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(Re)claiming Professional Identity: Humanizing Black women's experiences in the workplace

Ashley Hixson Clarke, Di-Tu Dissassa, and Crystal Allen

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Ashley Hixson Clarke
she/her



Di-Tu Dissassa
she/her



Crystal Allen
she/her



Land, Labor, and Digital Acknowledgement

The land on which we teach, research, and learn are the ancestral homelands of the Piscataway people. They were forcibly removed and displaced from their homelands, and we acknowledge the history of violence and daily oppression Indigenous populations face and stand in solidarity.

Further, we respectfully acknowledge the enslaved people who built this country through exploited labor. The United States is explicitly in debt to their labor and the labor of many Black and Brown bodies that continue to work in the shadows for our collective benefit.

Lastly, let's consider how our activities shared digitally on the internet have a legacy of colonization through the technology we use. The technological structures we use are not only unavailable to many Indigenous peoples, but they also contribute to climate change by leaving significant carbon footprints that disproportionately affect Indigenous peoples worldwide.

Influenced by University of Maryland, Highline College, Adrienne Wong of SpiderWebShow

Contextual Background

Racialized Organization: racialized organizations enhance or diminish agency of people of color, create unequal distribution of resources, use whiteness as a credential, and make the formal rules of the organization racialized (Ray, 2019).

Colonialism: the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically

Settler colonialism:

- based on the logic of owning land (Wolfe, 1999)
- land is fundamentally property, and people are differentially positioned relative to their worthiness to own it (Patel, 2016, p.43)
- Since land is a finite resource there is a desire to accumulate wealth and property and convert it into other entities (i.e. people, status, air and sea). (Harris, 1993)

Decolonization: “cultural, psychological, and economic freedom” for Indigenous people with the goal of achieving Indigenous sovereignty — the right and ability of Indigenous people to practice self-determination over their land, cultures, and political and economic systems.



Overview and Purpose

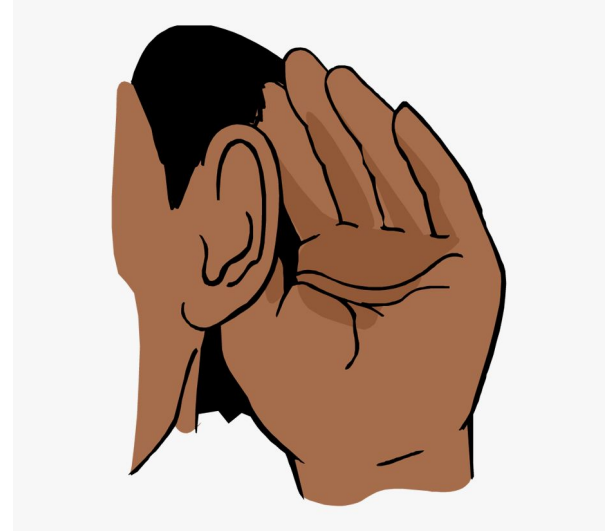
- Reclaim Professional Identity Development (PID) for Black women in the workplace
- We disrupt the traditional associations and ideas of professionalism that have not considered the multiple identities
- Allows for authenticity in daily work responsibilities and connections to the organization



What comes to mind when you hear the word “professional” ?

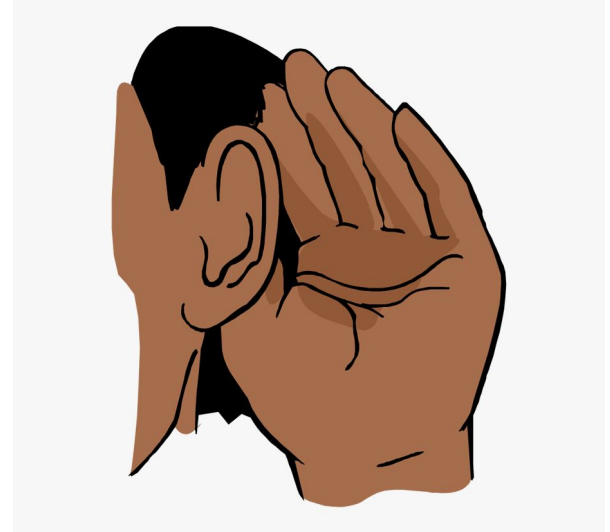
Scatterfall Instructions

1. Think of what comes to mind.
2. Type it out, but **do not** press enter/return until instructed to do so.



What comes to mind when you hear the word “professional” ?

1. Body type
2. Hair (straight)
3. Clothing
4. Tone
5. Socioeconomic Status or Class
6. Educational Background/Pedigree





How to Be Professional at Work: 20 ..
careeraddict.com

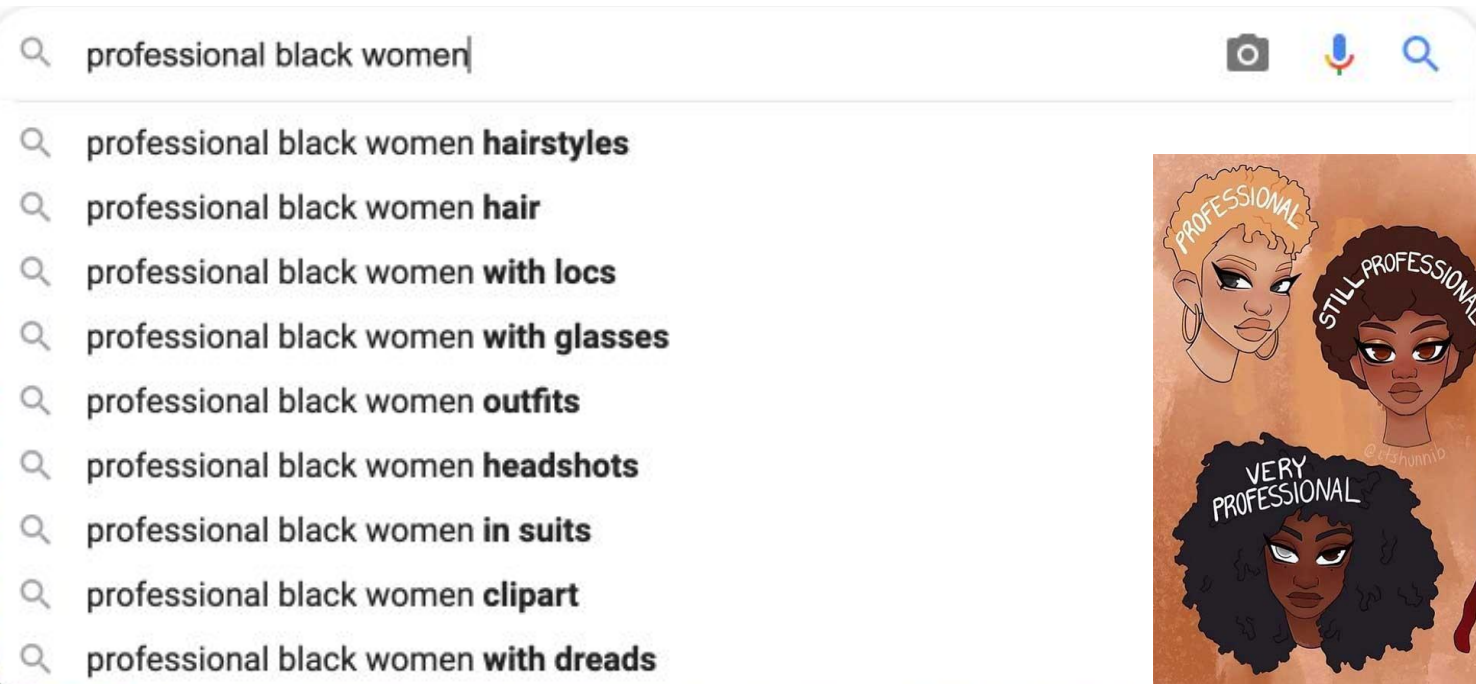


Professional - Definition, Example ...
corporatefinanceinstitute.com



Society for Conservation Biology ...
conbio.org







The CROWN Act

The **CROWN Act**, which stands for “Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair,” is a law that prohibits race-based hair discrimination, which is the denial of employment and educational opportunities because of hair texture or protective hairstyles including braids, locs, twists or bantu knots.

Tatiana, Senior Producer



Both are qualified.
One is professional.
One is “distracting.”

Black women's hair is 2.5x more likely to be perceived as unprofessional. And in most states, there are no laws to protect against race-based hair discrimination in the workplace.

That's why Dove and LinkedIn have partnered to support the passing of the **CROWN Act**, to end hair bias and hair discrimination nationwide.

Visit Dove.com/LinkedIn to sign the CROWN Act petition, and access free learning courses that support a more equitable and inclusive work environment.

#BlackHairsProfessional

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Jewell, Director of Office Operations



Same strong resume.
Same qualifications.
One “isn’t a culture fit.”

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#BlackHairsProfessional

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Tara, Executive Coach



Both are qualified.
One is professional.
One is “unpolished.”

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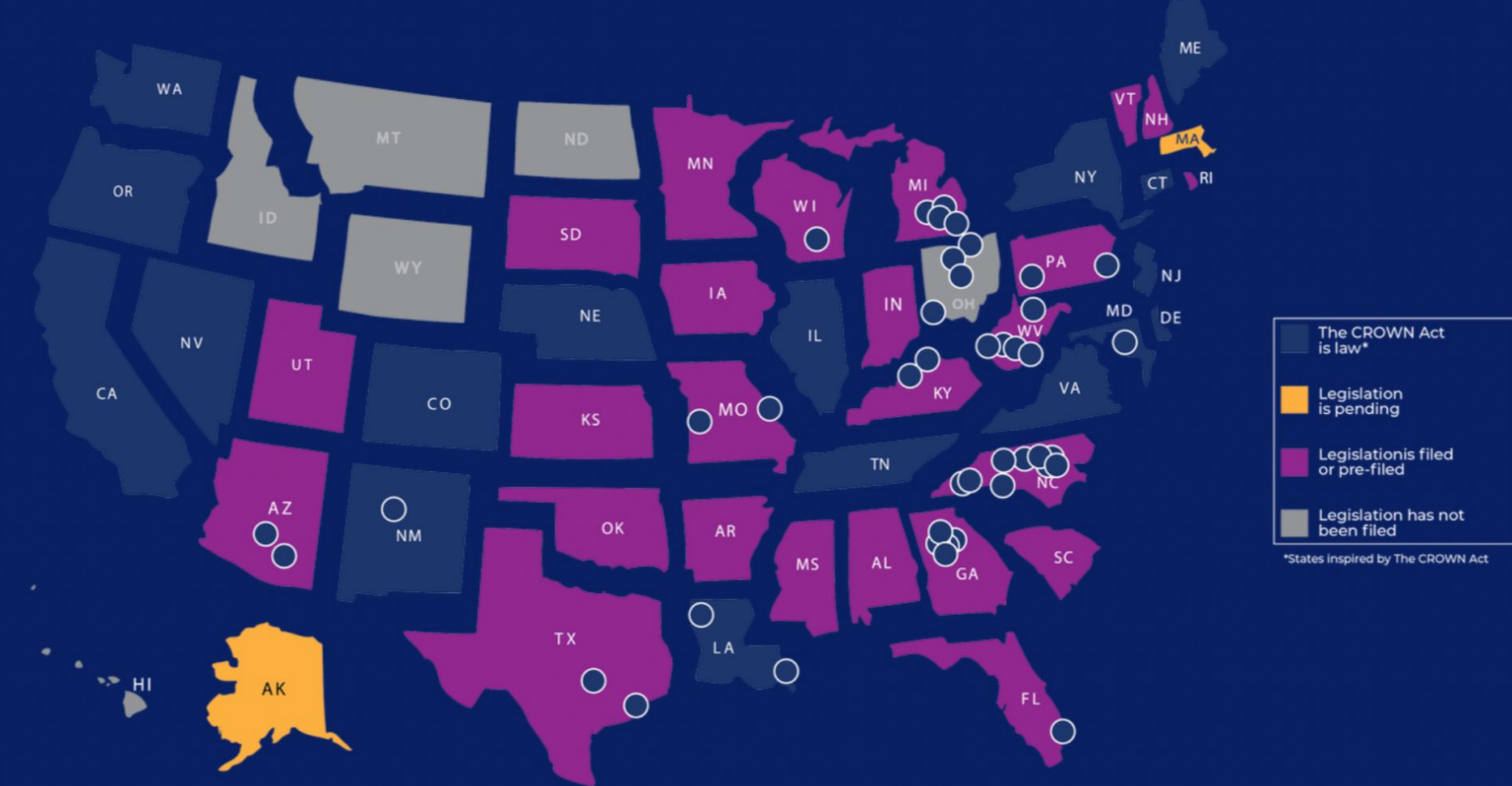
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#BlackHairsProfessional

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○ THE CROWN ACT IS LAW

Montgomery County, MD
Beckley, WV
Charleston, WV
Huntington, WV
Lewisburg, WV
Morgantown, WV
Ann Arbor, MI
Ingham County, MI

Genesee County, MI
Philadelphia, PA
Pittsburgh, PA
Newburgh Heights, OH
Akron, OH
Columbus, OH
Cincinnati, OH
Dane County, WI

Milwaukee, WI
Covington, KY
Louisville, KY
Asheville, NC
Buncombe County, NC
Chatham County, NC
Charlotte, NC
Durham, NC

Orange County, NC
Greensboro, NC
Raleigh, NC
Winston-Salem, NC
Kansas City, MO
St. Louis, MO
Tempe, AZ
Tucson, AZ

Clayton County, GA
East Point, GA
Gwinnet County, GA
South Fulton, GA
Stockbridge, GA
Albuquerque, NM
New Orleans, LA
Shreveport, LA

Broward County, FL
Austin, TX
Harris County, TX
U.S. Virgin Islands



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**A Conversation With
Black Women on Race |
Op-Docs**

[https://youtu.be/U-xz4
qiUBsw](https://youtu.be/U-xz4qiUBsw)

Professional Identity Development

- Professional Identity Development (Seemiller & Priest, 2017)
 - Self-perception - how one sees themselves
 - Legitimization - how one is recognized or regarded by others (Sutherland & Markauskaite, 2012)





Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT):

- Stems from scholars in legal studies
- Demonstrate the ways power perpetuates and reinforces racism
- Highlights the interactions between people and within organizations
- Rely on the assumptions that racism is so normal and woven through our societal structurals, that it is invisible
- **Tenets:** counter-storytelling, **racism as permanence, whiteness as property,** interest conversion, and the critique of liberalism

“CRT analyzes the role of race and racism in perpetuating social disparities between dominant and marginalized racial groups” (Hiraldo, 2010, p.54).

(Delgado and Stefancic, 2001; Patton & Bondi, 2015)

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Whiteness as Property:

1. the right to disposition
2. the right to use and enjoyment
3. the right to status and property
4. the right to exclude

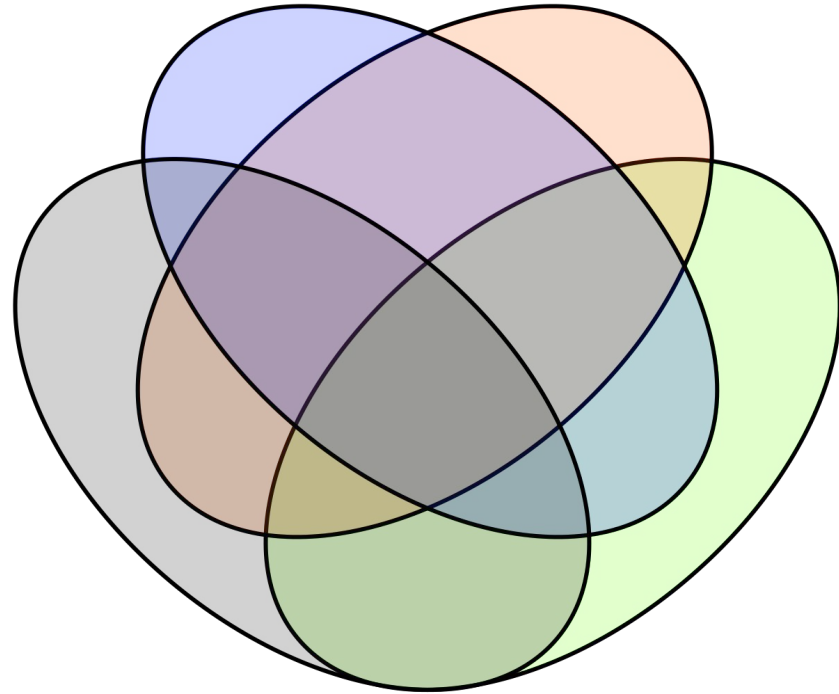


Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Racism as permanence:
explains the degree to which racism is normalized in
structural [& institutional] systems

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Intersectionality:
used as an analytical tool for
addressing the ways in which
Black women face multiple
complex issues of
discrimination



(Re)Claiming Professional Identity Development

**“There is no thing as a single-issue struggle
because we do not live single-issue lives.”
-Audre Lorde**

Black Women's PID Experience

- Central argument on Black woman PID Experience
 - Ways that impacts Black women's experience



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Q&A

Lived Experiences



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CONTACT:

ahixson@umd.edu

dissassa@umd.edu

College of Education
University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland