

# The Imperative OF EQUITABLE, ACCESSIBLE CHILDBIRTH EDUCATION

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# Disclosures:

- M. Runyon has no commercial financial interests or conflicts to disclose.
- D. Bolds, M. Gabriel-Caldwell, M. Strayhorn, & S. Sumling have no commercial financial interests or conflicts to disclose. They each receive grant funding from the 501c3 Your BIRTH Partners to lead Imperative classes in their communities.

## BIRTHING PEOPLE



Recognize the imperative of equitable, accessible childbirth education to address the needs of Black and Brown birthing people.

## COMMUNITY



Illustrate the power and impact of community and clinicians in centering individual childbirth education needs.

## CLINICIANS



Compare current practices with recommended reflections and actions in support of reducing racism-driven disparities in perinatal care.

# Objectives

# The Imperative Team:



Denise  
Bolds



Michelle  
Gabriel-Caldwell



Sasha  
Sumling



Meredith  
Strayhorn



Maggie  
Runyon



**Mission:**  
Cultivate inclusive, collaborative  
birthcare communities rooted in  
autonomy, respect, & equity

# the IMPERATIVE of EQUITABLE, ACCESSIBLE CHILDBIRTH EDUCATION

## HOW MIGHT YOU HELP CENTER THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF A BIRTHING PERSON?

### BIRTHING PEOPLE

YOU DESERVE TO BE HEARD AND RESPECTED.



for Black and Brown Families

YOU ARE IN CHARGE.

YOU HAVE MANY CARE OPTIONS.

### COMMUNITY

- YOU ARE A CHOSEN SUPPORT.
- YOU HAVE A CRITICAL ROLE IN ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION.
- YOU AMPLIFY THE VOICE OF THE BIRTHING PERSON.

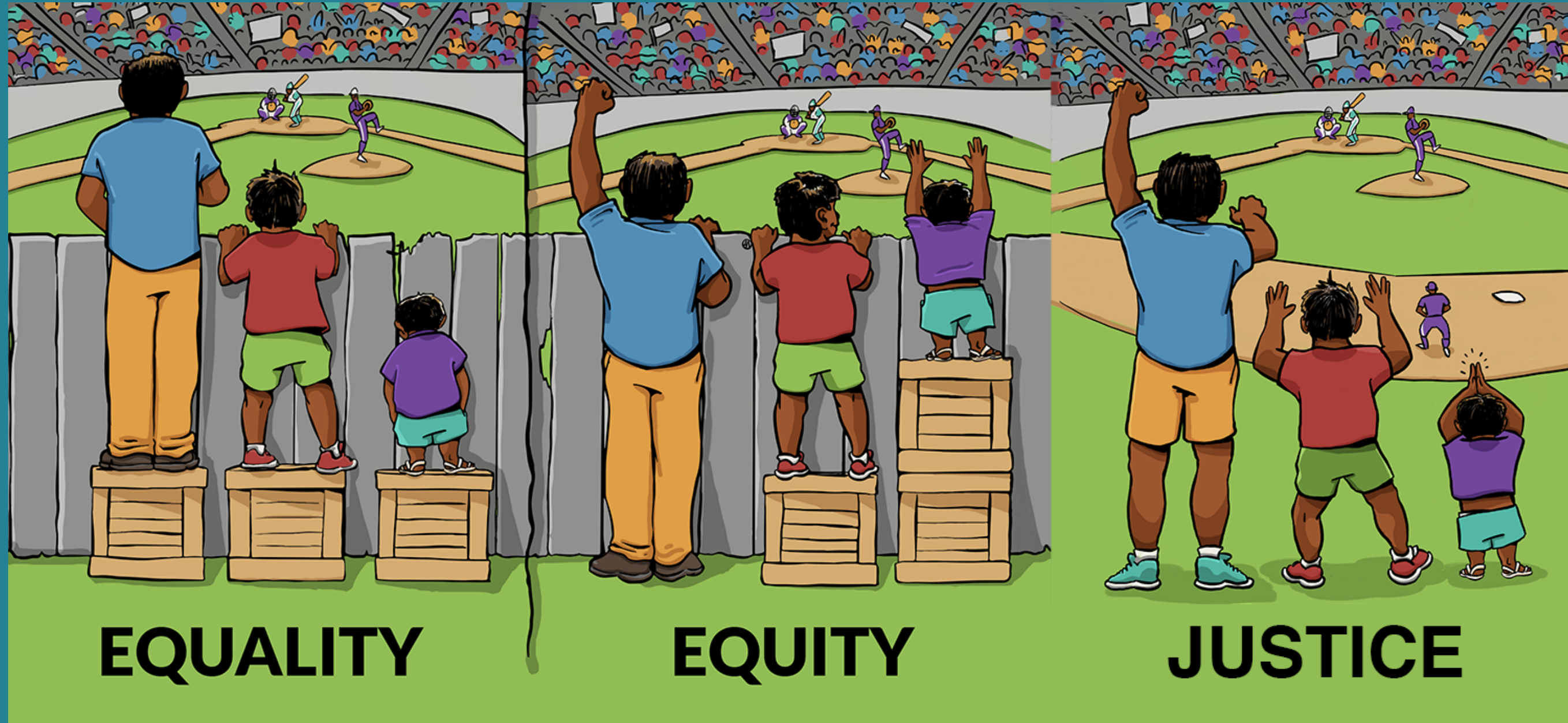


### CLINICIANS

- YOU ARE PRIVILEGED TO WITNESS AND SUPPORT BIRTH.
- YOU HAVE SO MANY INSIGHTS TO SHARE.
- YOU ENSURE EACH BIRTHING PERSON'S AUTONOMY IS RESPECTED.



# Explore Equality, Equity, Justice

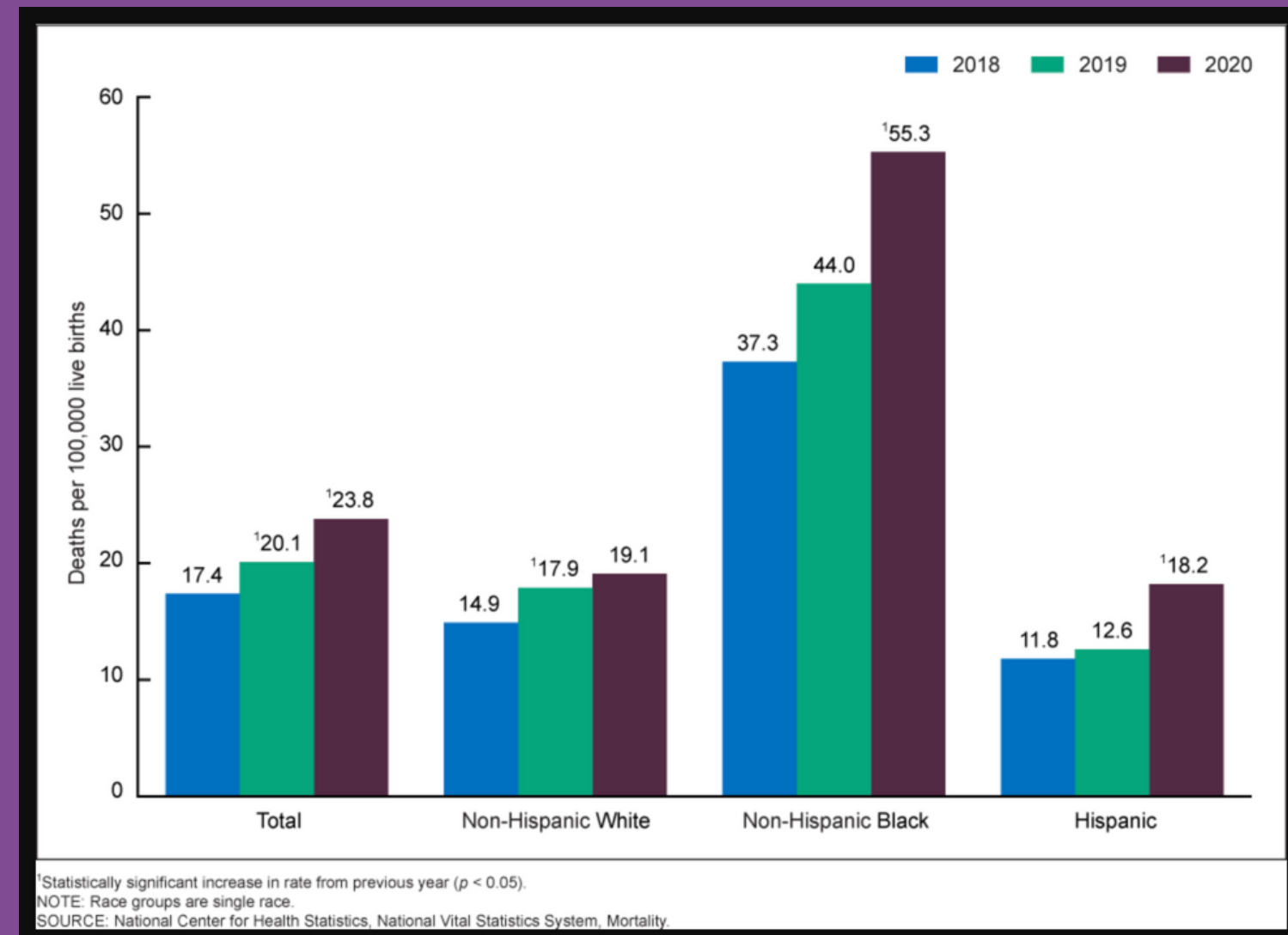


# Current State of Black Perinatal Health:

Structural & systemic racism

Unmet need for culturally-congruent care

Deficit-focused approaches to address disparities



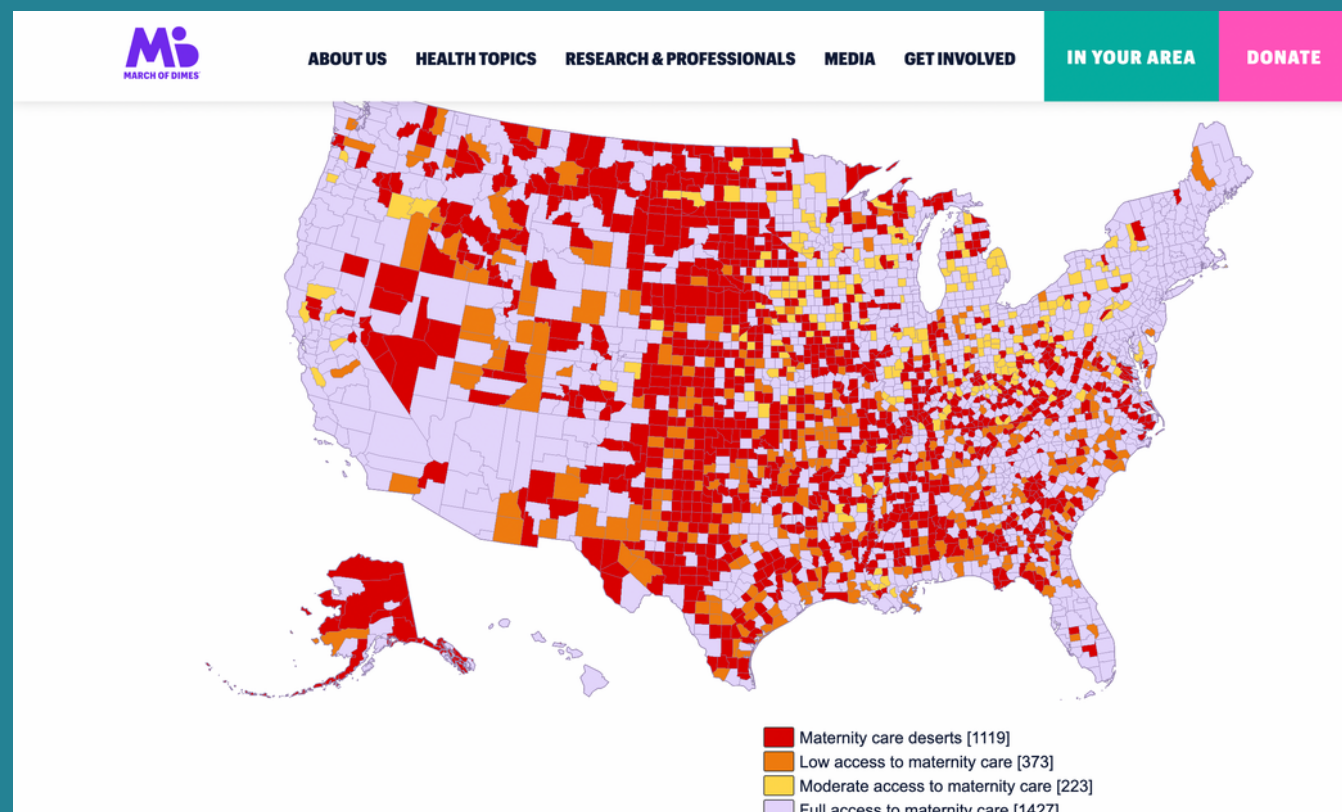
# Beyond "Low-Income" Stereotypes

Where does funding go to address perinatal health?  
How are you reaching members of your community?  
What services do you offer? Who is eligible?

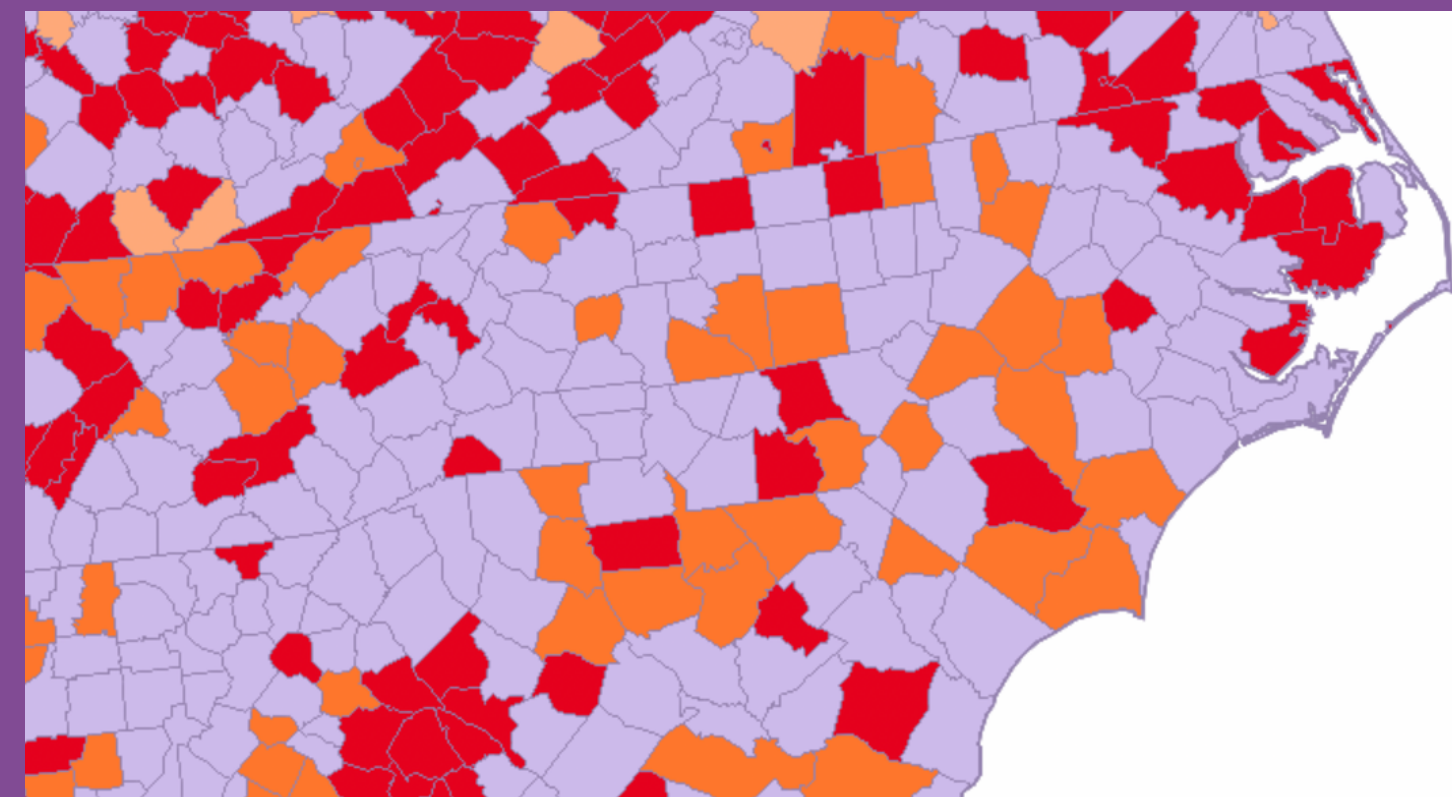




# Access and Maternal Health Deserts



March of Dimes identified 1119 counties with no OB hospitals, birth centers, Obstetricians, or Certified Nurse Midwives.



In North Carolina there are 21-including Caswell County, only 30 miles from this conference

# Our Response:

## The Imperative

- Evidence Based Birth classes which center Black & Brown cohorts of students in 4 states.
- There is no income requirements for participation, non-invasive enrollment process.
- Mentors are paid full rate to lead classes; funded by 501c3 Your BIRTH Partners
- Pregnant participants and support people engage within community & with additional educational resources.



# Why Evidence Based Birth Classes

**EVIDENCE  
BASED *Birth***  
Childbirth Class

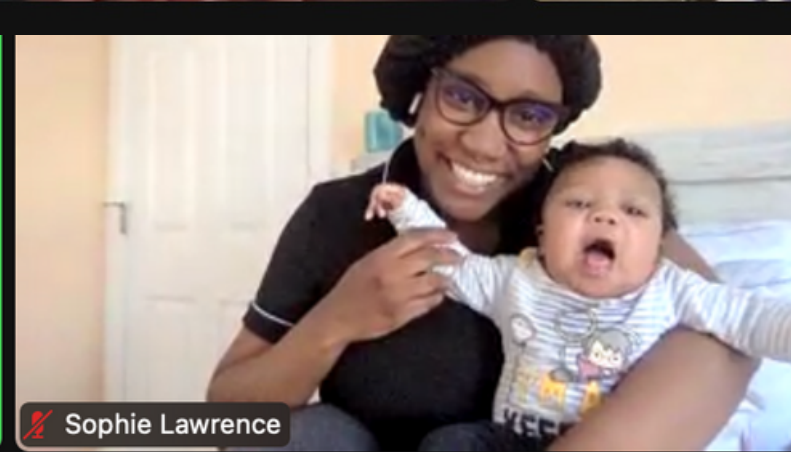


# Impact



- 89 families served since 2021
- Classes offered in New Jersey, New York, Kentucky, and Texas.

# Building Community



# Family Outcomes



Jaharra & Shawn

# Family Outcomes



Danielle & Chantel

# Family Outcomes



Canon & Patrick



# Family Outcomes



Desiree & Brian

# Family Outcomes

Juanna & Rasheem



# Family Outcomes



Victoria &  
Christopher

# Family Outcomes



3 Generations of Women

# Testimonials



Desiree & Brian,  
Baby Aria

# Testimonials



Racquel & Craig

# Growing Self-Advocacy

**Self-advocacy critical  
to EBB Imperative classes**



# Mindfulness & Connection



Practicing breathing techniques



# Options & Preferences



Confidence in understanding options and greater awareness of healthcare system

# Learning Together



Sense of community engagement



# Acknowledging Fears

Impact of centering  
Black and Brown experience



# Education in Action

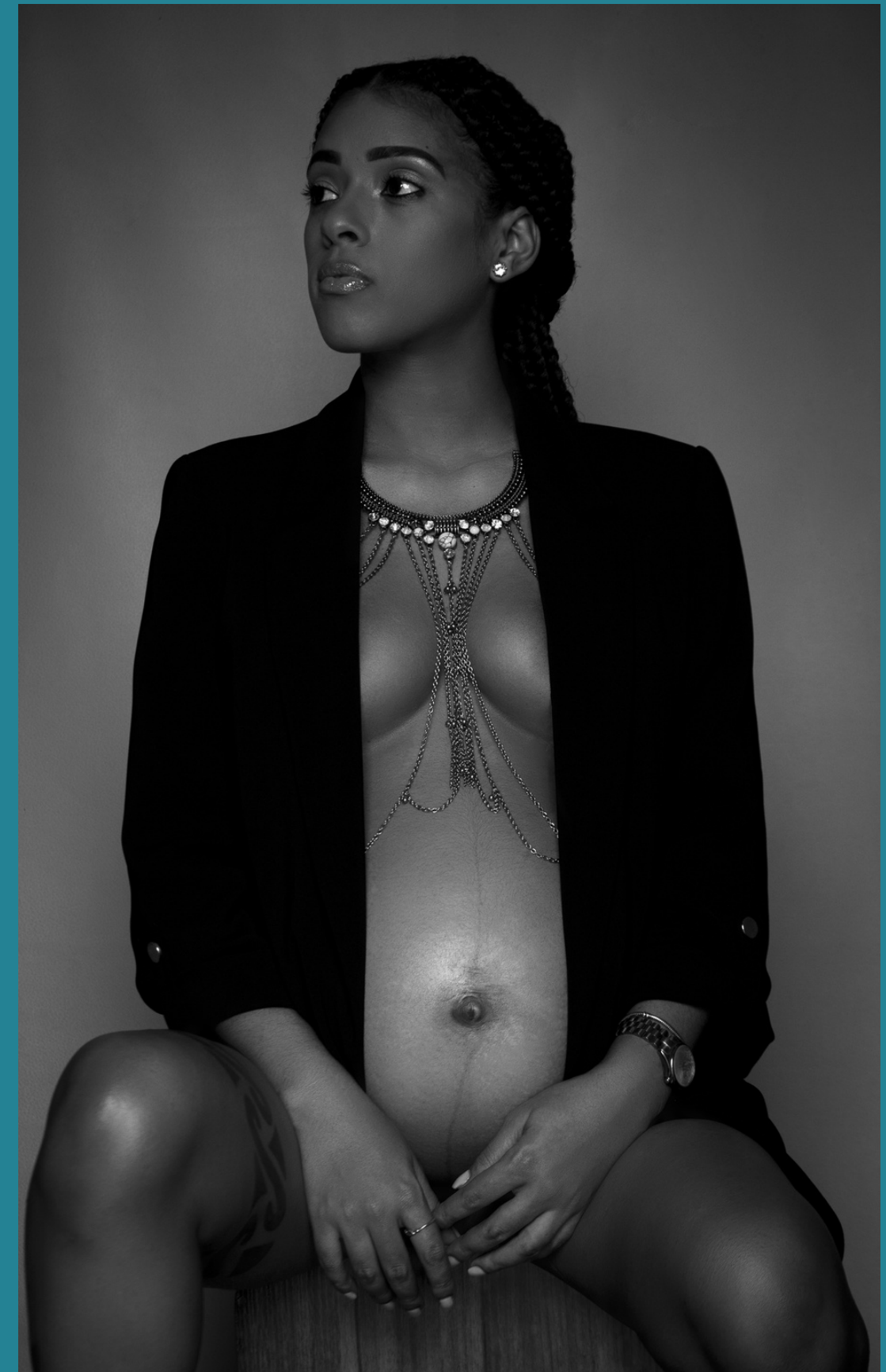


Comfort measures rehearsal

What do you notice here?

# Strength in Pregnancy

Clients end class after 6 weeks saying  
"I got this"





What can YOU do?

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Inspiration & ideas as you prepare for your birth

## LEARN about your birth desires:

- What does support look like to you? Who is on your ideal team?
- Which coping strategies resonate with you for your labor?
- Have you explored care setting choices and potential interventions?
- How do you feel about shared decision making & informed choice?
- What memories do you want to create through your birth story?

"As a first time Mom and a Black Woman, Black Maternal Health is super important to me. I wanted to make sure that I understood the birthing process, and was educated on all of the options available to me..."

~C.P., Imperative Student

You have options!

## BIRTHING PEOPLE

## RESOURCES for you to explore as you learn more about your birth:

- Evidence Based Birth's Parent Resources
- Queen's Village: Black Women for the Win
- on IG: @BlackWomenBirthing
  - @BlackMomsBlog
  - @BlackMomsBreastfeed

### Books:

- The First Time Parent's Childbirth Handbook: A Step-by-Step Guide for Building Your Birth Plan
- Nurture: A Modern Guide to Pregnancy, Birth, Early Motherhood
- Oh Sis, You're Pregnant: The Ultimate Guide to Black Pregnancy and Motherhood
- Real Food for Pregnancy: The Science and Wisdom of Optimal Prenatal Nutrition

## REFLECT on your needs:

- Who is available to support you during your pregnancy and birth?
  - Think through & plan your web of support: [yourbirthpartners.org/referral](http://yourbirthpartners.org/referral)
  - Use The IRTH App to share & review experiences of local providers
- What do you need to feel confident through your birth?
  - Register for support services through Be Her Village
- How do you want your loved ones to show up during this time?

## ACTIONS to take through your pregnancy:

- Do your research about your options!
- Find your community & inspiration...from doulas, to educators, to support groups, and other parents:
  - MaterMea-Content & Community for Black Moms
  - BlackMomsBlog
  - NATAL Podcast



Ashanti Gardner, visualscribe.co

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# Actions for Birthing People

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## HOW MIGHT YOU HELP CENTER THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF A BIRTHING PERSON?

### LEARN about your client's birth desires:

- What does support look like to you? Who is on your ideal team?
- Which coping strategies resonate with you for your labor?
- Have you explored care setting choices and potential interventions?
- How do you feel about shared decision making & informed choice?
- What memories do you want to create through your birth story?

### RESOURCES for you to explore as you learn more about equitable, person-centered, birth education:

- Evidence Based Birth's Professional Resource
  - The Educated Birth for Childbirth Education Graphics & Handouts
  - The National Association to Advance Black Birth
- Books:**
- Birthing Justice
  - Medical Bondage

### REFLECT on your understanding and experience moving through the birthcare system:

- How are you showing up in your community?
  - Where are you taking a stand and where can you do more?
- How are you examining your biases and who are you accountable to for creating equitable birthcare?
- What do YOU need to support you & keep your work sustainable?
- Reflect on your practice origins through: My Deep Dive

### ACTIONS to achieve equitable childbirth education:

- Connect with your community!
  - Be accessible & network, create or join referral & support groups.
- Be an advocate for collaborative care. Work to share information across disciplines so everyone lifts up the birthing person!

"Mentoring Black and Brown families with EBB Childbirth Classes is gratifying, especially the younger adults 21-25 years of age. They start the classes with so much unknown and end the classes empowered, able to self advocate, and use a voice they never knew they had."  
~Sasha Sumling, LMT, CD, EBB® Instructor

How do you encourage self-advocacy?

COMMUNITY



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Actions for  
Community

How can you promote self-advocacy?



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## RESOURCES for you to explore as you learn more about equitable, person-centered, birth education:

- Evidence Based Birth's Professional Resources    **Read:**
- The Educated Birth for Childbirth Education Graphics & Handouts
- Birthing Cultural Rigor for examining racism
- Battling Over Birth: Black Women and the Maternal Health Crisis
- Medical Bondage

## REFLECT on your understanding and experience moving through the birthcare system:

- How are you maintaining the status quo & perpetuating trauma?
- How are you examining your biases and who are you accountable to for creating equitable birthcare?
- What resources are you accessing to ensure you are healthy to provide care-therapy? debriefing? peer support groups?
- Contemplate: Setting the Standard for Holistic Care of & for Black Women

## ACTIONS to achieve equitable childbirth education:

- Be an advocate for collaborative care. Work to share information across disciplines so everyone lifts up the birthing person!
- Examine your organization: are you centering birthing people & addressing racism-driven disparities and structural inequities?

Imperative students shared that they found the following helpful from childbirth education:

"All of the information and support" ~A.S.

"Tools to self-advocate" ~S.G.

"The community we created" ~K.C.

How can you integrate this feedback and these concepts into your organization & care practice?

# CLINICIANS



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# Actions for Clinicians

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# How can you bring this into your work?

# Takeaways

Address Black perinatal health outcomes separate from socioeconomic status


Importance of reaching out beyond your own touch points  
(get comfortable being uncomfortable, looking beyond your front porch)

Recognize the power we have as perinatal professionals to step up, advocate, and

Create Change

Thank you  
FOR  
LISTENING



 Learn & Support

[YourBIRTHPartners.org/Imperative](https://YourBIRTHPartners.org/Imperative)



The logo for 'Your BIRTH Partners' is circular. The outer ring contains the text 'cultivating inclusive & collaborative birthcare communities'. The center features the words 'Your BIRTH Partners' in a mix of blue and purple fonts, with a colorful floral wreath on the right side.

**Your BIRTH Partners**

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- 📷 Your BIRTH Partners
- 🐦 @ybirthp

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