



Image by Kilkeny South Sudan women's group/ AkiDwA. Photo: Carol Ballantine

**“HOPE WILL SUCK IT IN”  
STRONG BLACK WOMEN DISCLOSING VIOLENCE**

DR. CAROL BALLANTINE



**RESEARCH QUESTION: WHAT IS THE ROLE OF INTERSECTIONAL STIGMA IN THE LIFE EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AMONG MIGRANT AFRICAN WOMEN IN IRELAND?**



**RESEARCH QUESTION:** WHAT IS THE ROLE OF INTERSECTIONAL STIGMA IN THE LIFE EXPERIENCE OF **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN** AMONG MIGRANT AFRICAN WOMEN IN IRELAND?

**Violence Against Women:** all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. (UN General Assembly, 1993)

**Continuum of violence:** Kelly, 1988; Kanyeredzi, 2018



**RESEARCH QUESTION:** WHAT IS THE ROLE OF INTERSECTIONAL **STIGMA** IN THE LIFE EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AMONG MIGRANT AFRICAN WOMEN IN IRELAND?



**Stigma:** a social labelling process with negative impacts on the individual, which is co-produced in interpersonal interactions (Goffman 1968) but underpinned by wider social structures and power relations (Link and Phelan, 2014, Tyler and Slater, 2018)



**RESEARCH QUESTION:** WHAT IS THE ROLE OF  
**INTERSECTIONAL STIGMA** IN THE LIFE EXPERIENCE OF  
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AMONG MIGRANT AFRICAN WOMEN IN  
IRELAND?

**Intersectional stigma:** Intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989): feminist analysis must look beyond gender as an axis of oppression.

Dimensions of stigma against African migrant women in Ireland:

Racial/ patriarchal/ violence/  
migration status/ social welfare  
reliance/ mental health



# RESEARCH QUESTION: WHAT IS THE ROLE OF INTERSECTIONAL STIGMA IN THE LIFE EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AMONG MIGRANT AFRICAN WOMEN IN IRELAND?

**Shame:** A painful social emotion grounded in a global negative self-assessment, often produced by stigma.

American Journal of Orthopsychiatry  
2003, Vol. 73, No. 4, 355–366

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## Battered Women's Entrapment in Shame: A Phenomenological Study

Eli Buchbinder, PhD, and Zvi Eisikovits, PhD

Liverpool Law Rev (2013) 34:145–171  
DOI 10.1007/s10991-013-9134-z

### The Significance of Shame in the Lives of Women Who Experience Male Violence

Helen Baker

Women's Studies International Forum 74 (2019) 218–223



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journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/wsif](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/wsif)



“There was no-one I could turn to because I was ashamed”: Shame in the narratives of women affected by IPV

Sandra Thaggard, Jed Montayre\*

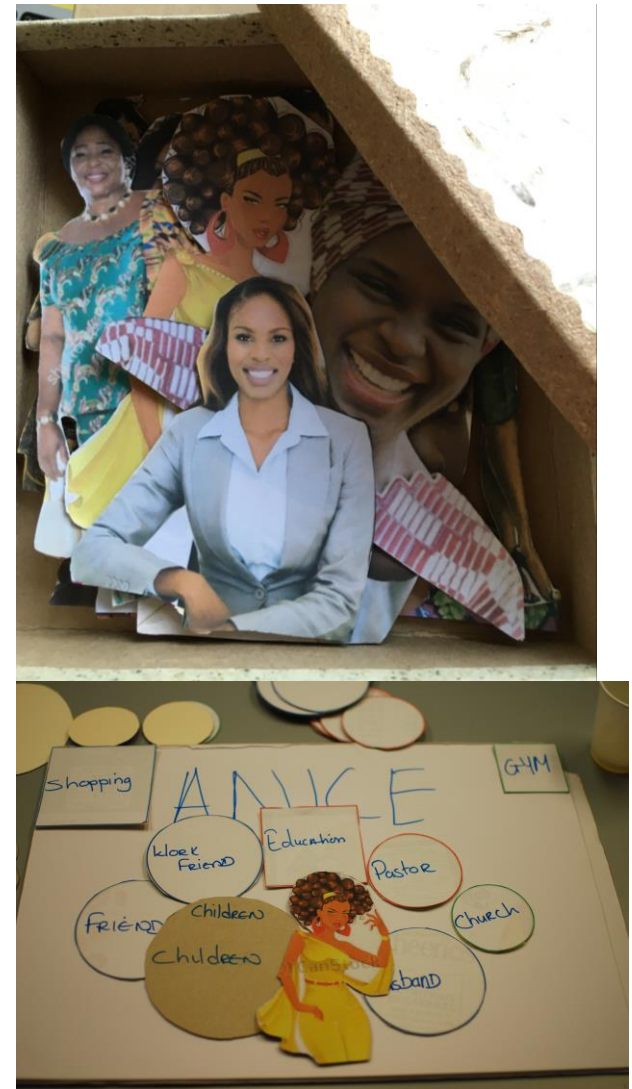
School of Clinical Sciences, Auckland University of Technology, 90 Akoranga Drive, Northcote, Auckland, New Zealand



# METHODOLOGY

- Participatory FGDs (6)
- Individual interviews with self-identified victim-survivors of violence (5)

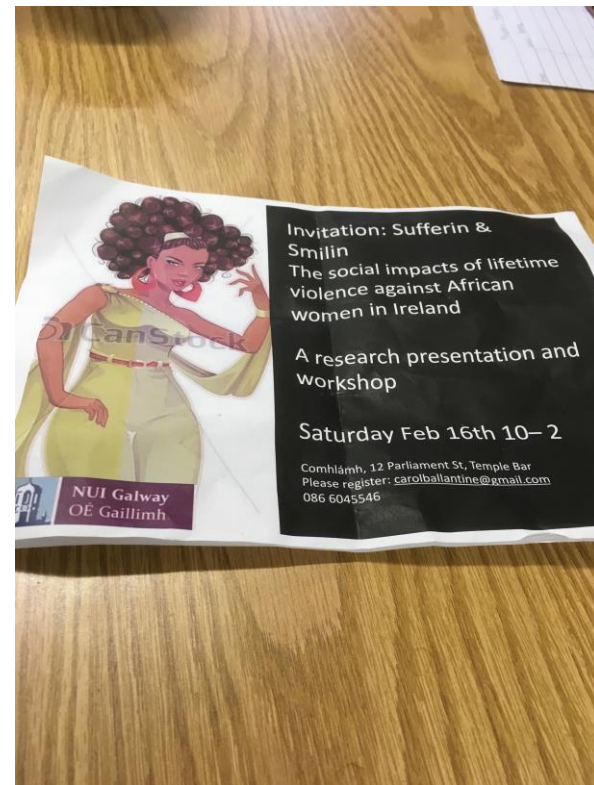
Explore the “local social world” of African women surviving violence in Ireland (Yang et al 2007)



# NAVIGATING STIGMA AS A SURVIVOR OF VIOLENCE: STRATEGIES

- Maintaining appearances
- Relationship management
- Strategic silences and strategic telling
- Self-care

... Sustained by a single narrative identity: The Strong Black Woman





# THE STRONG BLACK WOMAN: A COLLECTIVE NARRATIVE IDENTITY

Yeah, let's just keep, I think we are just naturally tough or strong people cause god has given us this resilience that's the word resilience you just keep going. It's not easy it's painful but we just keep putting our best ... Foot Forward, our best smile forward, that's what we do really. *Laughs.*

*Shade, DV survivor*



# THE STRONG BLACK WOMAN: A COLLECTIVE NARRATIVE IDENTITY

S: Ah, Hope will suck it in. For 5 years now she has moved on. So she's a new life person, she's no longer the old Hope of yesterday. She has, she has become a new person a more lively person than she was before.

S: It depends who Hope is as a person. If Hope is resilient, Hope will move on. And use that as a way to make herself better. Ok? Or, if Hope wants to live... in the past, all the time, then it will impact, on her life.

*Participant, FGD F*



# SELF-SILENCING AND SHAME



- Self-silencing is related to psychological distress (Abrams et al 2019), anxiety, depressive symptoms and adverse maternal health (Woods Giscombé 2010, Beabeouf Lafontant 2008).
- BUT Strong Black Woman also appeared protective from the worst excesses of gendered shame (Abrams et al. 2019, Romero 2000)



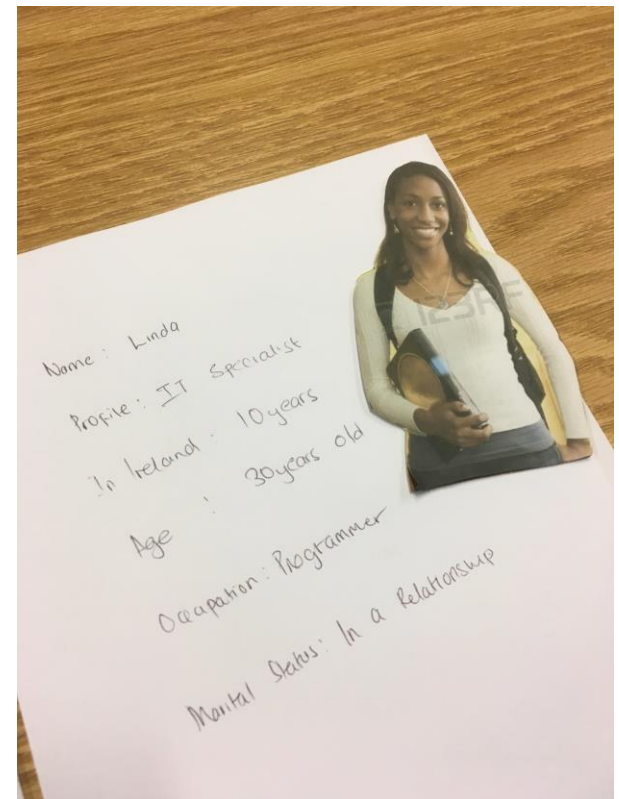
# IMPLICATIONS FOR ENCOURAGEMENT, FACILITATION AND SUPPORT

Respect the resonance and persistence of Strong Black Woman identity; protection from worst impacts of shame.

Self-silencing is damaging – inhibits disclosure and help-seeking; causes ongoing distress; sustains normative environment.

Facilitate emergence of alternative narratives and safe spaces for testimony.

Address inequality and associated stigmatization at structural levels (Tyler 2020, Parker and Aggleton 2003).



THANK YOU



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# THANK YOU

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