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Black maternal health: Where to donate in support of Black moms

Here are several organizations that support of Black moms' mental and maternal healthcare.



Maressa Brown

February 15, 2022



As the U.S. continues to grapple with a nationwide call for change around its various social shortcomings, including troubling racial disparities, more attention is being paid to the country's mental and maternal health care crisis faced by Black women.

"It's more critical than ever to address inequity in our healthcare system," says Bree Jenkins, licensed marriage and family therapist and founder of The Gathered Fight initiative, which aims to sponsor Black women seeking therapy and a Black therapist. "Many Black Indigenous people of color (BIPOC) can't afford mental health care or have avoided getting treatment for fear of abuse, misunderstanding or indifference from their mental and primary care providers.

Jenkins continues, “The lack of emotional and mental support affects Black women greatly, which affects Black motherhood and families.”

The [American Counseling Association](#) echoes Jenkins’ concerns, noting that compared with people who are white, BIPOC are less likely to have access to mental health services, to seek out services or to receive needed care and also more likely to receive poor quality of care and to end services prematurely. And as if that wasn’t enough, add pregnancy and parenthood to the mix. Black women are at [higher risk of postpartum depression](#), [childbirth complications](#), premature birth and death during and after childbirth.

While the roots of these disparities are multifaceted, and the crisis might feel daunting, several organizations have stepped up to the challenge of making a difference. Here, how Jenkins’ initiative and several others are creating change.

1. The Gathered Fight



Bree Jenkins

Organization:

[The Gathered Fight](#)

Founder:

Bree Jenkins

What they do:

Sponsor Black women seeking therapy and pay Black therapists competitive rates for their work.

Bree Jenkins, a licensed marriage and family therapist based in Los Angeles, notes that the pandemic paired with the brutal killings of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd have led to her inbox overflowing with Black women requesting therapy and other Black therapists checking in because of the intensity of their dual role as Black women and healers.

Making matters worse is an existing list of disparities: “In the therapy world, Black therapists are taxed,” notes Jenkins. “We have majority Black client populations, who often have more trauma and less resources to pay for our services. We often take on a higher caseload of lower cost or free labor even though we ourselves are more likely to have higher student loan burdens and greater financial need for full paying clients. We underearn our white therapist counterparts — as in most other industries. Black clients often can’t afford services, struggle to get connected with culturally competent therapists and Black therapists often can’t afford discounts. The cycle continues.”

This led to The Gathered Fight. Donations go to sponsoring Black women in need of mental health services with 4-6 therapy sessions.

How to support:

[Donate](#) to The Gathered Fight’s GoFundMe and share the initiative on social media ([Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#)). The initiative is also looking for more Black therapists to sign up to meet the demands of the client waitlist.

“Mommy Brain was born from a need I encountered as a first-time mom — a need to connect with other moms and hear that I wasn’t alone in these feelings of guilt, anxiety and having parts of motherhood that I didn’t love.”

— RAVELLE WORTHINGTON, FOUNDER OF MOMMY BRAIN

2. Mommy Brain





Ravelle Worthington

Organization:

[Mommy Brain](#)

Founder:

Ravelle Worthington

What they do:

Provide women with accessible mental and emotional support and resources necessary to navigate motherhood and career.

“Mommy Brain was born from a need I encountered as a first-time mom — a need to connect with other moms and hear that I wasn’t alone in these feelings of guilt, anxiety and having parts of motherhood that I didn’t love,” says Worthington. “The Mommy Brain platform offers mothers critical support by way of accessible expert-led mental and emotional guidance, resources and a diverse community.” One way they’re doing that is through free digital Q&As and discussions led by experts that delve into various facets of motherhood, such as identity struggle after kids, sex and intimacy and setting boundaries.

Worthington was also recently inspired to create a [Doula Support Fund](#) after her childbirth experience included facing “the fear-mongering and coercion that is prevalent in the medical system, especially towards women of color,” she notes. “[What I experienced] is a terrifying norm for many pregnant mamas, especially Black moms. And Black moms are dying at rates three times higher as a result of the systemic racism.”

The fund will help underserved Black moms receive doula care during pregnancy and birth plus at least two therapy sessions in postpartum. “This fund helps twofold: by supporting Black moms during birth/postpartum and by employing Black and POC doulas and therapists,” explains Worthington.

Mommy Brain has raised over \$10,000 to provide this critical support. You can apply for [financial assistance here](#).

How to support:

Share about Mommy Brain on social media ([Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#)) and/or donate to the doula fund at [mommybrain.com/donate](#). If you’re a mom looking for support, join their global community [here](#).

3. Black Mamas Matter Alliance

Organization:

[Black Mamas Matter Alliance](#)

Founders:

Black Mamas Matter Alliance Steering Committee members include Angela

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Doyinsola Aina, Elizabeth Dawes Gay, Joia Crear-Perry, Kwajelyn Jackson and Monica Simpson.

What they do:

Create policies that support improved maternal health, rights and justice for Black moms and conduct research that supports this important work.

The Black Mamas Matter Alliance (BMMA), founded in 2013, is the result of a partnership project between the [Center for Reproductive Rights \(CRR\)](#) and [SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective \(SisterSong\)](#).

According to BMMA's website, the alliance "was created out of a need to form an entity that can hold space and serve as a platform for Black women-led initiatives that are working to address the issues that impact maternal health disparities and inequities using the human rights, reproductive justice and birth justice frameworks across all sectors."

In partnership with CRR, BMMA created a [Black Mamas Matter toolkit](#) that was released in 2016, and includes research on maternal health as a human rights issue, stats on maternal health and morbidity and information on the rights of pregnant and birthing parents. They also offer [webinars](#) and [literature](#) that dive further into these details.

How to support:

You can [donate](#), [connect](#) to receive news and updates and follow on social media ([Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#)).

4. The Loveland Foundation

Organization:

[The Loveland Foundation](#)

Founder:

Rachel Cargle

What they do:

Aim to bring opportunity and healing to communities of color — especially to Black women and girls — through fellowships, residency programs, listening tours and a therapy fund.

Writer and lecturer [Rachel Cargle](#) established The Loveland Foundation in 2018, after seeing her birthday wish fundraiser, called Therapy for Black Women and Girls, take off. After raising \$250K to offer therapy support to Black women and girls, Cargle decided to continue the effort through Loveland.

Through partnerships with [Therapy for Black Girls](#), [National Queer & Trans Therapists of Color Network](#), [Talkspace](#) and [Open Path Collective](#), [Loveland Therapy Fund](#) recipients gain access to a comprehensive list of mental health professionals across the country providing high quality, culturally competent services to Black women and girls.

How to support:

You can [donate](#), start a group fundraiser, share info on the organization in

you can [write](#), start a group, translate, share info on the organization in order to raise awareness around the Foundation and follow on [Instagram](#).

5. Black Girls Breathing

Organization:

[Black Girls Breathing](#)

Founder:

Jasmine Marie

What they do:

Offer an inclusive platform that offers meditational breathwork classes, meant to aid Black women and girls with chronic stress.

Therapy doesn't always have to look like a one-on-one talk with a psychologist. For founder Jasmine Marie, a breathworker and mindfulness practitioner based in Atlanta, supporting Black women's mental, spiritual and emotional health means creating a safe space for them to actively nurture themselves via meditational breathwork in an environment curated especially for them.

After all, Black women suffer from physical and mental ailments linked back to chronic stress more than any other group: heart disease, strokes, high blood pressure, ovarian, cervical and breast-cancer related fatalities, anxiety, depression and reproductive system challenges, notes Marie. And by reframing the body's response to trauma and triggers, breathwork can reduce chronic stress, anxiety and depression.

Before the pandemic, the community, which hosts women aged 18 to over 65, offered in-person and virtual instruction all over the country. Now, Black Girls Breathing offers a bimonthly, virtual breathwork circle series on a sliding scale (the fee could be anywhere from \$0-\$25). After George Floyd's murder and the protests that followed, Marie launched a [crowdfunding campaign](#) to raise money to give 100 Black women per session free entry to virtual breathwork circles for a year. "We want for those who need well-being support to have the continuous access and opportunity to do so while still being able to operate and support the Black contractors and creatives we pay," the page noted.

As of early 2022, the organization is pledging to impact one million Black women and girls by 2025.

How to support:

You can [donate](#) to the Black Girls Breathing virtual breathwork fund, [join](#) the community and follow on social media ([Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#)).

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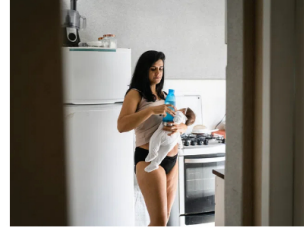
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