

# BLACK WOMEN'S PATHWAYS TO MOTHERHOOD WITHIN A REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE FRAMEWORK

(Leath, Wright, Charity-Parker, Sarfo, & Stephens, 2021)



## OVERVIEW

Given persistent racial disparities in maternal health, there is a pressing need to understand Black women's reproductive concerns. We illuminate how health practitioners can facilitate humanizing conversations to prioritize and support Black women's family planning goals.

## KEY CONSTRUCTS

**What is family planning?** - support services that help people decide about when, or if, they would like to have children through education and health access

**What is reproductive justice** - the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities (*SisterSong*)



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Various contextual factors (i.e., intimate partner relationship quality, prior caretaking experiences, and access to healthcare) influenced Black mothers' choices around family formation
- Family planning and health care delivery systems need to build networks that invest in Black mothers' needs, including the connections between gendered racism and social understandings of Black mothers

# MAIN CONCLUSIONS

By understanding Black women's beliefs, desires, and experiences surrounding motherhood, we can better understand the contextual factors that shape their choices around family planning. While Black women have actively resisted the dehumanization of their sexual and reproductive capacities, they are not responsible for overturning centuries of reproductive injustice.



# NEXT STEPS

- **Consider** the different pathways that Black women take to motherhood
- **Expand** reproductive justice discourse in academia to attend to the nuances of Black women's maternal health stories

# ORGANIZATIONS TO SUPPORT

- Black Mamas Matter Alliance
- Sista Midwife Productions
- SisterSong
- Black Women's Health Imperative

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