



The First 6 Weeks: A Black Mother's Postpartum Healing & Thriving Plan

You gave birth. Now you deserve care, too.

The first six weeks after having a baby can bring joy, exhaustion, uncertainty, fear, physical pain, and many different emotions. You do not have to figure everything out by yourself.

Postpartum depression and anxiety are common and treatable. The CDC notes that about 1 in 8 women with a recent live birth report symptoms of postpartum depression. Research also shows racial disparities in postpartum depressive symptoms, making culturally responsive support especially important for Black mothers.

This plan is not a substitute for medical or mental-health care. Use it as a tool for noticing how you are doing, building support, and knowing when to ask for help.

MY POSTPARTUM SUPPORT PLAN

My name: _____

Baby's name: _____ Baby's birth date: _____

My OB/midwife: _____ Phone: _____

My primary-care provider: _____ Phone: _____

My therapist/counselor: _____ Phone: _____

My baby's pediatrician: _____ Phone: _____

MY THREE PEOPLE

Choose three people who can check on you during these first six weeks.

Person 1

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Person 2

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Person 3

Name: _____ Phone: _____

I give myself permission to ask for help.

- ☐ Someone can bring me food.
 - ☐ Someone can help with laundry.
 - ☐ Someone can hold the baby while I rest.
 - ☐ Someone can accompany me to an appointment.
 - ☐ Someone can simply listen to me.
 - ☐ Someone can help me find professional support.
-

WEEK 1: SURVIVE & RECEIVE

Your only job this week is recovery.

- ✓ You do not have to entertain anyone.
- ✓ You do not have to keep your house perfect.
- ✓ You do not have to prove that you can do everything yourself.

This week I will:

- ☐ Accept help when it is offered.
- ☐ Ask someone to help with meals or household responsibilities.
- ☐ Drink water regularly.
- ☐ Eat regularly.
- ☐ Take prescribed medications as directed.
- ☐ Rest whenever I have an opportunity.

- ☐ Tell my healthcare provider if something doesn't feel right physically or emotionally.
 - ☐ Identify one person I can call when I feel overwhelmed.
-

WEEK 2: CHECK IN WITH YOURSELF

The "baby blues" can include temporary sadness, worry, irritability, and exhaustion. It typically resolves within several days. Postpartum depression is different: symptoms are more intense, last longer, and can interfere with daily life.

This week, ask yourself:

- ☐ Am I feeling increasingly sad?
- ☐ Am I feeling constantly anxious or overwhelmed?
- ☐ Am I withdrawing from people?
- ☐ Am I losing interest in things I normally enjoy?
- ☐ Am I struggling to function day to day?
- ☐ Do I feel unlike myself?
- ☐ Have I talked with my healthcare provider about how I'm feeling?

If these symptoms are persistent, worsening, or interfering with daily life, **contact your healthcare provider rather than waiting it out.** Depression is treatable, and treatment can include counseling, medication, or both depending on individual circumstances.

My action:

I will contact: _____

Date: _____

WEEK 3: BUILD MY VILLAGE

This week, identify what support you actually need.

Complete these sentences:

I need someone to help me with:

<https://theblackgirlsguidetohealingemotionalwounds.com>

I need someone to listen to me about:

I need a break from:

I would feel better if someone could:

One thing I will stop feeling guilty about:

My support person this week:

WEEK 4: MANAGE ANXIETY

When anxiety starts building, try the **STOP–BREATHE–CONNECT** method.

STOP

Pause what you are doing.

BREATHE

Take several slow, comfortable breaths.

CONNECT

Ask:

“What do I need right now?”

Then choose one:

- ☐ Call someone.
- ☐ Step outside and get some fresh air for a few minutes.
- ☐ Drink water/eat something.

<https://theblackgirlsguidetohealingemotionalwounds.com>

- ☐ Sit somewhere quiet.
- ☐ Ask someone to take over baby care briefly while you rest.
- ☐ Contact my healthcare provider.
- ☐ Contact my therapist.
- ☐ Contact a crisis-support service if I don't feel safe.

My calming activity:

WEEK 5: REMEMBER WHO I AM

Motherhood is something you are experiencing. **It is not your entire identity.**

These questions will help you remember who you are.

Before becoming a mother, I loved:

Something I am good at:

Something I want to continue doing:

Something I want my child to learn from watching me:

Three words I want to describe the woman I am becoming:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

WEEK 6: THRIVE & PLAN FORWARD

You've made it through six weeks. Pause and recognize that.

What have I learned about myself?

What support do I want to continue?

What do I want to change?

What is one mental-health goal for the next three months?

MY DAILY 5-MINUTE CHECK-IN

You don't need to have a perfect day. Just check in with yourself every day.

Today I feel:

☐ Calm

☐ Happy

☐ Sad

☐ Anxious

☐ Irritable

☐ Overwhelmed

☐ Lonely

☐ Angry

☐ Numb

☐ Other: _____

Today I need:

☐ Rest

☐ Food/water

☐ A shower

☐ Time alone

☐ Adult conversation

☐ Help with the baby

☐ Emotional support

☐ Medical advice

☐ Someone to listen

☐ Professional help

One thing I did for myself today:

One thing I am proud of:

My emotional check-in:

What has surprised me about motherhood so far?

What has been harder than I expected?

What has brought me joy?

My next healthcare appointment:

Date: _____

Provider: _____

My next mental-health check-in:

Date: _____

Provider/support person: _____

MY "I NEED HELP" PLAN

Sometimes the hardest part is knowing when and where to turn. Please do not suffer in silence.

Level 1: "I'm having a difficult day."

I will:

- ☐ Tell someone I trust.
 - ☐ Rest and take care of basic needs.
 - ☐ Reduce unnecessary demands.
 - ☐ Use one of my coping strategies.
 - ☐ Reach out instead of isolating myself.
 - ☐ Visit [The Black Girl Healing Project](https://theblackgirlsguidetohealingemotionalwounds.com) to chat with Rashida
-

Level 2: "I haven't felt like myself lately."

I will:

- ☐ Contact my OB/midwife.
 - ☐ Contact my primary-care provider.
 - ☐ Contact my therapist or mental-health professional.
 - ☐ Ask someone I trust to help me make the appointment.
-

LEVEL 3: "I AM IN CRISIS."

If you are in immediate danger or experiencing a mental-health emergency, **call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department.**

You can also **call or text 988** for free, confidential, 24/7 crisis support in the United States.

National Maternal Mental Health Hotline

<https://theblackgirlsguidetohealingemotionalwounds.com>

Call or text: 1-833-TLC-MAMA

1-833-852-6262

The National Maternal Mental Health Hotline provides free, confidential, 24/7 support for pregnant and postpartum women and is available in English and Spanish.

[National Maternal Mental Health Hotline information](#)

988 Lifeline

Call or text: 988

The 988 Lifeline also provides specialized information and support related to maternal mental health and Black mental health.

[988 Lifeline](#)

MY EMERGENCY CONTACT CARD

Put this somewhere you can easily find it.

My OB/Midwife

My Therapist

My Trusted Person

Maternal Mental Health Hotline

1-833-TLC-MAMA

1-833-852-6262

988

Call or text 988

Emergency

911 / nearest emergency department

<https://theblackgirlsguidetohealingemotionalwounds.com>