

Innovative Approaches to Improving Postpartum Engagement

Title: Track, don't trip! Implementing a financial empowerment program to improve maternal and infant health

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Presentation Objectives

- Provide an overview of a Financial Empowerment Program (FEP) designed for participants in California's Black Infant Health (BIH) Program
- Describe participation-related changes in women's financial practices, levels of stress and feelings of control, sense of community, and attitudes/behaviors as parents
- Offer practical guidance to other MCH programs interested in integrating empowerment-focused financial education into existing services

Highlights

- Financial Empowerment Program (FEP) was designed to supplement and build on California's BIH Program, which offers empowerment-focused group-based services to primarily low-income pregnant and parenting African-American women.
- FEP aims to strengthen new mothers' financial capabilities by helping them reflect on their own financial histories and values, set goals for their families' financial fitness, and learn and practice skills and behaviors to achieve those goals.
- Each FEP series includes six 2.5-hour group sessions—four weekly sessions and two follow-up sessions 30 and 60 days later—for up to 15 women who previously completed a BIH group series. All FEP sessions are facilitated by BIH staff who have participated in a 3-day FEP training. FEP materials include a facilitator guide with slides, participant handbook and resource guide, and training materials.
- FEP provides a judgment-free zone to help new mothers explore sensitive financial topics, examine their own behaviors and goals, and develop practical financial skills (e.g., building budgets, tracking spending, setting SMART financial goals).
- Comparing data collected from participants before and after FEP participation, women experienced improvements in financial practices and skills, increased feelings of control over and confidence about their personal finances, reduced stress related to financial issues, greater sense of shared community, and some positive changes in health-related parenting behaviors and attitudes.

Resources

- Questions? Please contact presenter Susan Egerter at susan.egerter@ucsf.edu or project coordinator Mercedes Dekker at mercedes.dekker@ucsf.edu.