alchemy. This same brilliance has been denied, pushed out, shut down, blocked, and attempted to silence because they are attached to our Brown, Black, Indigenous, fat, disabled, trans, spiritual, working class, queer, immigrant bodies. So we are forging our own way! Get ready or get out of the way! We are already here and we are building our own archive for each other!

The WOCSHN Curriculum Lab[©] was proposed to several large US-based sexuality conferences that have a long history in the field. None of them wanted to engage this project. One major conference who has supported us in the past completely ignored communication about this project. Two years later, Foundress Bianca I. Laureano, an award-winning sexuality educator, sexologist, and curriculum writer, created and implemented the first full WOCSHN Curriculum Lab[©]. SisterSong was the first organization hosting a conference that allowed us this space. Next is the Association of Black Sexologists and Clinicians (ABSC). Do you see the pattern?

We show up for each other and this curriculum is proof! We may not be famous, but we have notoriety.

If you wish to host your own WOCSHN Curriculum Lab[©] contact us at wocshn@gmail.org. If you wish to host your own Curriculum Lab facilitated by Bianca I Laureano contact her directly at Bianca.Laureano@mac.com for availability and rates.

Nevo, I. & Slonim-Nevo, V. (2011). The Myth of Evidence Based Practice: Towards Evidence-Informed Practice. *British Journal of Social Work*, 41, 1176-1197.

Flowers, Sara C., "Perceptions of Fidelity and Adaptation in Evidence-Informed Interventions by Women of Color Sexuality Health Educators" (2016). CUNY Academic Works. Retrieved from http://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/1586.

Dedication

- ❖ To ourselves, our families, our ancestors, our future:
- ❖ To the future sex educators, workers, and counselors of color:
- ❖ To youth of color:

We have always been here and never left or forgot about you. Together we found a way to get you what we all need. It took longer than any of us expected. We are all here now. This archive we leave for you as evidence of our love.

Peace,

Abeni, Ashleigh, Bianca, Elicia, Lacette, Mariotta & Sara

About **WoCSHN**

WOMEN of COLOR SEXUAL HEALTH

MISSION

The Women of Color Sexual Health Network (WOCSHN) creates opportunities for inclusion and retention of women and gender expansive people of color in the field of sexuality, sexual science, and sexology, and challenges the white supremacy the field was built upon.

VISION

WOCSHN is a collective membership organization with a focus on the sexual and reproductive needs of women and gender expansive people of color. We charge our colleagues and ourselves to respect our existence, our expertise, and our legacy in the field.

GOALS

- Provide spaces where voices of people of color are centered
- Mentor emerging sex professionals and public intellectuals
- Provide access to resources (publishing, presentations, public speaking)
- Extend partnerships, collaborations, and networks to reach more inclusive communities
- WOCSHN Foundresses and Executive Board provide technical assistance, evaluation, and critical commentary

CITATION & ATTRIBUTION

Each person who has written a lesson plan in this curriculum has earned the opportunity to be first author. We are purposefully disrupting the expectation that comes with citation and attribution.

We believe in a space and practice where people of color are cited for the work and labor we do. Join us as we push for just attribution and citation by selecting one of the following citations below or suggested citations at the end of each lesson plan.

On the next page are examples in APA, MLA, and Chicago formats for suggested citations for this curriculum.

APA

Please follow the suggested citation below for APA citation of the curriculum and lesson plans.

All Contributors

Cross, L., Flowers, S.C., Gary-Smith, M., Gonzales E., Jones, A., Laureano, B., Shackelford, A. (2017). *Communication MixTape: Speak On It Vol 1*. New Orleans, LA. Women of Color Sexual Health Network.

Editor

Laureano, B.I. (editor). 2017. *Communication MixTape: Speak On It Vol 1*. New Orleans, LA, Women of Color Sexual Health Network.

One Contributor

Last name, First Name Initials. (2017). Title of Lesson Plan. In B.I. Laureano (Ed), *Communication MixTape: Speak On It Vol 1*. (pages of lesson plan). New Orleans, LA. Women of Color Sexual Health Network.

MLA

Please follow the suggested citation below for MLA citation of the curriculum and lesson plans.

All contributors

Last name, first name; first name, last name (continue for all authors or choose et al as a last resort!). *Title*. Publisher. Date.

Cross, L. Sara C. Flowers, Mariotta Gary-Smith, Elicia Gonzales, Abeni Jones, Bianca I. Laureano & Ashleigh Shackelford. *Communication MixTape: Speak On It Vol 1*. Women of Color Sexual Health Network. (2017).

Editor

Laureano, Bianca (Ed). *Communication MixTape: Speak On It Vol 1*. Women of Color Sexual Health Network. 2017.

One Contributor

Last name, First name. "Title of Lesson Plan." *Communication MixTape: Speak On It Vol 1*., edited by Bianca I Laureano, Publisher, 2017, Page range of entry.

CHICAGO

Please follow the suggested citation below for Chicago citation of the curriculum and lesson plans.

All Contributors

First Name and Last Name (list each full name), *Communication MixTape: Speak On It Vol 1*. (New Orleans, LA: Women of Color Sexual Health Network, 2017), page numbers.

Editor

Laureano, Bianca I., editor. *Communication MixTape: Speak On It Vol 1*. New Orleans, LA: Women of Color Sexual Health Network, 2017

One Contributor

First Name and Last Name of author, “Title of Lesson Plan,” in *Communication MixTape: Speak On It Vol 1*, ed. Bianca I Laureano (New Orleans, Women of Color Sexual Health Network, 2017), page number.

Biographies of Authors

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Rev. Lacette Cross, aka Rev. L, lives in Richmond, VA. She is the founder of *Will You Be Whole Ministries*, which talks sex and faith for wholeness with Black women and those who love them. She is an experienced teacher and facilitator on topics related to sexuality and spirituality. Contact Rev. Lacette Cross at willyoubewhole@gmail.com.

SARA C. FLOWERS, DrPH

Sara is a seasoned educator and trainer. She earned her Doctor of Public Health degree with a focus on women of color sexuality educators and fidelity of curricula they are required to use. She is the Director of Youth Initiatives for Love Heals Youth Education Program at ACRIA and an adjunct assistant professor at York College, CUNY. Contact her at sara.c.flowers@gmail.com.

MARIOTTA GARY-SMITH, MPH, CSE

Mariotta is a foundress of WOCSHN and a 3rd generation social justice agitator. She's a sexologist, AASECT certified sexuality educator, and has presented across the US. With over 20 years of collaboration and lifting a culturally specific sexual health education, equity and justice, Mariotta is committed to communities of color and their optimal sexuality and sexual health outcomes. Contact her at sexualscholar@gmail.com.

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Elicia is a queer Latinx social worker, educator, and cultural activist. She is the Executive Director of the Women's Medical Fund in Philadelphia, PA and holds board positions with Bread & Roses Community Fund and Planned Parenthood Southeastern Pennsylvania. She is co-founder of SEXx Interactive in Philadelphia.

ABENI JONES

Abeni Jones is a Black trans communications professional, educator, workshop facilitator, artist, designer, poet, and writer in New Orleans, LA by way of California. Abeni co-authored two lesson plans, wrote one, and designed this curriculum. Find more about Abeni at her website abenijones.net.

BIANCA I. LAUREANO, MA, CSE

Bianca is a foundress of the Women of Color Sexual Health Network. She is an award-winning sexuality educator, sexologist, and curriculum writer. She co-founded The LatiNegrxs Project, #FemmeInMourning hashtag, and hosts LatinoSexuality.com. Find Bianca at BiancaLaureano.com or reach her at Bianca.Laureano@mac.com.

ASHLEIGH SHACKELFORD

Ashleigh is a Black fat femme storyteller, multidisciplinary artist, and cultural producer based in Atlanta, Georgia. She is the founder and creator of Free Figure Revolution, focusing on anti-Black body violence, and The Fat Census to radicalize research and provide tangible data to name the violence fat people experience. Find out more information at AshleighShackelford.com.

Community Agreements

Community Agreements are the behaviors that the group agrees to follow as you engage with one another. These help guide your conversations, create boundaries for participants and facilitator, and allow for accountability and responsibility in a collective way. Many people come prepared with a few essential agreements they desire for the space and allow the group to guide the conversation.

Writer Elicia Gonzales shared this script for facilitating the creation of Community Agreements: “We know that sexuality is sometimes a topic that we don’t get to spend enough time exploring together as a group. So it might make some people feel nervous or embarrassed - and that sometimes can come out through laughter, comments, or silence.

“To make sure that this space is good for conversation and learning, let’s make some Community Agreements together.” On a piece of newsprint write “Community Agreements.”

Ask participants, “Who has an agreement to add? (repeat this until you have a list - if these are not added, be sure the list includes: It’s Ok to Pass, Don’t Yuck My Yum, Be Respectful, Confidentiality, One Mic, WAIT/WANT - why am I talking, why am I not talking).

Finish by saying, “Everyone can re-visit these agreements at any time if they feel like someone in the room isn’t honoring one of them.”

Media Literacy

Media Literacy has existed for decades. With Net Neutrality being a core area of focus for all of us for at least a decade, we encourage all educators to incorporate a conversation and the core questions of being a media literate consumer. With this foundation, conversations, rage, and action for the dissolution of Net Neutrality can be established.

There are many online resources that can support and provide guidance on how to introduce Media Literacy to groups of various ages and abilities. Media Literacy allows us to be more conscious consumers of the media we are exposed to on a regular basis. There are five core questions that Media Literacy asks as part of this understanding:

1. Who created this?
2. What creative techniques are used to get my attention?
3. How might different people with different perspectives / experiences interpret this media differently than me?
4. What lifestyles, values, and points of view are presented?
5. What is omitted and why?

Visit the Center for Media Literacy <http://www.medialit.org> for more information and suggestions on lesson plans and activities.

Accessibility

This curriculum was written in 11 and 12 point font. It is provided as a PDF so that people can view the writing through a PDF reader program and amplify the font. An 8th grade reading level was the goal for the level of each lesson plan and handout. We worked hard to push each other to imagine different ways of discussing concepts and avoid using ableist language and classroom facilitation strategies.

This is a lifelong process of learning and unlearning that WOCSHN welcomes. Some of these commitments to unlearning ableism in curriculum writing included reimagining the use of terminology and replacing concepts such as “brainstorm” or “ideas cluster” which assumes our brains work in the same way and we receive and process information similarly.

There are some kinesthetic activities which we choose to include and share phrases such as “if it is comfortable for the group ask them to raise their hands if.../ take a deep breath” to allow for the facilitator to assess their group needs and make the best decision or if there is another option to include all participants. This is an example of accountability and responsibility we offer to facilitators in understanding who their participants are and to challenge each of us to be more inclusive.

One of the areas where some facilitators may struggle with making more accessible their lesson plan facilitation is if they choose media that is not subtitled. Media literacy is possible for many of us. We ask you consider using a variety of media for discussing Media Literacy. If you are watching a clip, watch it without the sound, or have students first listen to the media with sound and their eyes closed. Then have them watch it with the sound and discuss what they heard and saw differently from what they imagined. These are also Media Literacy skills and allow a more inclusive discussion of Media Literacy for all bodies.

We also use gender neutral language in the lesson plans and when discussing bodies we do so in a way that acknowledges a binary has been created, sex has been assigned at birth, and that people have bodies and none of those bodies are wrong. You will read terms such as “for people who have a vulva...” versus using gendered terminology for body parts. We also do not assume that participants are heterosexual, living HIV negative, speak English as a first language, or that the facilitator is the person in the room with the most knowledge. We ask that you do the same as you implement these lesson plans.

This curriculum is not perfect. There are many ways we did not do enough to make this more accessible to more communities. We welcome suggestions on how to make future curricula more accessible. Please share your suggestions and ideas with editor Bianca I Laureano at Bianca.Laureano@mac.com.

CASEL Social Emotional Learning Competencies

Educators of color have been creating lesson plans and curricula that have always already been rooted in social emotional learning (SEL) competencies. For generations we have known that empathy, compassion, self-awareness, and collaboration are central to our communities survival and knowledge production.

CASEL established five core competencies in the mid-90s and it is these we have implemented in this curriculum. Find out more at the CASEL website, www.CASEL.org and read about the five core competencies the lesson plans may include.

Self-awareness: The ability to accurately recognize one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one’s strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a “growth mindset.”

Self-management: The ability to successfully regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.

Social awareness: The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

Relationship skills: The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.

Responsible decision-making: The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.

LESSON PLANS

What's Self-Care?

Writer: Bianca I. Laureano, MA, CSE

NOTE TO EDUCATORS:

This lesson plan and the following two are suggested to be done in sequence for optimal outcomes. There are three lesson plans in total. This is the first lesson plan. The second and third lesson plans follow this one.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

In this lesson plan participants will explore complementary strategies for coping and finding help when help may not be immediately available or accessible.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the lesson participants will be able to:

- List 3 strategies for coping in high stress situations

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING COMPETENCIES (CASEL):

Self-awareness: The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset."

Self-management: The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.

Social awareness: The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

Relationship skills: The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.

Responsible decision-making: The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.

MATERIALS:

- Copies of Self-Care Handout (included)
- Newsprint
- Markers

PREPARATION:

- Make copies of the Self-care handout for participants
- Review the other two lesson plans that follow so you understand how the conversation flows and you can make any connections in this lesson plan to prepare participants for the next lessons to follow.
- Review the Glossary terms Self-Care and Body Autonomy and their definitions
- Be prepared to share some of your own experiences and ideas with self-care

Activity 1: Introduce Topic & Writing Prompt (5 min)

Begin by introducing the topic with the following writing prompt for participants to complete: “When I hear the term ‘self-care’ I think of ...” Encourage participants to be specific and if it is most comfortable make a list.

Activity 2: Self-Care Group Discussion (10 min)

Begin by writing on a piece of newsprint the words “self-care.” Invite a conversation with participants on what this phrase means and what they wrote down. You may need to provide some of your own examples from your own understanding to help participants begin. Encourage participants to think of people, spaces, experiences, and media that may help them understand this term more fully. For example, some participants may share a blog post or the name of an author or artist that helps them understand this experience.

Next, ask participants if they know of people who practice self-care and invite them to share some of those examples. Remind participants not to give this person’s name or identifying information. For example, ask participants to avoid saying “my parent” and instead use terms such as a “family member/friend/person I know” to maintain privacy.

After a full conversation with participants share the definition of self-care as: a practice, a process, of meeting the needs and facilitating restoration of the self. Invite participants to respond to the definition. What do they think of the definition? Does the definition include all that they have discussed? If participants wish to recreate their own definition if this one is not adequate welcome that discussion at this time.

Be sure before moving on that participants are in agreement on the definition. Be ready to share that the next activity may fall into the ways we may take care of ourselves in a variety of situations.

Activity 3: Self-Care In Action (10-15 min)

Distribute the Self-Care Handout. Read the handout instructions out loud. Read each section out loud that requires a response from participants by reviewing the handout with the group. Ask if there are any questions then provide several minutes for participants to begin completing the handout. Remind them this is a start and this can be a document they edit or add to as often as they would like.

After 10 minutes, invite a discussion of their experience thinking through these topics by pairing participants with one another and having them share their experiences. They do not need to share details or specifics of what they wrote if they are not comfortable. Instead, they can focus on what it was like to think about these topics and come to a decision on what to identify as useful and helpful for them. What answers were they surprised by? What are some things they may recognize? How is completing this worksheet an example of self-care? Close with asking participants where they are going to file this document and give themselves a personal deadline of completion.

Activity 4: Can Self-Care Be Harmful? (10-15 min)

Ask participants if they think there is a possibility that self-care may cause harm. Invite a conversation about moderation and how each of us has the body autonomy to decide what moderation means for us. If participants are not sure of what body autonomy is invite a discussion of the term similar to what was done for the term “self-care.” Share a definition of body autonomy to be the human right to make decisions about what happens to one’s body.

If participants struggle with this idea consider giving them an example to discuss. For example, perhaps someone’s form of self-care is to eat peanuts in between larger meals, and a close friend they spend a lot of time with has a peanut allergy that can lead to hospitalization. What are ways this person eating the peanuts as self-care can take care of themselves and maintain a friendship with their close friend who is allergic? Allow participants to guide this conversation. Some suggestions could be telling the close friend they are taking care of

themselves in this way and allowing the close friend to share what would work best for them when they spend time together. Perhaps they cannot share food and beverages. The goal is to help students understand that taking care of ourselves is always a good idea and that there may be times we need to share with people we care for what we are doing. It is good to have a trusted person to share things with and if our self-care may harm others we can find a way to take care of ourselves without hurting others. Have this discussion for as long as your group decides.

Activity 5: In Closing (5 min)

To close this session, thank participants for being engaged and present for the discussion. Invite them to share one way they are going to take care of themselves today. Be prepared to share your own form of self-care to begin.

Glossary

Self-Care: a practice, a process, of meeting the needs and facilitating restoration of the self.

Body Autonomy: the human right to make decisions about what happens to one's body.

Suggested APA Citation

Laureano, B.I. (2017). Title of Lesson Plan. In B.I. Laureano (Ed), *Communication MixTape: Speak On It Vol 1*. (pages 57-62). New Orleans, LA. Women of Color Sexual Health Network.

Self-Care & Asking For Help

Complete this worksheet when you are feeling comfortable and supported. It is important that this is completed when you are not immediately in need of help. Update this document as often as needed.

One (1) song I listen to that helps me relax or release energy:

1. _____

One (1) form of media (film, ad, photograph, etc.) that helps me relax or release energy:

1. _____

Two (2) affirmations I can say to myself (to calm me, stop crying, help ground me, think):

1. _____

2. _____

Three (3) accomplishments/successes I need to remind myself about when I need to be reminded of my power:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Three (3) things that help me (breathe, calm down, feel grounded) when I'm overwhelmed

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Five (5) things that make me feel good, calm me down, or otherwise relax me when I am stressed out or in a crisis:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____
