

NATIONAL ACADEMIES OF SCIENCES, ENGINEERING, AND MEDICINE

LEVERAGING THE ROLE OF DOULAS TO SUPPORT BLACK MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH

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Maternal Health Disparities: The Women Behind the Data - A Five-Part Webinar Series
Friday, May 3, 2024

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Discuss the current state of research surrounding Black maternal mental health.

OBJECTIVES

FOLLOWING THIS
PRESENTATION, PARTICIPANTS
WILL BE ABLE TO...



Define the term “perinatal race-related psychological stressor” as explained by experts in Black maternal mental health.



Identify categories of perinatal race-related psychological stressors that may negatively impact Black women/birthing persons’ mental health.

ABOUT ME



In the chat, please share where you are calling in from.

2X

more likely than
White women to
experience a MMH
condition.

(Kozhimanill et al., 2011; Taylor & Gamble, 2017)

2-3X

more likely than
White women to
experience maternal
death.

(Hoyert, 2023; Sethi, 2020)

40%

of BW/BP* experience
a maternal mental
health (MMH)
condition.

(UPMC Health Beat, 2020; Taylor & Gamble, 2017)

50%

of PPD cases in
women of color are
not reported.

(Kozhimanill et al., 2011; Taylor & Gamble, 2017)

UNDIAGNOSED & MISDIAGNOSED

Black women/birthing persons experience **increased provider and societal judgment**, thus decreasing their desire to seek help from their providers out of **fear that they may be perceived negatively for displaying mental health symptoms**.

(Artiga et al., 2020; Mehra et al., 2020)



CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO MMH DISPARITIES

Several **sources of stress** contribute to Black maternal mental health disparities. These are **rooted in the social determinants of health** (SDoH).



RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

Chronic environmental exposure to racial discrimination from multiple sources, including bias from law enforcement, financial disparities, and neighborhood segregation.

(Giurgescu et al., 2017; Jackson et al., 2017; Omowale et al., 2022; Watson & Henderson, 2023).



SYSTEMIC AND PROVIDER-RELATED FAILURES

Providers often fail to provide detailed healthcare resources, listen to their concerns, or honor their requests for support which contributes to the *lack of high-quality, safe, and respectful health-related interventions.*

(Barnett et al., 2022)

SOURCES OF SUPPORT



SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Black women's depressive symptoms tended to decrease after pregnancy when they were supported by social relationships, including co-parenting partnerships.

(Edwards et al., 2012)

POSITIVE PROVIDER INTERACTIONS

These interactions support their perinatal experiences and parental self-efficacy in disclosing psychosocial issues.

(Godoy et al., 2014; Keefe et al., 2016b)

INDEPENDENT COPING

As a result of discrepancies in follow-up MMH treatment, Black women may be more likely to seek help from religious sources.

(Kozhimannil et al., 2011); Woods-Giscombé et al., 2016)

DOULAS AND MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH



SUPPORT

Doulas offer support to BW/BP, particularly when other support people may be absent or when they need to navigate the healthcare system.

(Herriott et al., 2023; Quiray et al., 2024)

RACIAL CONCORDANCE

Many Black doulas mention that their clients are predominantly Black - a characteristic that decreases fear for BW/BP.

(Arteaga et al., 2022; Sayyad et al., 2023)

ADVOCACY

Doulas decrease perinatal stress by advocating for their BW/BP clients in numerous healthcare settings.

(Arteaga et al., 2022; Herriott et al., 2023; Quiray et al., 2024)

SAFETY AND TRUST

Safety and trust rest at the core of the doula-client relationship - characteristics that are often opposite when BW/BP encounter healthcare professionals.

(Herriott et al., 2023; Quiray et al., 2024)

Perinatal race-related psychological stressors consist of experiences related to the *historic and ongoing* mistreatment of Black women in the US, which, in turn, may contribute to stress that is specific to Black women's perinatal experiences.

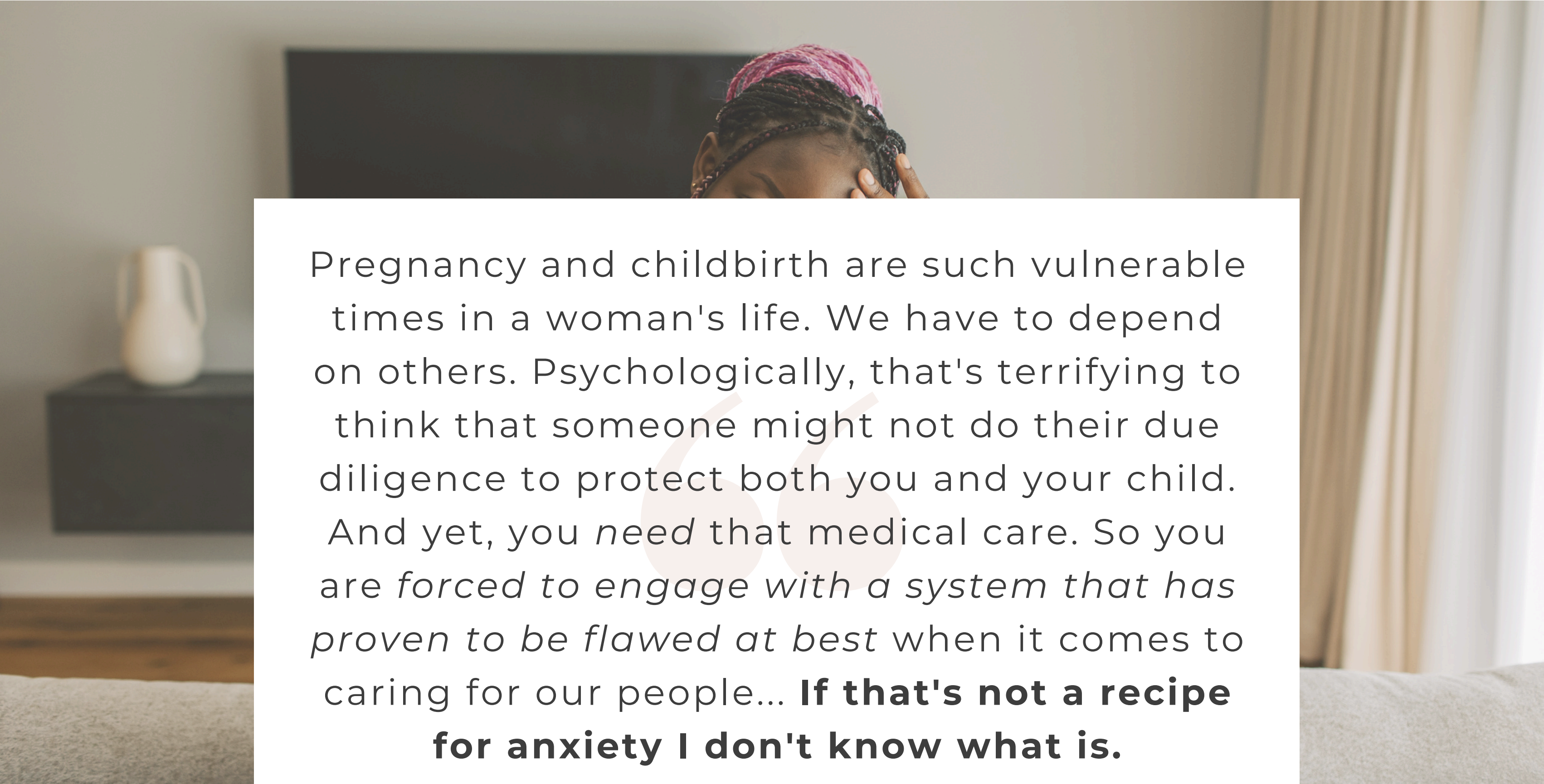
(Garland McKinney, In Preparation)

These stressors are related to:

- Interpersonal Relationships
- Well-Being
- Relationships with Providers and Staff
- Stereotypes

PERINATAL RACE-RELATED PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESSOR

(GARLAND MCKINNEY, IN PREPARATION)



Pregnancy and childbirth are such vulnerable times in a woman's life. We have to depend on others. Psychologically, that's terrifying to think that someone might not do their due diligence to protect both you and your child. And yet, you *need* that medical care. So you are *forced to engage with a system that has proven to be flawed at best* when it comes to caring for our people... **If that's not a recipe for anxiety I don't know what is.**

TAYLOR - LCPC, PSI TRAINED



BLACK MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

JULY 19TH-25TH

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**LET'S HEAR FROM OUR
PANELISTS...**
THANK YOU!



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