“Finally! The field of Black sexuality studies has a comprehensive narrative of the experiences of Black young adults who attend HBCUs. Hall-Byers meticulously constructs a research, clinical, and educational portrait that captures the complex behavioral and affective nuances that impacts sexual decision making of Black students. Indeed, this is a must read for all sexuality educators at HBCUs and PWIs.”

James C. Wadley, Ph.D., Lincoln University, USA

“This book provides a better understanding of the sexual health needs of Black college students at HBCUs. The book explores the intersectionality of sex, race, and culture on public health outcomes for a marginalized, yet revered sub-population. This important context is critical to inform decisions about sex and relationships, and key for mitigating contextual factors in an effort to advance sexual health for Black students!”

Thomas Alex Washington, Ph.D., professor and co-director, Center for Health Equity Research Institute, College of Health & Human Services, California State University, Long Beach, USA

“This is a timely book that contextualizes the sexual health of Black college students, specifically at HBCUs. The integration of theory, research, applications, and practice by Dr. Hall-Byers draws readers attention and provides critical strategies to improve the sexual health of our students. I look forward to using this book in my courses!”

Danielle Dickens, Ph.D., Spelman College, USA

“This book is much needed and fills a very important gap that has long existed regarding the sexual health of Black College Students at the Intersections of their social identities, lived experiences, and the social environment. Hall-Byers successfully provides educators, researchers, administrators, and health professionals with valuable insights and knowledge that can assist their health education and health promotion activities when planning and delivering interventions for Black College Students at HBCU’s. Grounded in a sex positive lens, this textbook also provides important factors to consider when addressing sexual health and the use of social justice informed approaches in order to prevent stigmatization and marginalization due to social identity.”

Yarneccia D. Dyson, PhD., University of North Carolina Greensboro, USA
Sexual Health and Black College Students

This book explores the various psychosocial, sociocultural, and contextual factors that affect the sexual health of Black students who attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and how this environment can help develop strategies to improve sexual health outcomes for its students.

The college environment provides young people with a new sense of independence, self-determination, and peer pressure to engage in risky sexual behaviors, and research has shown that Black students at HBCUs bear a disproportionate burden of poorer sexual health outcomes than students at predominately white institutions (PWIs). Uniquely focusing on the sexual milieu of Black students, Hall-Byers explains why a better understanding of these settings is needed to guide successful interventions that benefit and support the sexual health of Black students. Chapters compare data and research on sexual health outcomes of young Black men and women in comparison to those at PWIs, as well as looking at the role of HBCU campus contexts and cultures, the potential psychosocial and sociocultural influences, what culturally responsive approaches may look like, and recommendations on how HBCU campuses can increase positive sexual health, such as through access, collaborative efforts among administrative offices, and reallocating resources.

*Sexual Health and Black College Students* aims to advance the translation of culturally grounded research into effective practice and is essential reading for researchers and practitioners in sex therapy, public health, and social science as well as for college health staff, including nurses, student affairs, and campus wellness centers.

**Dr. Naomi M. Hall-Byers** is a professor of psychology in the Department of Psychological Sciences at Winston-Salem State University (WSSU). She is the Director of the Race, Culture, and Context (RC²) lab and her overarching program of research focuses on psychological, social, cultural, and contextual factors associated with health disparities and inequities among youth and emerging adults (YEAs) of African descent.
Leading Conversations on Black Sexualities and Identities  
Series editor: James C. Wadley

*Leading Conversations on Black Sexualities and Identities* aims to stimulate sensitive conversations and teachings surrounding Black sexuality. Written by academics and practitioners who have dedicated their work to the distinctive sexual and relational experiences of persons of African descent, the series aims to provoke an enhanced understanding throughout the field of sexology and identify educational and clinical strategies for change. Amplifying issues and voices often minimalized and marginalized, this series is a continuation and expansion of inquiry and advocacy upon the complexities and nuances of relational negotiation, identity affirmation, critical discourse, and liberated sexual expression.

**Titles in the series:**

**Sexual Health and Black College Students: Exploring the Sexual Milieu of HBCUs**  
*Naomi M. Hall*

**Internalized Homonegativity Among Same Gender Loving Black Men: An Exploration of Truths**  
*P. Ryan Grant*

**Black Women, Intersectionality, and Workplace Bullying: Intersecting Distress**  
*Leah P. Hollis*
Sexual Health and Black College Students
Exploring the Sexual Milieu of HBCUs

Naomi M. Hall
I want to thank my husband (Kevin) and my daughter (Saige) for supporting me while I pursue my many interests and passions, and for giving me the space to do them. Many thanks to my family members, those related by blood or chosen by love, who are always encouraging, honest, and supportive. I am appreciative to the many faculty, staff, and students who know the value and power of HBCUs and work tirelessly to ensure that tomorrow shines just a little brighter than it did today for our students. HBCU love is different! Finally, my greatest acknowledgment is for my two favorite ancestors (Jessie and Catherine Hall) who provided guidance, wisdom, and an enduring legacy of love and laughter.
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When I met Dr. Hall Byers at a conference several years ago, we had a wonderful conversation about working at our own respective HBCU’s. At the time, she maintained a tenure track position at Winston Salem State University while I was faculty at Lincoln University (Pennsylvania). We spent some time talking about how HBCUs had evolved over the past 15–20 years in their effort to address sexuality-related issues. I shared that my university was in an active discussion about how gender roles are constructed and how centuries worth of patriarchal conversations were negatively impacting policy and programs. She shared that her institution was in the midst of having dialogue about HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns to reduce the likelihood of acquiring sexually transmitted infections. At both institutions, there needed to be a conceptual shift from faculty, staff, and students not talking about sensitive issues to formally and informally engaging in meaningful conversations that can transform and empower folks to be their best selves and have healthy relationships. While our individual universities had begun to develop programming that specifically targeted sexual health and wellness, there was much work (e.g., research, programming, policy changes, etc.) to be done that would consider race while addressing homophobic, transphobic, sexist, and patriarchal rhetoric and how these constructs impact sexuality expression as well as the maintenance of identities (individual and collective).

Over the years, Dr. Hall Byers and I continued our discussion about the two of us evolving in the academy and the impact we could possibly have in administrative, faculty, and clinical roles. We acknowledged the scarcity of tenure track Black faculty who focus on sexuality. Even though there are a greater number of Black faculty at HBCUs than at predominantly White institutions (PWIs), some in professoriate shy away from developing sexuality research agendas.
This seems problematic as our country continues to be challenged by skewed ideologies and behaviors regarding sexual assault (e.g., R. Kelly, Bill Cosby); exploring the idea and experiences of gender non-binary folks; the use of social media as a means of relational and sexual partner selection; and understanding the utility of sex positivity programming. Thus, it seems necessary for HBCUs to consider creating tenure track positions that invite Black sexuality scholars to teach, mentor, and maintain a research agenda that addresses the sexual health needs of persons of African descent. Moreover, consideration should be given to developing more Black clinical practitioners to become sexuality therapists and consultants. Doing so may allow for an enhanced number of professionals who could assist the university and its constituents in unpacking and unraveling relational and sexual health issues.

Dr. Hall Byers continues to lead the discussion about sexuality and sexual health and has proven to be a thought leader in field of race and sexuality studies. In the present initiative, she offers us her research and insight entitled, *Sexual Health & Black College Students: Exploring the Sexual Milieu of Historically Black Colleges and Universities*. She invites scholars and practitioners to think critically about how HBCU’s have been able to meet the academic and sexual wellness needs of its students over time, context, and circumstance. She eloquently acknowledges that even though some HBCU’s are challenged by a lack of resources, they remain at the forefront for producing young, Black leaders who actively engage in discussions about sexual wellness. In addition, Dr. Hall Byers meticulously dives into the world of courtship, sexual decision making, and the continuum of Black sexual expression of college students. Because of this contribution to the literature and field of sexuality studies, scholars and practitioners are in a more advantageous position to follow Dr. Hall Byers lead in creating conversations about Black sexualities and identities at HBCUs.

James C. Wadley, Series Editor
1 Introduction

The purpose of this book is to explore various psychosocial, socio-cultural, and contextual factors critical to the sexual health of Black college students within the milieu of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Additionally, it explores how this environment can promote, or in some cases impede, optimal sexual health. The book can be used to help guide the development of strategies and interventions to improve sexual health outcomes and advance the translation of culturally grounded research into effective practice. This chapter is introductory in that it explores the definition of sexual health, its importance, and the history and significance of HBCUs in the United States.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019) define sexual health as a state of physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being in relation to sexuality. Although the terms are often used interchangeably, sexual health is more than sexuality or sexual behaviors (Younge et al., 2014). It is multi-dimensional and includes the ability to comprehend the benefits, risks, and responsibilities of sexual experiences while also understanding the importance of preventing disease and other adverse outcomes. Additionally, it includes access to comprehensive, accurate sex and sexuality-related information and services, and to be in an environment that affirms and promotes sexual health (World Health Organization, 2015). Often only the negative consequences for individuals are discussed in the literature and the media such as sexually transmitted infection (STI) and Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) rates, unplanned pregnancies, and sexual violence. However, numerous other areas of sexual health should receive more attention because they are important to one’s overall well-being. Areas such as identity (e.g., racial/ethnic, gender, sexual), decision-making, sexual expression, relationships, and sexual pleasure are often

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