

ABSC SPRING ROUNDTABLE SERIES XI

theabsc.com/events

April 27–28, 2026 | St. Maarten



**THE JOYS OF INDIVIDUAL
AND RELATIONAL EMANCIPATION**



The Association
of Black Sexologists and Clinicians

Gimme Shelter...

THREE DECADES OF ADVOCACY



For nearly 30 years, NCSF has been tirelessly advocating to protect the rights of people who are kinky or non-monogamous. Over the last 30 years, NCSF has:

- Developed the Consent Counts Campaign to decriminalize sexual conduct between consensual adults, and to promote a culture of consent through education and providing resources on how to deal with nonconsensual incidents.
- Provided incident response assistance to thousands of people regarding child custody, job discrimination, criminal prosecutions, consent violations, venue licensing, and enforcement issues.
- Given over 1,000 media interviews to change media representations of BDSM and non-monogamy, and trained many hundreds of people to talk to the media.
- Developed educational programs and resources for law enforcement, attorneys, therapists, medical personnel, victim advocates, universities, authors, and our own communities.
- Worked with the American Psychiatric Association to change the DSM criteria so that BDSM is no longer categorized as a mental illness.
- Filed Amicus Briefs in important legal cases.
- Maintained the Kink and Polyamory Aware Professionals database with hundreds of professionals to help you.
- Created the Freedom and Privacy Program to protect our spaces



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SALUTATIONS!

We are so excited to venture to St. Maarten for our 2026 ABSC Spring Roundtable Series! Together with the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom we are ready to discuss sex positive relationships of persons of African descent. Hosted online from beautiful St. Maarten, we have several wonderful presentations that illuminate the complexities of Black sexuality and relationships and we are happy that you are a part of our conference.

*Thank you so much for your support and patience over the last several months as we have worked hard to prepare this experience for you. Thematically, our task for the conference is to explore *The Joys of Individual and Relational Emancipation*. How might joy be constructed for you personally and professionally? When are the moments that you've felt untethered and free from relational expectations? Who is responsible for your joy and emancipation? We hope that your time with us gives you an opportunity to feel joy and have emancipatory experiences.:-)*

St. Maarten is the capital of Saint James Parish on Jamaica's north coast, is a major cruise ship port with numerous beach resorts and golf courses outside its commercial core. The country is known for its beautiful beaches, cobblestone streets, and salt pans. If you are a part of the conference and in St. Maarten, you can visit <https://shorturl.at/C7x4l> for more information about the country's history and things to do.

Finally, please let us know how we are doing so that we can make your conference experience the best you've ever had. We're looking forward to engaging conversations and look forward to learning more about you and your work.

James C. Wadley, Ph.D

Co-Chair

2026 ABSC Spring Roundtable Series

Monique Howard, Ed.D

Co-Chair

2026 ABSC Spring Roundtable Series

9:00AM

Disentangling the Inevitability of Sexual Desire

Mary E. May, MFT

Description

Disentangling the Inevitability of Sexual Desire invites a critical conversation among melanated clinicians and sexologists about the intersection of liberation, responsibility, and inherited sexual scripts. This dialogue explores desire not as pathology, but as data—an embodied language revealing what we crave, protect, and believe about intimacy and power. Within cultural and historical contexts shaped by colonization, religion, and respectability, participants will examine how generational narratives have framed desire as both sacred and suspect. Together, we'll consider how reclaiming sexual expression through self-awareness, cultural honesty, and embodied freedom transforms both personal healing and professional practice—challenging the tendency to moralize what was never meant to be silenced.

SMART GOALS

01

Participants will gain a renewed understanding of desire as cultural data—a reflection of both identity and conditioning that informs therapeutic and personal healing.

02

They will leave with the language and perspective to honor desire as sacred, reframing it from a source of shame into an embodied act of reclamation, liberation, and professional integrity.

10:00AM

Black Women-Loving Women's Styles of Sociability in Atlanta, Georgia

Jessany Maldonado, PhD

SMART GOALS

01

By the end of the presentation, attendees will be able to understand how Black WLW utilize their gender, performance, and sexuality to transform unmarked place into Black kweer space.

02

By the end of the presentation, attendees will be able to understand how age differences function to strengthen social bonds among intragenerational Black WLW but decrease the potential for social bonds among intergenerational Black WLW.

Description

Scholarship exploring Black women-loving women's (Black WLW) sociability with one another in Atlanta, Georgia is scarce. Using a mixed methods design, this qualitative analysis reveals that age/generational differences mediate how Black WLW use sartorial styles and sociability to transform unmarked place into Black kweer space. Specifically, younger Black WLW use labeled designer clothing and social media to strengthen and publicize their pre-established social bonds. Older Black WLW invest more in clothing style and interpersonal interaction to create new and strengthen pre-established bonds. Congruent with previous scholarship,

these two generational groups demonstrate Black women's ability to create affirming enclaves for themselves.

11:00AM

Black Men, BDSM, and Erotic Emancipation: Passion and the Power

Bill Johnson, PsyD

Description

Black men who engage in BDSM navigate a complex terrain shaped by both the stigma attached to kink and the racialized sexual stereotypes that mark Black male desire as dangerous, excessive, or suspect. While much scholarship and clinical work focuses on harm, pathology, or survival, this roundtable centers a different question: how do Black men experience BDSM as a site of joy, relational freedom, and erotic emancipation? Drawing from clinical practice, Black

sexuality studies, and community knowledge, this discussion explores how pleasure, power exchange, and consent can function not only as resistance to oppression but as affirmative practices of healing and connection. Participants will be informed about how Black men reclaim erotic agency within and beyond BDSM spaces, how relationships become sites of emancipation rather than surveillance, and how clinicians can support joy without requiring suffering as the entry point. This presentation invites shared reflection on erotic life as a source of vitality, meaning, and collective possibility for people of African descent.

12:00PM

The Dual Abjection of the BBC

LeKeisha M. Jones, MS, LPC

Description

Abjection is defined as being unconsciously horrified or disgusted by an object, person, or place. Desire and disgust are part of the spectrum of abjection insinuating both can be experienced at the same time. Literature presents evidence of the Big Black Cock (BBC) specifically, has been desired and repulsed by European missionaries and colonists seeking to conquer the Motherland. While being met by the beauty of our bodies, colonists noticed our genitals first, unconsciously separated the BBC from the man, and were convinced their patriarchy, supremacy, and the control they have over their women were threatened. This presentation will present the historical elements of how the BBC was defined since colonization, praised during slavery, pathologized through the medicalization of sexuality, and has remained an unconscious part of White Supremacy and racism in the western world. This presentation will also discuss how we can reclaim the beauty in our bodies and our sexuality through the lens of Afrocentric centered perspective.

SMART GOALS

01

Participants will define and understand the racist significance of dual abjection of the BBC and its relationship and foundation of White Supremacy and patriarchy.

02

Participants will understand the origin, history, and racist implications of the BBC and how it has created harm among Black people, emasculated Black Men since colonial times, and will explore options to rekindle the beauty in Black Men's bodies that will breed healing and transformation.



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9:00AM

Decolonial Relationalities and Emancipatory Pleasures

Zelaika Hepworth Clarke, PhD, MSW, MEd, CSE, CST

Description

How can the way we relate be conducive to our liberation? This session explores decolonial relationality as an emancipatory praxis that supports healing justice, erotic prosperity, and collective liberation. Drawing from decolonizing autoethnographic research on Osunality and erotic emancipation, the facilitator—serving as co-emancipator—will introduce tools, concepts, and frameworks that center erotic justice and relational wellbeing.

Grounded in transnational decolonial Black feminist thought, pluriversal and African-centered sexual onto-epistemologies, and anti-oppressive, pleasure-centered approaches, this presentation affirms the transformative power of communal care and joy. Together, we will explore decolonial intimacy and partnership practices that resist and reimagine beyond kyriarchal structures.

Participants will be invited to unsettle colonial mentalities that distort how we conceptualize, interpret, and experience love, relationality, eroticism, pleasure, sex, fulfillment, connection, and embodied wisdom. This session will offer a liberatory space to reflect, imagine, and reclaim relational practices that foster erotic thrivance.

SMART GOALS

01

Describe the concept of decolonial relationality and explain its significance in challenging colonial constructs of intimacy and sexuality.

02

Identify at least one theory, concept, or practice that supports erotic emancipation in clinical, educational, or community-based work.

10:00AM

Am I Next? Black Men Navigating Structural Violence: A Journey of Survival

John G. Taylor, PhD, M.Ed., MACC, LPC

Description

Through a variety of mechanisms, historical events and tragedies have influenced the mentality and view of mortality for Black men. These abuses, such as slavery, lynchings, and police brutality, have caused negative physical, mental, and sexual health outcomes among Black men. For example, young Black men aged 18 and older have the highest age-adjusted mortality rates and the worst mental health status of any racial or ethnic group in the United States. Additionally, young Black men ages 15–24 have higher rates of suicide compared to White men in the same age group. Demonstrating the role of structural violence in mental health, Black men profiled by the police reported episodes of depression, anxiety, despair,

and fear. In addition, Black gay youth, when approached by police, experienced anxiety, fear, and depression. Notably, the mental health of Black men will continue to suffer if these oppressive systems continue to cause physical, psychological, and emotional harm.

SMART GOALS

01

Participants will learn the impact that structural violence has on the mental health and sexual behavior of Black Men.

02

Participants will learn the intersection of Terror Management and Minority Theories and their influence on the lives of Black Men.

11:00AM

A Black Feminist Study of Black Mother-Daughter Sexual Communication.

Khrystal Johnson

Description

The current study explores parent-child sexual communication (PCSC) within Black families through in-depth interviews with 29 Black mothers of daughters aged 6-11. We examine the multidimensional goals and strategies mothers employ when engaging in conversations about sex-related topics, including pleasure and sexual identity. Findings indicated that mothers'

goals for PCSC included increasing awareness through neutral and accurate information, fostering daughters' sense of self, and both challenging and navigating dominant societal norms shaped by White heteropatriarchy. Mothers described using a range of strategies, including direct and open communication, behavioral modeling, the incorporation of real-life examples, attentiveness to daughters' developmental needs, and active monitoring of daughters' social environments. Collectively, these themes highlight the complexity, intentionality, and strengths of sex-positive parenting practices within Black families. The findings contribute to the panel by inviting critical dialogue on how culturally grounded and developmentally responsive approaches to PCSC can inform sexual health research and education while challenging deficit-based narratives that have historically shaped the field. Implications of this work include informing family-based sexual health interventions, practitioner training, and educational curricula that more accurately reflect the values, strengths, and lived experiences of Black families.

SMART GOALS

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 01 | By the end of the discussion, participants will be able to identify and describe at least 3 goals and strategies that Black mothers use when engaging in parent-child sexual communication (PCSC). |
| 02 | Critically examine how communication strategies employed by Black parents and guardians can inform the development of culturally responsive sex education programs and interventions. |

Des Moines, IA
Monday, April 20th

Denver, CO
Wednesday, April 22nd

Chicago, IL
Friday, April 24th, and Saturday,
April 25th

Detroit, MI
Sunday, April 26th

Kansas City, MO
Tuesday, April 28th

Virginia Beach, VA
Wednesday, April 29th

Baltimore, MD
Thursday, April 30th, and Friday, May 1st

Washington, D.C.
Saturday, May 2nd, Sunday, May 3rd,
and Monday, May 4th

Atlanta, GA
Wednesday, May 6th, and Thursday,
May 7th

Philadelphia, PA
Saturday, May 9th, and Sunday, May 10th

Jacksonville, FL
Monday, May 11th

Orlando, FL
Tuesday, May 12th

Tampa, FL
Wednesday, May 13th

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Saturday, May 16th

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BIOSKETCHES

Zelaika Hepworth Clarke, PhD, MSW, MEd, CSE, CST, also known as the Jamerican Sexosopher, is an AASECT Certified Sexuality Educator and Sex Therapist, African-centered social worker, decolonial eroticologist, and decolonizing autoethnographer. The first Jamaican-American to earn three degrees in sexuality studies (NYU; MEd; PhD) on Turtle Island, Dr. Clarke is an adjunct professor at Columbia University teaching Decolonizing Social Work. They co-founded an anti-racist decolonial sexuality studies program and co-created the Decolonial SAR (D-SAR). Dr. Clarke provides decolonial guidance, therapy, consulting, and education with the Pluriversity LLC. Dr. Clarke is committed to the decolonial project, healing justice, erotic sovereignty, and emancipatory praxis.

Bill Johnson, Psy.D., is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist and AASECT Certified Sex Therapist. He specializes in anti-racist psychotherapy with Black men, particularly those engaged in BDSM and kink communities. His clinical, training, and scholarly work examines how gendered racism, sexual stigma, and power shape Black men's erotic lives and mental health. Dr. Johnson has presented nationally and internationally on Black sexuality, pleasure, and culturally responsive sex therapy, and his work bridges clinical practice, Black sexuality studies, and liberation-oriented frameworks.

Khrystal Johnson is a fourth-year Ph.D. candidate in clinical psychology at Washington University in St. Louis, where she works under the advisement of Dr. Seanna Leath in the Fostering Healthy Identities and Resilience (FHIRE) Lab. Her research focuses on culturally grounded processes that support healthy identity development and resilience among Black women, with particular emphasis on joy and storytelling as mechanisms of well-being. Building on this work, Khrystal also examines sex socialization messaging within the Black community, with a focus on how affirming and positive sexual messages contribute to healthy sexual identity development among Black girls and LGBT+ emerging adults.

LeKeisha Jones, MS., LPC aka Kitty Pride is a licensed professional Counselor, board certified clinical and holistic sexologist, and erotic poet. She obtained her Master of Science degree from Brenau University's Clinical Counseling Psychology program. She is currently a PhD student in the Human Sexuality program at California Institute of Integral Studies. Lekeisha is the founder of EROTIC-OLOGY providing group psychotherapy, consultation, and education for adult clients and professionals and provides edutainment events through erotic poetry, art and performances. She currently provides psychotherapeutic treatment for various sexual disorders, problematic sexual behaviors/addictions, and paraphilias with adults and adolescents. She is native to Minnesota and is currently living in Atlanta, Georgia.

Jessany Maldonado, Ph.D is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies at Southern Connecticut State University. Having a scholarly background in psychological sciences, gender and sexuality studies, and Afrocentric feminist methodologies, her research interests center Black socio-sexual culture and sexual behavior.

Mary E. May, MFT is a Relationship Therapist with a keen ability to facilitate resolution focused and interventions that support healing for youth, teens, and adults by assisting them to develop a pathway to work towards strategies to deal with violence and trauma when it manifests in their lives. Mary is also an innovative trainer, educator, presenter, and public speaker. Her expertise in intimacy, depression, anxiety, domestic violence, bullying, suicide prevention, teen dating violence, and more makes her an exemplary choice for seminars, workshops, and symposiums. She continues to develop her work and techniques with a variety of organizations, mental health networks, and universities. And remember, "Freedom lies in being bold."

John G. Taylor, PhD, M.Ed., MACC, LPC, is an Assistant Professor, Author, Christian Therapist, Licensed Professional Counselor, and Sexuality Educator in Philadelphia, PA. Author, Pocket Guide for Young Men Without Fathers: Important Life Lessons. Dr. Taylor hosts the podcast, My Mortality Matters: The Voices and Lives of Black Men. Dr. Taylor has a Doctor of Philosophy with a concentration in Human Sexuality Studies from Widener University.

He has a Master's degree in Sexuality Studies from Widener University and a Master's degree in Christian Counseling from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He has a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Fayetteville State University.



The Association
of Black Sexologists and Clinicians

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James C. Wadley, PhD, Editor

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