

# BLACK Maternal Health Circles

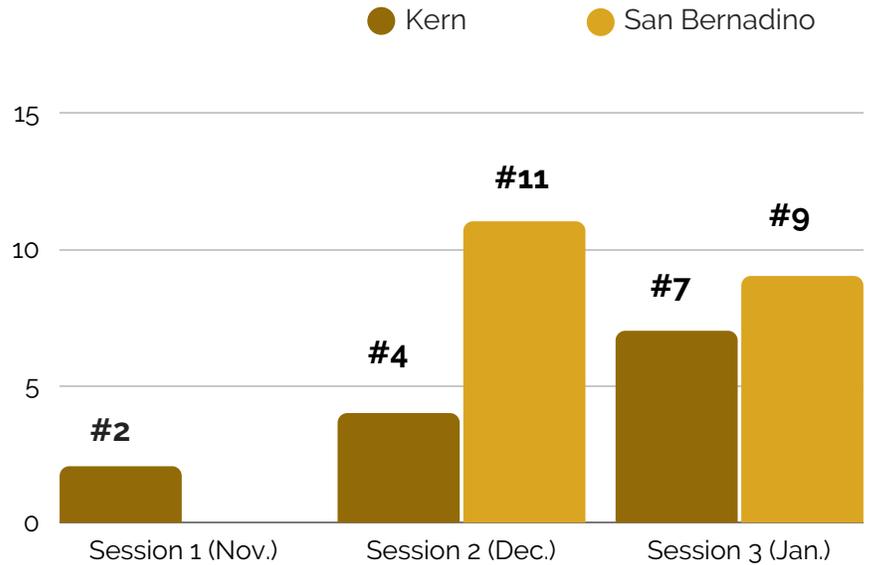


Quarterly reporting: October 18, 2021 – January 18, 2022

## Setting the scene:

Over the span of **3** "Circles" we had a total of **33** participants from 2 different counties. Of the 33 participants 23 were new and 10 participated more than once.

Of the 23 we met **8** were from Kern County and **15** from San Bernadino.

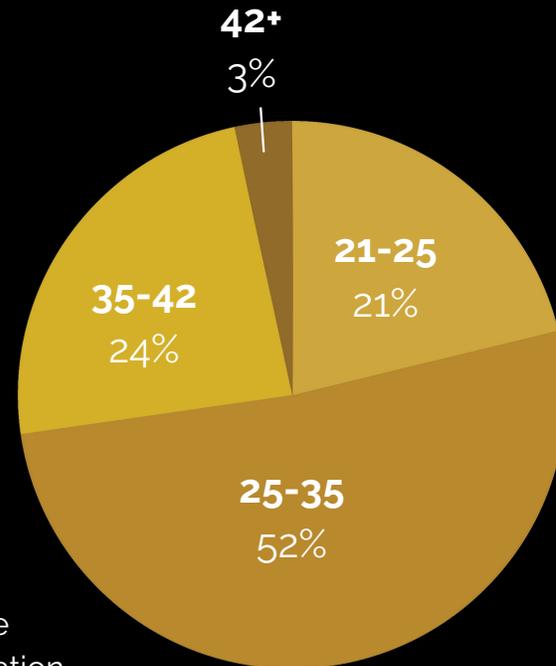


# 23 out of 33

23 participants attended 1 time and **10** returning.

## Age Groups:

Circles participant ages ranged from 4 different age groups participate. **Group 2 (ages 25-35)** was our largest group.



## 7 Pregnant Participants

With **7** pregnant voices, we were able to gather information from those currently experiencing pregnancy, along with those who are not.



## How did we recruit in the first quarter?

- Social media (placed ads, posts)
- Internal BWPC network (community & partners)
- BSC contacts
- Establishing new contacts

## Types of engagements:

Zoom meetings – video chat is preferred but based on individual circumstances it is not always feasible/the most comfortable way for participants to engage in discussions.

2 hour-meetings; recorded with consent; \$50 Gift card (flexible use)

## BLACK Maternal Health Circles' approach:

- Trust building
- Flexibility
- BWPC staff shares experiences to facilitate discussions
- Follow up with participants before and after each session
- We accepted participations based on self-identification and self-reporting on the BMHC's eligibility requirements.

## Focus of the first three sessions:

Understanding both localities; co-design; building trust with participants to build a base of returning and stable participants; learning about provider interactions.

## Some of the key experiences in both counties:

- **Barriers in access to transportation** – benefiting from services and attending doctors' appointments are challenges in both counties due to inadequate infrastructure and transportation system.
- **Air quality & pollution and cost of living** (affordability) were mentioned as most significant aspects – aspects that impact some of the participants' lives. Concerns about air pollution and its impact on pregnant persons and their babies is a specific concern so much so that it may prevent individuals from leaving their homes.
- **Partners are key during pregnancy time** – support from partner can influence how much a pregnant person feels safe and supported. Feeling supported can help pregnant persons cope with pregnancy related challenges.
- **Accommodating neighborhood** is important for participants. Neighborhood can be a source of support, especially during COVID times.
- **Access to information during pregnancy** is challenging. Although through certain resources women can access free services (for example doula), this information does not reach all women in need during pregnancy but only after birth.
- Challenges during pregnancy include (1) discussing personal matters with male providers – **finding female providers** can be difficult. (2) **Isolation/not having enough support** is another challenge – women need other support beyond their partners to rely on – conversations, especially when there are pregnancy complications, (3) **Long commute** to get to various appointments, not having high risk doctors in network – **costs of having to go out of network are also mentioned as significant challenges.**

## The ideal **provider's** characteristics include:

- Familiar
- Has an office in the **same neighborhood**
- Female
- **"Treats us like a family"**
- Friendly & smiles
- Professional & **experienced**
- Comes with friends' recommendations
- Can **attend high-risk** pregnancies
- Answers **questions**
- Dedicates **more time if needed**
- Attentive, empathetic (emotional)
- Makes patients **feel comfortable**
- Tries their **best to help**, honest, careful and not rushing
- Has a **sense of humor**
- Remembers **previous discussions**, checks up on patients even without appointments

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## Person-centered care, respectful care and good care mean:

- **"Respectful care** is a subset of good care"
- **Effective** services
- Good communication, **calming and soothing**
- **"Listening** to what I have to say"
- **Remembers most** of previous discussion
- **Holistic support** – emotional support is an integral part of the care plan
- **Flexible care**, including choice of providers and individualized payment options
- Patient **education**
- Gives **voice to patients**
- Non-judgmental

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**Respectful care is a subset of good care**

## Next steps:

- Focus on health plan experiences and resources
- 3 more sessions in 2022: February, March, April
- Meet the target of reaching 45 individuals