

A CABWHP + USC PARTNERSHIP PRESENTS

UNIQUE BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY-BASED CARE

Stories from Birthworkers

A group of Black Birthworkers (doulas, midwives, lactation specialist) mainly serving Black birthers shared their experience with providing community-based care and support. They provided one or more of the following services: childbirth education, prenatal and postnatal care, yoga, meditation, lactation coaching.

Here's what they had to say:

GOALS

"Having a healthy and safe outcome isn't enough, [Black mothers] should be experiencing a joyous birth."

Most of the birth workers expressed that their own experiences, their identity as Black women, helps them understand their clients' needs better.

This allows them to show up for Black birthers to

- Empower and affirm them to advocate for themselves
- Advocate on their behalf, when necessary
- Listen and validate their preferences, fears and concerns
- Provide information using culturally sensitive approaches

SAFE PREGNANCY & BIRTHING EXPERIENCE MEANS....



Having access to an environment that addresses the specific needs of birthers



Being able to participate in the decision making process and give informed consent



"Unbiased support....understanding that birth is not linear"



Recognition of the *"racial trauma that comes up in Black birthing bodies"*

KEY FINDINGS

- One of the main goals of community-based Black birthworkers is to empower Black birthers and arm them with important and necessary information throughout their birthing journey.
- Black birthworkers' provided birthers with information and physical, emotional and clinical support.
- Black birthworkers triangulate community resources to help birthers navigate a wide range of support across organizations.
- Black birthworkers need more financial support to ensure that their important work can be sustainable.
- Black birthworkers expressed the need for more mental health support in maternal healthcare
- Black birthworkers seek community support groups to aid them in providing service

UNIQUE BENEFITS OF DOULA/MIDWIFERY SERVICES COMPARED TO CLINICAL SERVICES

A key and common theme that came up in all of these interviews was the idea of personalized care that the current structure of hospital healthcare doesn't have room to provide.

- Longer prenatal appointments, more postpartum visits and constant screening throughout pregnancy
- Being a constant support person in the birther's journey
- Providing "auxiliary service" to the hospital → giving attentive non-clinical support to birthers



STRENGTHS IN DOULA/MIDWIFERY SERVICES

Building a relationship with the birther

"Part of being a doula [is] you become a part of these people's family..their village and their network."

Supporting, educating and advocating for Black birthers

"Being able to support and advocate for them is huge, because typically in the healthcare setting, it's just very generalized"

Providing "wraparound" community support postpartum → presenting childcare resources, postpartum overnight shifts to support parents

Ensuring that Black birthers feel heard and validated, emphasizing the importance of listening to their bodies so they feel safe communicating their needs

Monitoring the mother throughout the birthing experience, focusing on her as the clinical team focuses on delivering the baby

Providing consistent and extensive care and resources that are individualized and culturally affirming

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Black birthworkers need livable wages and proper financial compensation in order to make this a sustainable career option

"One of the challenges is having a livable wage for a doula to sustain themselves and their families"

- Public health programs need to listen to and work with Black birthworkers to maintain the integrity and authenticity of doula/midwifery comprehensive care

"You can't say that you're offering doula support, if you pull out all the stuff that's important, and intervene in what we do."

- Improving access to mental health and community support resources for Black birthworkers

"Birth work is emotionally and physically taxing"

- Training medical providers to dispel implicit biases and stigmas around out of hospital care & improving collaboration between community-based birth workers and medical providers

"When you're transferring from midwifery care to obstetrical care, your clients are oftentimes ridiculed for their choices"

FOR FURTHER INQUIRIES:

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