



# Perspectives of Black/African American women on a digital healthcare platform to reduce PPD and improve mother-infant interaction



Mary McDonough, Pamela A. Geller, Bobbie Posmontier, June Andrews Horowitz, Mona Elgohail, Yiqi Wang, Kayla Alvares, Jessica Beneway, Tony Ma, Kayla Layne, Katie Chang

## Background

- Postpartum depression (PPD) affects 20% of women, with an even higher prevalence among Black/ African Americans (B/AA).
- Structural inequities, stigma, limited access to care, & logistical barriers such as childcare or transportation contribute to low treatment engagement with subsequent adverse effects on the quality of maternal-infant interaction and severity of depressive symptoms.
- Digital health interventions offer a scalable, cost-effective, and accessible solution.
- This study explores B/AA women's perspectives to inform *the culturally tailored* development of *MommaConnect*.



## Action:

- Following a *user-centered design process*, we conducted focus groups with 6 B/AA o gain their perspectives on the design of *MommaConnect*.
- Participants reviewed high-fidelity rendering of the app which features psychoeducation materials about interpersonal therapy, mother baby interaction therapy, self-care, mindfulness, telehealth scheduling, appointment setup, and between session activities.
- Verbatim transcripts of meetings were analyzed using qualitative content analysis to identify key themes

Themes	Qualitative Response
Systemic and Cultural Barriers to Mental Health Care	<i>Number one is finance access to the mental health facility because of race or language barrier.</i>
Racism and Discrimination in Healthcare	<i>I think nobody listens to us. Nobody listens to us. Nobody believes us.</i>
Effectiveness of Mental Health Treatment Approaches	<i>It has been absolutely incredible to do telehealth, trying to get everything together enough to get out of the house with a baby, let alone travel across town and park and everything. It's a nightmare.</i>
Alternative Mental Health Support and Self-Care Strategies	<i>Yeah, I love a good support group. I'm a part of a lot of work groups on Facebook. It's been a lot of fun, just like finding and joining and talking to people.</i>
Technology-Based Mental Health Support Preferences	<i>Yeah, I think... [it] is a good app. It should [have] more privacy... like, logging in the beginning... because a lot of people have iPhones, like, you know, you could add face ID or whatsoever.</i>

## MommaConnect Platform Design



## Implications for Practice

- Results from this study informed ongoing development of *MommaConnect* as a culturally tailored intervention for B/AA women with PPD to improve health outcomes for both mothers and infants.
- Clinical implications include using *MommaConnect* for B/AA women across a variety of practice settings.

## References

