

Family, church help black women cope

Dual stigma faced daily, speaker says

By Kathleen Faddis ^{UDK}
Kansas staff writer Feb. 10, 1988

Black women have the dual stigma of being female and black in a society that devalues both, Barbara Ballard, associate dean of student life and director of the Emily Taylor Women's Resource Center, said last night.

Ballard described the pressures of being a black woman to about 45 people at a workshop titled "Black Women: Do They Cope Better?" at the Kansas Union. Ballard's comments were based on ideas contained in a book of the same title by Lena Wright Myers.

The workshop was sponsored by the Women's Resource Center.

Black women have been forced to cope because of the obstacles they face daily by being black and female, Ballard said. The strength to cope comes from a strong base of support from the family and the church, she said.

Black women will seek out support from their family or church before they will seek outside help, Ballard said. That might explain why few minority students take advantage of the help at KU's counseling center.

"What we have to learn is to

utilize some of those other resources," Ballard said.

Ballard said that to cope, black women needed to have high self esteem. And when black women measure themselves against white standards, it gives them little chance to feel good about themselves.

Lauri Conner, St. Louis freshman, said she learned to cope from her mother and grandmother. The family has passed from one generation to another the things that society has not taught them: the ability to feel good about themselves.

Ballard said the women's movement made people aware of a lot of the problems black women had faced for a long time.

"If you believe you have worth, you can cope with just about anything," Ballard said.

Ballard said black women, especially in a predominantly white environment such as KU, often coped better because they were more determined to succeed.

The will not to fail becomes a strong motivation, she said.



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Barbara Ballard, associate dean of student life and director of the Emily Taylor Women's Resource Center, leads a workshop entitled "Black Women: Do They Cope Better?"