

Contents

Preface	v
Part I	
1 Description and Demographics	3
Universal and Divergent Perspectives.....	4
Who this Book is About	4
Heterogeneity Among African American Girls	5
African Americans and Blacks in the United States	5
Where do African Americans Live?.....	6
Family Structure.....	6
Socioeconomic Indicators	6
African American Children and Teens	7
Overview of Chapters.....	7
Part 1: Who am I?	7
Part 2: How did I Come to Be?	7
Part 3: Who will I Become?	8
2 Self and Identity	11
The Self	12
What is the Self and what does it Mean to Adolescent Girls?	12
Self-Concept Among African American Girls.....	13
What are Other Aspects of the Self?	13
Do African American Girls Assume Multiple Roles?	13
Why is Self-Concept and Other Aspects of the Self	
Generally Positive Among African American Girls?	14
Racial and Ethnic Identity	15
What is Ethnic Identity?	15
Why is Ethnic Identity Important for African American Girls?	16

Relationships	16
Why are Relationships Important to African American Girls?	16
What does a Relational Orientation Mean for African American Adolescent Girls?	17
Gender Role Beliefs	17
What are Gender Role Beliefs?.....	18
Gender Role Beliefs Influence Attitudes, Expectations, and Behaviors .	18
Why are Gender Role Beliefs Important?.....	19
What are the Gender Role Beliefs Among African American Adolescent Girls?	19
What does it Mean to be Androgynous?	20
Body Image	21
Why is Body Image Important?	21
Ethnic Differences in Body Size Perception	21
African American Adolescent Females and Skin Color and Hair Texture	22
How does the Media Influence Self-Perception of African American Adolescent Females?.....	22
Sexual Identity	23
Life-Course Expectations.....	24
Summary	24
Recommendations and Resources.....	25
Increasing Positive Affirmations and Relationships	25
Promoting Ethnic Identity	25
Promote Androgynous Gender Role Beliefs	28
Promote Positive Relationships.....	28
Promote Positive Body Image	29
Resources.....	29

Part II

3 Family and Kin	33
The African American Family	34
Who is in her Family?	34
Grandparents	35
Family Structure and Well-Being	35
Raising Girls in African American Households	36
Racial and Gender Socialization	36
Parenting Methods	37
African American Girls' Roles within the Family	38
Project Naja	38
Mother–Daughter Relationships and Communication	39
What do African American Girls Learn from their Mothers?.....	40
Father–Daughter Relationships and Communication	41

What do African American Girls Relationships with their Fathers Look Like?	41
Influence of Fathers on Daughter's Self-Attributes	42
Father–Daughter Communication and Conflict	43
Father–Daughter Relationships and Sexual Behavior	44
Parental Monitoring and Structure	44
Parental Influences on Daughter's Life-Course Expectations	45
Summary	46
Recommendations and Resources	46
Monitor and Supervise	46
Encourage and Provide Opportunities for Meaningful Relationships with Males	47
Communication is Essential	47
Parents Should Racially Socialize their Daughters about what it Means to be an African American Girl and Woman	47
Have Girls Reflect on what Family Means to them	48
Evidence-Based Parenting Programs	48
Resources	49
 4 Peers and Friends	 51
Definitions	51
Why are Friends Needed?	52
Friends Provide Needed Relationships	52
Friendship Patterns	53
Developmental Aspect of Friendships	53
What do Same-Sex Friendship Networks Look Like?	53
Cliques	54
Respect and Trust	54
Interracial Friendships	55
Internet Friendships	55
Romantic Friendships	56
Dating Initiation	56
Preference for Dating Partners	57
Dating and Academic Achievement	57
Interracial Dating	58
The Negative Side of Peers and Friendships	58
Gangs	59
Birds of a Feather Flock Together	60
Drug Use	61
Sexual Activity	62
Academic Achievement	62
Promoting Positive Relationships Among Girls	63
Summary	64

Recommendations and Resources	65
Increasing Positive Friendships Through Activities	65
Increasing Positive Relationships and Prosocial Behavior	65
Preventing Gang Membership	65
Interventions for Enhancing Positive Relationships	66
Resources	67
5 Communities and Neighborhoods	69
Understanding the Role of Poverty in Disadvantaged Communities	70
Neighborhood Influences on Behaviors	71
Neighborhood Influences on Academic Achievement and Expectations	71
Neighborhood Influences on Drug Use and Violence	73
Neighborhood Influences on Sexual Behavior	74
Neighborhood Influences on Other Outcomes	75
Community Resources and Assets	75
Involvement in Community Activities	75
Community-Based Prevention Programs	76
Urban Communities	77
Stress in Urban Context	77
Coping with Stress in Disadvantaged Neighborhoods	78
Exposure to Community Violence	79
Rural Communities	79
Rural Communities and Risky Sexual Behavior	81
The School as Community	81
Teacher's Expectations for African American Girls	82
Single-Sex Education Classes and Single-Sex Education Schools	83
Summary	84
Recommendations and Resources	85
Provide Organized After-School Activities in Neighborhoods	85
Provide Mechanisms Wherein Girls Can Contribute to the Beauty of Their Community	85
Involve Girls in Volunteer Work and Civic Engagement	85
Train a Cadre of Girls Within a Neighborhood to Be Peer Ambassadors for Their Neighborhood	85
Use Social Marketing Techniques to Inform the Community	86
Train Teachers in How to Promote Positive Development with Girls	86
Recommendations from the Institute of Medicine, National Research Council	86
Resources	87
6 Expectations and Achievement	89
Academic Achievement	90
The Gender Gap in Academic Achievement	90
Educational Expectations	92

Factors that Contribute to High Academic Expectations and Achievement 93

 How Parents Contribute to Academic Achievement and Expectations .. 93

 Ethnic Identity 95

 Future Outlook 96

Other Life-Course Expectations..... 98

 What are African American Adolescent Girls’ General Life-Course Expectations? 98

 The Impact of Poverty on Expectations 100

 Career Expectations 101

 Improving Life-Course Expectations 102

Summary 102

Recommendations and Resources..... 103

 Increase Expectations and Direct Her Path to Good Career Choices 103

 Engage in Goal Setting Activities for Short- and Long-Term Plans 103

 Explore Parental Expectations and Choices for Daughters 103

 Increase Academic Achievement..... 104

 Increase Possible and Positive Self-Expectations 104

Resources..... 105

Part III

7 Health and Wellness 109

 Definitions..... 109

 Puberty 110

 Early Puberty 111

 Diet and Physical Activity..... 111

 Diet 112

 Vitamins and Minerals 113

 Fitness and Physical Activity 114

 Chronic Health Conditions 114

 Obesity..... 114

 Diabetes..... 116

 Asthma..... 116

 Mental Health 117

 Depression 117

 Cultural Factors in Mental Health 118

 Drug Use 118

 Summary 120

 Recommendations and Resources..... 121

 Increasing Good Food Choices and Nutrition 121

 Increasing Physical Fitness and Activities 122

 Resources..... 122

8 Sexual Behavior and Consequences	123
Definitions	124
Sexual Activity Among African American Teen Girls	124
Age of Initiation	125
Contraception and Condom Use	125
Risk and Protective Factors for Early and Risky Sexual Activity	126
Puberty	126
Self-Worth and Self-Image	127
Sexual Abuse	127
Family Connection and Communication	127
Father's Influence on Daughter's Sexual Behavior	129
Media Messages	130
Drug Use	131
Teen Pregnancy, Births, and Parenting	131
Pregnancy	132
Teen Births and Parenting	132
What Contributes to Teen Pregnancies and Parenthood?	133
Health Consequences of Early Sexual Activity	134
HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections	134
Other Risk Factors for HIV	135
Why do African American Girls Have the Highest Risk for HIV?	135
Summary	136
Recommendation and Resources	136
Provide Accurate Sexual Information	136
Reduce Sexual Behavior and Risk	136
Increasing Media Literacy Regarding Sexual Activity	138
Provide Contraceptive Services	138
Encourage Abstinence Through Virginity Clubs	139
Reduce Sexual Activity and Risk Through Small Group and Classroom Activities	139
Resources	140
9 Prosocial Behavior and Aggression	141
Prosocial Behaviors	141
Prosocial Behavior Among African American Adolescents	143
Empathy	143
Morality	144
Altruistic Behavior	144
Africentric Education	145
Spirituality and Religiosity	145
Aggression and Violence	147
Relational Aggression	148
Violence Among Girls	148
Violence Against Girls	149
Sexual Victimization	149

Dating Violence 150

Same-Sex Dating Violence 151

Preventing Teen Dating Violence..... 152

Summary 152

Recommendations and Resources..... 153

 Increasing Prosocial Behavior 153

 Evidence-Based Practices for Increasing Prosocial Behavior..... 154

 Preventing Teen Partner and Dating Violence 154

Resources..... 154

Concluding Comments 157

References..... 159

Index 175