Coalition Toolkit – Philosophical Foundations

“To build a better future for the generations that follow, we have to understand how we got here and how our past affects people differently depending on their community's role and experience in history.” – NJCASA At the Intersections: Unpacking Our History blog post

Retelling history is always contentious. Whose perspective do we highlight when interpretations of events differ? Why do we feel like we have to choose? Which events are marked as significant, meaningful, and worthy of recognizing and by whom? How do power, race, geography, citizenship, gender, economic class, language, and ability impact our answers to these questions?
As people, we often use stories to understand our place in the world and what is possible within it. The stories we tell about our origins can help us find our bearings. They can be our map when we lose our way. They can offer an explanation for why we do things the way we do. They can be a balm for vicarious trauma. Stories are important. They connect us with something larger than ourselves. This is part of how we build resilience. It is part of the fun of this work.

But what happens when the story leaves out details important to your experience and your community? How does that impact your participation, your connection, and your vision for what is possible?

In this edition of ReShape, the first in a six-part series lifting up sections of the RSP Coalition Toolkit developed over the past several years, we highlight the sections on history of the anti-rape movement and resources to address on-going oppression within our work.

We paired these sections together for this ReShape to encourage us all to think critically about the link between how we tell our movements’ origin stories, the lack of current day recognition of women of color as leaders in the movement, and the tendency to equate criminal legal responses with safety.

Though these are not included in the coalition toolkit, we also offer links at the end of this ReShape to resources written by coalitions and others as examples of how we might tell our histories in different ways.

**History & Anti-Oppression**

- Resources to develop anti-oppression practices [http://www.resourcesharingproject.org/anti-oppression](http://www.resourcesharingproject.org/anti-oppression)
To access the entire toolkit visit:
http://www.resourcesharingproject.org/coalition-toolkit

Resources to Deepen the Stories of Our Movements’ Histories

- NJCASA’s “At the Intersections: Unpacking Our Histories” blog series and #AtTheIntersections hashtag: https://njcasa.org/news/njcasa-at-the-intersections/ and https://twitter.com/search?q=%23AtTheIntersections
- Loretta Ross, former ED of the DC Rape Crisis Center, on the history of the term ‘women of color’ (transcript for video included at the link): https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/03/origin-of-term-woc/

Book List
Previous RSP Book Club Selections

- Sarah Deer’s The Beginning and End of Rape
- Danielle McGuire’s At the Dark End of the Street
- Queering Sexual Violence, edited by Jennifer Patterson
- Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge’s Intersectionality

Other Informative Books

- Beth E. Ritchie’s Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America’s Prison Nation
- This Bridge Called My Back, edited by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa
• **Color of Violence: The Incite! Anthology**, by Incite! Women of Color Against Violence
  
  **Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza**, by Gloria Anzaldúa and Norma Cantu

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[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DM9JDDK](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DM9JDDK)

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