

# WHAT IS INTERSECTIONALITY?

## ORIGINS

### THE COMBAHEE RIVER COLLECTIVE



- Black feminist lesbian collective
- In 1975, released a statement illustrating their politics, which addressed their struggle against the **interlocking oppressions** of race, sex, and class
- They argued that these oppressions are experienced **simultaneously** by Black women and cannot be separated

### KIMBERLÉ WILLIAMS CRENSHAW



- Credited with coining the term intersectionality.
- In a 1989 paper, Crenshaw drew attention to Black women's exclusion from employment in industrial plants. She noticed that black men and white women were employed, but Black women faced **intersectional discrimination** on the basis of gender and race. The courts did not recognize these overlapping systems of oppression, making black women choose between racial and sexual discrimination in lawsuits.
- Sought to draw attention to the fact that Black women experience both domestic and state violence.
- Crenshaw examines what she calls the **intersectional failures** of the white feminist movement to take up questions of racism, and the anti-racism movement to take up questions of patriarchy.

## INTERSECTIONAL FAILURES

*“The failure to interrogate patriarchy in anti-racism and racism within feminism continues to shape modern politics...they undermine our collective capacity to create a more robust coalition around social justice.”*  
– Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw

### #SAYHERNAME



- With #sayhername, Kimberle Crenshaw speaks to the rampant state-sanctioned violence against Black women.
- She calls on us to say their names to bring visibility to their deaths, to affirm that their lives were not insignificant, and to begin a movement for change.

#### REFERENCES

COMBAHEE RIVER COLLECTIVE. "THE COMBAHEE RIVER COLLECTIVE STATEMENT." APRIL, 1977. <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/combahee-river-collective-statement-1977/>.  
CRENSHAW, KIMBERLE WILLIAMS. "ON INTERSECTIONALITY." YOUTUBE VIDEO, 30:46. MARCH 14th, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DW4HLgYPIA>