



# Benefits of Breastfeeding

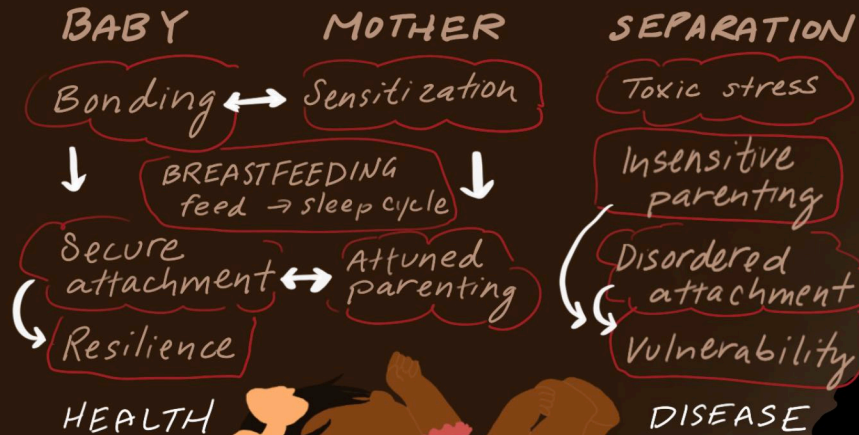
DR. LAVONNE MOORE DNP | CHOSEN VESSELS MIDWIFERY

a **CULTURAL PRACTICE** to be REVIVED, RESTORED and RECLAIMED

## SO MANY BENEFITS

- Immunology
- Reduces chronic diseases
- Mental Wellness
- Economic benefit
- Environmentally friendly
- Nurturing and bonding

## NURTURE SCIENCE



## HEALING



a **REVOLUTIONARY ACT** against racist capitalist conditioning

NO AMOUNT OF BREASTMILK IS TOO LITTLE



2021 Black and Brown Birthing Summit

Jen Meier



# Tying in the Elders of the Community

2021 Black and Brown Birthing Summit

SISTER HAZEL TANNER | MOTHER ATUM AZZAHIR | SISTER BEVERLY PROPS

## POWER of DATA

350 babies/yr die in MN

In most countries, midwives outnumber OB-GYNs - not in U.S.

Nationally, Black mothers have highest infant mortality rate as well as preterm birth and low birth weight

Why do our children die at a higher rate?

## STRUCTURAL RACISM

primary risk factor due to complex stress it places on mothers throughout life

DISPARITIES in income, housing, safety, education lead to poor health

The U.S. has HIGHEST MATERNAL MORTALITY ratio among wealthy countries

SEXISM and RACISM in healthcare

women of color not listened to or respected

## COMMUNITY HEALTH

MN is the 1st state to create COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER post-secondary curriculum. THESE WORKERS bridge cultural barriers, expand access to care, and improve health outcomes

## CULTURAL WELLNESS



## POWER of PARTNERSHIP

NO ORGANIZATION OR INDIVIDUAL CAN DO IT ALONE

Committed people make change

## NETWORKING

LED TO MINNESOTA BEING FIRST STATE TO HAVE AN OFFICE of MINORITY HEALTH

DEPT. OF HEALTH EQUITY

WE NEED MORE YOUNG PEOPLE to go into healthcare with an understanding of cultural wellness

## Words of Wisdom

PREGNANCY is NATURAL is not a CONDITION

a newborn is a GIFT

ENJOY every aspect of pregnancy

TREAT YOUR BODY WITH RESPECT

WE HAVE THE CAPACITY TO ENDURE

If there is COMMUNITY there are ELDERS

Seek out and Thank an Elder!





# Men's Perspective and a Father's Role

JEREMIAH ELLIS | MINKARA TEZAT

2021 Black and Brown Birthing Summit

## INFORMATION IS POWER

- Combat misinformation
- Process of becoming a father
- Healthy relationships, sexuality
- Cost of parenthood
- Rituals & ceremonies

Ancestral knowledge  
Education  
containers for questions and  
space to process

## FATHER-CHILD BOND

- Relationship between Black man and child has been intentionally destroyed
  - There is an internal, energetic bond that can shift and is FOREVER there
  - Fathers, set your intention for this relationship
  - What rituals will you have to foster bond?
  - Learn what a child needs from 0-7 years
- A baby is never not a baby...  
I am my parent's baby

## BIRTHING TEAM

- FATHER in-tune with mother's needs
- DOULA for mother and a man to support the father
- COMMUNITY surrounds the child
- COMFORT CARE RITUAL LOVE

FEEL the experience of becoming a father

## COMMUNITY

- There is a network of men who care about community supporting fathers
- We have a web of invisible relationships built on authenticity and commitment
- The culture we want for our community grows out of the culture of our homes
- Giving birth to your expanding family, brings new consciousness to the community

AMPLIFY LOVE FOR OURSELVES,  
OUR FAMILIES, and  
OUR COMMUNITIES

a baby is  
a **MESSAGE**  
to YOU from the  
Creator of all Things  
**BE PRESENT** to  
what it has to teach  
you about being a  
man, a father





# Conversation Between Fatherhood Practitioners

CLARENCE JONES & CALVIN WILLIAMS

## PARTNER IN PREGNANCY

- Providing and protecting begins at conception
- Look out for mom - ensure her preferences are honored and needs met

## STRESS

- Cortisol (stress hormone) is a factor in premature births and infant mortality
- Racial and economic stress is cumulative, generational
- Parent relationships can be fragile
- How can I reduce stress?  
Less stress = healthier parent and child

## ATTN: HEALTHCARE

- Fathers often feel unseen, unheard, unwelcomed
- Understand men dealing with depression and anxiety look different from women
- Check your bias then do the work to counter negative beliefs and assumptions
- Talk about fatherhood with both parents

FATHER  
as a  
SERVANT and  
WARRIOR

Fathers have a  
role in pregnancy, birth,  
discharge, and breastfeeding

## COMMUNITY

- Fund local fatherhood research and leverage existing research on health, beliefs, and attitudes
- Build up our Black and Brown fathers

## FATHERHOOD

- Risk for depression during perinatal period
- Talk to, sing to, play with baby... father's voice impacts brain development 0-3 years

CHALLENGE  
MECHANISMS and  
NARRATIVES that  
EJECT and  
REJECT  
FATHERS

Jan-Maria

2021 Black and Brown Birthing Summit



# Anxiety, Grief, and Trauma

NANCY BORDEAUX | DR. ANTONIA WILCOXON | YVETTE TROTMAN

2021 Black and Brown Birthing Summit



**INDIGENOUS TRADITIONS**  
a pathway to  
**RESILIENCE**  
and  
**HEALING**  
WOMB to WOMB

**HEALING**  
baby is a gift  
of healing

**FIRST KICK**  
baby sharing  
sacred energy

**SACRED CEREMONY**

**NAME GIVING**  
teach baby their  
name in utero

**BABY SHOWERS**  
gifts made for  
a spiritual purpose

**BIRTHING**  
a grandmother  
cleans airway

**INTERGENERATIONAL**  
trauma passed down  
generation to generation

high rate of disease  
anxiety and depression  
chronic stress, pain  
self-medication, addiction

**HISTORY of  
TRAUMA,  
COLONIZATION,  
ASSIMILATION  
POLICY**

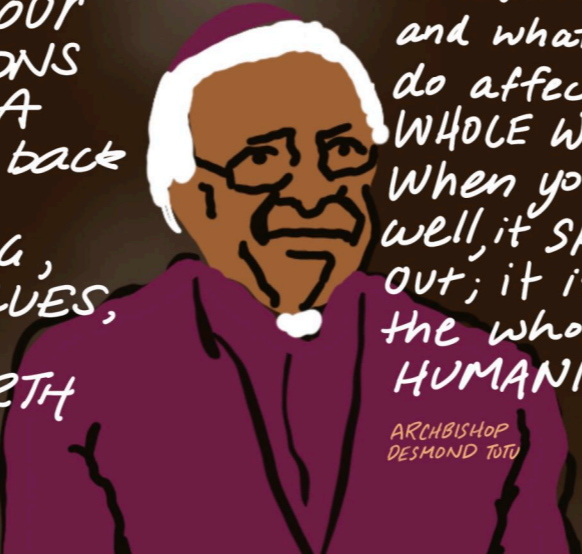
## COMMUNITY

you are loved,  
safe, sacred

HOW CAN WE  
CONTINUE TO  
BUILD COMMUNITY  
AROUND US TO  
SUPPORT HEALING?

through our  
TRADITIONS  
OUR DNA  
guides us back  
to  
HEALING,  
GUIDING VALUES,  
our  
TRUE NORTH

"Far too often,  
people think of  
themselves as  
individuals,  
seperated  
from one another,  
whereas you are  
CONNECTED  
and what you  
do affects the  
WHOLE WORLD.  
When you do  
well, it spreads  
out; it is for  
the whole  
HUMANITY."



ARCHBISHOP  
DESMOND TUTU

**EPIGENETIC  
LIFESTYLE  
FACTORS  
CAN CHANGE  
THE WAY OUR  
GENES ARE  
EXPRESSED**

Historical trauma  
cumulative traumatic events  
everyday stressors  
racism

→ **HIGH BLOOD  
PRESSURE**  
if mom has it,  
baby will not get  
what it needs

**REDUCE  
BLOOD PRESSURE**

Eat vegetables,  
healthy oils,  
lean meats,  
less sugar  
Exercise  
Rest  
Sleep

## BREATH

**BREATHING**  
blow bubbles

**ME TIME**  
set boundaries,  
engage in centering  
activity, model for  
children

**SELF CARE**  
Journaling, laughter, massage,  
progressive muscle relaxation

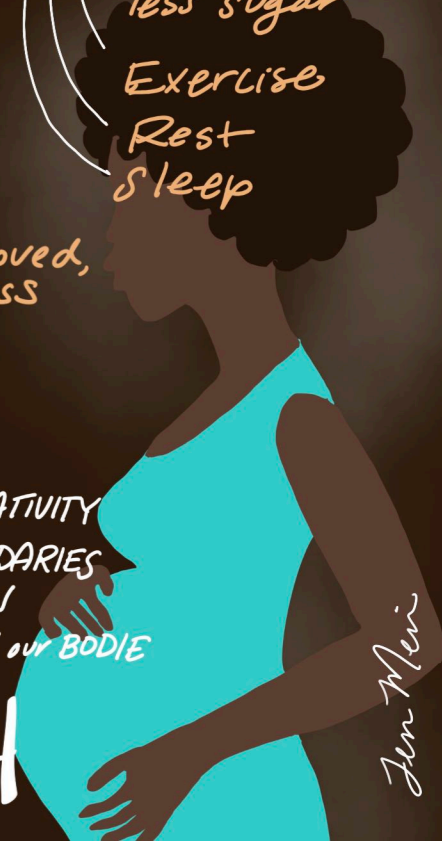
**SOCIAL SUPPORT**  
feeling cared for and loved,  
sense of belonging, access  
to information

## COPING TECHNIQUES

**MEDITATION**  
silence the mind,  
relax body, prayer,  
affirmations

**OMIT NEGATIVITY  
SET BOUNDARIES  
TRAIN  
OURSELVES and our BODIE**

## BREATH



Jen Meri



# Feedback from Healthcare Workers

JENNIE JOSEPH

we must figure out ways to sustain ourselves and each other, strengthen our collectives, and stay in touch in caring, supportive, and trustworthy ways

**WE HAVE POWER**

be intentional about gathering your circle, rekindle joy and check-in enough to say "I see you. I hear you." without saying a word - we know the struggles

**WE HAVE PURPOSE**

Come back and refill your cup

**BIRTH STORIES are IMPORTANT**

## PURVEYORS OF SAFETY

Our mothers and babies are dying  
High blood pressure is a leading cause  
**BE AWARE, UNDERSTAND** and know how to **TALK** to FAMILIES about it  
Share information with neighbors, friends, family, your community

Social Determinants of Health  
**REALITY and CONSTRAINTS**

**THIS IS MOVEMENT WORK**

## NOT NEW

Building and growing movements over generations  
**POWER** beyond **PROFESSION**  
We have always found a way to provide care



## WORKING TOGETHER

Everyone plays a role  
Collective leadership  
**WE ARE ALL MIDWIVES**  
doulas · lactation · advocates  
all apart of the movement toward **LIBERATION**

## SAFE SPACE

We create it for our clients  
We need to create it for **OURSELVES** and for the **COMMUNITY** we care about

People who embed themselves in **CARING** and **SUPPORTING** work often neglect doing that for themselves.

## BOUNDARY SETTING

Hold each other accountable  
**SET YOUR OWN** and **RESPECT OTHERS**  
Acknowledge when set  
Express gratitude for a clear 'no'

**SUSTAIN** yourself and each other  
utilize the commodity we do not have a shortage of...

**LOVE**



2021 Black and Brown Birthing Summit

Jen Mem



# Division of Care for Black, Latino & African Families

MARISOL CHICLANA-AYANA

2021 Black and Brown Birthing Summit

## FORMAL CHILD CARE

Child care centers, licensed family child care, legally unlicensed, and other (eg. Head Start)  
High Cost (4<sup>th</sup> highest in USA)  
Quality rating  
Ratio 4:1 and 10:1  
Kindergarten readiness

## INFORMAL CHILD CARE

Family, friend, and neighbor care  
Flexible hours  
Affordable  
Culturally responsible  
Continuum of care

45-51% of MN BABIES (0-3) are in FFN care many are Black and Brown babies

## CHALLENGES

SYSTEMIC RACISM → Economic and education disparities  
Funding sources often limited to formal child care  
FFN caregivers are under-resourced - training, food, educational materials, PPE

FAMILY, FRIEND, NEIGHBOR CARE CANNOT BE INVISIBLE TO US ANYMORE

## Creating new opportunities and future

- 1 Reclaiming culture, traditions, identity
- 2 Celebrating and honoring self
- 3 Political activism
- 4 Organizing to gain access to funding & resources
- 5 Participate in movements for peace & justice
- 6 Redefine "Quality Care"
- 7 Create new opportunities to support FFN

Jen Mein