

# IFCI Research Newsletter

## Maternal Vitality Study

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- ▶ Community Resources
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## We want Moms to THRIVE!

**Visualize This:** A society that is built on **family vitality**- where **cross-generational thriving** is the priority, and Black mothers are no longer worried about **just surviving** pregnancy, childbirth, and post-partum days. A society where Black families are not disproportionately burdened by the **infant and maternal mortality crisis** driven by race-related stressors and gaps in care for maternal mental health. A world in which skin color is not correlated with the standard for family vitality and or the ability to thrive. As you visualize this reality built on **family vitality**, we must first address the current reality as it is.

The current reality that Black mothers face is nowhere near the visualization we created above. The current infant and maternal mortality crisis driven by maternal depression in the United States disproportionately impacts Black communities. The current research exploring maternal depression symptom variations has often been conducted by white people which increases the chance that depression in Black and Brown communities will be undertreated, overlooked, and ignored; in-turn exacerbating the current infant and maternal mortality crisis that prohibits cross-generational thriving and family vitality.

### What is the Maternal Vitality Study?

This crisis must be eradicated with innovations like our Maternal Vitality Study which is purposed to create a **research-based therapy protocol developed with Black women for Black women**. Building family vitality is at the core of IFCI's Maternal Vitality Study because this study invites Black women to contribute strategies to **identify and combat not only maternal depression, but also race-related stressors** during therapy sessions.

The Maternal Vitality Study examines a **15-session Maternal Depression Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) based intervention protocol redesigned by Black women for Black women** to address maternal depression **during and after pregnancy**. The study gives moms **free access** to a treatment program led by Black women.

The Maternal Vitality Study serves to **empower Black women** with strategies to boost their overall health and wellness for themselves and their families- resulting in cross-generational thriving, as opposed to just surviving the current reality.

# FEBRUARY READING CORNER

Each month we will include readings that are relevant to our work at IFCI! This month's recommendations all align with our Maternal Vitality Innovation. We at IFCI want moms to THRIVE- read the literature below to learn more about the pathway toward family vitality.



## CLICK THE HYPERLINKED TITLES TO READ MORE

### ["Pathways to Equitable and Antiracist Maternal Mental Health Care: Insights from Black Women Stakeholders"](#)



To address the impact of structural racism and the inequities persisting in the diagnoses and treatment of perinatal maternal mental health disorders among Black birthing populations, Matthews, et al. (2021) interviewed ten Black women who support Black birthing people (including mental health practitioners, researchers, and activists). Through these interviews, the current racist disjointed systems of care for mental health were addressed and five key pathways were explored in this article.

### ["Reimagining Perinatal Mental Health: An Expansive Vision for Structural Change"](#)

Foster, et al. (2021) push against the standard diagnoses of depression, anxiety, or other mental illness as being the only psychosocial elements of the perinatal period. They explore unstable, unsafe, or inhumane work environments, trauma, perinatal loss, structural racism, and gendered oppression in health care and society as major elements during the perinatal period. This human rights framework is used to discuss developing relevant policies for perinatal mental health that attends to the intersecting effects of racism, poverty, inadequate postpartum support, lack of childcare, and other structural violence on health.



### ["Patients Lift their Voices to Advance Maternal Health"](#)



Ready to see the impact of a prenatal care program designed by Black women for Black women? Read this article from Michele Cohen Marill (2022) to explore a St. Louis-based group "prenatal care program" that "incorporates trauma-informed care and behavioral health services"

## WHY WE ARE URGING YOU TO READ THIS LITERATURE:

The above literature is linked for you to read because it addresses the Infant and Maternal Mortality crisis that currently disproportionately impacts Black birthing populations. In order to reach a society that mirrors the visualization we explored in the beginning of this Newsletter; we must work toward a society that develops tools for Black women with Black women while also dismantling social and structural barriers Black women face. In the articles we have provided, you can explore anti-racist pathways toward equity for Black birthing populations through expansive literature that discusses structural change, and even an existing prenatal care program in St. Louis developed with Black women for Black women.



(1) Matthews, K., Morgan, I., Davis, K., Estriplet, T., Perez, S., & Crear-Perry, J. A. (2021). Pathways To Equitable And Antiracist Maternal Mental Health Care: Insights From Black Women Stakeholders: Study examines pathways to equitable and antiracist maternal mental health care. *Health Affairs*, 40(10), 1597–1604. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2021.00808>

(2) Foster, V.-A., Harrison, J. M., Williams, C. R., Asiodu, I. V., Ayala, S., Getrouw-Moore, J., Davis, N. K., Davis, W., Mahdi, I. K., Nedhari, A., Niles, P. M., Peprah, S., Perritt, J. B., McLemore, M. R., & Mask Jackson, F. (2021). Reimagining Perinatal Mental Health: An Expansive Vision For Structural Change: Commentary describes changes needed to improve perinatal mental health care. *Health Affairs*, 40(10), 1592–1596. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2021.00805>

(3) Marill, M. C. (2022). Patients Lift Their Voices To Advance Maternal Health: Article describes a St. Louis-based group prenatal care program, designed by and for Black women, that incorporates trauma-informed care and behavioral health. *Health Affairs*, 41(8), 1072–1077. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2022.00798>

# COMMUNITY RESOURCES



We work with the communities we serve! Each month we include resources that coincide with the innovation explored on that given month! Below are some resources that might be of help to you, the READER! This is also where you can add your own resources! Contact [research@ohioguidestone.org](mailto:research@ohioguidestone.org) to include your resources in upcoming releases! Click the hyperlinked titles below to learn if these resources could be of assistance to you or someone you know!



BLACK EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH  
COLLECTIVE

## BLACK EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH COLLECTIVE (BEAM)

The Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective (BEAM) is a national institution that utilizes training, movement building, and grant making to dedicate resources to the healing, wellness, and liberation of Black and marginalized communities. They offer a variety of programs that support online community building among the Black community. Crisis line: <https://beam.community/get-help-now/>



## MARCH OF DIMES

The March of Dimes is a nonprofit organization that works to end preventable maternal health risks and death. They offer many programs that operate with health care and community partners across the country including implicit bias training, parental education, support and care, NICU family support, international conferences on birth defects and disabilities in the developing world, mom and baby mobile health centers, and supportive pregnancy care.



BLACK WOMEN'S  
HEALTH IMPERATIVE

## BLACK WOMEN'S HEALTH IMPERATIVE (BWHI)

Black Women's Health Imperative has a vision of a society where all Black women enjoy optimal health. They promote health equity, social and reproductive justice. As the "first and only national non-profit dedicated to achieving health equity for Black women in America," they have many programs that support optimal wellness, find out more @bwhi.org



## BIRTHING BEAUTIFUL COMMUNITIES (BBC)

Located in Cleveland, OH, Birthing Beautiful Communities is a non-profit made up of a community of birth workers also known as doulas or midwives that provide pregnant women at highest risk for infant mortality social support. BBC's services are embedded with strategies that address social determinants of health that impact infant mortality such as systemic racism, comprehensive sex education and more!



## THE VILLAGE OF HEALING

Cleveland's village of healing is the first and only clinic for Black women in Cuyahoga county and serves as a venue for women in need of access to gynecological, antepartum, and post-partum care.

# COMMUNITY RESOURCES & OPEN POSITIONS AT IFCI



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## PREGNANT WITH POSSIBILITIES



Pregnant with Possibilities Resource Center was founded in 2015 and is based in the Cleveland area. The center provides culturally competent sexual health education, perinatal support, tools, and techniques that equip individuals to overcome barriers to give birth. Pregnant with possibilities programs and services are research-based and are designed by African American women for African American teens and young women who live in Cleveland and its southeast suburbs. ALL SERVICES ARE FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL!

## First Year Cleveland

### FIRST YEAR CLEVELAND

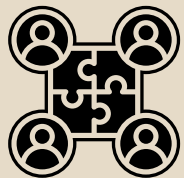
First Year Cleveland is tackling the astronomically high infant death rate in Cuyahoga county. The county was rated the second-worst of 88 counties in all of Ohio. First Year Cleveland is a community-based movement that is dedicated to reversing this trend and helping all babies make it to their first birthdays. Their mission is to mobilize the community through partnerships and a unified strategy to reduce infant deaths and racial disparities. They do this through fatherhood programs, engaging in public policy and advocacy, program funding, and reducing toxins.

**COME JOIN OUR TEAM! WE ARE CURRENTLY HIRING FOR:**

**Research Assessor- License holding or license-eligible clinician with a research interest- PRN and part-time**

**Institute Scholar- Internship role for volunteer or class credits for across fields/majors.**

**Visit: <https://ohioguidestone.org/employment/> today!**



# IFCI OPEN PROJECT RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT

MATERNAL VITALITY STUDY, JOYFUL TOGETHER, FATHER'S FEELINGS

## MATERNAL VITALITY STUDY

### Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a resident of Cuyahoga County
- Be an African American Female
- Must have been pregnant within the last 12 months regardless of how the pregnancy ended

[Scan the QR code](#)  
[or click here to join!](#)



About: The Maternal Vitality Study is a 15-session cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) based intervention protocol to treat depression in pregnant Black mothers residing in Cuyahoga County. This study invites Black mothers to work alongside Black women therapists to contribute strategies that will combat maternal depression and identify race related stressors that may arise during therapy, with hopes of increasing healthcare options that focus on cross-generational thriving instead of simply surviving. The Maternal Vitality Study will empower Black mothers with more than just survival by equipping them with the resources to thrive mentally and physically.



## JOYFUL TOGETHER- OHIO CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND (JT-OCTF)

### Eligibility Requirements:

- Have a child 3 months-10 years old
- Reside in Summit, Medina, or Lorain counties
- Can not be receiving government home-visiting services (Ex. Help Me Grow)
- Can not have any open or substantiated child abuse or neglect cases.

[Scan the QR code](#)  
[or click here to join!](#)



About: Joyful Together-OCTF is an evidenced-based program that limits toxic stress in children while enhancing childhood resiliency and adding positive childhood experiences. You are probably asking "okay.... nice, but how?" Joyful Together strengthens caregiver and child relationships through joyful play using easy-to-do activities. The program coaches caregivers to infuse joyful play with young children into everyday routines to create stronger bonds and lower stress. This program can be completed from the comfort of your own home through a total of six 60-minute virtual play sessions, ending with more fun with your kids and gift cards to Amazon (\$10 per child for every session attended). During the study, you'll meet with a research assistant and learn how to do Joyful Together activities with your child(ren), as well as fill out questionnaires through our simple, easy-to-use research portal website.



## FATHER'S FEELINGS STUDY

### Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be a male father 18 years of age (Teen fathers 14-17 years with parent/guardian permission)
- You must be expecting a child or have a child that is younger than 12 months
- Must reside in Ohio
- If you reside in Stark & Summit counties you must be a Black father or a father of a Black child (including bi/multiracial Black identity)

[Scan the QR code](#)  
[or click here to join!](#)



About: Father's Feelings provides fathers a chance to be seen, heard and helped! No matter income, education, zip code, or relationship status: all fathers deserve respect and space for their thoughts and feelings about fatherhood to be elevated. We partner with several community outlets to inform fathers. Eligible fathers also receive up to \$400.00 in early childhood safety items (e.g. crib, car seat, smoke detector). The Father's Feelings encourages fathers to know they are very important in their baby's life, and supports their engagement and attachment with their baby- while increasing awareness and access to father specific resources.



# FEATURED JOYFUL TOGETHER FAMILY STORY



## Joyful testimony from Abby Rinehart (2021 Joyful Together Community Program Participant)

“ Joyful Together truly brought little moments of added joy to our days when we needed them the most. It has also left a long-lasting impact in creating a culture of joy within our family unit ”

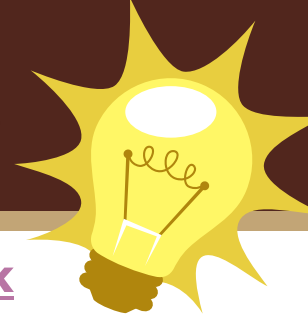


“

These very easy and accessible ideas in Joyful Together take a sensory-based approach to meet children’s basic needs of love and safety and give parents the tools to meet those needs with very little effort. It is something anyone can do, and everyone should try. ”

“ Finding ways to support families in simple but meaningful ways is so important right now. More and more lately the climate in homes is one of stress and disconnectedness created by overworked parents, busy kids, too much screen time, social media influences, and so many other external variables we can’t control. ”

# WHAT'S NEXT AND FEEDBACK



## Monthly Newsletter

The Institute of Family and Community Impact will be releasing **monthly and quarterly newsletters** like this one to **communicate our projects, innovations, and other happenings while strengthening our relationship** with the community in an **accessible** manner. These newsletters will aid in our **ongoing communication** with the community and **strengthen** our bond as we seek to **serve, advocate and partner** with you.

## Feedback

Thank you for reading the Institute of Family and Community Impact Monthly Research Newsletter! We would love to hear from **YOU**—the reader! What would you like to see? If you are reading this as a participant in our **research** and you would like to be featured in an **upcoming Monthly or Quarterly newsletter** to share your story, please email us at [Research@ohioguidestone.org](mailto:Research@ohioguidestone.org).

The Institute of Family and Community Impact, an OhioGuidestone initiative, believes in building strengths in individuals and communities by addressing the barriers individuals, families and communities face.

We do research, while offering trainings, developing innovations, advocating for trauma-informed policies, translating science, and publishing products! We work **with** communities whose voices have been historically silenced by forced marginalization. To support our vision of building resilient communities, follow the steps to donate below! Continue reading our monthly and quarterly newsletters to see the impact of your donation!

## CONTACT US!



Phone: 440.260.8865

Facebook:

@InstituteFamilyCommunityImpact

Twitter: @ifci\_research

Email: IFCI@ohioguidestone.org

## Donation Steps:

Scan this QR code or click here to donate virtually.



Click the amount you would like to donate or specify an amount of your choosing.

Direct your donation by using the dropdown menu. To direct your donation to the Institute of Family and Community Impact, click "IFCI" in the dropdown menu.

Type in your personal and additional information.

Click "Make Donation"



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### OUR VISION

Future generations are educated, self reliant and contributing members of strong communities.

### OUR MISSION

To provide pathways for growth, achievement and lifelong success.

# THE INSTITUTE OF FAMILY & COMMUNITY<sup>®</sup> IMPACT

 An OhioGuidestone Initiative

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Ohio Children's Trust Fund  
*Ohio's Prevent Child Abuse America Chapter*

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