

Maternal Mortality and Medical Misogynoir

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MORTALITY GAP FOR U.S. MOMS

In the U.S., black women who are expecting or who are new mothers die at rates similar to those of the same women in lower-income countries, while the maternal mortality rate for white U.S. mothers more closely resembles rates in more affluent nations.

Sources: U.S. ratios (2011-2013):

NON-HISPANIC BLACK WOMEN

40

United States

Comparison:
Women of all races

44

Brazil

40

Malaysia

38

Mexico

36

Uzbekistan

Maternal
deaths per
100,000

NON-HISPANIC WHITE WOMEN

12.4

United States

11

New Zealand

9

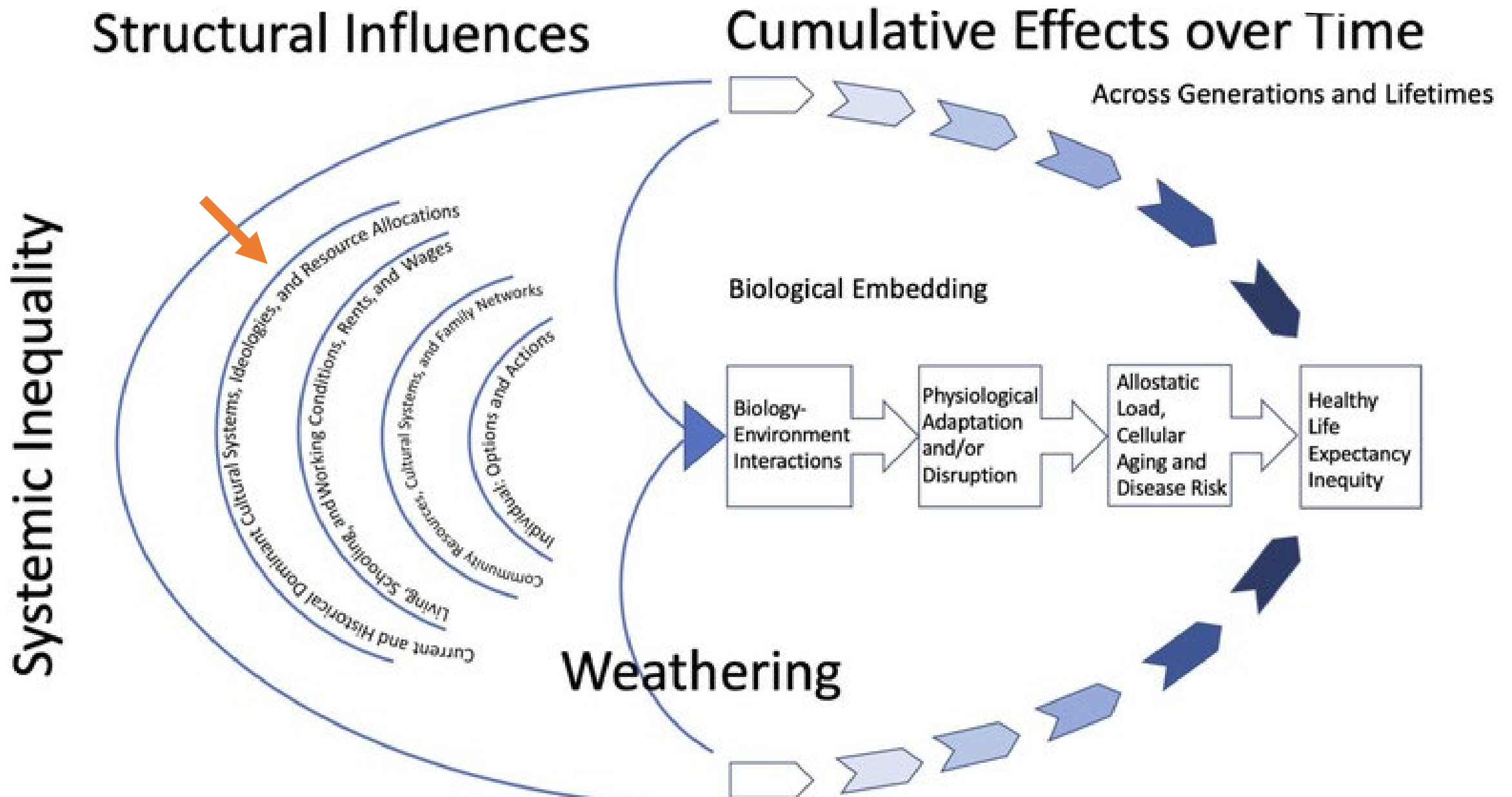
United Kingdom

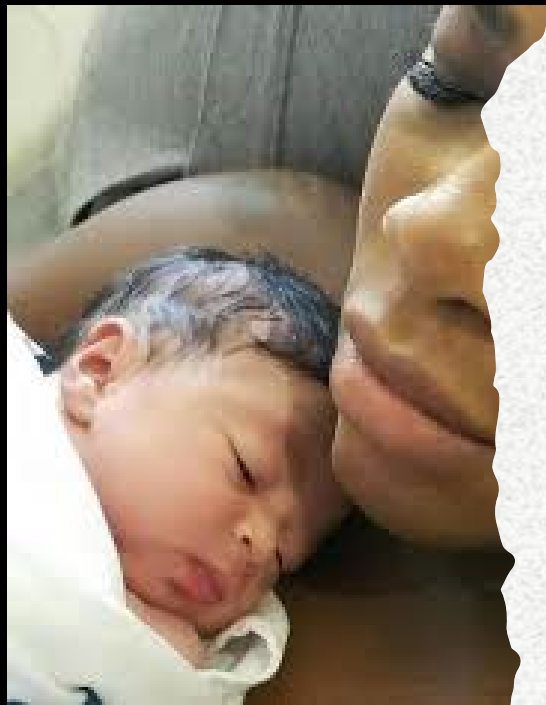
8

France

5

Japan





*"She walked out of the hospital room so her mother wouldn't worry and **told the nearest nurse, between gasps, that she needed a CT scan with contrast and IV heparin** (a blood thinner) right away. **The nurse thought her pain medicine might be making her confused.** But Serena insisted, and soon enough a doctor was performing an ultrasound of her legs. "I was like, a Doppler? **I told you, I need a CT scan and a heparin drip,**" . . . The ultrasound revealed nothing, so they sent her for the CT, and **sure enough, several small blood clots had settled in her lungs.** Minutes later she was on the drip. "I was like, listen to Dr. Williams!"*

Misogynoir

A specifically anti-Black racist form of misogyny that black women experience as ***"stereotypes, violence, oppression, and dehumanization unique to Black women's bodies, experiences, lives and histories"***





Partus Sequitar Ventrem

- In 1662 Virginia law states that the status of a child would follow that of his or her mother; **enslavement is inheritable**
- Children of enslaved mothers were “**born into**” slavery.
- Black women’s childbearing becomes the centerpiece of the system of chattel slavery.
- Black women’s **physical labor, reproductive labor** and **emotional labor** become commodified and exploited

Justifications become Archetypes: Submissive, Sexy, or Sassy

- **Emotional labor**: Exists to meet white's wet-nursing, caretaking, and domestic servitude needs; puts her needs aside in service of whiteness. **Mammy, later the 'Black Best Friend'**
- **Reproductive labor**: Exists to meet the sexual and economic interests of white men; seductress, hypersexual/born to breed. **Jezebel, later 'Welfare Queen'**
- **Physical labor**: Exists to provide free labor; hypermasculine/manly, strong, harsh, aggressive. **Sapphire, later the 'Strong Black Woman' or 'Angry Black Woman'**



MICHELLE



Melania



michelle's veggie jamz



Michelle Obama



Meghan Markle



"That gynecology advanced from American slavery means that Black people have always had a precarious relationship to the field and its practitioners" –Diedre Cooper Owens

The Cost: 'Medical Misogynoir'

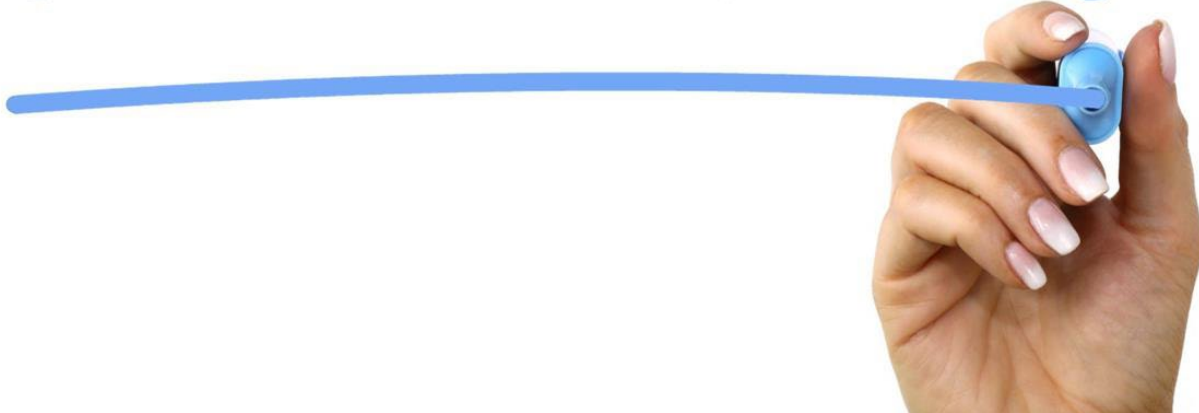
- Neglectful Care
- Judgmental Care
- Withholding Information

Sigurdson, K., Morton, C., Mitchell, B. et al. *Journal of Perinatology*. 2018; 38, 600–607.

Altman, M.R., McLemore, M.R., Oseguera, T., Lyndon, A. and Franck, L.S., *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health*. 2020; 65: 466-473.

Shared Decision-Making: Shared POWER

POWER



Priorities: Agenda Setting

Outcomes: Goals of Care

Wants: Preferences and Values

Expertise: Bidirectional Information Sharing

Responsibility: Joint Decision-Making

The Remedy: Patient-Centered Care

Shared Decision-Making



Trauma-Informed Care

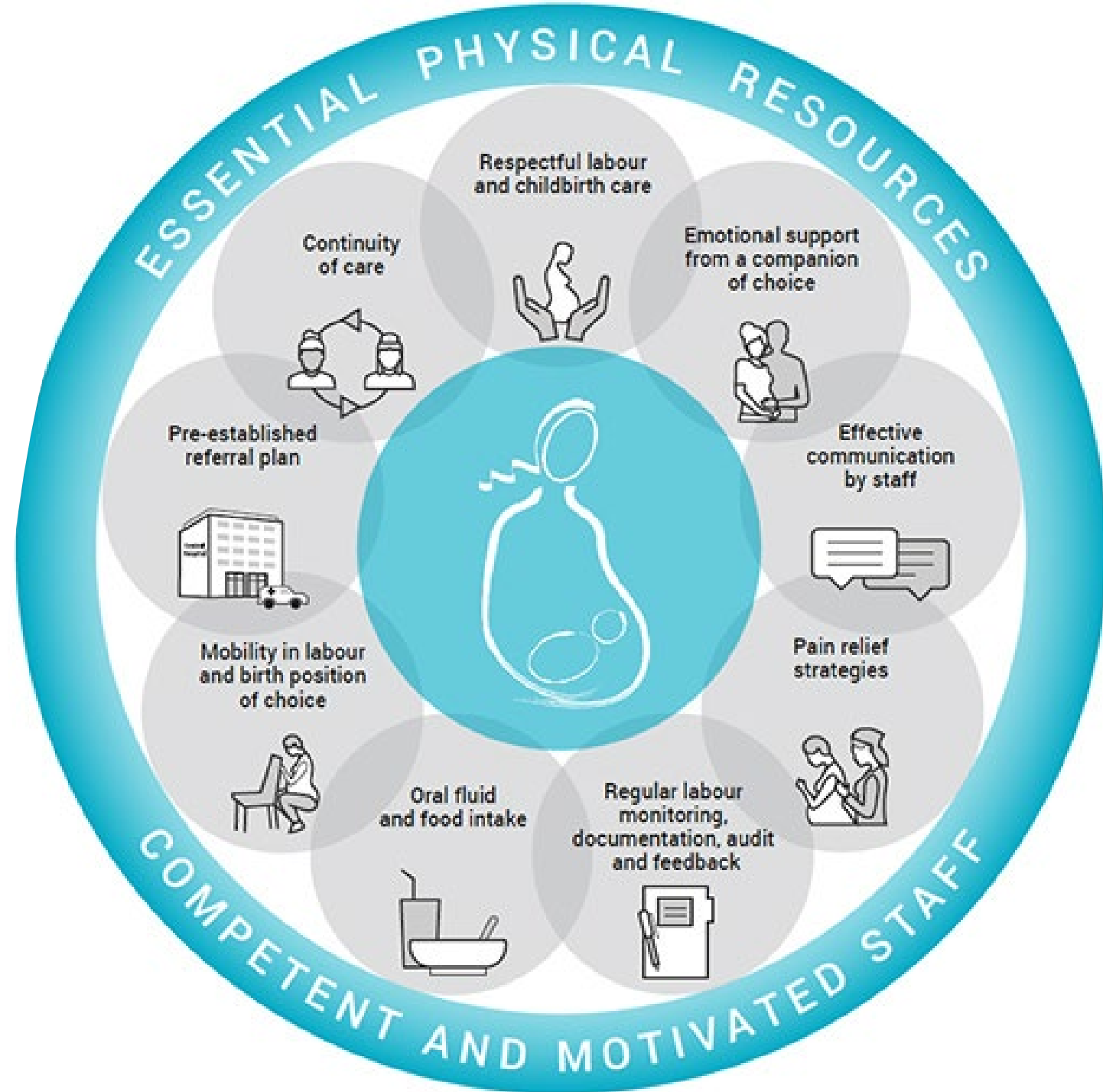


Reproductive Justice



Centering Black Women

Medical Models + Midwifery Models



"If Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression."

--Combahee River Collection Statement

