

BLACK
Maternal **MENTAL**
HEALTH WEEK[®]
— ACKNOWLEDGE RESPECT AND SUPPORT —

JULY 19–24, 2024

The **ART**
OF MOTHERHOOD
PARENTING
BEYOND
Societal
NORMS



**BLACK MATERNAL MENTAL
HEALTH WEEK**

Toolkit



A Letter from our Founder

Dear Community,

In the heart of every challenge lies the seed of opportunity — an opportunity to learn, to grow, and, most importantly, to help. The Shades of Blue Project was born out of a profound personal journey, one that illuminated the stark realities faced by Black mothers and birthing individuals in our healthcare system. It's a journey that many of you know all too well, marked by hurdles that should never exist in the pursuit of health and happiness.

Our mission at the Shades of Blue Project is deeply personal. We are driven by the stories we hear every day: stories of struggle, resilience, and the quest for joy in the sacred journey of motherhood. We do this work because we believe in a world where every Black mother and birthing person receives the care, respect, and support they deserve.

Why do we focus on maternal mental health? Because it is the cornerstone of a family's wellbeing. Without mental health, there is no health. Yet, too many of our sisters are suffering in silence, burdened by the stigma of mental health struggles and the disparities of a system that often fails to see them or hear them.

Our work is about more than awareness; it's about action. It's about dismantling the barriers to mental health care and ensuring that Black mothers and birthing individuals not only survive but thrive. This is our commitment, our calling, and our promise to you and future generations.

This week, as we come together for Black Maternal Mental Health Week, let's remind ourselves of the power of community. Let's amplify our voices, share our stories, and stand united in the fight for health equity. Together, we can transform the narrative, ensuring that joy and peace of mind are not just aspirations but realities for Black mothers everywhere.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Your support, your voice, and your action make all the difference. Let's continue to shine a light on maternal mental health and create a brighter future for all.

With gratitude and hope,

Kay Matthews Executive Director/Founder
The Shades of Blue Project

MEET OUR TEAM



We are dedicated to helping women of color before, during and after child-birth with community resources, mental health advocacy, treatment and support. Our vision is to change the way women are currently being diagnosed and treated after giving birth and experiencing any adverse maternal mental health outcome. Our vision is that our Acknowledge, Respect, and Support method will be the adaptable change agent for healthcare professional and healthcare systems operations in their engagement with patients

UNDERSTANDING THE CRISIS: KEY STATISTICS ON BLACK MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH

In the journey towards health equity, knowledge is power. The challenges Black mothers and birthing individuals face are not just personal—they are pervasive and systemic. By familiarizing ourselves with the facts, we can better advocate for change and support our community. Here are the critical statistics that underscore the urgency of our work:

- 1. Postpartum Depression (PPD):** Black mothers experience postpartum depression at a rate of 40%, nearly twice the rate of white mothers. This discrepancy highlights not just a healthcare gap but a chasm of understanding and support.
- 2. Access to Treatment:** Only about 25% of Black women who experience symptoms of PPD seek professional help, compared to 45% of white women. The barriers? Stigma, lack of access, and insufficient culturally competent care.
- 3. Maternal Mortality:** Black women are 3 to 4 times more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications than white women. Behind this stark statistic are issues of systemic racism, socio-economic disparities, and inadequate healthcare.
- 4. Underdiagnosis:** Black women's symptoms of maternal mental health issues are less likely to be diagnosed or taken seriously, further compounding the crisis.
- 5. Impact on Infant Health:** Untreated maternal mental health conditions can lead to poor developmental outcomes for children, including delays in language, cognitive abilities, and emotional regulation.

UNDERSTANDING THE CRISIS: KEY STATISTICS ON BLACK MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUED.....

Let's Change the Narrative

These statistics are more than just numbers—they represent real people, real stories, and real lives impacted by systemic inequities. Armed with knowledge, we can all play a part in advocating for the necessary changes in policy, practice, and perception to support Black maternal mental health.

Join Us: Be a voice for change. Share these facts with your network, engage in conversations about Black maternal mental health, and advocate for policies that support mental health care access for all Black mothers and birthing individuals.

#TheConversationContinues #BMMHW2024

OUR PATH FORWARD

The journey to health equity for Black mothers and birthing individuals requires a multifaceted approach. At the Shades of Blue Project, we've identified crucial areas where change can have the most significant impact. Here's how we're addressing these challenges:

01

Policy Reform

- Objective: Advocate for policies that ensure equitable healthcare access and address systemic racism in maternal care.
- Action: Support legislation that mandates comprehensive maternal mental health screening and culturally competent care within all healthcare systems.

02

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

- Objective: Highlight and address the impact of IPV on maternal mental health.
- Action: Provide resources and support networks for survivors, and advocate for integrated IPV screening and support services in prenatal and postpartum care.

03

3. Substance Use Disorder

- Objective: Break down the stigma surrounding substance use and provide compassionate support for recovery, focusing on the unique needs of pregnant individuals and new mothers.
- Action: Promote access to non-judgmental substance use treatment programs that prioritize maternal and infant health.

OUR PATH FORWARD continued.....

04

Infant Mental Health

- Objective: Stress the importance of early emotional and psychological development, recognizing the profound impact of maternal mental health on infants.
- Action: Support programs that offer parenting resources and education on nurturing infant mental health.

05

Community-Based Organization Funding

- Objective: Amplify the work of grassroots organizations that provide direct support to Black mothers and birthing individuals.
- Action: Advocate for increased funding and resources to empower these vital community support networks.

Be Part of the Solution

Our focus areas are more than just goals—they are a call to action for each of us. Whether you're advocating for policy change, supporting survivors of IPV, addressing substance use, focusing on infant mental health, or boosting community organizations, your involvement can make a real difference.

How You Can Help:

- Engage with and support policies that promote health equity.
- Volunteer your time or donate to organizations tackling these issues.
- Educate yourself and others about the complex factors affecting Black maternal mental health.

Let's unite in these efforts to create a healthier, more supportive world for Black mothers and their children.

#TheConversationContinues #BMMHW2024

The Power of Words: Empowering Voices

Language shapes our reality. In the fight for Black maternal mental health equity, the words we choose carry immense power—to heal, to harm, to uplift, or to undermine. At the Shades of Blue Project, we're committed to using language that empowers, educates, and embraces. Here are key sayings and principles guiding our communication:

1. "STRENGTH IN VULNERABILITY"

Why It Matters: This saying challenges the stereotype of the "strong Black woman" that often prevents Black mothers from seeking help. It celebrates openness and emotional expression as true strengths.

2. "HEALING IS A JOURNEY, NOT A DESTINATION"

Why It Matters: This phrase acknowledges the ongoing nature of mental health care, encouraging patience and persistence in the face of challenges.

3. "COMMUNITY IS OUR GREATEST STRENGTH"

Why It Matters: It highlights the importance of collective support and action in overcoming systemic barriers to mental health care.

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4. "EVERY MOTHER DESERVES TO BE HEARD"

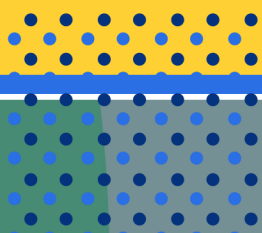
Why It Matters: This statement is a call to listen actively and empathetically to the experiences of Black mothers, recognizing and validating their struggles and needs.

5. "WELLNESS IN MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT"

Why It Matters: It promotes a holistic view of health, emphasizing the interconnectedness of mental, physical, and spiritual well-being.

6. "OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE BEGINS WITH OUR HEALTH TODAY"

Why It Matters: This underscores the critical impact of maternal health on the next generation, advocating for early and sustained support for mothers.



Speak Out and Spread the Word

Incorporate these **empowering phrases** into your daily conversations, social media posts, and advocacy efforts.

By changing the way we talk about Black maternal mental health, we can change perceptions, reduce stigma, and build a more supportive community for all.

Share your favorite sayings from this page or create your own.

Use #TheConversationContinues and #BMMHW2024 to join a broader dialogue about the power of supportive language in fostering mental health equity.

#EmpowermentThroughLanguage
#BMMHW2024

Social Media Advocacy Guide

Suggested Posts & Hashtags

MESSAGING FOR SOCIAL MEDIA POST

> Awareness

"Black mothers are twice as likely to suffer from postpartum depression but less likely to receive treatment. It's time to break the silence and stigma surrounding maternal mental health.

#TheConversationContinues
#BMMHW2024"

> Advocacy

"Every mother deserves to be heard, understood, and supported. Join me in advocating for policies that ensure equitable healthcare for all Black birthing individuals. **#PolicyChange**

#BMMHW2024"

> Support

"Community is our greatest strength. Let's unite to support Black mothers, offering the resources and empathy they need to thrive. **#CommunitySupport**

#BMMHW2024"

> Education

"Did you know? Untreated maternal mental health conditions can impact a child's development. Early intervention is key. Let's spread the word and support our mothers. **#EarlyIntervention**

#BMMHW2024"

Social Media Advocacy Guide

Suggested Posts & Hashtags

> Empowerment

"Strength in vulnerability: Sharing our stories can light the way for others. I stand with Black mothers everywhere, fighting for joy and peace in motherhood.

#StrengthInVulnerability
#BMMHW2024"

> Call to Action

"Join us in making shift happen. Advocate, educate, and support to transform black maternal mental health. It starts with us.

#MakeShiftHappen
#BMMHW2024"

> Mental Health Resources

"Access to mental health resources is a right, not a privilege. Let's ensure every Black mother has the support she needs.

#MentalHealthEquity
#BMMHW2024"

> Breaking Stigmas

"Breaking the stigma starts with conversation. Let's talk openly about maternal mental health and support Black mothers in every step of their journey. **#BreakTheStigma**

#BMMHW2024"

Social Media Advocacy Guide

Suggested Posts & Hashtags

MESSAGING FOR SOCIAL MEDIA POST

> Solidarity

"We stand together in solidarity with Black mothers and birthing individuals, advocating for a future where health equity is a reality, not a dream.
#SolidarityInAction **#BMMHW2024**"

> Empowering Change

"Empowerment through awareness: By educating ourselves and others about the challenges in Black maternal mental health, we pave the way for meaningful change. Let's empower, support, and uplift each other. **#EmpowerChange #BMMHW2024**"

Hash Tags

#EmpowerChange
#MakeShiftHappen
#SolidarityInAction
#BMMHS2024
#MentalHealthEquity
#BreakTheStigma
#ShineTheLight

Hash Tags

#TheConversationContinues
#BMMHW2024
#CommunitySupport:
#PolicyChange:
#EarlyIntervention
#StrengthInVulnerability
#WeAreTheExpertsToo

Social Media Advocacy Guide: Maximize Your Impact:

#HashTags

Effective Social Media Engagement

Social media is a powerful tool in our advocacy toolkit. It connects us, educates us, and mobilizes us to action. By using specific hashtags and strategic messaging, we can amplify our voices and make a significant impact. Here's how to effectively engage on social media for Black Maternal Mental Health Week:

Our Campaign Hashtags:

- **#TheConversationContinues:** Keep the dialogue on Black maternal mental health going. Use this for sharing stories, facts, and ongoing discussions.
- **#BMMHW2024:** The official hashtag for Black Maternal Mental Health Week 2024. Tag your posts related to the event, activities, and awareness efforts.
- **#MakeShiftHappen:** Highlight actions and changes happening in the community. Ideal for posts about advocacy, policy changes, and impactful stories.
- **#EmpowerChange:** Focus on empowerment through education and sharing of resources. Use this for posts that offer support, knowledge, and inspiration.

By leveraging these hashtags and strategies, you're not just raising awareness; you're contributing to a community-wide effort to shift perceptions, policies, and practices in favor of Black maternal mental health.



BLACK
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HEALTH WEEK
—ACKNOWLEDGE RESPECT AND SUPPORT—

Raising Our Voices:

Amplifying the Message of Black Maternal Mental Health Week

Our voices have the power to reach corners of the world previously unimaginable. The Shades of Blue Project invites you to amplify the conversation around Black maternal mental health, turning awareness into action. Here's how you can help spread the word and make an impact.

Your Voice Matters

By amplifying our message, you play a crucial role in building a movement that champions the health and well-being of Black mothers. Every tweet, post, event, and conversation contributes to a louder, united voice calling for change.

Join us this Black Maternal Mental Health Week by using your platform to shine a light on these critical issues. Together, we can make a difference.

#TheConversationContinues #BMMHW2024



TECH
SUMMIT

PARTICIPANT

Raising Our Voices:

Amplifying the Message of Black Maternal Mental Health Week

1. Social Media Advocacy

What You Can Do: Share posts, infographics, and stories related to Black maternal mental health. Use our campaign hashtags to join the global conversation.

Tips: Keep your messages supportive, informative, and engaging. Personal stories or testimonials can be particularly powerful.

2. Host Virtual Events

What You Can Do: Organize webinars, panel discussions, or live Q&A sessions with experts to educate and engage your community.

Tips: Collaborate with local health professionals, advocates, and survivors to provide diverse perspectives.

3. Participate in Community Outreach

What You Can Do: Volunteer for local health fairs, workshops, or support groups. Distribute educational materials and share information about the Shades of Blue Project.

Tips: Tailor your approach to meet the specific needs and concerns of your community.

Raising Our Voices:

Amplifying the Message of Black Maternal Mental Health Week

4. Engage with Local Media

What You Can Do: Write op-eds, letters to the editor, or offer to speak on local radio shows about Black maternal mental health week and the importance of addressing these issues.

Tips: Highlight compelling statistics and personal stories to illustrate the urgency of the cause.

5. Advocate for Policy Change

What You Can Do: Contact your representatives to advocate for better healthcare policies that support Black maternal mental health.

Tips: Be clear, concise, and specific about the changes you want to see. Personal stories can be a powerful tool to illustrate the need for policy reform.

Join the Movement: How You Can Make a Difference

Together, We Can Make Shift Happen!! Your action, whether it's through donation, volunteering, advocacy, education, or participation, fuels our mission to improve the lives of Black mothers and their families. You are a vital part of this movement. By joining hands with the Shades of Blue Project, you're not just supporting a cause; you're igniting a movement for change, hope, and healing.

01

DONATE

- Support Our Cause: Your donations help us provide essential resources, support groups, and access to care for Black mothers and birthing individuals.
- How to Donate: Visit our website www.shadesofblueproject.org to make a contribution. Every dollar makes a difference.

02

ADVOCATE

- Raise Your Voice for Policy Change: Use your voice to advocate for equitable healthcare policies and support mental health initiatives.
- Action Steps: Contact your local representatives, participate in advocacy events, and use social media to spread awareness using our campaign hashtags.

03

EDUCATE AND SHARE

- Become an Ambassador of Change: Educate yourself and others about the challenges and solutions related to Black maternal mental health.
- Resources to Share: Utilize our toolkit, share our posts, and engage in conversations within your network to spread knowledge and understanding.

04

PARTICIPATE IN EVENTS

- Join Our Campaigns: Participate in Black Maternal Mental Health Week activities, workshops, and webinars to show your support and learn more.
- Stay Updated: Follow us on social media **SHADES OF BLUE PROJECT** and sign up for our newsletter to stay informed about upcoming events.

05

VOLUNTEER

- Lend Your Time and Skills: Join our community of volunteers to support events, facilitate support groups, or provide administrative help.
- Get Involved: Fill out our volunteer application form on our website www.shadesofblueproject.org to find opportunities that match your skills and interests.

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United for Change: Our Sponsors and Partners

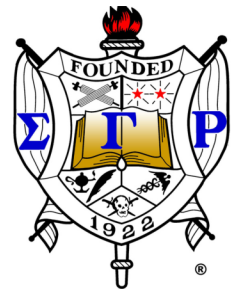
The journey towards health equity in Black maternal mental health is paved with the support, collaboration, and dedication of our sponsors and partners. Their commitment not only amplifies our message but also strengthens our ability to make a tangible difference in the lives of Black mothers and birthing individuals. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each organization that has joined us in this vital cause.



FUNDERS FOR
BIRTH JUSTICE
& EQUITY



FUND II
FOUNDATION



Join Our Network of Support:

Your organization can make a significant impact on the health and well-being of Black mothers and their families. By sponsoring or partnering with the Shades of Blue Project, you're not just supporting a cause—you're investing in the future of our communities.

How to Become a Sponsor or Partner: For more information on sponsorship and partnership opportunities, visit www.shadesofblueproject.org

IMAGES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA POST



BLACK MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH WEEK 2024 SCHEDULE

JULY 19TH

5:00-10:00PM: Party with A Purpose @
Community Bar & Kitchen

JULY 20TH

9:00 AM: INSPIRE Walk & Fun Day In The Park

JULY 21ST

2:00-5:00 PM: INSPIRE Brunch & Angel Awards

JULY 22ND

3:00 PM: Press Conference In Washington, DC

2:00 PM: Twitter Discussion

JULY 24 -JULY 25

Black Maternal Mental Health Summit

5:00 PM-7:30 PM: Happy Hour Art Showcase

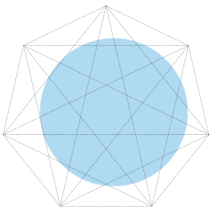
COMMUNICATION & QUESTIONS



CONTACT US
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www.shadesofblueproject.org



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