

Black Girls as Transformative Leaders in Physical Activity Programs

Tara B. Blackshear¹

¹Towson University, Kinesiology, U.S.A.

Abstract

Black American adolescent girls possess a unique ability to inspire and enact change in their communities yet are overlooked in discussions of leadership and empowerment. Coupled with deficit approaches to school-based physical activity programming, positioning Black girls as physical activity leaders is missing from practice. BLinG-Health™ (Black Leadership in Girls' Health) trained peer leaders in group fitness instruction that was instrumental in an 8-week after-school physical activity pilot program. This paper presents qualitative data illustrating the program's impact on Black girls leading peers in a group fitness setting using general inductive narrative analysis based on group interviews, observations, reflection notes, and faculty leadership testimonials. Participants exuded community, collaboration, and confidence. Peer leadership was effective but differed. Girls recognized the program's benefits and challenges while enjoying it. Black girls can lead physical activity initiatives when allowed to do so while building a community. Researchers and school and community activists should empower Black girls to lead physical activity programs, which can ultimately foster better health outcomes.

Keywords: Black girl leadership, physical activity leaders, physical activity pipeline for Black adolescent girls

Black American adolescent girls possess a unique ability to inspire and enact change in their communities yet are overlooked in discussions of leadership and empowerment (Mims & Kaler-Jones, 2020). Contemporary Black adolescent female change leaders include Marley Dias, who at age 11 launched the #1000BlackGirlBooks campaign aiming to collect and donate books with Black girls as the main characters (www.marleydias.com, 2024). Recognizing the lack of Black female representation in the literature, Dias engaged in activism fostering a global conversation and securing thousands of books to donate to other Black girls.

Aligned with Dias, Naomi Wadler, also at age 11, delivered a speech in 2018 at the March for Our Lives rally to highlight how Black women and girls inflicted by gun violence are ignored and neglected (NBC News YouTube Channel, 2018; Wu, 2020). Wadler continues to challenge youth to take political action through her advocacy platform and speaking engagements (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2022). Her unapologetic advocacy centers Black women and girls as mainstream media pushes them to the back of the bus. Finally raising the alarm of the “back of the bus” status affecting Black girls and women, California recently implemented a new “Ebony Alert” law to center and amplify missing Black youth ages 12 to 15 and Black women (La, 2023) as media gives more attention to White girls and women (NPR, 2023).

These examples of Black girls in transformative leadership roles are not new. Mims and Kaler-Jones (2020), for instance, highlight historical Black girl leaders including Ruby Bridges' courageous act of desegregating an all-white elementary school in New Orleans in 1960 at the precious age of six (Bridges, 2009), illustrating how Black girls have always, “run the show” for racial and social justice (Copeny, 2024; Mims & Kaler-Jones, 2020, p.16) yet are overlooked. Mims and Kaler-Jones (2020) also acknowledge overlooked contemporary Black adolescent girl leaders, including clean water activist Mari Copeny (aka, Little Miss Flint) and community activist Zyahna Bryant, who, at age 12, organized her first demonstration for justice for Trayvon Martin and confronted anti-Black policing with an impressive ongoing record of activism (Bryant, 2024).

Black Girls and Women Leadership in Physical Activity

While the historical contributions of Black women’s leadership and impact in physical activity are starting to emerge (Blackshear & Culp, 2022; Perkins, 2021; Purkiss, 2023; Verbrugge, 2012), Black girl leadership in physical activity programming is missing from the literature and practice. Additionally, the visible Black girls and young women physical activity leaders are elite athletes (e.g., Venus Williams, Serena Williams, Cori “Coco” Gauff - tennis; Allyson Felix - track; Gabby Douglass, Simone Biles - gymnastics; and Angel Reese - basketball - to name a few) and may not resonate with the average adolescent girl not engaged in these sporting activities. Furthermore, the Black women leaders in fitness (Camai Brandenburg - Pilates; Ariel Belgrave - health and fitness coach; Lita

Lewis - online fitness coach; Massy Arias - personal trainer; and Latoya Shauntay Snell - endurance athlete and body politics advocate) have yet to make it to the mainstream media with perhaps one exception, Jessamyn Stanley, plus-size yoga guru (Fluker, 2023) who like many of the aforementioned women have experienced gendered racism and body weight stigma triply impacted by their marginalized identities - Black, woman, and body shape(s) that differ from portrayals of who can and should be physically active [aka, skinny, White women]. Interestingly, in Mims and Kaler-Jones’ (2020) study, they asked participants to name Black women or girl leaders. Among the list of 18 names provided, no athletes were mentioned, and only one Black woman leader (5.5%) publicly promoted physical activity - Michelle Obama during her role as First Lady and youth physical activity proponent forming the “Let’s Move” initiative (Eschmeyer, 2017).

To combat these problems and as Black girls (and women) are often not seen as (physical activity) leaders despite historical and contemporary examples, we designed a culturally relevant peer-led physical activity quasi-experimental design that empowered Black adolescent girls to be physical activity leaders in their school (see Blackshear & Baucum, 2024). BLinG-Health (Black Leadership in Girls Health) the branded name of the study, fostered an environment where girls could be trained in physical activity leadership and disseminate group fitness instruction and knowledge amongst peers after school. BLinG-Health is also a space where Black girls could just be girls instead of perceptions of them being women or young adults – aka adultification as compared to their White contemporaries (NPR, 2023; Perillo, et al., 2023). The current paper examines the qualitative data derived from this study.

Methods

Institutional Review Board approvals were granted from Towson University and Baltimore City Public Schools and informed assent and parental consent were obtained. This study is part of a published pilot project, *BLinG-Health: A peer-led physical activity program for Black adolescent girls* (Blackshear & Baucum, 2024). In this pilot study, peer leaders led classmates in Tabata group fitness sessions two to three days a week for eight weeks, combining diffusions of innovations theory, racism as a root cause, and the socio-ecological framework using a culturally relevant approach (Blackshear & Baucum, 2024). School leadership assisted in identifying peer leaders. We initially wanted girls in grade 11 for maturation purposes; however, we found leaders across grade levels competent in peer leadership, discussed in the quantitative publication.”. In this study, girls significantly improved their cardiovascular fitness by 17.8% (p=0.25) in the 12-minute run, and by 47.5% (p=.013) in muscular endurance via the push-up test. The current paper presents the qualitative components of BLinG-Health using a general inductive narrative analysis (Thomas, 2006) from the researcher’s interpretations of observations, group interview data, reflection notes, and administrative

testimonials collected at the end of the program to highlight peer impact on health and physical activity outcomes.

In addition to ongoing questioning and observations throughout the pilot study, we held a family-style dinner at the end of the eight-week intervention while conducting an audio-recorded group interview. We asked the participants to share the good, bad, and ugly of BLinG-Health. The family-style dinner fostered fellowship and showed appreciation for the participants.

Participants

The current analysis included eight self-identified Black high school adolescent girls attending a Baltimore City public high school—three peer leader participants and five non-peer leader participants; however, only seven attended the family-style dinner. The girls were in grades 9-12, with one in grade 9, three in grade 10, three in grade 11, and one in grade 12. The mean age was 16.43 years. The 12th grader discontinued BLinG-Health after week five since seniors completed school at this time (Blackshear & Baucum, 2024); however, peers discussed this peer leader during the group fitness sessions and interviews.

Data Analysis

General inductive narrative analysis (Thomas, 2006) aided in interpreting interview question responses, observations, and researcher notes taken during the intervention while drawing on aspects from the first BLinG-Health paper, such as the significant fitness outcomes and challenges in implementation (Blackshear & Baucum, 2024). Audio recordings were uploaded and transcribed. The principal investigator listened to audio recordings at least three times alongside transcripts correcting errors in the transcription software. Member checks were conducted by providing participants with a copy of the transcripts to review to have an opportunity to make changes or clarifications—participants requested no changes.

Author positionality

As a Black woman scholar, I engage in education, health, and physical activity research focusing on Black people, especially youth, girls, and women. Thus, my professional work is also personal, especially as Black women are grossly underrepresented in health and physical activity fields and are the least respected, protected, and most neglected across all domains (Akhalbey, 2020; Malcolm X, 1962). Given this, I acknowledge that the intersectionalities of my identities, specifically as a Black woman, influence and inform my work to liberate, properly educate, provide opportunities and access, and to foster better health outcomes and overall well-being for Black youth. To address my subjectivities while fostering trustworthiness, I present responses verbatim from the transcripts to support my summary of events in the narrative analysis, critically reflecting on my assessments along with the member checking previously stated.

Results

Presented are the researcher's questions and participants' responses, followed by a general inductive narrative analysis. Given the harmful effects of the adultification of Black girls (Perillo et al., 2023), we refer to the participants as girls while keeping in line with cultural relevance and anti-gendered racism by expecting others to view them as such.

Q1: We want the honest core truth about the BLinG-Health experience—the good, the bad, and the ugly. So tell us what was good about it.

“Being together with my friends.”

“Getting to lose weight”

“Like my waist [is] so snatch now, I lost 4lbs.”

“I became healthy.” “I’m more physically active.”

“I don’t have insomnia no more.”

“Yeah. I always went to bed late, but now I, every time I, every time after this, when I go home, I [am] just knocked, knocked out.”

Participants illustrated the social and physical benefits of participating in BLinG-Health, including friendship connections, weight loss, and improved sleep. While anthropometrics and weight were taken pre-and post-intervention, losing weight was not the program's focus; yet, those who desired to lose weight were pleased with their results, illustrating a by-product effect of the peer-led physical activity program.

Q2: What needs to be improved? Like, what do you think, what needs to change?

“Me getting tired a lot.”

This participant acknowledged that some physical activities created fatigue; however, she would state, *“I feel better, or I feel good,”* after each workout session and once stated, *“It is getting easier.”* This participant attended every session, so the response of getting tired a lot was unexpected.

The girls appreciated the BLinG-Health branded attire, but the sports bras could have provided better support to accommodate large breast sizes.

“I like the outfits.”

“Jumping, my titties are too big to be jumping. Just saying. They just keep on [bomp bomp (sound effect)] I’m like, oh my God. So I’ll just have to hold them while I’m doing it. I’m like, ugh.”

There was laughter around the breast commentary, however, girls with smaller breasts made it clear that the sports bras were fine for them.

“For people with big boobs.”

“I’m like the smallest one out here.”

They also requested a skirt that the research assistant wore occasionally, which we will add as it allows girls to

engage in various activities with modest coverage around the hips and buttocks and for easier transition to other activities after the sessions.

The peer leaders took pride in their leadership by showing up every week, as one peer leader was less reliable and discontinued the pilot. They acknowledged their role in the success of BLinG-Health.

“Me and _____ were boss leaders for real.” “I slayed.”

“_____ did not come at all.” “She trained two times?” “No, three.”

The confidence portrayed by the peer leaders is evident among Black adolescent girls who have “run the show” or been leaders of change but are missing from the literature (Mims & Kaler-Jones, 2020). These peer leaders may have enjoyed the program or been more motivated to instruct classes as they received a stipend (income) based on the percentage of classes taught. The peer leader who stated she “slayed” earned the most income due to her consistency in her group fitness instruction. Additionally, the early departure of the one peer leader was likely attributed to the earlier ending of the senior school year; however, she did not attend often when present in school.

Q3: Peer leaders, would you be more motivated to be paid per class on a weekly basis instead of waiting until the end?

“I would rather have that. I would rather have that because it's just like working at a job.”

Both leaders expressed that they would prefer weekly payments rather than waiting until the end of the pilot; however, impressed by their delayed financial gratification, on another occasion, the girls were asked if they would attend if they were not receiving any financial compensation, and they said, “yes.” It is recognized that the girls may have felt pressure to say “yes” in front of the researcher and research assistant; however, the girls illustrated candor early on.

As the program continued the following school year, peer leaders received biweekly payment; however, some dropped out of the program for jobs where they could acquire more hours with consistent pay. For peer leaders who have continued but with other employment, transportation has become an issue. Fortunately, BLinG-Health is working on a mobile unit to reach more schools and provide transportation home or to other places of employment after BLinG-Health ends.

Q4: We asked you this last week, but would you be interested in a PE (physical education) course that offered Tabata, kickboxing, and step aerobics within the school day, not after school?

“Yeah”

“Can we play energetic games, it's basically exercising.”

This response is consistent with what girls tend to prefer over traditional male-centered (e.g., competitive sports) physical education classes (Williams et al., 2015). For instance, Williams and colleagues (2015) found that girls in their study wanted more variety in physical education activities, including dance than the sports-centric PE curriculum that plagues many programs. We missed the mark in not following up with the PE options available or suggesting enrolling in a PE course the following academic school year. However, this participant was in grade 11, and many do not continue PE beyond the 0.5 credit graduation requirement, usually completed in grade 9 (Baltimore Public City Schools Graduation and Promotion, 2024).

Q5: Were there any challenges with after school? What do you think about keeping a program like this going after school?

“It depends,” others agree. Continuing with BLinG-Health depended on what other afterschool activities took place. For instance, the Environmental Club met on Thursdays, and some girls participated, thus conflicting with BLinG-Health. Some girls also had jobs, which is why we paid peer leaders, as they were delivering a service that deserved payment.

Q6: Are any of you working out outside of BLinG-Health?

“No.”

“How about running for a bus?” laughter

How about walking every day?” laughter

“I chase my cat around the house.”

Most of the girls were only getting health-enhancing physical activity during BLinG-Health, illustrating that a structured program with a community school approach may better match the needs of girls with low physical activity engagement.

Q7: What did you dislike?

“I didn't like the fact that _____ would do too much.”

Other participants agreed, to which this peer leader apologized. *“My apologies; that's just who I am.”* The other peer leader laughed, *[this is] how she showed her love, right? Yeah. Right. She grabbed you and hugged you.”* After three peers challenged her apology, *“We are not the same,” “We don't like that,”* and a moment of reflection, she sincerely apologized with a softer tone without an excuse. *“My apologies. I shall do better in the near future.”* She expressed that she did not like seeing them *“just standing”* and felt some were not doing some activities purposely during some of the workouts despite her standing there, too, at times. While this approach may have garnered improved overall fitness, it had a negative effect on some girls despite the laughter that transpired.

during this conversation, which disrupted the experience for some of the girls.

During the sessions, it was evident that peer leadership styles differed—one adopted more of an extroverted authoritative approach with direct proximal instruction strongly encouraging participants to increase their intensity and focus on the form along with demonstrations, while the other employed an introverted, reserved approach by leading by example, allowing peers to work at their desired intensity. The authoritative approach the peer leader engaged in is likely linked to the significant increase in muscular endurance via push-ups (see Blackshear & Baucum, 2024). However, while most of the girls responded to this approach, there was one strong negative interaction observed during one session, which fostered resistance to the activities during that session. At the time of the interaction, it was unclear what the issue was; however, until the group dinner when the impacted peer stated that this peer leader “was doing too much.” As BLinG-Health refines the program, we will pay more attention to the instructor’s role, responsibilities, and expectations that peer leaders received during the first training day, including providing a safe and fun environment for participants.

Q8: Any final comments about BLinG-Health before we stop the recording.

“I had a good time.”

“I’m doing it next year.”

“I’m going to be a peer leader next year.”

“I wanna be a peer leader, too.”

The girls who were not peer leaders expressed the desire to lead the following school year, illustrating that when given a physical activity opportunity in a different environment with compensation, Black girls can lead and foster transformative changes in physical activity engagement.

School Leadership Testimonials

After the intervention ended, BLinG-Health became a permanent after-school physical activity program at the school and secured 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. Three faculty school leaders and/or community partners provided testimonials of the program’s impact on the girls. Testimonials were taken independently and summarized as they contained longer stories and examples. Testimonials will eventually be posted on the BLinG-Health website. Filler words (e.g., Um and ah’s were removed for better flow). The videographer posed the testimonial question.

TQ1: So, how significant was the program [BLinG-Health]?

Teacher: *The same students who I could not get to do anything (in a physical education class) [are] now leading the BLinG-Health program.*

This teacher, instrumental in getting BLinG-Health at the school, shares a story about girls in BLinG-Health engaging in the program but not engaging in her physical education class. She probed the girls on why and found out that *one girl was just saying that, you know, she didn't feel comfortable going to the locker room to get dressed. Another girl just said that she felt inferior 'cause it was a class full of like kind of athletes.* These responses are supported by other studies where Black girls have reported a lack of enjoyment in traditional PE spaces, facility issues, hygiene issues, and the lack of privacy in locker rooms (Williams, et al., 2015).

She continues, *And that program [BLinG-Health] made those young, those Black young ladies feel comfortable in their own skin, in their own space, and they were able to lead and they [were] able to recruit other girls to come and be a part of it, further highlighting the safe community for Black girls to be themselves and “run the show” in their (intrinsic) recruitment efforts (Mims & Kaler-Jones, 2020).*

Administrator: *And the girls who are in Bling-Health here, I can tell they're different. They smile, they walk in a different way. They're focused, and I would love for all of my girls here at the school to be a part of it, to get with it because they're very confident young women now. So, I like seeing that in the building. They can speak up for themselves. I've noticed they are advocates. They will look at adults in their eyes. They're not afraid to ask questions and approach adults in a respectful manner. They're also trying to get their friends to do the right thing, even though I know it's harder for them.*

This administrator’s responses and observations illustrate the confidence and joy shown among BLinG-Health participants and the advocacy among peers. A community leader active in the school shared similar sentiments.

Community School Director: *I've seen it benefit the young women in this program because it has given them more confidence. It's given them a greater way to do public speaking. It's even just given them ways to move their body and to have something that is interactive and positive to do after school. And so, a lot of the young women look forward to staying after to fellowship with one another. And they're learning things that are transferable skills where we're tapping some of those students to do other things at our school because they're gaining those skills while they're working with Bling-Health. I would recommend this program to any school, [and] to any young woman who wants to get involved. We're really trying to make sure that next year this program really continues to grow because we feel like the young women at this school can benefit greatly from this program. There are so many things that are transferable from the way that they engage with one another, the way that they can enter into conflict resolution, the way that they can speak to one another,*

Speak about themselves, and just lead groups and people. And so it's just positive all around, and we want as many young women as possible to be involved in it.

The school leadership and PI were able to see the girls perform with confidence during a variety of school events (e.g., Women's Tea and Talent Showcase spoken word acts, panel moderator).

Discussion

The girls in the current study built community and exuded confidence and collaboration. They spoke candidly and freely, a testament to the safe, liberating space created despite adult presence. They also enjoyed the fellowship and camaraderie throughout the program and often demonstrated joy through laughter and smiles, thus building community. A community of Black girls benefitted the group, as adolescent girls have shown more physical activity engagement when they are among their same-gendered peers while engaging in "girl-friendly" non-competitive activities (Williams et al., 2015; Lubans et al., 2012). Similar to the Tabata sessions led by peer leaders in the current study, Williams et al. (2015) suggest physical activity programming targeting girls should include other group fitness activities like "Zumba and cardio-kickboxing" (p. 64). To cater specifically to Black girls rather than outsourcing a portion of the fitness training and certification component, a BLinG-Health junior group fitness program for girls and young women ages 14-18 is under development with representative graphics and images we were unable to find.

A by-product of BLinG-Health is that girls displayed increased confidence that transferred to other areas of their lives, as evidenced by their fitness performance, observations, and school leadership testimonials - independent of their leadership status. Research has shown that physical activity enhances self-esteem, self-worth, and overall confidence levels and increases enjoyment among girls (Walters et al., 2023). Thus, BLinG-Health benefitted the girls in these areas despite not directly measuring these outcomes.

Engaging in a project led by a Black woman principal investigator (PI) with a Black woman undergraduate research assistant and having Black girls lead the physical activity component not only fostered confidence but also validated the girls by representing and acknowledging them in a program designed for them. The research is compelling on Black representation fostering self-efficacy among Black youth (Milner, 2006) therefore, it is critical to prioritize Black scholars when working with Black youth in schools and physical activity programming to empower them and ensure they thrive.

While peer leaders were designated, leadership and accountability occurred among most girls. They took charge and demonstrated strong leadership skills by supporting and holding each other accountable before, during, and after the physical activity sessions, especially when peer leaders took breaks or were delayed due to other

school obligations. This organic distributed leadership approach fostered a sense of empowerment and collaboration among the girls, allowing them to collectively achieve personal growth and development. Gram-Hanssen (2021) refers to this type of leadership as "individual-collective simultaneity," shown among Indigenous populations that garners transformation and sustainability for the greater good of the community instead of individualistic Eurocentric or White leadership models that may disrupt the health and well-being among marginalized communities. Historically, Black American communities engaged in similar collective leadership; however, many have assimilated into white individualistic leadership approaches, thus suppressing cultural practices that garner better outcomes for the Black community (Graves, 2016). A return to cultural roots in leadership is recommended for health and physical activity programming focused on and led by Black youth.

Limitations

While the small number of participants limits the generalizability of the study's findings to the larger population of Black adolescent girls, it is important to recognize that the results contribute to the visibility and recognition of Black girl leadership, highlighting the need for further research in this area to build a more comprehensive understanding.

Conclusion

Despite the dearth of recognition for being so, Black girls have always been transformative leaders in school settings (Mims & Kaler-Jones, 2020). Challenging deficit narratives on Black girls' physical activity engagement, Black girls can lead and participate in after-school physical activity programs. Empowering Black adolescent girls in leadership may enhance physical activity engagement and foster healthier outcomes. To increase Black girls' opportunities to engage in physical activity, schools should consider culturally relevant programming by integrating peer-led physical activity programs into their curriculum, especially with the reduction or elimination of physical education requirements and/or male-centric programs (Long, 2017; Williams, 2015). By recognizing and supporting these initiatives, schools can prioritize the importance of inclusive physical activity programs and their role in promoting student health and well-being while fostering a pipeline to health and physical activity fields for underrepresented and overlooked youth.

Correspondence should be addressed to

Tara B. Blackshear
Towson University
tblackshear@towson.edu
410-704-3172

- Tara Blackshear: [0000-0002-4908-0609](tel:0000-0002-4908-0609)

Funding

This work was supported by The Pfizer Foundation Matching Gifts Program and Towson University's BTU Community Engagement Program.

Acknowledgments

The participants in this study, Taylor Baucum, Kathleen Crostic, Geoff Meehle, Tina Queen, Bianca Newton, Dr. Shawnette Williams, and Camille Basoco.

Conflict of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

Creative Commons License

This work is [licensed](#) under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 International License \(CC BY-NC 4.0\)](#).

References

- Akhalbey, F. (2020, October 5). Here's the full Malcolm X speech about Black women displayed by Megan Thee Stallion on 'SNL.'
- Bailey & Trudy (2018). On misogynoir: Citation, erasure, and plagiarism. *Feminist Media Studies*, 18(4), 762-768. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2018.1447395>.
- Baltimore Public City Schools (2024). Graduation and Promotion. <https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/graduation-and-promotion>.
- Blackshear, T. B., & Baucum, T. (2024). BLinG-Health™: A Peer-Led Physical Activity Program for Black Adolescent Girls—a pilot study, *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal*. Advanced online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1123/wspaj.2023-0078>
- Blackshear, T. B., & Culp, B. (2022, February 15). Black women do physical education too: The hidden figures of physical education in *Momentum Magazine*, Winter 2022, 21-24. <https://issuu.com/shapeamerica>
- Bridges, R. (2009). *Ruby goes to school: my true story*. Scholastic, Inc.
- Bryant, Z. (2024). Zy Bryant official: More of the movement, less of myself. <https://zybryant.com/>.
- CBS New York (2016, February 18). 1000 Black girl books. <https://youtu.be/nfgcGbs4jvQ?si=BcyRn23cWgxdFR3N>
- Copeny, M. (2024). Mari Copeny. <https://www.maricopeny.com/>
- Eschmeyer, D. (2017, January 4). Onward. *Let's Move*. [Let's Move!](#)
- Gram-Hanssen, I. (2021). Individual and collective leadership for deliberate transformations: Insights from Indigenous leadership. *Leadership*, 17(5), 519-541. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715021996486>
- Graves, Stephen C. W. (2016). *A crisis of leadership and the role of citizens in Black America: Leaders of the new school*. Lexington Books.
- Long, C. (2017, March 28). When physical education is cut, who picks up the slack?: Budget cuts to critical PE programs are forcing districts to pass the burden of exercise instruction onto classroom teachers. *NEA Today*. <https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/when-physical-education-cut-who-picks-slack>

- Lubans, D. R., Okely, A. D., Morgan, P. J., Cotton, W., Puglisi, L., & Miller, J. (2012). Description and evaluation of a social cognitive model of physical activity behaviour tailored for adolescent girls. *Health education research*, 27(1), 115–128. <https://doi.org/10.1093/her/cyr039>
- Milner, IV. (2006). The promise of Black teachers' success with Black students. *Educational Foundations*, 20(3–4), 89-104.
- Mims, L. C., & Kaler-Jones, C. (2020). Running the show: Supporting the leadership development of Black girls in middle school. *Middle School Journal* 51(2), 16-24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00940771.2019.1707342>
- NBC News YouTube Channel (2018, March 24). 11-Year-Old Naomi Wadler's Speech At The March For Our Lives (Full) | NBC News. <https://youtu.be/C5ZUDImTIQ8?si=59pC7-7OBKqKpMpG>
- NPR (2023, June 8). Missing White woman syndrome: The media bias against missing people of color. *NPR WAMU 88.5 American University Radio*. <https://www.npr.org/2023/06/06/1180499403/missing-white-woman-syndrome-the-media-bias-towards-missing-people-of-color>
- Perillo, J.T., Sykes, R.B., Bennett, S.A., & Reardon, M.C. (2023). Examining the consequences of dehumanization and adultification in justification of police use of force against Black girls and boys. *Law and Human Behavior*, 47(1), 36–52. <https://doi.org/10.1037/lhb0000521>
- Perkins, L.M. (2021). African American women, femininity and their history in physical education and sports in American higher education: From World War I through the mid-century. In Allender, T., Spencer, S. (eds) 'Femininity' and the History of Women's Education. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-54233-7_3
- Purkiss, A. (2023). *Fit citizens: A history of Black women's exercise from post-reconstruction to postwar America*. The University of North Carolina Press.
- Snell, L. S. (2024). Latoya Shauntay Snell is NOT your typical athlete. <https://www.iamlshauntay.com/about>
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2022, June 27). Naomi Wadler on Raising Youth Voices and Youth Advocates <https://www.aecf.org/blog/naomi-wadler-on-raising-youth-voices-and-youth-advocates>
- Thomas, D. R. (2006). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 27(2), 237-246. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214005283748>
- Vebrugge, M. H. (2012). *Active Bodies: A history of women's physical education twentieth-century America*. Oxford University Press.
- Walters, K., Chard, C., Castro, E., & Nelson, D. (2023). The influence of a girls' health and well-being program on body image, self-esteem, and physical activity enjoyment. *Behavioral Sciences*. 13(9):783. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs13090783>
- Williams, W. M., & Berry, D. C. (2015). A Qualitative Study: African-American girls' perceptions of why physical activity declines in high school. *Journal of National Black Nurses' Association*, 26(2), 60–66.

Wu, T. (2020, October 20). How Girls Have Brought Political Change to America: The History of activism in young girls, who give voice to important issues in extraordinary ways, is the topic of a new Smithsonian exhibition.

X., Malcolm (1962). The most disrespected person in America is the Black woman: Speech to Black women in 1962.

<https://speakola.com/political/malcolm-x-speech-to-black-women-1962>