

Session Descriptions

Youth Violence: Examining Effects and Root Causes

Arab American Action Network (Youth Organizing Program Staff)

- This workshop will address the way youth violence not only affects young people, but also our families and communities. Participants will be challenged to think critically about the differences between symptoms and root causes of violence. Facilitated by the Youth Organizing Interns at the Arab American Action Network: Aisha Durr, Arasele Robles, Muhammad Sankari & Zaineb Abdulla. Facilitators can be reached at youth@aan.org; www.aan.org. This workshop is taken from the Project NIA curriculum, titled “Something is Wrong: Exploring the Roots of Youth Violence,” which is available online at www.project-nia.org.

Mobilizing Communities to End Violence Workshop

Ann Russo, DePaul University, Women’s and Gender Studies Faculty

- This workshop will explore the possibilities to build everyday collective actions for support, intervention, prevention, and transformation in the context of violence. Drawing from frameworks and practices of organizations like INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, Communities Against Rape and Abuse, Creative Interventions and Generation FIVE, participants will have an opportunity to imagine and create collective responses to incidents of interpersonal violence (e.g., harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, connected to sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, etc.)

Circles: Acts of Revolution

Ora Schub, J.D., Community Justice for Youth Institute

- This workshop allows participants to have a Circle experience. Taken from indigenous practices, circles are now being used in Western society to check in, resolve conflicts, heal, grieve, and celebrate.

Don’t Call Me Sassy: Synergy – Beats and Verses

AquaMoon, SpokenExistence, Inc.

- Through the use of Ntozake Shange’s choreopoem aesthetics of poetry, choreography, and music, “Don’t Call Me Sassy...” goes from transcending to transgressing the race, class, and sexual politics of African American girls and womyn by fostering a safe performance space for black bodies, ideas of disenfranchised people, and the portrayal of synergetic “whole beings” that life race, class and gender on a daily basis. This performance renders a space for girls/womyn of color to see themselves as healthy sexual beings.

AAAN strives to strengthen the Arab community in the Chicago area by building its capacity to be an active agent for positive social change. As a grassroots nonprofit, our strategies include community organizing, advocacy, education, providing social services, leadership development, cultural outreach and forging productive relationships with other communities.

Ann Russo teaches in Women’s and Gender Studies at DePaul University and is active in feminist and queer social justice movements to end oppression and violence in all of its many forms. Most recently, she’s been involved in the Women and Girls Collective Action Network and is co-author (With Melissa Spatz) of their report “Communities Engaged in Resisting Violence” that documents community-based strategies to end violence being used by 16 organizations in Chicago (www.womenandgirlscan.org). She is also author of *Taking Back Our Lives: A Call to Action in Feminist Movement* (2001).

A former clinical law professor at the Northwestern University School of Law, CFJC, **Ora Schub** is known for her work on domestic violence and human rights. She has served as Director of Programs at Access Living, Deputy Public Guardian, and a criminal defense attorney. Ora has traveled throughout the U.S., Ecuador and Brazil speaking and sharing ideas on restorative justice and teen dating violence. She has also been involved in numerous human rights delegations to the Middle East working in the area of Palestinian Rights. She also has trained several hundred people to be circle keepers; youth teachers, probation officers, parents, community activists, etc. and have kept hundreds of circles going.

AquaMoon, **camil.williams** and **veronica precious bohanan**, is a Chicago-based writing, performance, and teaching-artist team. camil.williams, Aqua, is a multifaceted artist that is constantly exploring herself. williams has appeared in several independent films and has performed at spoken word venues across the nation. She is also a painter and has showcased her work in various art exhibits around Chicago. Her latest endeavors include perfecting her skills as a musician in an all woman band and completing a screen-play. butta to fly is her debut collection of poetry & art, accompanied by a CD. veronica precious bohanan is a moonchild on an excursion to earth. A graduate of the University of Iowa, she earned a B.A. in Speech and Hearing Sciences and an M.A. in Social Foundations of Education. Her poetry can be found in *Home Girls Make Some Noise!: Hip-hop Feminism Anthology* and *Check the Rhyme: An Anthology of Female Poets and Emcees*. Om: *My Sistagyr! Lotus* is her first collection of prose and poetry.

Thank Yous

- A special thank you to the Cynthia L. Bischof Memorial Foundation. The Foundation is a catalyst for legislative and societal change. They aim to support the network of those who are already serving victims of domestic violence, to be the voice of the many victims who may not feel that they have a voice, and to expand accessibility of resources to those who might otherwise not have resources. Visit www.cindysmemorial.org for more information.
- Thank you to the Women's and Gender Studies Program, Peace, Justice, and Conflict Studies Department and The Women's Center for their gracious co-sponsorship.
- Thank you to R.J. Grunts, Einstein Bros. Bagels, Peet's Coffee and Tea, Argo Tea, Donkey Chips, Taste of Lebanon, and Noodles & Co. for their generous food donations.
- Thank you to Dr. Beth Catlett for her guidance, support, and help in planning this event.
- Thank you to Leo Masalihit, Program Assistant in the Women's and Gender Studies Department for his patience and tireless assistance, and to Talina Phillips, student assistant for her help and support.
- Thank you to Karen Shaw, Dennis Froslan, Amanda Gallo, and AlphaGraphics for their generosity and donations.
- Thanks to the African and Black Diaspora Studies for their support and allowing us to utilize their conference room.
- Thank you to the conference planning committee – Dr. Laila Farah, Julie Froslan, Jamie Shaw, Claudia Feldhaus, and Michelle Emery for all of their hard work, dedication, and passion.
- Finally, a big thank you to all of our plenary participants, session leaders, and to all of you who have joined us today.



Cynthia L. Bischof Conference on **Youth Anti-Violence**

Saturday, May 22nd

Thomas P. Levan Center, 2322 N. Kenmore
Rooms 404, 405, & 406

Welcome!

The DePaul University's Women's and Gender Studies Department is pleased to welcome you. All are welcome! Feel free to come to any or all of the sessions.

Today, we seek to address the following questions:

- How does violence impact the lives of young people?
- How do intersecting oppressions shape and perpetuate violence against and among youth?
- How are teachers, parents, activists, and other adult community members and allies to youth challenging and interrupting violence?
- How are youth organizing and embodying resistance/resilience/healing?

The presence of violence within a community seems irreversible, but today's youth have taken initiatives to organize and embody resistance, resilience, and healing.

In bringing together community members, activists, students, and faculty, we seek to examine the ways in which anti-violence has been conceptualized, theorized, interrogated, and implemented in the lives of young people.

In approaching the topic of anti-violence, we will work from the framework established by the group INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence in the following ways: We understand that violence occurs both within communities and is perpetuated against communities. We are committed to acknowledging and making connections between interpersonal violence, state violence, and international violence in ways that challenge sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression (visit www.incite-national.org and [Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology](#)).

Thank you & enjoy the day!