



## SUPPORTER TOOL KIT

### **What is Truth in Reality?**

Truth in Reality is a media advocacy organization whose mission is to change the way women of color and violence are portrayed in the media, especially on reality television. We are a dedicated group of volunteers working to create a cultural shift in how we perceive women of color and media violence. Ultimately, we hope to see a reduction in the rates of gender-based violence in the Black community as a result of a lowered cultural acceptance of violence in the media.

### **What is the issue with reality television featuring predominately women of color cast members?**

Many of the most popular reality shows featuring women of color casts consistently rank among the most viewed programs on cable. Especially within the Black community, reality shows comprise some of the most watched television programs however the portrayal of Black women on these shows relies heavily on racial stereotyping and relational violence as entertainment.

Research has shown that regular viewers of violent reality shows come away with different expectations of their real-life relationships and a greater acceptance of violence and aggression as a problem-solving tactic. Research has shown that violent representations of women in the media can predispose males towards violence against women. As Black women suffer from the **highest** rates of domestic violence, the violent and stereotypical representation of Black women in “ratchet” reality television is especially dangerous to their health and wellbeing.

### **Can you be more specific as to the types of shows you consider harmful?**

Shows which we deem to have a negative effect on viewers have the following key elements:

- Cast members comprised primarily of women of color who regularly practice relational aggression such as bullying, domestic violence, verbal abuse, etc.
- Cast members whose primary means of financial support is via her current or prior relationship with a partner who exhibits abusive behavior.
- Shows in which relational violence between cast members is the primary storyline.
- Shows which depict women of color as modern day equivalents to historical stereotypes such as the “Jezebel”, “Mammy”, “Sapphire”, or “Welfare Queen” et al.

### **What does Truth in Reality do to address the problem?**

Truth in Reality combines digital advocacy, public awareness campaigns, and educational programs to shift our cultural acceptance of reality show violence. We partner with local, regional, and national organizations to educate audiences about

the effect negative media messaging has on their perception, and how they can use their power as media consumers to demand more responsible reality TV.

Currently we have two programs through which we address the issues on violent reality TV:

### **REDEFINING HERSTORY MOVEMENT**

**Redefining HERstory** is a campus based educational and social action campaign that has been developed by Truth in Reality, a 501 (c) 3 media advocacy organization. The goal of the program is to challenge college students on their existing belief systems around domestic violence and redefine society's existing narrative of Black women by using the media messaging on reality television as the basis for this conversation. **Redefining HERstory** will empower students with media and financial literacy tools that will enable them to think critically about their media consumption habits, increase awareness of the impact of domestic violence and bullying in their community, and expose them to a variety of successful women from all walks of life whose achievements have redefined our COLLECTIVE history.

### **MEDIA ADVOCACY TOOLKIT**

The Truth in Reality Media Advocacy Toolkit, available for download at no cost on [www.TruthInReality.org](http://www.TruthInReality.org), is a brief, easy-to-use program aimed at educating audiences of all ages about the implications of violent reality television. The toolkit outlines steps that individuals can use to take action against the harmful values that violent reality shows are having on society. By promoting the Truth in Reality petition for the Redefining HERstory Movement and engaging audiences on social media, we raise awareness of the issue of violent media and show content producers and distributors that audiences desire healthier and more positive programming.

### **How can I help Truth in Reality's mission?**

- Follow us on Twitter [@TruthInReality](https://twitter.com/TruthInReality), RT our updates, and participate in our weekly Reality TV Check Tweet Chats held each Monday night at 8p ET/7p CT
- Like and share our [Facebook](#) page
- Follow us on Instagram: [@TruthInReality](https://www.instagram.com/TruthInReality)
- Subscribe to our monthly newsletter
- Email a letter of support to your contacts, encouraging them to learn more about the issue.
- Sign our [petition](#)
- [Download](#) our Media Advocacy Toolkit and host a Reality TV Check party.

**I have a more specific question or concern. How can I contact a member of the Truth in Reality team?**

For any follow up questions or concerns, you can email us at [info@truthinreality.org](mailto:info@truthinreality.org) or message us on Twitter at [@TruthInReality](https://twitter.com/TruthInReality). Thank you for your continued support!

**To spread the word about our work, consider adapting these social media postings for your network, and tell your friends about the Redefining HERstory Movement!**

**Sample Facebook Posts:**

I just signed Truth in Reality's petition demanding more truth in reality TV. Reality television needs to stop promoting racist stereotypes, violence and dysfunction. Check out Truth in Reality on [Facebook](#), and visit [www.TruthInReality.org](http://www.TruthInReality.org) to join the #RedefiningHERstory

Truth in Reality is a groundbreaking organization that challenges the values of "ratchet" reality television shows. Violence and stereotypes aren't guilty pleasures-they contribute to the high rate of violence against Black women in reality. We need LESS TALK, MORE ACTION. Check out [www.TruthInReality.org](http://www.TruthInReality.org) to do your part.

Think your favorite reality shows are just a guilty pleasure? REALITY TV CHECK: stereotypes on reality TV influence our perception and acceptance of gender-based violence. Violence isn't entertainment-it's real. Visit [www.TruthInReality.org](http://www.TruthInReality.org) to learn more.

**Sample Twitter Posts:**

We've seen enough stereotypes on TV. Follow [@TruthInReality](https://twitter.com/TruthInReality) for a [#RealityTVCheck](#) on the issues of ratchet reality TV. #RedefiningHERstory

Is your guilty pleasure making you accept more dangerous behavior in reality? Visit [TruthinReality.org](http://TruthinReality.org) to get a [#RealityTVCheck](#) [#RedefiningHERstory](#)

Studies have shown that watching violent reality TV alters views & behaviors in real life. Follow [@TruthInReality](https://twitter.com/TruthInReality) for a [#RealityTVCheck](#) [#RedefiningHERstory](#)

Less Talk, More Action: Support [@TruthInReality](https://twitter.com/TruthInReality) & the [#RedefiningHERstory](#) movement. Don't accept violence & stereotypes as entertainment.

Follow [@TruthInReality](https://twitter.com/TruthInReality) for a [#RealityTVCheck](#), and join me in the [#RedefiningHERstory](#) Movement

**Thank you for joining the Redefining HERstory Movement. As a next step, consider adapting this email and sending it to your contacts to spread the word about our mission:**

Dear Friends,

Today, I became a part of a meaningful social movement to end our cultural acceptance of violence. I hope you will stand with me by joining Truth in Reality in their efforts to change the way women of color and violence are portrayed on reality television.

Unscripted shows such as the *Bad Girls Club*, *Basketball Wives*, *Real Housewives of Atlanta*, and *Love & Hip Hop Atlanta* are among the most watched on cable. Many of the most popular reality television shows are providing “entertainment” to millions of viewers around the globe via cast members’ dysfunctional relationships, violent bullying, unsafe sex practices, alcohol abuse, and rampant materialism. Research has shown that there is a real link between media consumption and behavior, leading regular viewers of negative reality television to have very skewed expectations in relationships, self-image and overall understanding of how the world works. Indeed, young women who regularly watch aggressive reality shows accept and expect higher levels of drama, aggression, and bullying in their own lives.

Researchers have also found that violence and negative stereotypes of women in the media predispose men towards violence against women. **Black women suffer from the highest rates of non-fatal domestic violence, sexual assault, intimate partner homicide and HIV infections in the United States.** As Black Americans watch more television than any other ethnic group, the prevalence of violence against Black women on reality programming is particularly harmful.

**Truth in Reality** is committed to reducing the acceptance of violence by challenging the values reality shows promote. Through digital advocacy, public awareness campaigns, strategic partnerships with national community organizations, and educational programs targeted towards young women and girls, they aim to be a catalyst for change in the way women of color and violence are portrayed on reality television.

Please visit [www.TruthInReality.org](http://www.TruthInReality.org) today to see the simple steps you can take to support their mission and advocate for a more responsible reality. Together, we can spark a movement that leads to a safer, healthier culture for women of color.

Thank you,

[your name]

To increase the word of mouth about Truth in Reality's mission and identify yourself as a supporter, please consider adding information about Truth in Reality to your email signature. Below are a few simple, unobtrusive options:

Option 1:

Proud supporter of the **Redefining HERstory** movement. Visit [www.TruthInReality.org](http://www.TruthInReality.org) now for a **REALITY TV CHECK** on violent reality television.

Option 2:

Please join the **Redefining HERstory** Movement by visiting [www.TruthInReality.org](http://www.TruthInReality.org) and signing their petition.

Option 3:

Less Talk, More Action! Join the **Redefining HERstory** Movement at [www.TruthInReality.org](http://www.TruthInReality.org)

Option 4:

Join [@TruthInReality](https://twitter.com/TruthInReality)'s weekly **Monday Night Live "Reality TV Check" Tweetchats**, 8-9pm ET. Invite others & use the #RealityTVCheck hashtag to join the Redefining Herstory movement!

Option 5:

Full Name  
555-5555  
email@domain.com  
[www.TruthinReality.org](http://www.TruthinReality.org)  
**Join the Redefining HERstory Movement!**