



Addressing The Black Maternal Health Crisis Through A Stress Management Program

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Center for Graduate Studies - West Coast University, Occupational Therapy Doctorate Program

Lactation & Development Resources



R.O.O.T.S.
Reclaiming Overall Occupational Wellness by Targeting Stress

Description of DCE Site

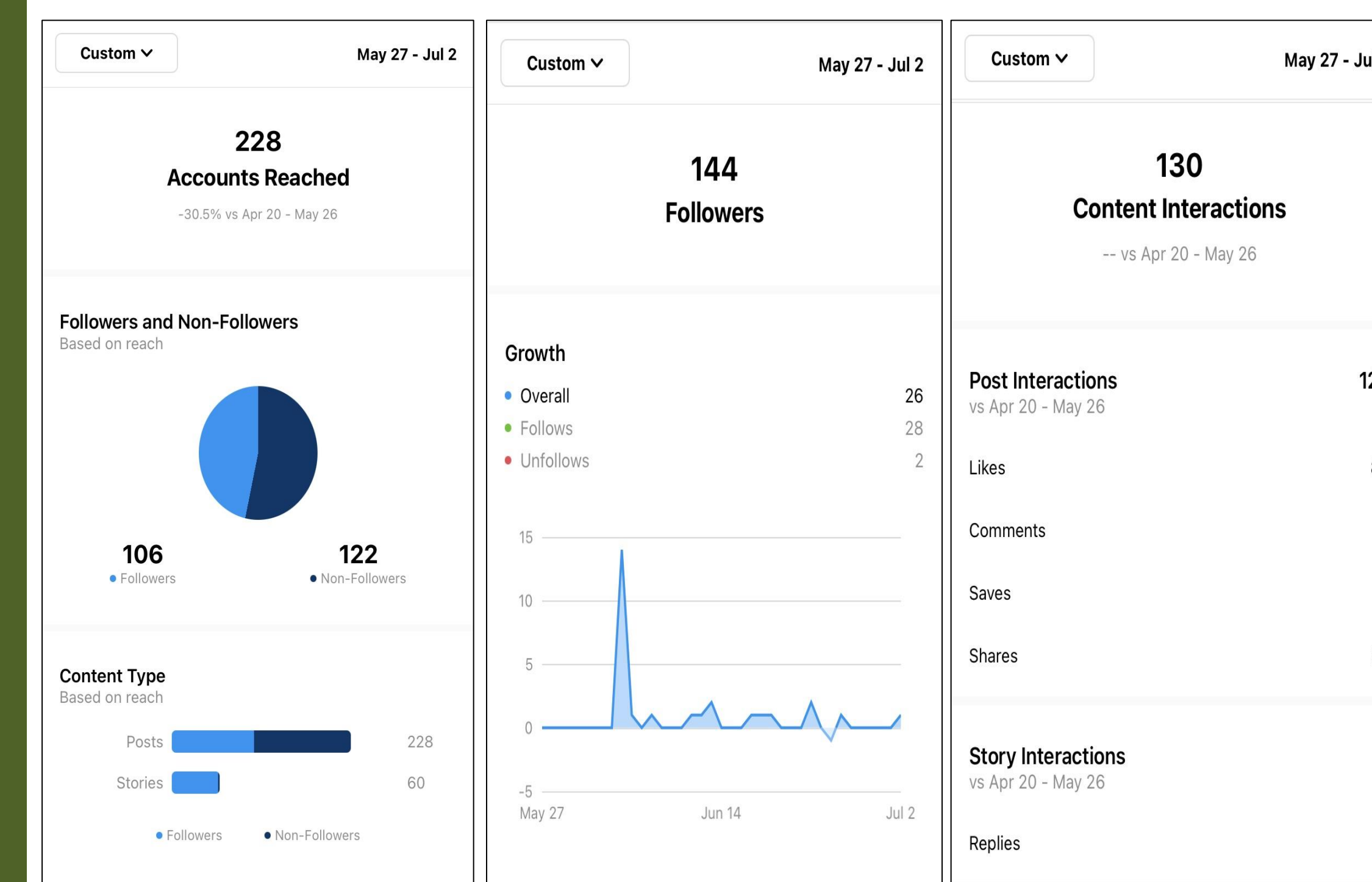
- Setting:**
 - private practice
- Population Served:**
 - mothers and well babies from 0-9 months of age
- Specialized Services:**
 - occupational therapy (OT)
 - lactation support
 - feeding and breast-feeding therapy services
- Payment Model:**
 - out-of-pocket payment method, no insurance accepted

Learning Objectives

- Design and implement a maternal wellness-based stress management program
- Advocate for the role of occupational therapy in women's health by developing partnerships with providers in the community
- Create a universal screening tool to specifically assess perceived maternal stress

Evaluation and Outcomes

- Faculty Mentor Feedback**
- Instagram Data and Analytics**



Identified Needs

- Prenatal education and training on tethered oral tissues
- Expanding community collaboration and diversifying clientele
- Prenatal or postnatal education on milestones and development

Project Description

- Purpose:** to create a wellness-based stress management program for pregnant black women to:
 - reduce perceived stressors
 - provide cost-effective, sustainable stress management and relaxation techniques
 - connect pregnant women of color to local resources
 - promote understanding of the role of OT in occupational therapy

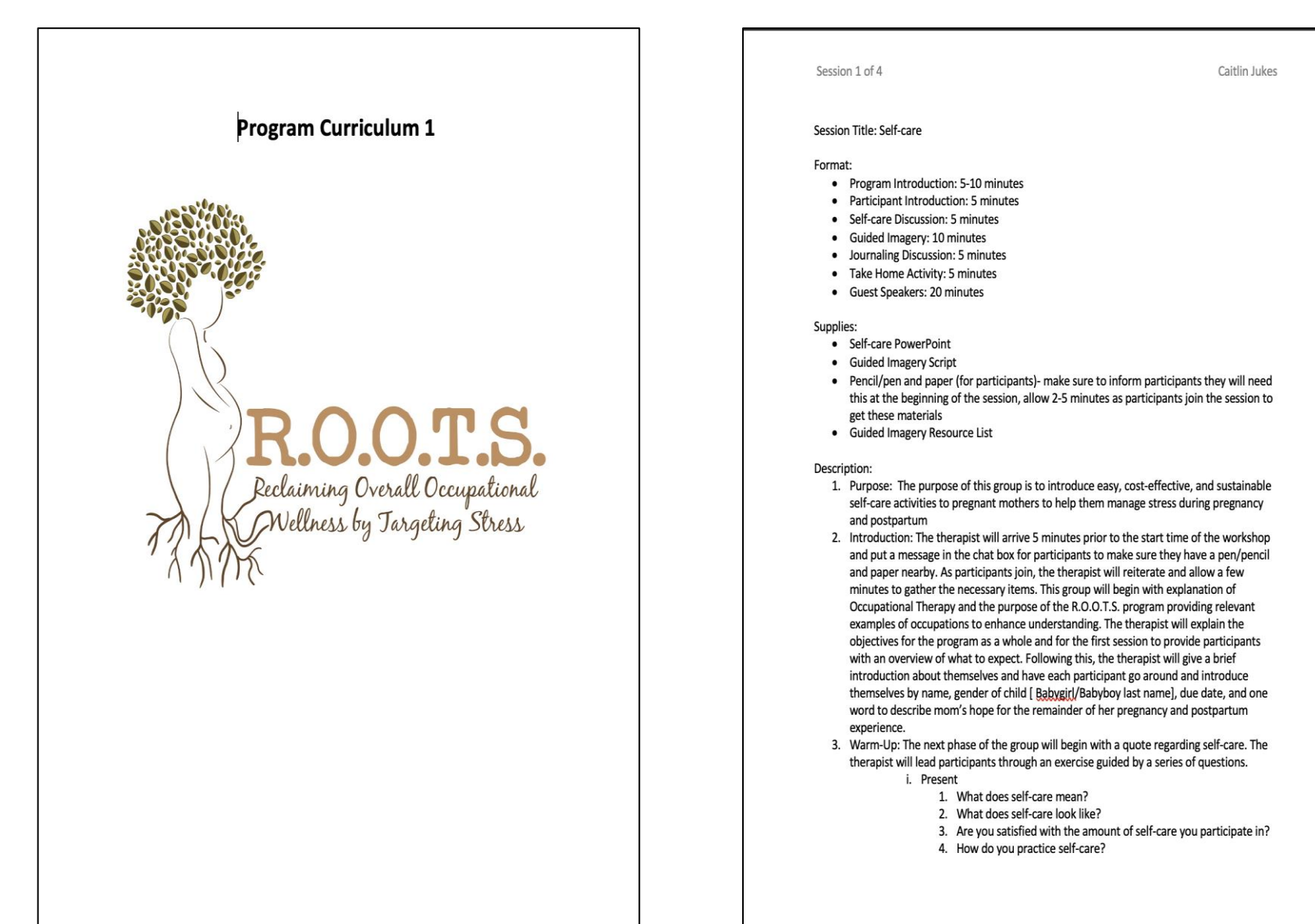
Literature Review

- Lack of evidence regarding medical and non-medical intervention deemed effective for this population
- Chronic Stress**
 - Health implications associated with prolonged cyclical exposure to stressors (Latendresse, 2009)
 - Concept of allostatic load attributed to experiences such as harsher punishment in schools, lower pay for adults, being pulled over when driving and structural racism (Leiser, 2018)
 - Black women have higher allostatic load, in part due to epigenetics (Christopher and Simpson, 2014)
 - Moderators of stress have been identified as optimism, access to satisfactory and sufficient social supports and adequate coping skills (Latendresse, 2009)
- Determinants of Health**
 - Impact of slavery on current social and structural guidelines that prevents communities of color from culturally appropriate and quality care (Crear-Perry et. al, 2020)
- Effective Solutions**
 - Emphasis on the interplay between clinical and community supports. (Christopher and Simpson, 2014; Leiser, 2018)
 - Low-cost, easily sustainable relaxation interventions such as guided imagery have proven to be effective in reducing biological and perceived stress levels in pregnant women (Jallo et. al, 2014; Wesley, 2006)

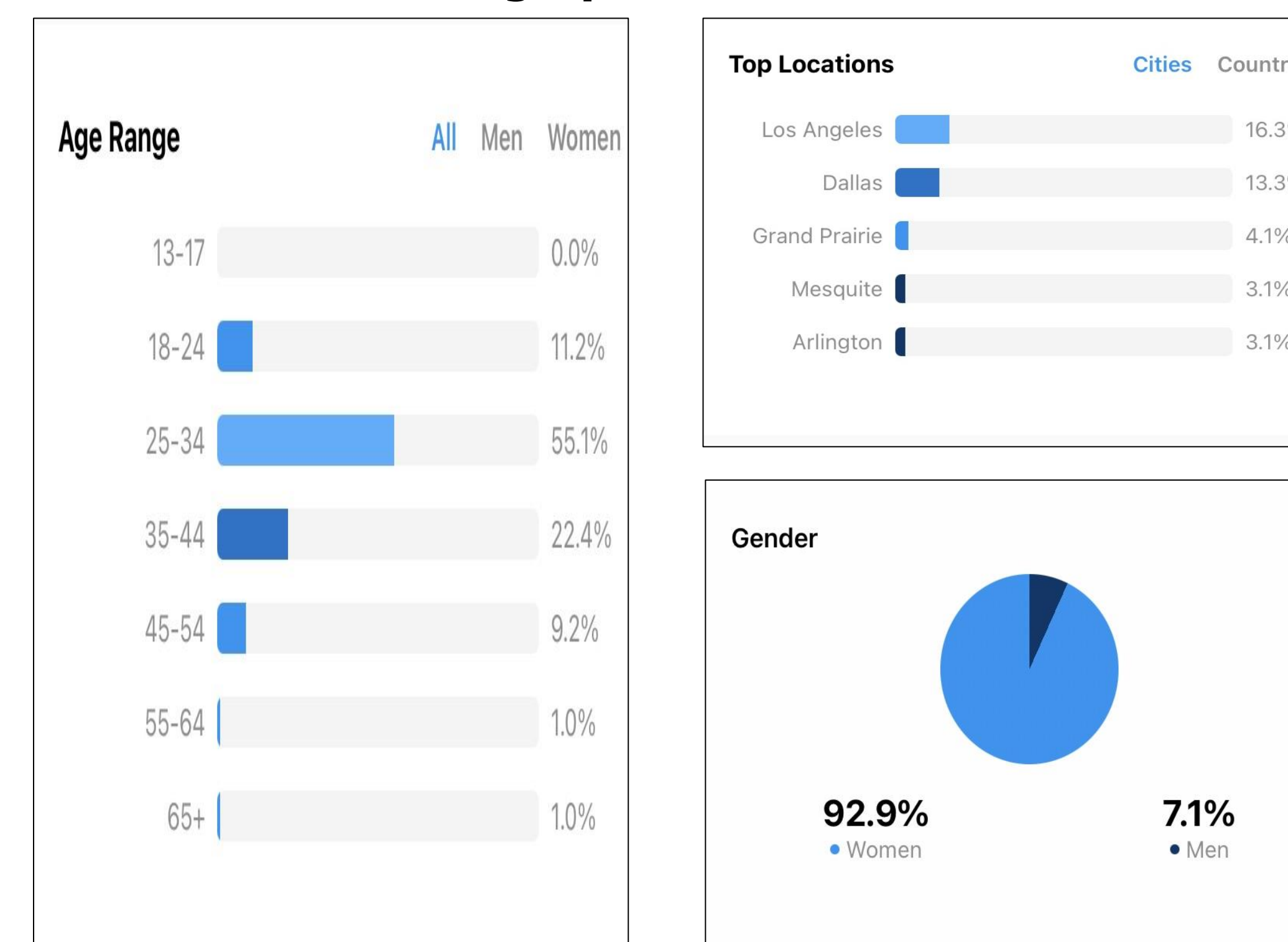
Program Description

- Designed to service 5-7 black pregnant women in the 2nd to 3rd trimester (12-28 weeks)
- 60-90-minute work shops 1x/week for 4 weeks virtually on the Zoom platform
- Low participant registration
- Disseminated information online through weekly blog posts for 4 weeks

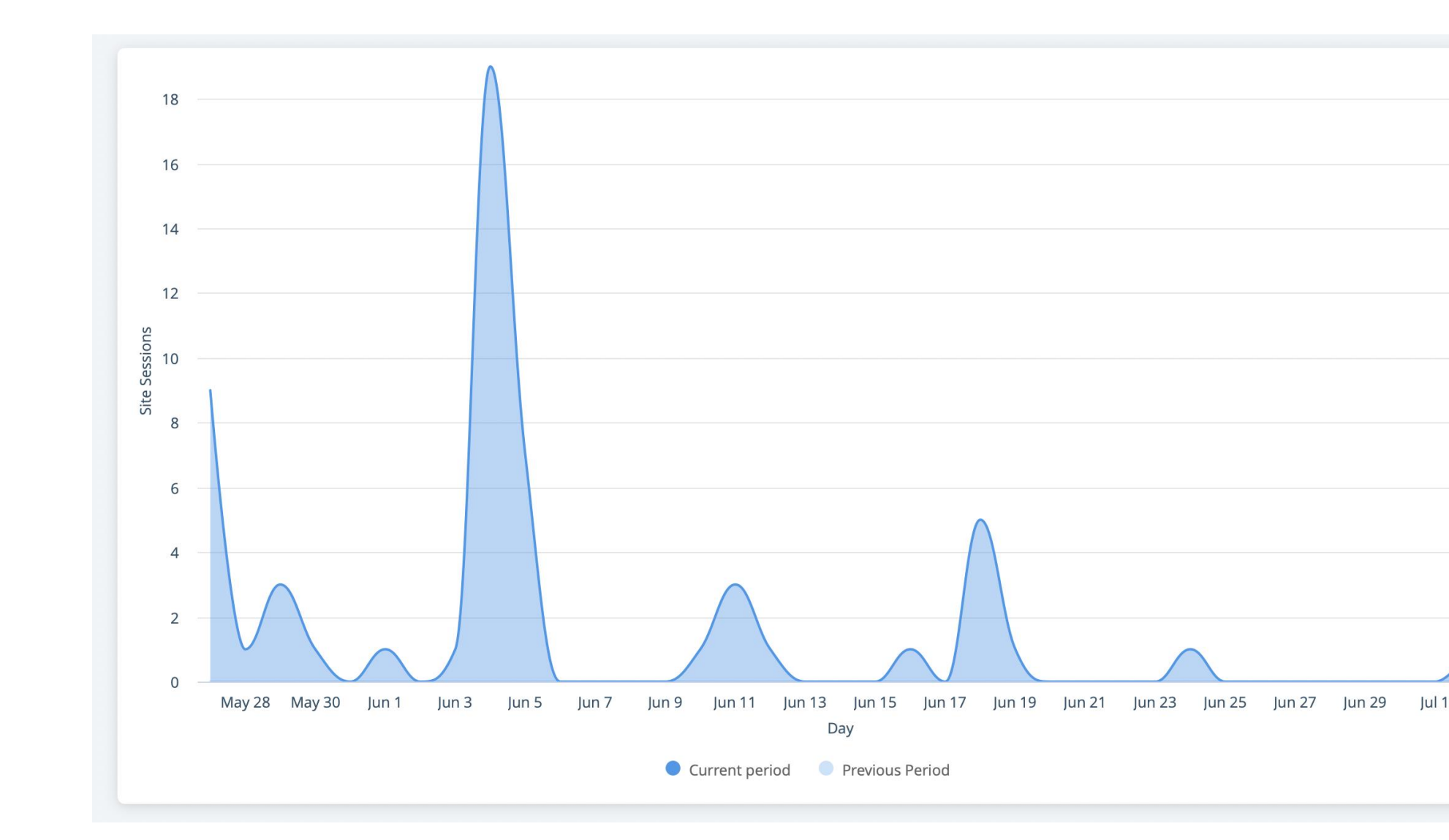
- Topics:**
 - Week 1** • Self-Care
 - Week 2** • Social Participation
 - Week 3** • Nutrition & Exercise
 - Week 4** • Rest & Sleep



Follower Demographics

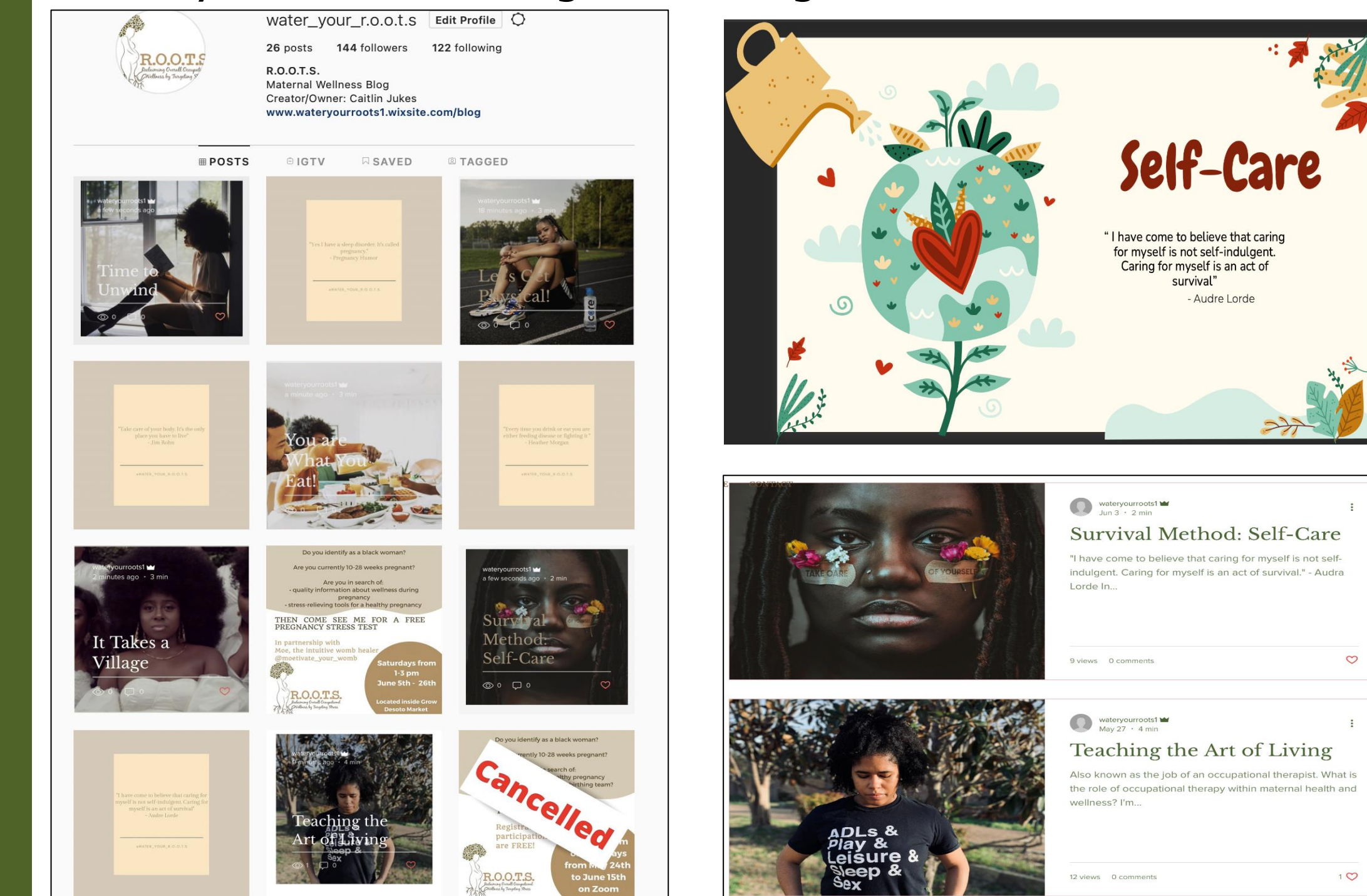


Blog Site Data and Analytics



Scholarly Deliverables

- The Program Curriculum
- The Perceived Maternal Stress Screening Tool
- Workshop Activities
- A List of Black Birth Workers in the DFW Area
- Weekly Blog and Instagram Posts
- Analytics from the Blog and Instagram Site



Discussion/Implications

- Discussion**
 - Cost-effective, sustainable, relaxation-based interventions are necessary to assist in combatting the black maternal health crisis
 - Viewers displayed highest interest and engagement with guided imagery and social support content
- Limitations**
 - Covid-19 pandemic impacted program marketing
 - Virtual delivery model and experimental nature of the program
 - Low participant registration
- Implications for Future Practice**
 - Occupational therapists holistic, individualized approach make them uniquely suited to treat this population
 - Further research is needed to determine the effectiveness of preventative wellness-based programming with a face to face or in person component

Acknowledgements

- A huge thank you to my family and close friends for their continuous support throughout this entire experience
- A special thank you to Dr. Friberg for your guidance and mentorship in helping me make this program come to fruition

References (Available Upon Request)