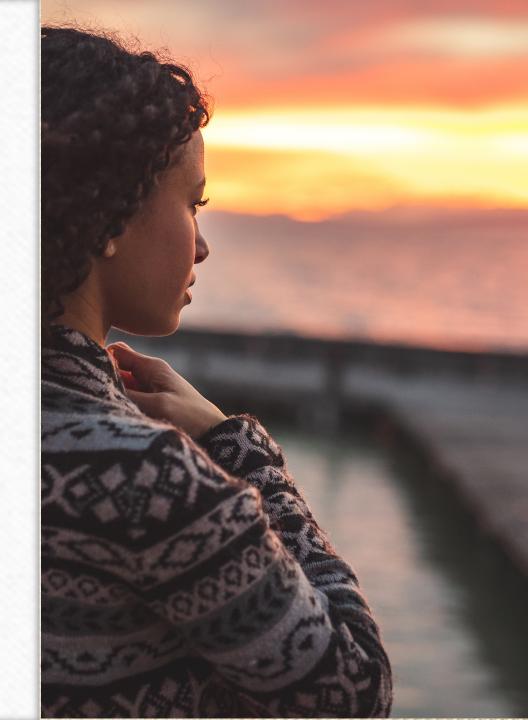
Disclosure Statement

This presenter has no relevant financial relationships to disclose. There are no relevant financial relationships with ineligible companies for those involved with the ability to control content of this activity.

Understanding Childbirth-Related Maternal Trauma to Address Systemic Issues

Presented by Lisa Kirkland, AMFT, APCC



"Giving birth becomes traumatic for mothers when they become so distressed about the care provide, even fearing for the safety of their baby or themselves, that they can no longer cope."

Harris and Ayers, 2012

Up to

45%

of women rate childbirth as traumatic 2

Childbirth Impacts:

- Birthing mother's sense of self 3
- Physical and mental health 4, 5, 6
- Family wellbeing 3
- Decisions to have more children 7,8

Responses and symptoms associated with traumatic childbirth:

Distress, spontaneous crying, unwanted memories, nightmares, fear, emotional detachment, guilt, anger, grief, somatization and shame 7,4





Four Key Findings

Childbirth-Related Maternal Trauma in the Hospital Setting





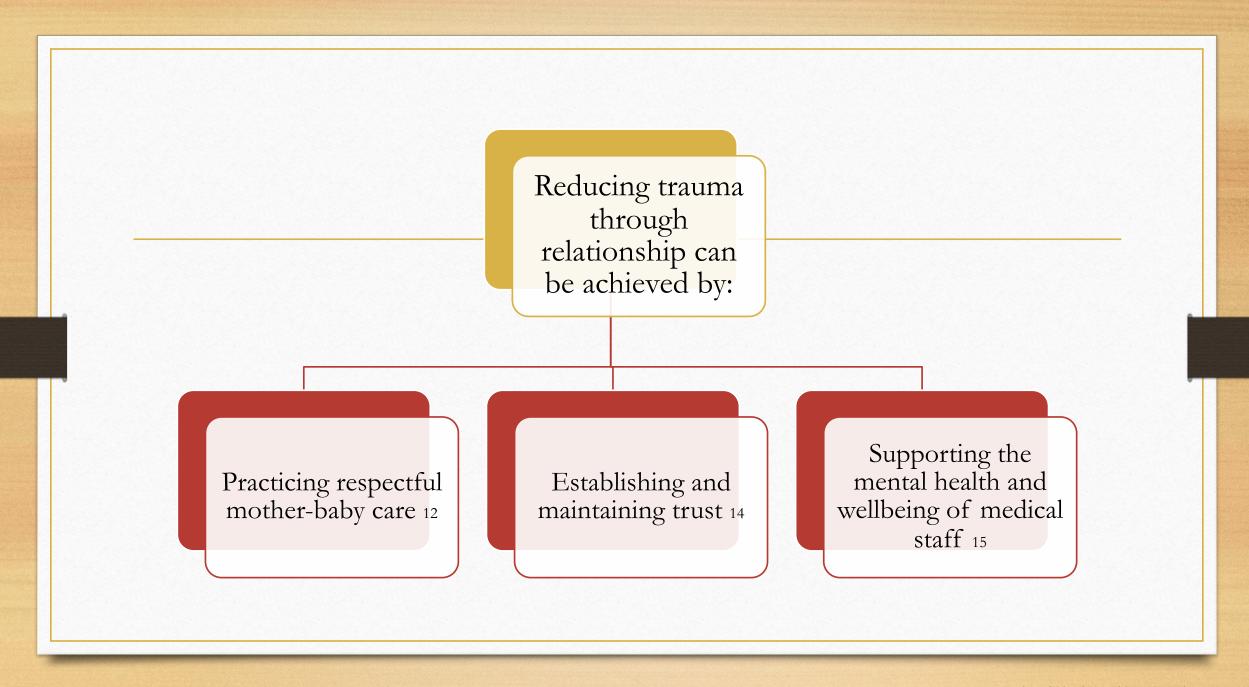
1.) RELATIONSHIP: Strongest predictor of PTSD 1 Medical providers attitudes and behaviors are more predictive than assisted or surgical birth or complications with baby 10 If the birthing mother:

 Felt informed, safe, supported and respected: 5

• Experienced loss of control, loss of dignity, or negative or dehumanizing interactions: 10

Able to trust and tolerate the unpredictability of labor, birth, and the postpartum period 11

Four-times more likely to develop post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) 1



2.) PAST TRAUMA: Increased risk of CBRMT 4 Significant number of birthing mothers with a history of trauma 16





Current Psychological Understanding of Trauma 17, 18, 19

Big 'T' Trauma

- Acute survival response
- Life threatening, serious threat to physical or emotional integrity
- Decreases prefrontal function
- Problematic when not processed and integrated

Little 't' trauma

- Chronic survival response
- Physical or psychological needs not being met
- No overt harm
- Disconnect from Self





- ACEs Study Findings
 in General Public: 16
- Department of Veteran Affairs found: 20
- In a study of multiparous participants: 21

61% at least one ACE

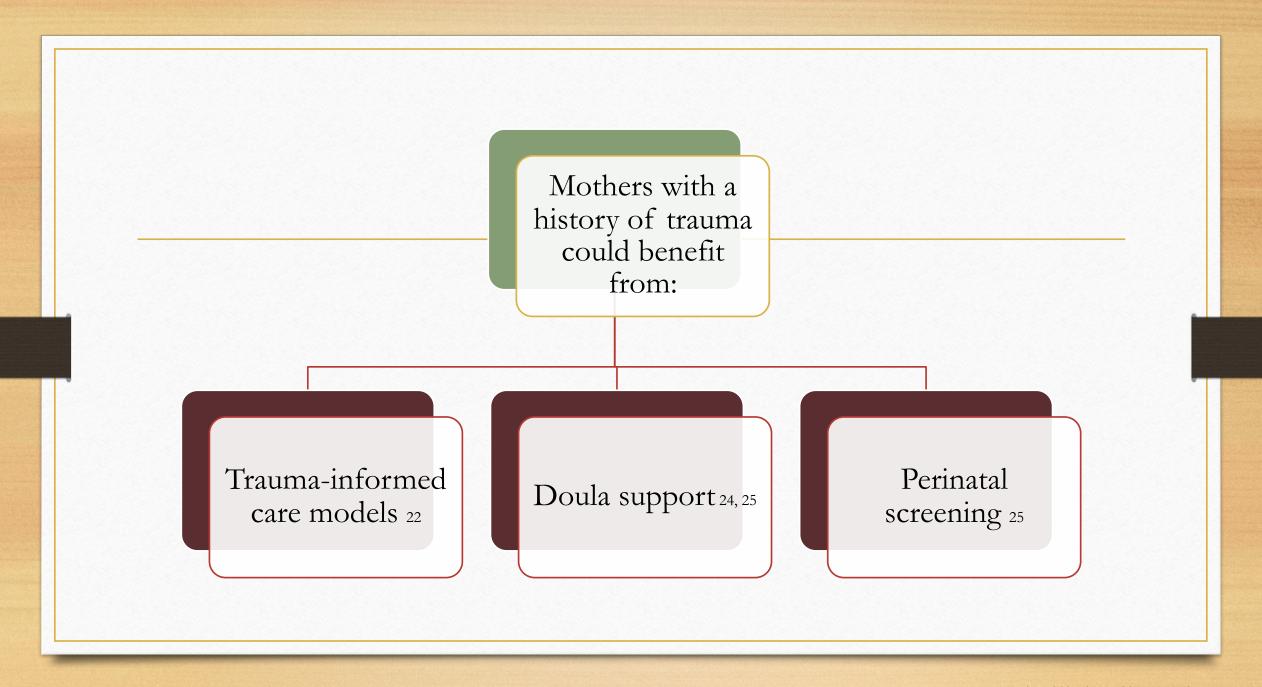
Almost one in six with 4 or more, with BIPOC, women at higher risk

One in three women have been the victim of sexual assault

Lifetime prevalence of one or more traumatic events was 83%.

"For mothers who have experienced trauma, the loss of control and dignity, and the absence or failure of a trusting relationships in maternity care can be experienced as re-enactment of trauma."

Montgomery, 2013



3.) REACTIVATION of past sexual trauma

Aspects of childbirth in US hospitals share similarities to sexual assault 26

Sexual assault is defined as:
28

- Touching or penetrating the body without consent
- The use of coercion, intimidation, force, or manipulation to get a victim to comply

Vaginal check, membrane sweeps, episiotomies, touching breasts, etc without knowledge or informed consent 1,2,4,7,27,

Medical providers standing above the birthing mother while wanting her to comply with interventions 7

Unknown staff entering when exposed, nude, or being examined



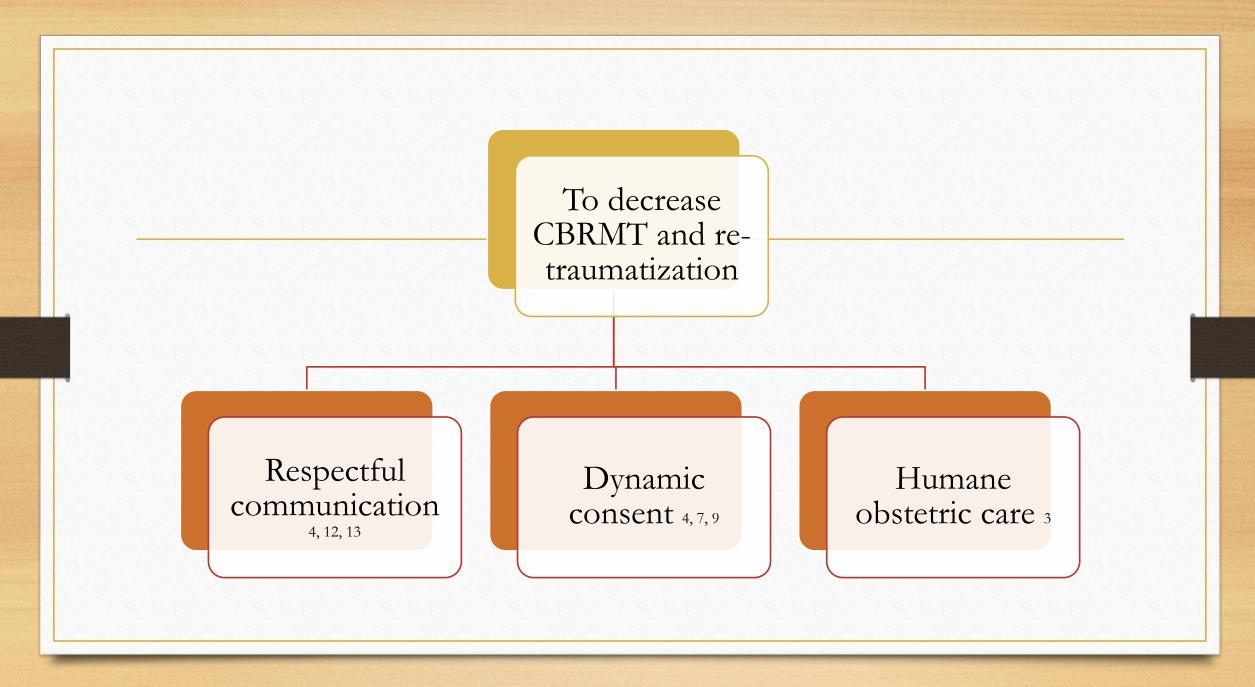


Researchers Rodrigues et al termed obstetric procedures done without consent:

"Obstetric Assault"







3.) WORSENING
Maternal Morbidity
and Mortality Rates 29,

The *Medical Model* and reliance on technology does not improve childbirth outcomes 24,31

"As displayed in the poor maternal outcomes in the United States, childbirth does not fit into the traditional hospital framework of a medical and technocratic model for patient care."

Kirkland, 2021

Childbirth-Related Maternal Trauma is not a mother or birthing person failing to:

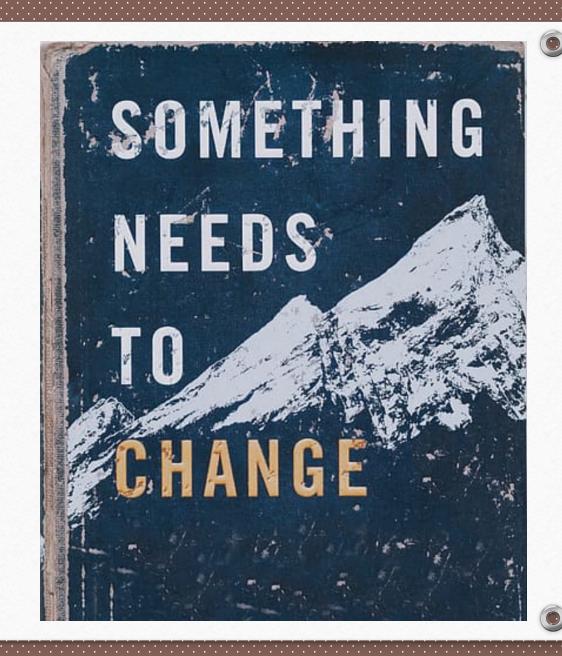
Prepare

Advocate

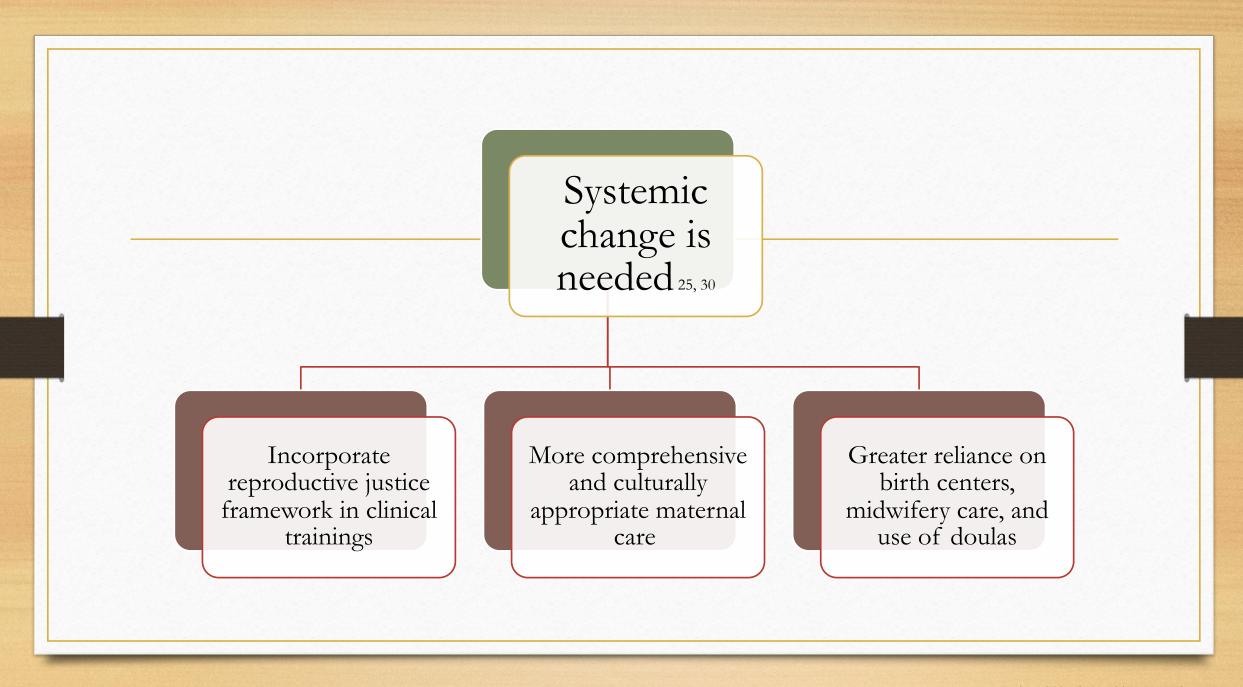
Utilize coping skills



- Severe maternal morbidity increased by approximately 20% in the U.S. from 1993-2014 and continues to rise 32
- 31.9% of deliveries are occurring by Cesarian section in US 33
- Gender discrimination and structural racism continue to impact outcomes 24, 34
- Black women have the highest PRMR 32











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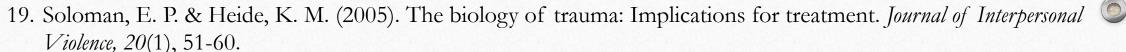
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