



OUR BODIES OURSELVES

Signs of Hope January 2026



A group of women holding signs that proudly affirm their confidence and sense of worth. Image courtesy of our global partner, the Tanzania Home Economics Organization (TAHEA)

A Note From Our Program Director

Dear Friends,

Sometimes I read for escapist pleasure but I chose my last two books wanting practical insight and guidance: Timothy Snyder, *On Tyranny*, and Rebecca Solnit, *Hope in the Dark*. Solnit originally wrote her inspirational book for activists in 2004. I took up the third edition, from 2015, which opens:

“Your opponents would love you to believe that it’s hopeless, that you have no power, that there’s no reason to act, that you can’t win. Hope is a gift that you don’t have to surrender, a power you don’t have to throw away.”

There are “good reasons” to hope, Solnit says, encouraging us to practice this “act of defiance.” Meanwhile, Snyder offers concrete lessons learned from 20th-century atrocities, especially in Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia. Some are familiar, like “do not obey in advance” and “contribute to good causes.” Others are just as crucial, like



“remember professional ethics,” “investigate,” “believe in truth,” and “learn from peers in other countries.”

Both writers use vivid specific examples to show that authority never has all the power. There’s evidence we can overturn oppression because people *have done it*. We may feel paralyzed as we doom-scroll through the news each day. But individually and collectively, from Nepal to Minnesota, we do have power to wield. Resistance is a choice we make, grounded in the knowledge that our actions matter.

Our Bodies Ourselves continues to cultivate this informed optimism – and, I dare say, to resist tyranny – in collaboration with many fierce allies. In this issue, we highlight four of our latest evidence-based, feminist resources, which all come from a corps of professionals, resolutely investigating and believing in truth. Speaking from our experience breaks silence and stigma, as Jazzmine does in the featured story. And our global partners, our interns, and our event partners bear witness to the strength of our community. Thank you too for believing in us as a cause that deserves your support!

The Tanzania Home Economics Association recently sent us wonderful photos along with news about their work. In one, women hold up pink signs proudly affirming, in Kiswahili, their confidence, achievement, and worth.

Ndoto inatimia. Amid the uncertainty and injustice, we have reason to hope.

In solidarity,



Laura R. Prieto (she/her/ella)
Our Bodies Ourselves Program Director

Support Our Bodies Ourselves!

Explore Our Website: New Resources

We are always adding new resources to our website, reviewed by our content experts and put into context by the editorial team at Our Bodies Ourselves.

Here are some recent resources we've published:



"Menopause care is a necessity," argue Ms Magazine writers Nora Lansen and Jannine Versi, and our health care system needs to be better at meeting that need, and making it affordable to all.

[Read "We Need Better Menopause Care"](#)

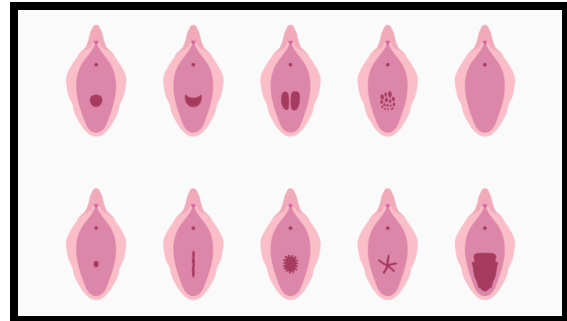


This article features OBOS content expert and psychiatrist Shweta Kapoor, discussing the role of therapies and medications in helping us heal from sexual trauma, and how partners can best care for survivors.

[Read "Healing from Sexual Trauma"](#)

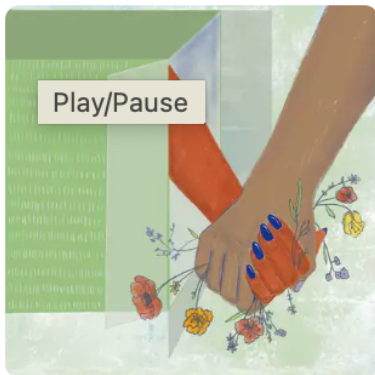
Award-winning photojournalist Karen Kasmauski documents the work of Black midwives and doulas who are making progress against staggering racial disparities in birthing outcomes.

[View "...Turning to Midwives..."](#)



Is the membrane just a myth? In this piece for Scarleteen, Anna Knöfel Magnusson demystifies the vaginal corona (also called the hymen) and its often misunderstood connection to "virginity."

[Read "My Corona: The Hymen and the Myths"](#)



Spotlight: Our Stories & Conversations

Society often assumes that penetrative sex is a part of heterosexual marriage, but what happens when that's not possible? In this episode of the **Tight Lipped** podcast, Jazzmine and Jordan share how they navigate Jazzmine's chronic vulvovaginal pain. They also talk about sociological, legal, and historical perspectives on the now-controversial diagnosis of "vaginismus."

[Listen to the episode](#)

Our Inspiring Fall Interns

This fall, we were fortunate to work with three wonderful undergraduate interns from Simmons University: Ryan Rollins, Charlotte Smith, and (extending their summer internship) Inés I.

Inés supported the work of our gender-based violence experts and led the **Our Bodies Our Quilt** project in its very successful first phase. They will continue collaborating with us as we continue the project. They have also been sharing their writing and art with us, from essays to zines. Read their personal reflections on **"Reading and Rereading the 'Lesbian Chapter'"** ("In Amerika They Call Us Dykes," in "Our Bodies, Ourselves," 1973).

Ryan created guides and descriptions for original material from the Boston Women's Health Book Collective that we have on site, as well as digitized oral histories with the founders. Ryan reflected, "Engaging with OBOS' history made clear how important it is to recognize what has changed, what has remained consistent, and how we must continue adapting to evolving social and political contexts in order to uphold an obligation to accessibility, intersectionality, and community-centeredness. I am grateful and honored to be even a small part of such a huge legacy and continuous impact around the world."

Charlotte conducted research on reproductive health, fertility, and chronic illness to identify potential website content. She helped design a pamphlet about contraceptive choices and she ran a user experience (UX) survey for the OBOS website. "Through my semester with Our Bodies Ourselves, I've gained a deeper understanding of the organization—not only its legacy as a groundbreaking feminist health nonprofit, but also its ongoing work in education, outreach, and advocacy," Charlotte wrote. "I've loved my time working with such a mission-driven organization and such passionate people. I've been able to support OBOS's mission meaningfully while growing as a communicator and public health advocate!"



Our Bodies Ourselves News

🌟 *Global Northeastern News* interviewed Our Bodies Ourselves executive director **Amy Agigian** about how we should regard the FDA's decision to remove the black box warning from **menopause-related hormone therapy** (MHT) treatments, including creams and pills.

🔗 [Access the full article](#)

🌟 Catch up with our two recent events on **menstrual justice!**

- "Mythbusting Menstruation," Third Massachusetts Menstrual Equity Summit, cohosted by Our Bodies Ourselves, Mass NOW, and the Massachusetts Menstrual Equity Summit.

🔗 [Watch the keynote and panel videos](#)

- "Power in the Flow: Menstrual Equity and Reproductive Justice," cohosted by Sister Song, Mass NOW, and Our Bodies Ourselves,

🔗 [Watch the keynote and panel videos](#)



🌟 Susannah Fox, author of the new book "Rebel Health: A Field Guide to the Patient-Led Revolution in Medical Care" (MIT Press), describes Our

Bodies Ourselves as a **book that sparked a revolution**. Fox spoke with **Yasmeen Long** (OBOS leadership council) about the history and legacy of the Boston Women's Health Book Collective, especially in educating and empowering women.

[🔗 Read Fox's post](#)

We mourn the recent loss of two brilliant and consequential feminists who reshaped the healthcare landscape. Writer Gena Corea and attorney Susan Jenkins were both invaluable colleagues, activists, and friends of Our Bodies Ourselves. We honor their memory as we continue their work towards health justice for all.

[🔗 Visit our tribute to Susan and Gena](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, February 10: Our Bodies Ourselves Open House **Suffolk University**

10th Floor, 73 Tremont St., Boston

Stop by the Center for Women's Health and Human Rights anytime **between 12pm and 2pm** to see our space, meet our students and staff, and learn about our feminist approach to health and sexuality. We will have snacks, swag, and fun activities waiting for you!

[🔗 Find out more](#)

*****Save the Date!*****

Sunday, March 8, 2-4:30pm **Making Our Legacy Matter**

You're invited to "Making Our Legacy Matter," an afternoon tea with Our Bodies Ourselves on **International Women's Day!** This won't be ladylike crumpets and bone china but a more revolutionary Boston kind of gathering. We mean a feminist occasion where we can lay down the groundwork for action -- like the tea in Seneca Falls, New York, where the world's first women's rights conference got planned in 1848.



On our program will be OBOS co-founder **Judy Norsigian** in conversation with reproductive justice icons **Byllye Avery** and **Cynthia Pearson**, about the past, present, and future of the women's health movement. More speaker announcements and details to follow -- please mark your calendars and watch your email for the invitation. We'd love to have you with us you there!

Updates from Our Global Partners

Our Bodies Ourselves' **Global Projects Committee** has been hearing exciting updates from our global partners! Ever since the 1970s, feminist groups from around the world have been **translating and adapting "Our Bodies, Ourselves"** for women in their own countries. They have developed books in 34 languages so far. We will be featuring their important, continuing work in a series, beginning here with the **Tanzania Home Economics Association (TAHEA)**.

TAHEA is a women-led professional NGO, established in 1980 as TAHEA Mwanza. They presented on a panel at OBOS's 40th anniversary symposium in 2011. The organization later published two Kiswahili booklets: *Afya Ya Uzazi* (Reproductive Health, 2013) and *Mahusiano Na Magonjwa Ya Ngono* (Relationships and Sexually Transmitted Diseases, 2014), with chapters drawing from the latest edition of "Our Bodies, Ourselves."

In her recent letter to us, **Mary Kabati**, Executive Director of TAHEA, writes, "We use the translations in our training packages as references during training sessions on reproductive health." TAHEA is currently focused on two initiatives: achieving gender equality through their Early Childhood Development Project; and an intervention on obstetric fistula.

 [Read Mary Kabati's letter about TAHEA's current work](#)



Photos courtesy of TAHEA

Please share this newsletter with a friend!

**Your accurate *and* inclusive
guide to health, sexuality, *and*
reproductive justice**



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