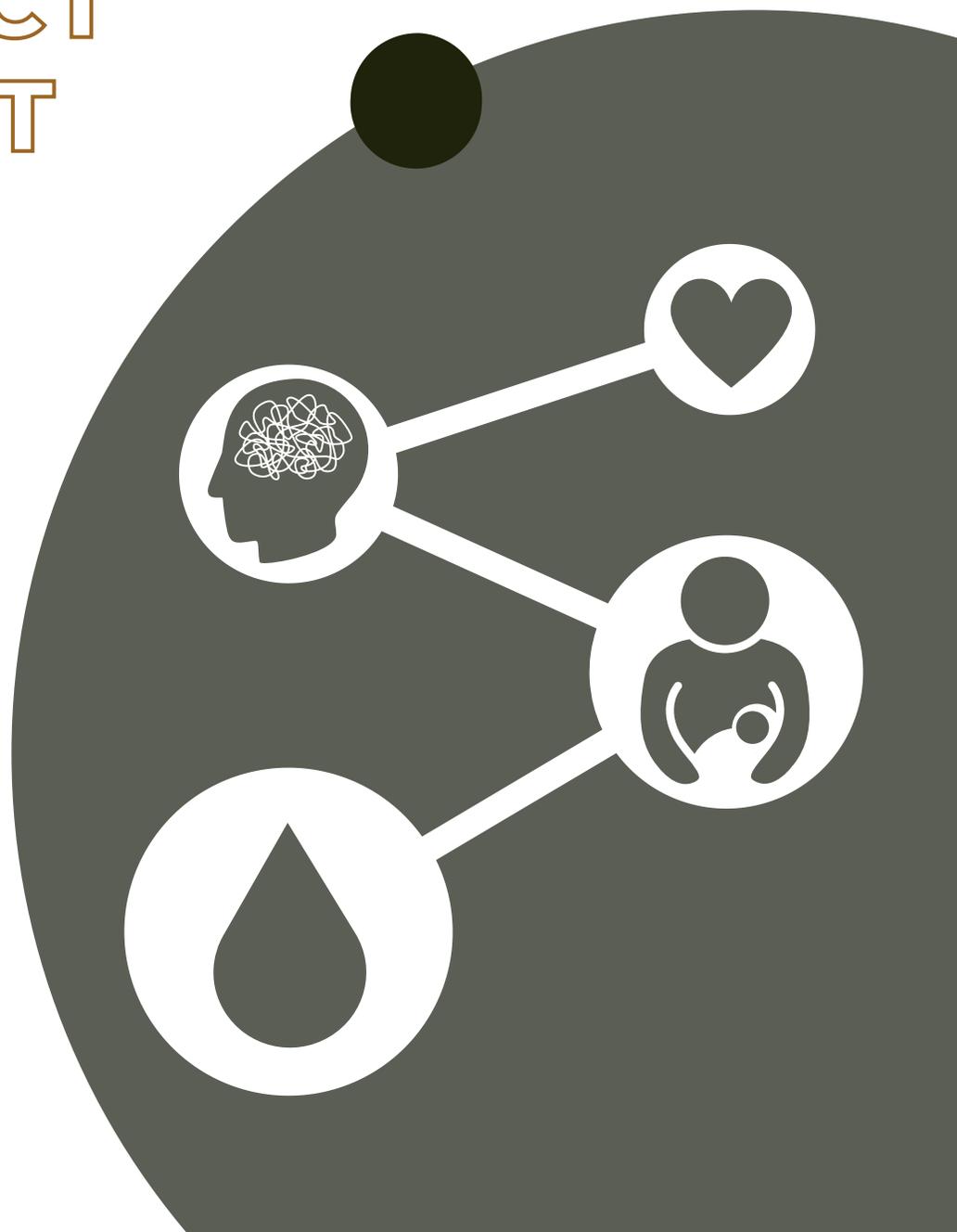


CONNECTING FAMILIES WITH LACTATION AND MENTAL HEALTH

PROJECT REPORT



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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION



ABOUT SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN IBCLCS OF COLOR

Southeast Michigan IBCLCs of Color (SEMI) is a Black-led, community-based organization, working to create an evidence-based, equity-focused comprehensive model of care in order to promote, protect, and support breastfeeding. SEMI centers equity and justice in a truly sustainable way, supporting the families of Southeast Michigan from the inside out. Current systems do not support birth and breastfeeding equity and significant harm has been done to communities of color, resulting in lower breastfeeding rates and health disparities. SEMI reflects and represents the families they serve, reaching families that otherwise would not have access to skilled birth and breastfeeding support. Keeping resources within Southeast Michigan ensures that time, money, and relationships stay local, meeting the needs of the community and establishing an equitable framework that positively impacts birth and breastfeeding outcomes.

SEMI's mission is to meet the unique needs for mentorship, fellowship and profession growth of IBCLCs of Color in the Southeast Michigan region in order to supply our community with equitable access to culturally appropriate lactation support and advocacy.

FAST FACTS



\$75,000



October 1, 2021 to
September 30, 2022

ABOUT THE AWARD

Thank you to the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan for your generosity in supporting this project. Through your support, SEMI provided new and expanded services, including breastfeeding support consultations and a mental health support group, offered by Southeast Michigan IBCLCs of Color to ensure that families had access to culturally-relevant, skilled care during the ongoing pandemic. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

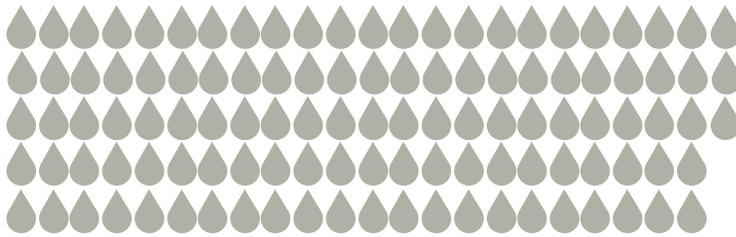
SUCCESSSES



BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT CONSULTATIONS

SEMI provided one-on-one in-person and virtual support from International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs). SEMI members are committed to ensuring that families receive skilled and timely lactation support by having their "boots on the ground," driving around to families' homes in metro-Detroit; meeting aunts, grandmas, and cousins of lactating folks; and gathering in community. These visits provided unbiased, evidence-based education, support, and resources, returning the power to families to successfully reach their breastfeeding goals.

113
consults
provided

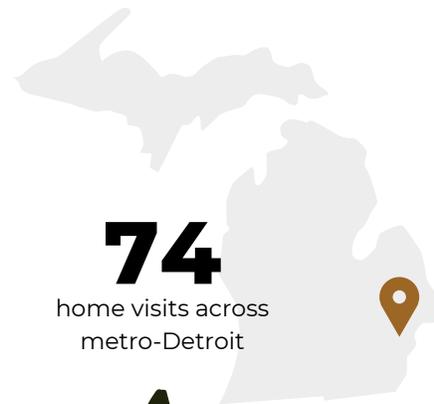


The number of consults went well above and beyond what was committed to as part of this project.

DROP OF KNOWLEDGE

74

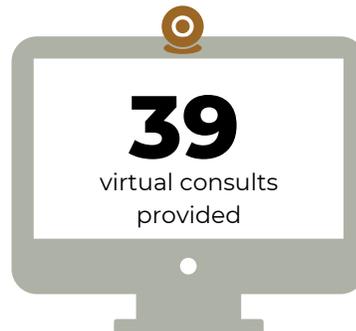
home visits across
metro-Detroit



Home visits ensured that families were safe during COVID-19 and offered racially-concordant care and community referrals if necessary.

39

virtual consults
provided





LACTATION ISSUES ADDRESSED INCLUDED:

- Latch issues
- Low supply
- Infant intake concerns
- Nipple pain
- Breast pain
- Late preterm infant
- Vasospasms
- Oversupply
- Preterm twins
- Positions
- Infant weight loss
- Management of hyperlactation
- Ankyloglossia
- Nursing strike
- Nipple assessment
- Clogged milk duct
- Milk production
- Suspected TOTs
- Medication and breastfeeding
- Inability to sustain latch
- Frenotomy & post-care
- NICU infant and latching



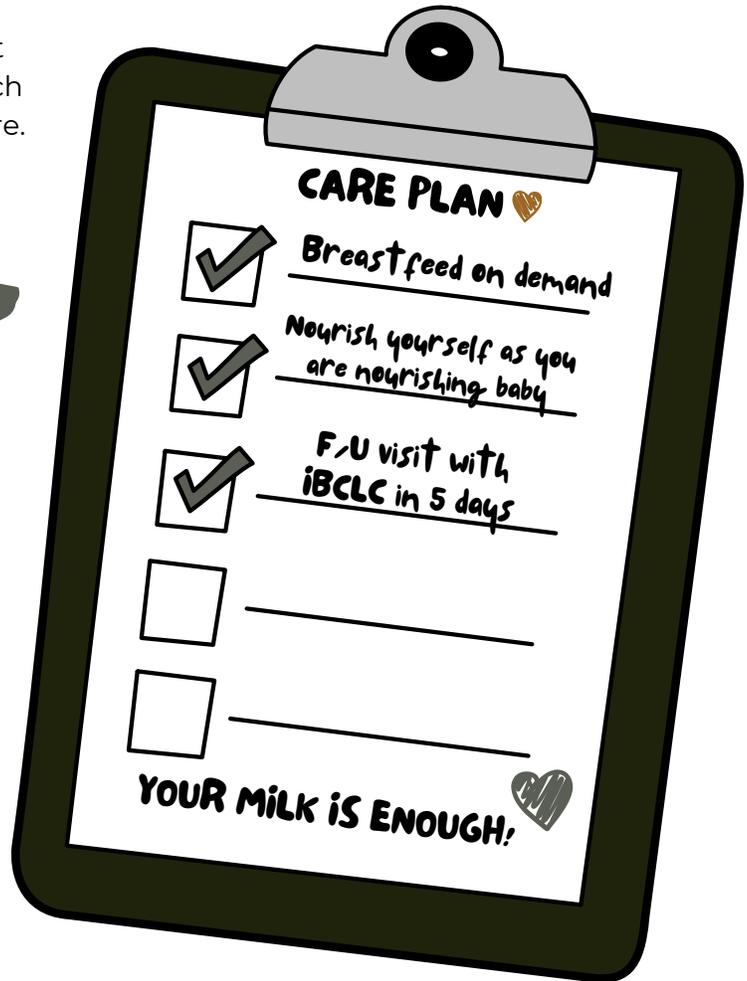
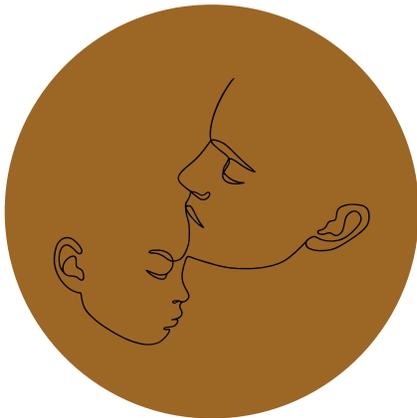
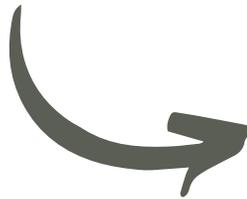
DID YOU KNOW?

Visits were at no-cost to families while SEMI members were equitably compensated to do the necessary work in the community.





Management and treatment plans were discussed with each client that received clinical care.



COMMUNITY OVER COMPETITION

SEMI members firmly believe in community over competition and lean into collaborating with community to better serve families. Referrals for breastfeeding support consultations came in from: Birth Detroit; doulas; pediatricians; home birth midwives (CPMs); hospital midwives (CNMs); local hospitals; Wayne, Macomb and Oakland County WIC agencies; past SEMI clients; mental health counselors; community members; and self-referral.





"SEMI SERVICES HAVE HELPED ME A LOT. WITHOUT THEIR SERVICES, I WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GET HELP FROM A LACTATION CONSULTANT AT THIS TIME. I WAS ABLE TO FIND OUT BETTER WAYS TO NURSE MY DAUGHTER DUE TO THE SUPPORT. AND, IT DIDN'T COST ME A THING."

-E.C.

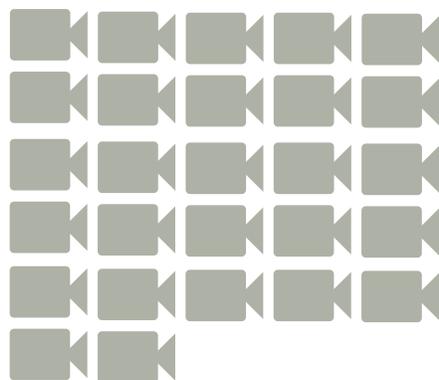


"HOLDING SPACE: BREASTFEEDING AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT DURING A PANDEMIC" VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUP

Mental health services are vital for birth and breastfeeding families. SEMI sought to meet the needs of families seeking breastfeeding support by providing a space for them to address the intersection of breastfeeding and mental health concerns. In recognizing the intersections between breastfeeding and mental health, SEMI held weekly community-based support groups open to families of color throughout Michigan. In this space, they laughed, they cried, they shared, and they built their own village to support each other through the journey and joys of Black motherhood. SEMI members felt it was imperative that each group not only be facilitated by lactation experts to discuss lactation topics, but that a therapist attend weekly also to hold space for those needing a listening ear and tangible tools to implement in the day-to-day to help cope.

52

support groups convened



This support group quickly expanded from serving SE Michigan, to Battle Creek alongside CORE Cohort colleagues Milk Like Mine, to all of Michigan to ensure access to mental health support.



438

expecting or lactating persons attended plus their children



Due to the virtual nature, this group is available to families in Michigan who identify as BIPOC to ensure safety in the intimate and sacred space.

DROP OF KNOWLEDGE



"GOING TO HOLDING SPACE GROUPS HAS GIVEN ME THE FAMILY I NEVER KNEW I NEEDED. IT'S JUDGMENT FREE, THEY ANSWER ALL MY QUESTIONS, AND OTHER MOMS HELP EACH OTHER, TOO. IT'S BEEN REFRESHING TO BE IN SPACE WHERE EVERYONE THERE LOOKS LIKE ME AND MY BABY. I FEEL LIKE I CAN FINALLY BREATHE."

HOLDING SPACE MAMA



CHANGING THE MODEL FOR SUPPORT

Evidence supports that two of the main reasons for discontinuing breastfeeding, particularly for Black families, is returning to work and perceptions about lactation. With the safe space created weekly through "Holding Space," families were able to show up as they are, talk through their concerns, build community, and grow in their lactation journeys. Outside of group, relationships formed. Parents became friends and babies started recognizing each other on the screen from seeing each other weekly. With "Holding Space," SEMI paved the way for a new model of breastfeeding and mental health support by and for the community.

SEMI made the intentional decision to continue holding space even on holidays as not all birthing and lactating mamas have families or access to be with their families, especially throughout the pandemic.

DROP OF KNOWLEDGE

GROUPS STARTED WITH A MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN, FOLLOWED BY TOPICS CHOSEN BY FAMILIES, INCLUDING:

- Breast pain
- Latch issues
- Perceived low supply
- Return to work
- Racist microaggressions/stress
- Recognizing PPD signs
- Giving yourself grace
- Family support
- Power pumping
- Weaning at night
- Increasing supply
- Managing oversupply
- Exercise of self-check for the mood elevator
- Community milk sharing
- Self-care
- Co-sleeping
- Cluster feeding
- Infant formula shortage
- Introduction of complementary foods
- Making homemade baby foods
- Teething
- Vaccination during pregnancy and breastfeeding
- Doulas and IBCLCs at part of the care team
- Managing sleep with a newborn
- Positions
- Virtual doula support during the pandemic
- The village
- Mask wearing
- Low milk production and vaccine association
- Feeding on demand
- Pumping concerns
- Grief





"HOLDING SPACE HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST REWARDING EXPERIENCES THROUGHOUT THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. I HAVE REVELED IN AND CELEBRATED THE OPPORTUNITY THAT WAS GIVEN TO ME TO CONNECT WITH ALL OF THE NEW MOTHERS. BEING A MOTHER MYSELF, I LOOK FORWARD TO CONNECTING WITH THE MOMS EVERY WEEK AND BEING ABLE TO SHARE HOPE, LOVE, AND INSPIRATION. I AM SO THANKFUL AND GRATEFUL TO BE ABLE TO GIVE BACK WHAT I HAVE LEARNED IN MY EXPERIENCES. I HOPE TO ALWAYS BE ABLE TO BE PART OF THIS EXPERIENCE."

NAFEESA JOHNSON, LPC, HOLDING
SPACE FACILITATOR



NEXT STEPS

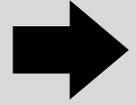


"THIS FUNDING IS SO IMPORTANT IN ENSURING THAT PRICE NOR PLACE ARE BARRIERS TO SKILLED LACTATION CARE AND SUPPORT. THANKS TO THIS GRANT, WE ARE ABLE TO MEET FAMILIES WHERE THEY ARE, LITERALLY, BY TAKING US INTO THEIR HOMES AS WELL AS BRINGING THEM TOGETHER IN VIRTUAL SPACES. THESE FUNDS ALLOW US TO BE EQUITABLY COMPENSATED FOR THE CARE WE PROVIDE, WITHOUT PLACING THAT FINANCIAL BURDEN ON THE FAMILIES THAT NEED US THE MOST."

TAMEKA JACKSON-DYER, BASC,
IBCLC, CHW, SEMI CO-FOUNDER



NEXT STEPS



Increasing Capacity To Serve

SEMI has increased its capacity with four new active members and is onboarding to grow SEMI infrastructure, sustainability and capacity to serve.



Growing Partnerships

SEMI has new contractual partnerships with Birth Detroit, MSU, and starting paperwork with U of M to layer nursing students into community-based learning while engaging them into each of SEMI's service models.



Adding Mental Health Support

In addition to the mental health support SEMI already provides, SEMI will be adding new mental health therapists to their team to meet community need.



Formalizing As An Organization

SEMI is beginning paperwork to become a Recognized Support Counsellor Organization with IBLCE and has started the 501c3 process to become a non-profit organization.

