



First Year Cleveland Pregnancy and Infant Loss (PAIL) Committee OWN Virtual Press Conference Q and A Talking Points

Who Comprises OWN?

- OWN is comprised of 16 African American therapists, clergy and parents who have experienced a pregnancy and infant loss.
- The PAIL committee selected each person based on their experience and commitment to African American mental and emotional health.
- Each person aligned with OWN is trained in the Grief Recovery Method which is a comprehensive grief education experience that has been validated as an evidence-based model.

Is OWN a free program?

- Because we have received generous support from First Year Cleveland, we are able to offer emotional support services for those who are uninsured and underinsured.
- If you are insured, we will direct you to a therapist who accepts insurance for services rendered.
- If you prefer not to use your insurance and have access to a flexible spending account or health savings account, we will direct you to a therapist who accepts those coverage options.

Why are you only targeting African Americans?

- Our program is open and accessible to all.
- First Year Cleveland launched the Pregnancy and Infant Loss Committee two years ago to work specifically with African American families who have endured a loss. The parents' experience and feedback help shape strategies and policies to ensure families have better pregnancy, birth and parenting outcomes now and in the future.

Are Non-African American providers and lay members included with the OWN?

- No, not at this moment because in speaking to our parents, individuals who are pregnant, and new parents, we learned they prefer mental and emotional support from people who can better relate to them culturally.
- We are not saying non-African Americans can't help African Americans. They can and have. However, we believe African Americans will likely be more motivated and comfortable approaching OWN for support because we have individuals available who uniquely understand the African American culture and lived experience.

Do you know how many Black therapists are employed and/or contracted with the City of Cleveland? Cuyahoga County? Local Hospitals?

- We have been on this journey for a year and continue to search for African American therapists to help with our work. We have discovered there are number of credentialed and experienced African American mental health professionals operating at the community level. Many are in private practice. When we began speaking to the therapists about our local infant mortality crisis, they expressed a sincere desire to help African American families navigate through their pain.
- We've communicated to therapists that we need them in private practice and we also need them to be engaged with certain structures that provide greater access to the African American population. Therapists can better connect with this population by being engaged with health plan provider panels and employer employee assistance programs.
- We support every employer, specifically our health systems, health plans, local governments and other sectors moving forward in partnering with African American therapists to best support their employees, patients or clients' mental and emotional health needs. Partnering with African American therapists also helps businesses advance their diversity, equity and inclusion goals.