

From Thug to PIMP

Written by Westside ID426

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A lot of things bother Bronwyn Mayden about hip-hop culture: its shift from the unconventional to the mainstream, its celebration of a "thug culture" and its degradation of women, writes [Leslie Williams](#)

At the moment, though, the effect of hip-hop, gangsta rap and other popular media on the sexual behavior of black boys is disturbing the executive director of the Campaign For Our Children, a Baltimore-based nonprofit group that promotes adolescent preventive-health issues.

In a workshop today titled "From Thug to P.I.M.P.: Implications for Black Male Sexuality," Mayden will examine a contemporary culture that, according to her, glorifies sex and money.

Mayden's workshop is one of more than 60 workshops being presented at the 25th conference of the National Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Parenting and Prevention that began Thursday at the Sheraton New Orleans Hotel. The conference provides an opportunity for more than 500 educators, researchers, advocates and others to share information about the best programs and policies for reducing adolescent pregnancies.

Adolescent sexuality remains a concern in New Orleans. In 2003, 70 percent of the city's male high-school students and 48 percent of its female high-school students reported having sexual intercourse, according to the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, compared with 48 percent of male and 45 percent of female high-school students nationwide.

At her workshop, Mayden will review data showing young black males spend six or seven hours each day with some form of media, often musical videos that rarely show the negative consequences of unbridled sexuality.

"As a consequence, they are more inclined to be sexually active earlier," said Mayden, who emphasizes that these messages arrive at a time when adolescents "are trying to find their way."

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Many teens, she said, learn about sexuality from the mass media: the Internet, television shows, movies, the radio, publications, CDs. Two-thirds of girls and boys 8 to 18 have a television in their bedrooms and many have access to cable, she said, citing recent studies.

Teens who watch three to five hours of television a day witness about 2,000 sex acts per year, she said.

"This includes kissing, embracing, intercourse implied, fondling, etc. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation's biennial Sex on TV 3 study, released in 2003, two-thirds of all television shows have some sexual content. One in seven shows now includes sexual intercourse either depicted or strongly implied. And some of these shows are during the family hour from 8 to 9 p.m., Mayden said.

And more than a fifth of the music videos "designed for and aimed at teens between 12 and 19" portray sexuality, she said.

In September 2004, the RAND Corp. reported that watching sex on television predicts and may hasten adolescent sexual initiation, she said.

"As adolescents develop their growing sense of self, they interpret and integrate what they are seeing in the media to help them form their sexual identity," Mayden said. "It gives them cues on how to act with the opposite sex. It helps to contribute to the maturation of youth -- it takes them from childhood to adulthood."

Parents, she said, can combat the problem by reducing exposure to music videos and other media, some of which she considers pornographic. Parents can also urge Congress to pass legislation giving the Federal Communications Commission more authority to crack down on such videos and to increase the fines for violators.

Anyone can attend the conference, which ends Saturday, for a fee, conference organizer Pat Paluzzi said. The fees are \$300 for one day for nonstudents and \$100 for students, she said.

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