



**COMMUNITY INTERVENTIONS
NEEDED TO SUPPORT BLACK
MARRIAGES**

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT BLACK MARRIAGES

- Black Marriages Are in Crisis.
- Marriage and Marital Quality Affect the Economic, Psychological, Social and Physical Well-being of African American Children and Adults
- Most Blacks Value Marriage and Want to Marry.
- Many Black are Losing Hope that Marriage is Attainable.



COMMUNITY STRATEGIES FOR STRENGTHENING BLACK MARRIAGES

1) DEVELOP AN INSPIRING VISION AND HOPE FOR STRENGTHENING AFRICAN AMERICAN MARRIAGES

A. Vision of Healthy Marriages in the Black Community

B. Sources for Vision and Definition of Healthy Marriages:

- Models of Healthy Black Marriages
- Lessons learned by Blacks who have experiences challenges of marriage and marital dissolution
- Marital qualities that couples aspire for in the context of current and future social realities
- Evidence-based information about what strengthens all marriages in general and black marriages in particular; and
- Definitions of healthy marriage developed by marriage researchers

DEFINING A HEALTHY BLACK MARRIAGE

1. Marital Satisfaction
2. Effective Communication
3. Effective Conflict Resolution
4. Lack of Domestic Violence
5. Interaction and Time Together
6. Intimacy (Emotional, Intellectual, Sexual, Spiritual)
7. Commitment to the Marriage
8. Fidelity, Honesty and Trust
9. Domestic Justice
10. Supportiveness
11. Commitment to the Children
12. Duration of Legal Marital status

INSPIRING HOPE

- Celebrate, Honor, and Put on Display Healthy Black Marriages.
- Learn From the Wise and Hopeful Individuals who Were Previously Married.
- Develop Understandable and Practical Action Steps that Increase couples Chances of Establishing and Sustaining Healthy Marriages.

2. BUILD ON BLACK CULTURAL STRENGTHS

- 1) Collectivism/Communalism
- 2) Spiritualism
- 3) Role Flexibility
- 4) Egalitarian Relationships
- 5) Diunital views of the world
- 6) Kinship bonds
- 7) Authenticity
- 8) Extended family supports
- 9) Resilience

3) GALVANIZE AND MOBILIZE BLACK LEADERS, ACTIVISTS AND INSTITUTIONS

- To Collaborate, Organize and Act Strategically and Persistently to Strengthen Black Marriages.
- To Connect Healthy Marriage Promotion Efforts to Other essential Initiatives.

OVERCOME THE RESISTANCE

1. Misunderstandings about the Perspectives, Loyalties and Intentions of Those Who Note the Significance of Marriage
2. Politicization of Marriage and Marriage as a Diversionary Technique
3. Limited Paradigms for Black Uplift
4. Blaming The Victim and Being Out of Touch with Real Life Struggles of African Americans
5. Airing Dirty Laundry in Public
6. Marriage Strengthening Efforts Devalue Other Black Family Forms
7. Marriages Strengthening Efforts Could Replace, or Diminish other efforts to Improve the Life Conditions of African Americans
8. Healthy Marriage Promotion Is Irresponsible – It Give Blacks False Hope

4) STARTING A NATIONAL CONVERSATION ABOUT BLACK MARRIAGES

- Raise Public Awareness About Marriage
- Make the Case to Youth

5) RESEARCH

- Identify Factors That detract From and Contribute to Black Marital Quality and Stability.
- Use caution in Applying Research Findings on General Population to African Americans.
- More Research is Needed With Representative Samples of African Americans.
- More African American Doing Research on Black Marriages.

6) DEVELOP, IMPLEMENT AND EVALUATE MARRIAGE PROGRAMS FOR BLACKS

- Increase development of and access to marriage programs that are designed to strengthen black marriages.
- Youth relationship and marriage education programs in secondary schools and colleges.
- Increased exposure to evidence-based information about how to achieve a healthy marriage.

7) INCREASE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SUPPORTS FOR MARRIAGE - REDUCE SOCIETAL FORCES THAT ARE HARMFUL TO BLACK MARRIAGES

- Vigilance in working for social justice in politics, economics, education, health care, child care and the legal system.
- Exert pressure on government and market institutions to fairly distribute resources and institute policies that support the efforts of African Americans to strengthen their marriages and families.
- Encourage media outlets to present positive messages about and images of African Americans.