

Journal of Family Strengths

Volume 23
Issue 1 *Mental Health and the Intersectionality
of Race and Gender of Crossover Youth*

Article 1

10-27-2023

Guest Editors' Introduction

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Recommended Citation

Simmons Horton, Sherri; McDaniel, Sharon; and Destin, Yven (2023) "Guest Editors' Introduction," *Journal of Family Strengths*: Vol. 23: Iss. 1, Article 1.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/jfs/vol23/iss1/1>

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Crossover youth define a unique population of adolescents who have experienced child maltreatment and engage in juvenile delinquency regardless of whether the contact is concurrent or non-concurrent. There is a history of persistent overrepresentation of Black youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems respectively. It makes sense then, that Black youth are also disproportionately represented among crossover youth. The lived experiences of Black crossover youth indicate a heightened vulnerability to mental health challenges brought about by systemic challenges such as extended lengths of stay in foster care, higher likelihood for placement in structured congregate settings, and forced separation from family. These factors, coupled with structural racialized and gendered trauma, can negatively impact outcomes for these youth into their adulthood.

As scholars dedicated to dismantling structural racism and preserving the strengths of and empowering Black families, this issue of the *Journal of Family Strengths* features the scholarship of authors dedicated to calling out and highlighting the challenges of Black crossover youth. The authors of this special issue also offer professionals upstream strategies, innovative programs, and policy recommendations to best serve Black crossover youth. This is our call to action! As the editors of the important work represented here, we express our gratitude to the authors and the professionals across Texas and the country for their dedication to dismantling anti-Black racism in child welfare and juvenile justice systems.