



# Building Trust & Community Around Maternal-Infant Environmental Health

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# Environmental Justice

## CONTEXT

Institutional racism, legacy of slavery built into systems (ex: history of obstetrics)

Spanning healthcare, housing, edu, law-enf, justice, transpo, food, proximity to industry

## TODAY

Environmental injustices drive SDOH:

US moms dying at highest rate in developed world; rate is rising, and crisis is most severe for Black moms.

Black, American Indian, Alaska Native women 3-4x more likely to die in childbirth than white women.

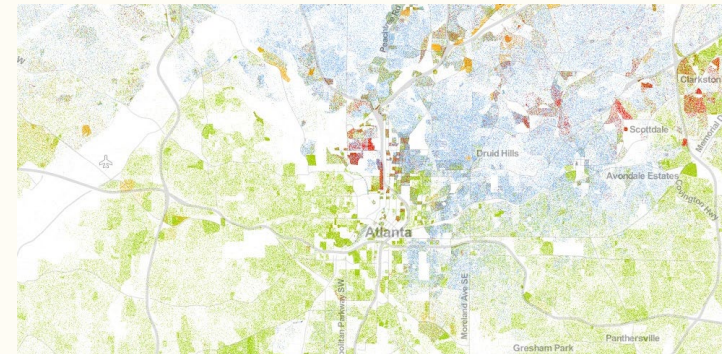
Black infants 3x less likely to survive w/ white OBGYN.

## STAKEHOLDERS

Moms, families, communities, scientists, policy makers, EPA, NIEHS, CDC/PEHSU

Setbacks v. Wins: Rollback of 100 environmental protections in 2020; Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021; Social Determinants for Moms Act

## EXAMPLE: ATLANTA



# Cultivating Environmental Health Literacy: Communities Take Lead

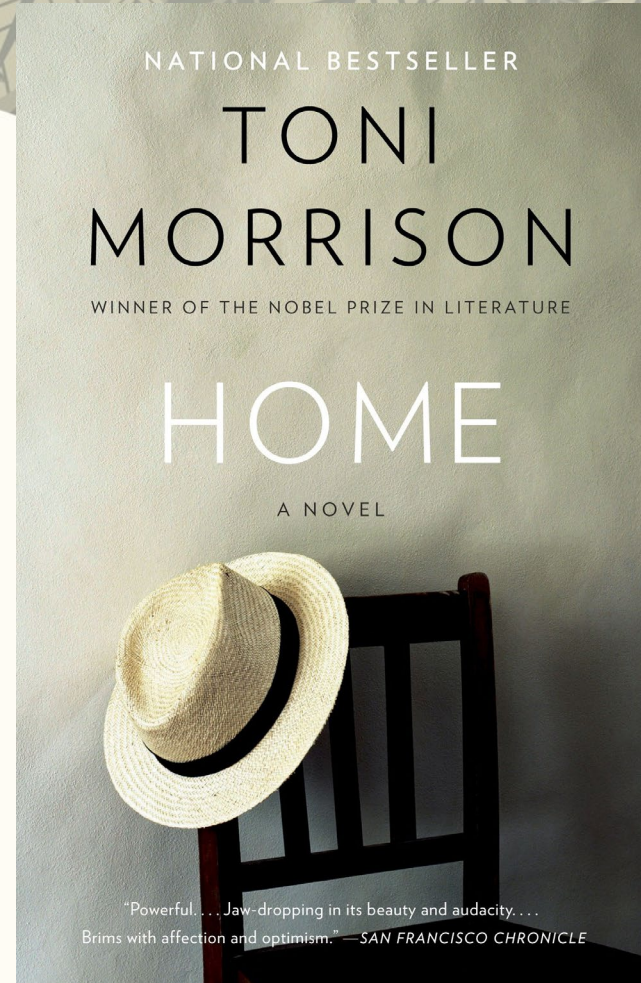
- Community-academic partnerships = Key to EHL
  - Meaningful, multi-directional, nurtured over time
  - Train-the-trainer workshops, CAN, home visits, social media
- Trans-disciplinary
- Continuous evaluation
- Data, findings, info belong to the community
  - As do the tone, content, visuals of materials you co-create
  - (Ex: CBWW, #KBLBATL Ambassadors)

Moms are the gatekeepers.



# Ways to Earn Community Trust

1. **Study, respect history:** Origin of C-section; systematic removal of Black midwives
2. **Read:** Books like *Home*, *Black and Blue*, *How to Be an Anti-Racist* (Audience suggestions?)
3. **Hire Black midwives, BIPOC women scientists**
4. **Accept criticism:** It's possible to be an ally or a BIPOC health scientist AND commit a microaggression or make flawed research assumptions
5. **“Report back” research results**
6. **Ensure continuity of funding**
7. **Seek 360 community input**
8. **Support pilot projects:** CBWW; HERCULES



# Listen to Community Voices

## Community Concerns

1. Endocrine disrupting chemicals
  - Personal care products
  - Cleaning products
2. Lead
3. Air pollution

*These reflect recent focus groups done with CBWW.*



# Community Voices & The Science from Emory's Children's Center

- **Multiple phthalate congeners higher in Grady than Emory**
- **Parabens**
  - Emory is significantly higher than Grady (3-5x)
- **BPA**
  - Grady significantly higher than Emory (reverse for BPF)
- **Participants were candid about marijuana use during pregnancy**
  - Cotinine levels and self-reported marijuana use were highly correlated
    - Potential reasons:
      - Marijuana users may be more prone to use tobacco products
      - Marijuana may be “cut” with tobacco



# The Power of Engaged Health Professionals

## Every HCP Can and Must Be an Advocate for Moms and Babies

Not limited to specialty, practice area  
Leverage all channels, resources  
Build in diverse feedback, approvals

## Examples, Resources

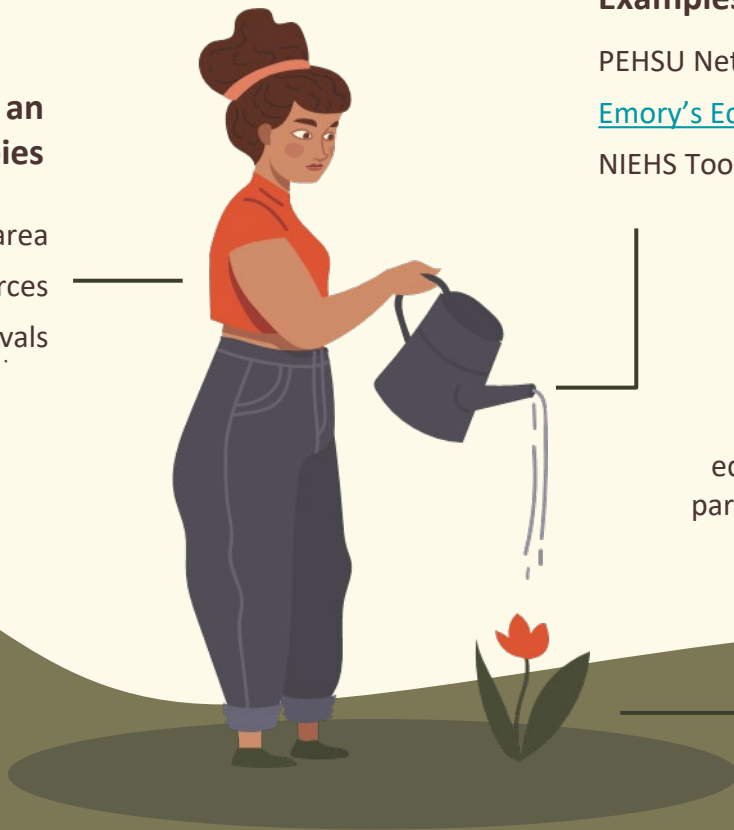
PEHSU Network

[Emory's Eco-Friendly Training](#)

NIEHS Toolkit

## Remember

Translation, continuing education must happen in partnership with moms and communities.



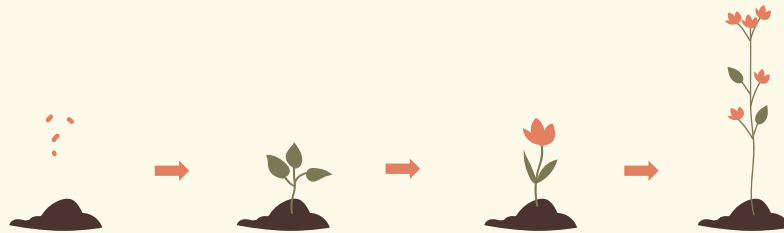


# Critical Take-Aways

Listen

Be in it for the long-haul

Respond: Keep communication channels open and active





# Thanks

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THANKS