

# Girls face self-esteem issues

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particularly, does it have an effect on the self-esteem of black girls? Some may not believe these songs are geared toward youths, but urban stations WPEG and WBT's target audience is between the ages of 12 and 25.

As well, clothing has become increasingly provocative in recent years. Micro-minis and pants with words across the butt were very popular, but are those clothes appropriate for the age group they are marketed to?

In a 2005 New York Times article, author Denise Brodey examined how "Blacks Joined the Eating Disorder Mainstream." The subject has gained momentum in recent years, as the numbers of bulimics and anorexics in the African American community have increased. Once thought a problem for other cultures, Brodey explained that, "comparisons to white peers and images of white celebrities in the media" have led some black youth to hate their bodies, and strive for unattainable figures.

Even more prevalent is the increased use of laxatives as a weight loss tool, in the black community. White women in their teens and 20s still account for most anorexia cases in the U.S. A 2003 study published in The American Journal of Psychiatry found "young black women were as likely as white women to report binge eating." In an earlier study, published in 2000 in Archives of Family Medicine, black women were found to be "as likely as white women to report binge eating or vomiting and were more likely to report fasting and the abuse of laxatives or diuretics than their white peers."

For years the medical community did not believe eating disorders were a problem for blacks because of the self

## Rice: Civil war, Iraq are similar

By Bary Schweid  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is drawing a parallel between the Iraq war and the Civil War. Both had their critics but both were justified, she says.

In both cases, it was the right decision to fight and see the wars through, Rice, who is black and is from Alabama, said in an interview with Essence Magazine.

Asked if she still thought the decision to go to war in Iraq in 2003 was right, considering the cost in lives and treasure, Rice said, "Absolutely."

Rice then offered a parallel between critics of the administration's Iraq policies and "people who thought it was a mistake to fight the Civil War (in this country) to its end and to insist that the emancipation of slaves would hold."

"I'm sure that there were people who said, 'why don't we get out of this now, take a peace with the South, but leave the South with slaves.'"

"Just because things are difficult, it doesn't mean that they are wrong or that you turn back," Rice told the magazine, which has a large audience among African-Americans.

Rice, a former academic, said she spent the summer reading biographies of the Founding Fathers and said she was certain "there were people who thought the Declaration of Independence was a mistake" as well.

image of black women as "brick houses."

"Curvy African-American women were celebrated," said Dr. Gayle Brooks, an African-American psychologist and vice president of clinical services at the Renfrew Center in Coconut Creek, Fla., an eating disorders treatment center. "These girls didn't experience anxiety and shame about their bodies. Being curvy or large was a source of pride within the African-American community."

Yet in recent years that has changed. "In the past 10 years, there has been a tremendous cultural shift. The image of the ideal body image is narrower," said Dr. Ira Sacker, an expert in eating disorders and founder of the Helping End Eating Disorders Foundation in New York. "Black women, Latina women, they all feel the need to be thin to fit in." In some cases, minority women believe being thin will help them fit into mainstream white culture, on the professional level, and on the playground.

Anorexia is the third most common chronic illness among adolescents and 95 percent of those with eating disorders are between the ages of 12 and 25. According to the Office of Women's Health, 50 percent of girls between the ages of 11 and 13 see themselves as overweight. One possible reason for this change in perception could be that black women pictured in magazines today often have body types similar to white women. For every Beyonce, there are still more Ya-Ya's, and even Beyonce isn't as thick as she used to be.

One industry that has been accused of creating unrealistic views of shape and women in general is the exotic dance, or stripper community. However, not everyone agrees.

Darlene Hines-Brown, owner of Maryland-based Entertainment With Class, struggles to help her daughter with self-image and self-esteem issues.

"My daughter is not secure in herself," said Hines-Brown. "She's had problems in school. She lets people tell her she's ugly, and she believes it."

Hines-Brown manages 42 female and male exotic dancers. She says the problem in her daughter's case has nothing to do with the industry she works in, but rather what they see in school.

"She looks around her and sees other high school students in high heels (some higher than the girls wear dancing), girls wear halter tops, and tops with spaghetti straps to school these days," she said. "They wouldn't let us wear a tube top or halter top when I was in school. My daughter looks around her and thinks she's behind, or I'm behind because I won't let her wear that stuff."

As a parent, Hines-Brown keeps a close watch on what her daughter wears. "She had on a t-shirt one time that said, 'Smile - Your Boyfriend did last night.' I asked her 'Do you know what that is implying? That you were with a man last night, and he enjoyed himself.' Though other kids at her school are wearing shirts like that, I took her back to the store to pick out a different shirt. That is not a shirt I am going to let her wear."

Hines-Brown's son, 18, and daughter, 16, both are aware of what their mother does for a living and are not allowed to see shows. However, what is good for the goose is not

good enough for the gander.

"Would I let her dance if she was 18? No. Would I let her dance at any age, no," said Hines-Brown. "Yes, it's a legitimate form of making money, but I wouldn't want it for my children."

"I want them to make their own way. This is how I supported my children, my mother cleaned houses, and made a good living doing it, but she didn't want us to do that."

Even in the industry she works, Hines-Brown finds that it is usually the more attractive girls who feel inadequate.



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