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‘Mama May I?’: A Comprehensive Guide to Inform Occupational Therapy Practitioners for the Wellness of Black Pregnant Women

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‘Mama May I?’: A Comprehensive Guide to Inform Occupational Therapy Practitioners for the Wellness of Black Pregnant Women

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BACKGROUND

Black women are facing a decline in well-being because health providers do not understand how pregnancy impacts them differently than other race in the United States.

This population is dying at a rate 3-4 more times than white, Asian, and Hispanic women. These deaths are preventable as many stem from racism and bias in medicine (Markin & Coleman, 2023).

Historically, occupational therapists have not been included in the care of pregnant women due to the exclusive team of obstetric providers, doulas, and midwives (Rost et al., 2023). Because the United States primarily utilizes the medical model for perinatal healthcare, pregnant women traditionally do not seek occupational therapy for wellness services. In relation to pregnant women, occupational therapists are sought to provide services for physical issues and educational deficits (Fernandes, 2018).

PROBLEM

Currently, there is no comprehensive guide for occupational therapists to follow for the wellness of pregnant Black women that features the intersection of health management and complex contextual factors.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to develop a wellness guide that will promote competence among occupational therapists to address the intersection of health management and complex contextual factors of Black women during pregnancy.

METHODOLOGY

Pre-Development Phase

- ☐ Assemble information on the wellness needs (and strengths) of pregnant black women.

Development Phase

- ☐ Create wellness guide for occupational therapy practitioners to treat pregnant Black women.

Peer Review/Revision Phase

- ☐ Critique feedback for preliminary draft of comprehensive wellness guide for pregnant Black women.

Dissemination Phase

- ☐ Develop a presentation proposal for state or national conference for occupational therapy practitioners.

WELLNESS GUIDE OVERVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Person-Environment-Occupation-Environment Model (PEOP)

The characteristics of a black pregnant women include PERSON and ENVIRONMENTAL factors. Before implementation of the guide, the mother experiences more **barriers** than **strengths**. After implementation of the wellness guide, the relationships amongst these factors are improved because the clinician has an increased competence for addressing important outcomes in well-being and health management. There is an increase in strengths and decrease in barriers. Black pregnant women should see an improvement in occupational performances.

Wellness Guide Outline:

Introduction

Chapter 1: Emotional Wellness

Chapter 2: Social Wellness

Chapter 3: Physical Wellness

Chapter 4: Financial Wellness

Chapter 5: Occupational Wellness

Chapter 6: Environmental Wellness

Chapter 7: Spiritual Wellness

Chapter 8: Intellectual Wellness

Chapter 9: Administrative Resources

DISCUSSION

Significance

- Uniquely addresses a specific population that the profession of occupational therapy has failed to regard in women’s health
- Provides a perspective that recognizes how Black women have contrasting aspects of their lifestyle and genetic makeup that impact pregnancy
- Indirectly empowers this population and provides representation for those women who are unable to comprehend the benefits of occupational therapy’s contribution to wellness
- Offers a sense of belonging when Black women see they are represented in healthcare

Implications for OT Practice and Research

- Initiate research into the effectiveness of this wellness guide.
- Expand the wellness to address the pregnancy continuum (antepartum, partum, and post-partum).
- Understand racism and its impact on health and wellness, especially for Black pregnant women.
- Examine their own positionality to further avoid oppressing marginalized populations they are serving and/or researching (Turelli et al., 2023).
- Raise awareness about the benefits of OT among obstetric providers.
- Advocate for collaboration between occupational therapists and obstetric providers.
- Participate in interprofessional research teams that are addressing Black maternal mortality rates.

