

### North Star

**Zero racial disparities in infant mortality by 2033.**

### High Infant Mortality Zip Codes



This project served participants in the following FLOURISH priority zip codes:

**63106, 63112, 63113, 63115, 63120, 63121, 63136**

### How much did we do?



**32**

Pregnant clients participated in the program



**15**

Clients completed needs assessments and benefitted from case management



**93**

Counseling sessions were provided (including intake and treatment)



**4**


Students were clinically trained in culturally relevant and diversified treatment protocols

### Program Description

This FLOURISH grant funded Allowing Families to Flourish (AFTF) via Behavioral Health Treatment (BTX) Prenatal Parent Child program at SkiWise. The purpose of this project was to offer free and voluntary behavioral health treatment to mothers 15-26 years of age that have been diagnosed with mental health disorder. Participants could be pregnant or have kids up to one year of age. The primary goals were to increase access and decrease cultural barriers that keep them from seeking treatment understanding the correlation between untreated mental illness in caregivers and infant wellbeing. This project took place from February to December 2022.

### Priority Areas

FLOURISH Community Leaders Cabinet identified priority areas they believe will have the most significant impact on improving conditions for Black families. Infant mortality is a complex issue that can't be solved by one organization alone. Below, you will find population level data where FLOURISH is contributing to changes for Black families alongside other organizations. SkiWise is working to move the needle for the individuals they serve in the areas listed below.

FLOURISH Priority Area	Category of Work	Population Level Data
 Coordinated Quality Care	Perinatal Behavioral Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Maternal Depression/Postpartum Depression</a></li> <li><a href="#">Poor Mental Health Days</a></li> <li><a href="#">Improvement in Maternal Health &amp; Well-Being</a></li> <li><a href="#">Emotional Support Through All Stages of Birth</a></li> </ul>

FLOURISH uses a **results-based accountability** model of evaluation, because it helps show how collaborative efforts can make an impact on reducing disparities in infant mortality. We focus on how well programs address root causes of the issue and whether Black pregnant and parenting families are better off.

### How well did we do it?



of clients completed all three sessions



of counselors-in-training will use their experience to provide better mental health support in the future.

### Is anyone better off?

Program participants noted:



## Project Impact

SkiWise sought to address pregnancy related complications that are closely tied to infant mortality due to increased socioeconomic and environmental stressors in underserved, under-resourced urban neighborhoods in St. Louis. These stressors can exacerbate mental health symptoms, particularly in young mothers. Women of color may experience higher rates of undiagnosed and untreated mental and behavioral health problems directly related to an inability to afford and/or access treatment or stigma.

### This project provided:

- preferential access to mental health treatment in support of prenatal and postpartum care,
- integrated behavioral health treatment in partnership with a maternal care team,
- parenting education with emphasis on managing symptoms, and
- workforce development of counselors-in-training that treat from a culturally relevant lens.

## Key Learnings and Challenges

We learned that there are many barriers that impede if not prevent access to mental health treatment in underserved, under resourced populations.

Outreach and recruitment was challenging as this was a transient population of families.



## Counselors-in-Training

Four Counselors In Training (CIT) were recruited from advertisements and referrals through local universities Clinical Mental Health programs, schools of education and university students seeking practicum experiences.

Each CIT completed 20 hours per week including 10 hours of outreach, recruitment, engagement & client services, and 10 hours of professional development trainings, documentation, group, and individual supervision. Each CIT carried a caseload of 4 clients for which they were able to track each client's participation over the course of the intake and 3 session series.

CITs met with clients in the office, virtually via telehealth or in clients' homes while practicing COVID protocols. We found that telehealth was the preferred method of engagement, given that clients may have had socioeconomic barriers preventing access to ongoing treatment.

## Training and Skill Development

The Counselors-in-Training were trained in the administration of PMAD (perinatal mood and anxiety disorder screening) and Client Centered modalities of treatment which they will be able to apply in their future careers. Clinical modeling and coaching were incorporated into the practical process to ensure proper application and to support the therapeutic relationships developed with pregnant moms.



FLOURISH Saint Louis, an infant mortality reduction initiative powered by Generate Health, is bringing together people and organizations across the region to fix the systems that impact the health of Black families. This organization received a FLOURISH grant which was funded by Missouri Foundation for Health.