



As Black women navigate life, we are tasked with balancing work, family, wellness, and many other responsibilities.

While managing these things, we often develop invisible capes. They symbolize our innate and inherent trait, the ability to be superwomen. Although this role is multifaceted and notably impressive, over time, it puts a lot of wear and tear on the physical, mental, and emotional health of Black women collectively.

This conceptual framework is commonly referred to as **The Superwoman Schema (SWS)**; it explores the experiences of women, with an emphasis on Black women, as we attempt to exceed societal expectations and defy stereotypes, and is characterized by a few things, including the following:

- Feeling obligated to present an image of strength
- Suppressing one's emotions.
- An intense drive to succeed.
- Feeling a strong obligation to help others.
- Resistance to being vulnerable.

## You Feel the Need to Challenge Stereotypes About **Black Women**

**SWS** is a result of the united effort of Black women as we strive to be dependable and admirable members of our communities while simultaneously exuding excellence to defy false stereotypes of aggression, laziness, and loudness that have historically and unjustly been associated with us. Together, we can deconstruct SWS and evolve into the habit of acknowledging our feelings and the necessity for our wellness holistically.

## Here Are Some Signs You Need to **Put Down Your Cape**:

### You Are Denying How You Really Feel.

You are playing the strong Black woman but that holding unresolved pain and hurt you haven't dealt with, or have had traumatic experiences you which no one knows about.

### You Put Everyone Needs Above Your Own.

Being a martyr is stressing you out.

### You Engage in Unhealthy Coping Strategies:

- eating unhealthy foods,
- drinking alcohol,
- using illicit drugs,
- being sedentary
- or becoming a workaholic

## Here are some things we can do:

- **Evaluate and prioritize** your feelings and be kind to yourself.
- **Seek support.** Finding a therapist and talking with friends and family are healthy ways to discuss your feelings and to feel understood.
- **Set boundaries** try to refrain from stressing yourself out with tasks, and sometimes you have to say no.