



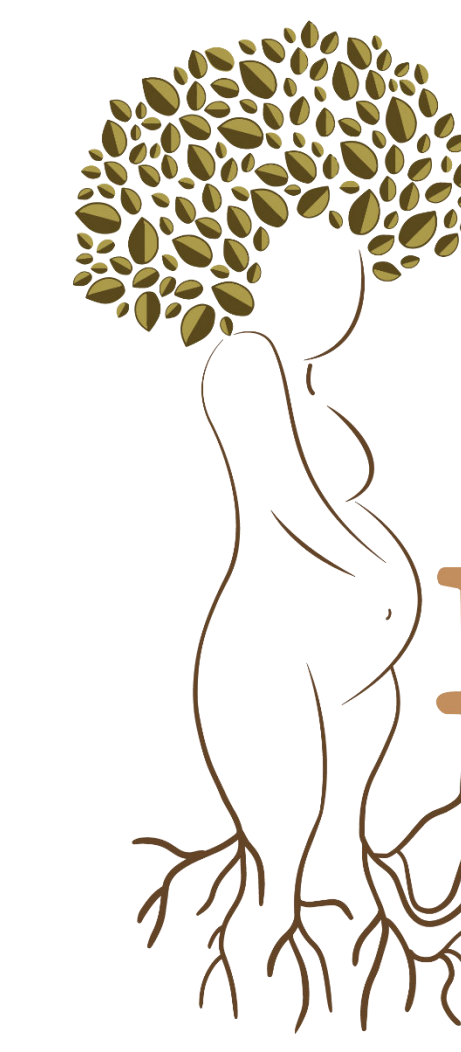
Addressing The Black Maternal Health Crisis Through A Stress Management Program

Caitlin Jukes OTD/S

Faculty Mentor: Danielle Friberg, OTD, OTR/L

Site Mentor: Marissa Yahil, OTR/L, IBCLC, CEO, Founder

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

Identified Needs

1. Prenatal education and training on tethered oral tissues
2. Expanding community collaboration and diversifying clientele
3. Prenatal or postnatal education on milestones and development

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)

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

Project Description

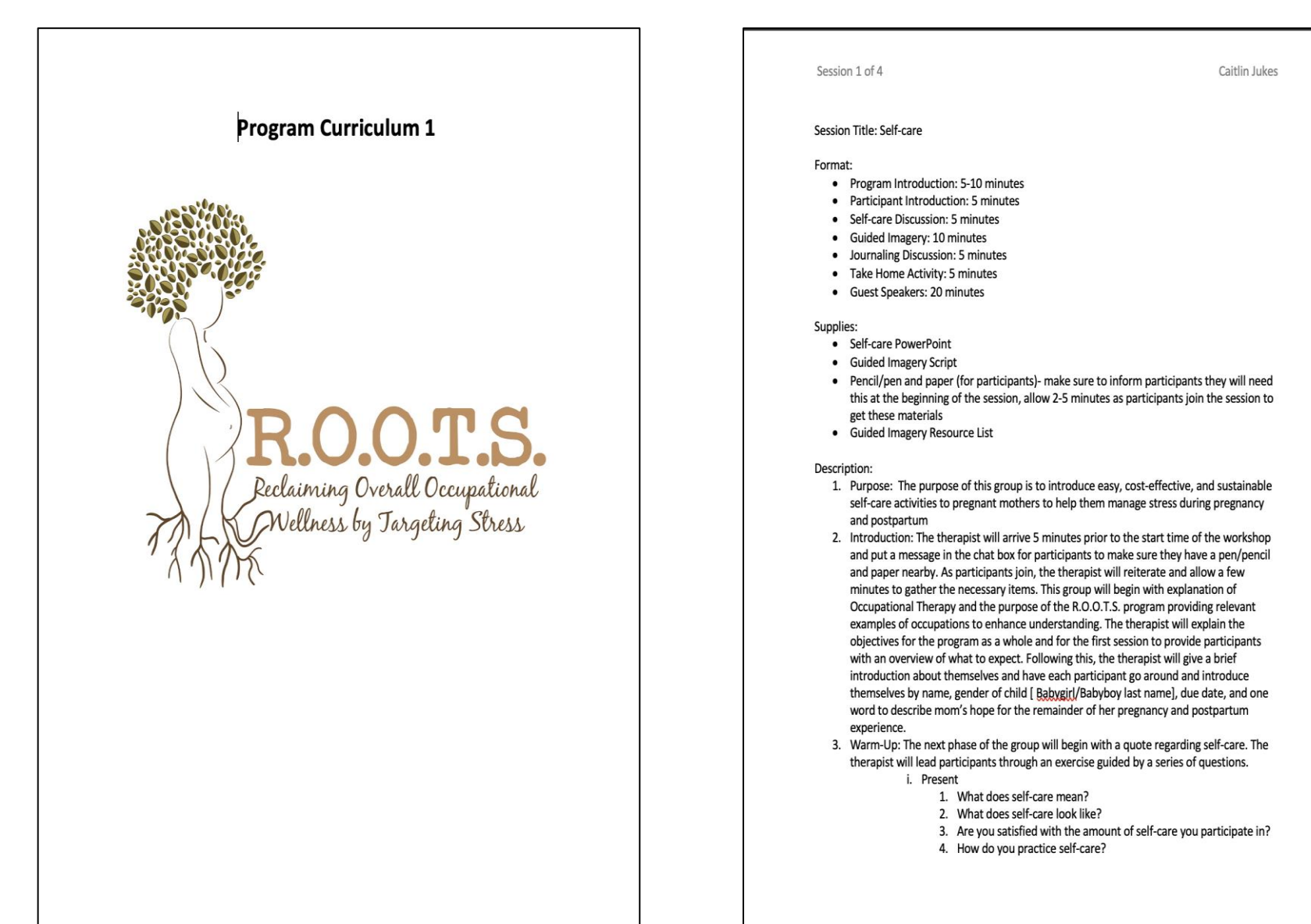
- **Purpose:** to create a wellness-based stress management program for pregnant black women to:
 - reduce perceived stressors
 - provide cost-effective, sustainable stress management and relaxation techniques
 - connect pregnant women of color to local resources
 - promote understanding of the role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

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

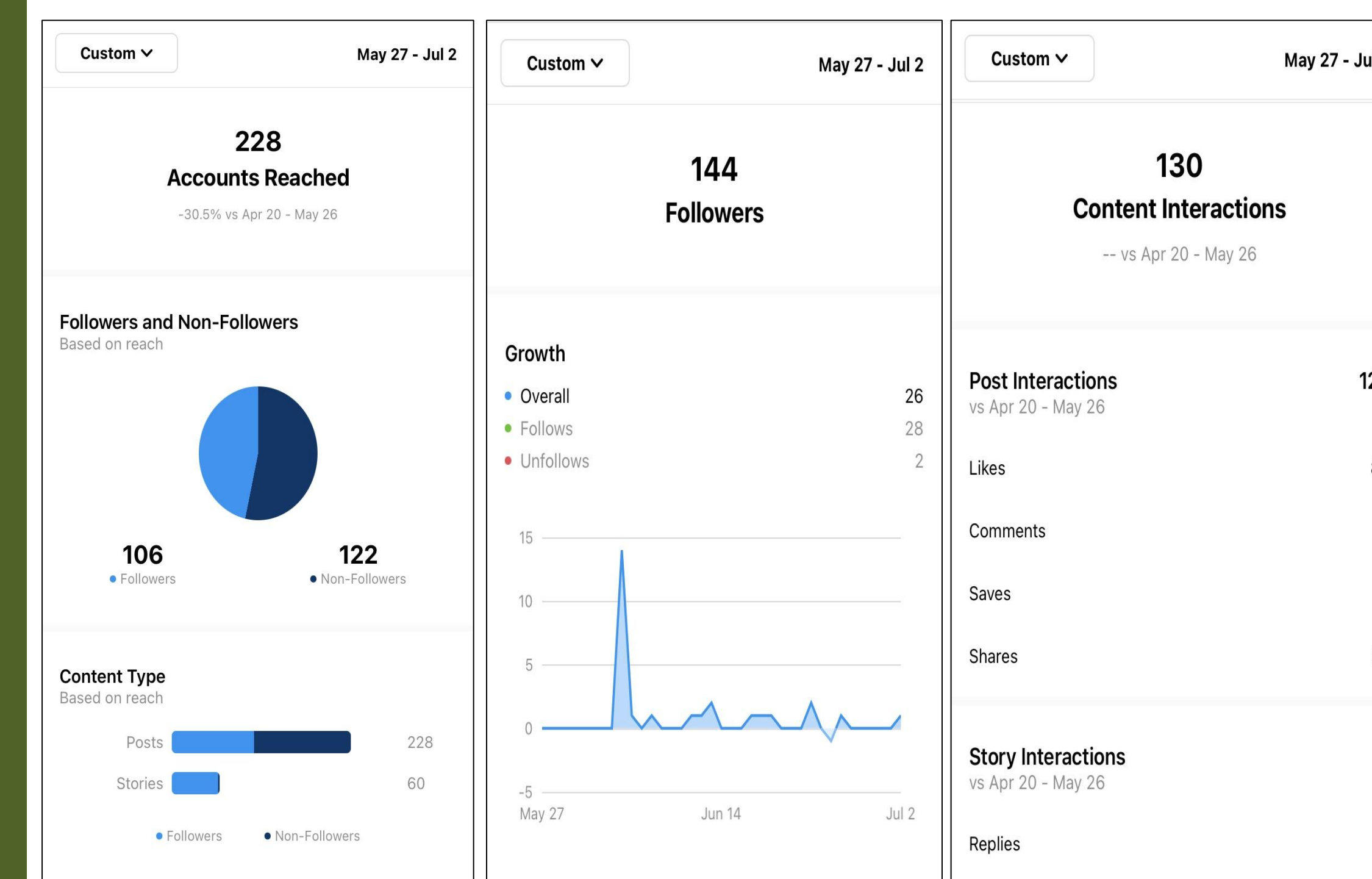
Topics:

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

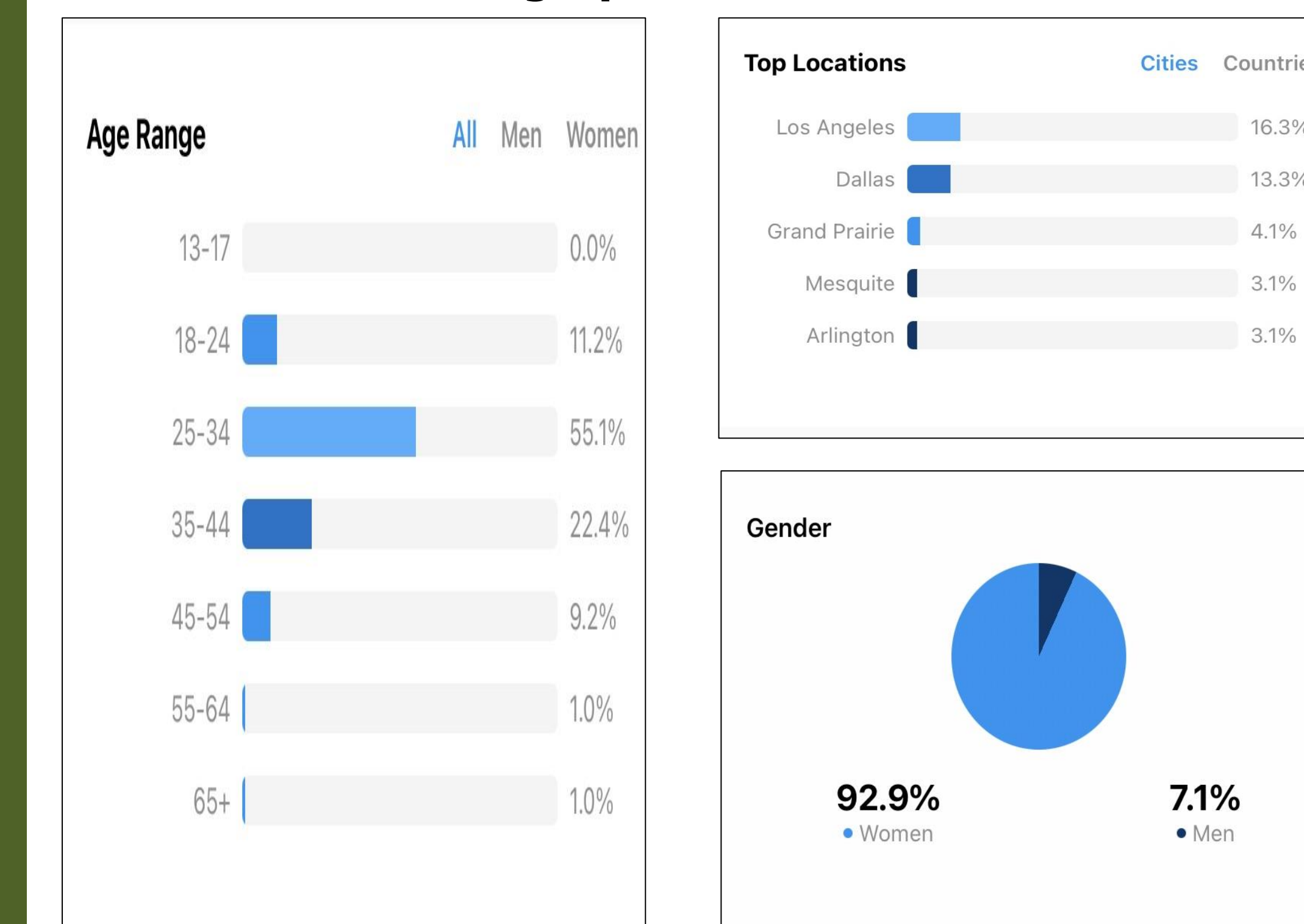


Evaluation and Outcomes

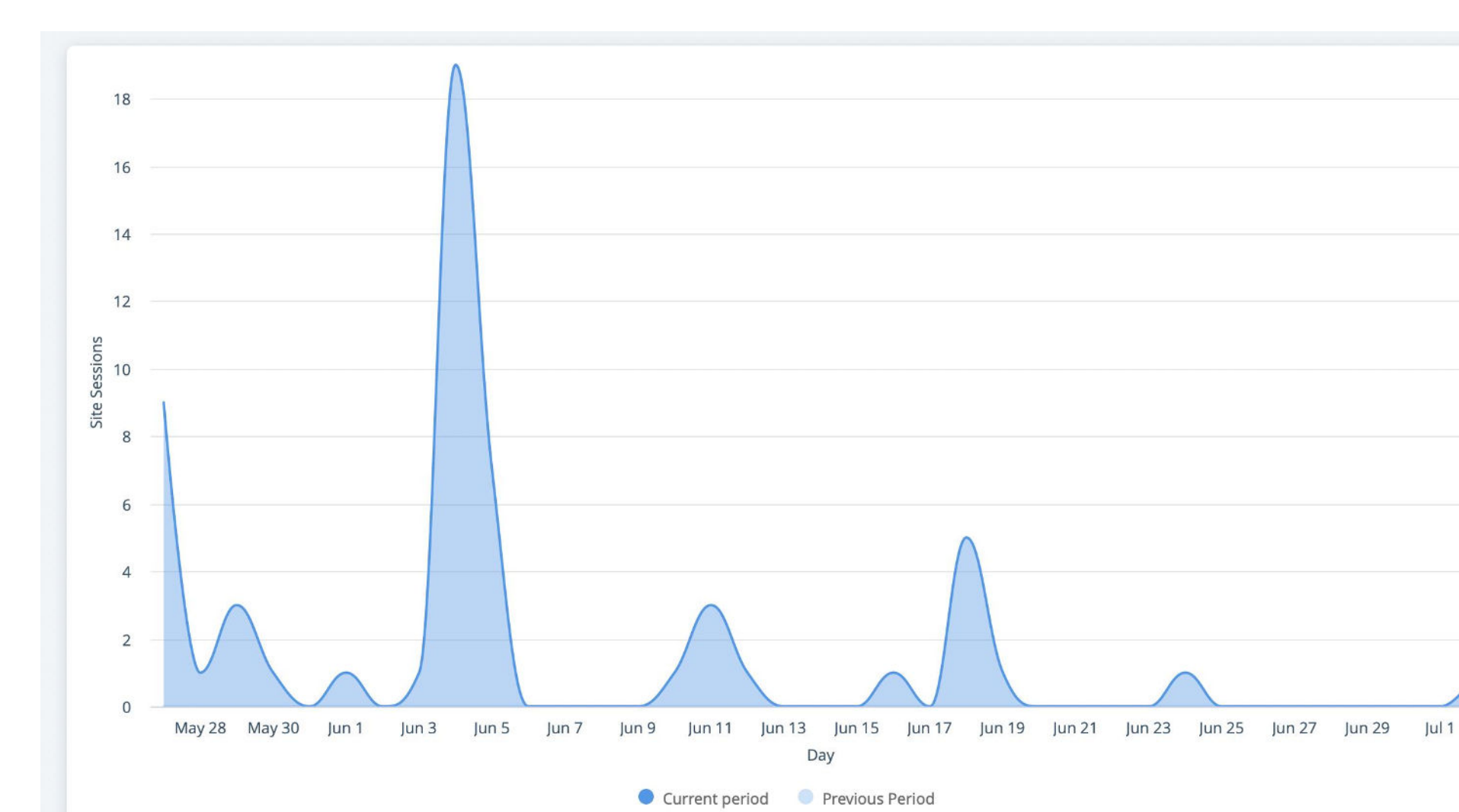
- **Faculty Mentor Feedback**
- **Instagram Data and Analytics**



Follower Demographics

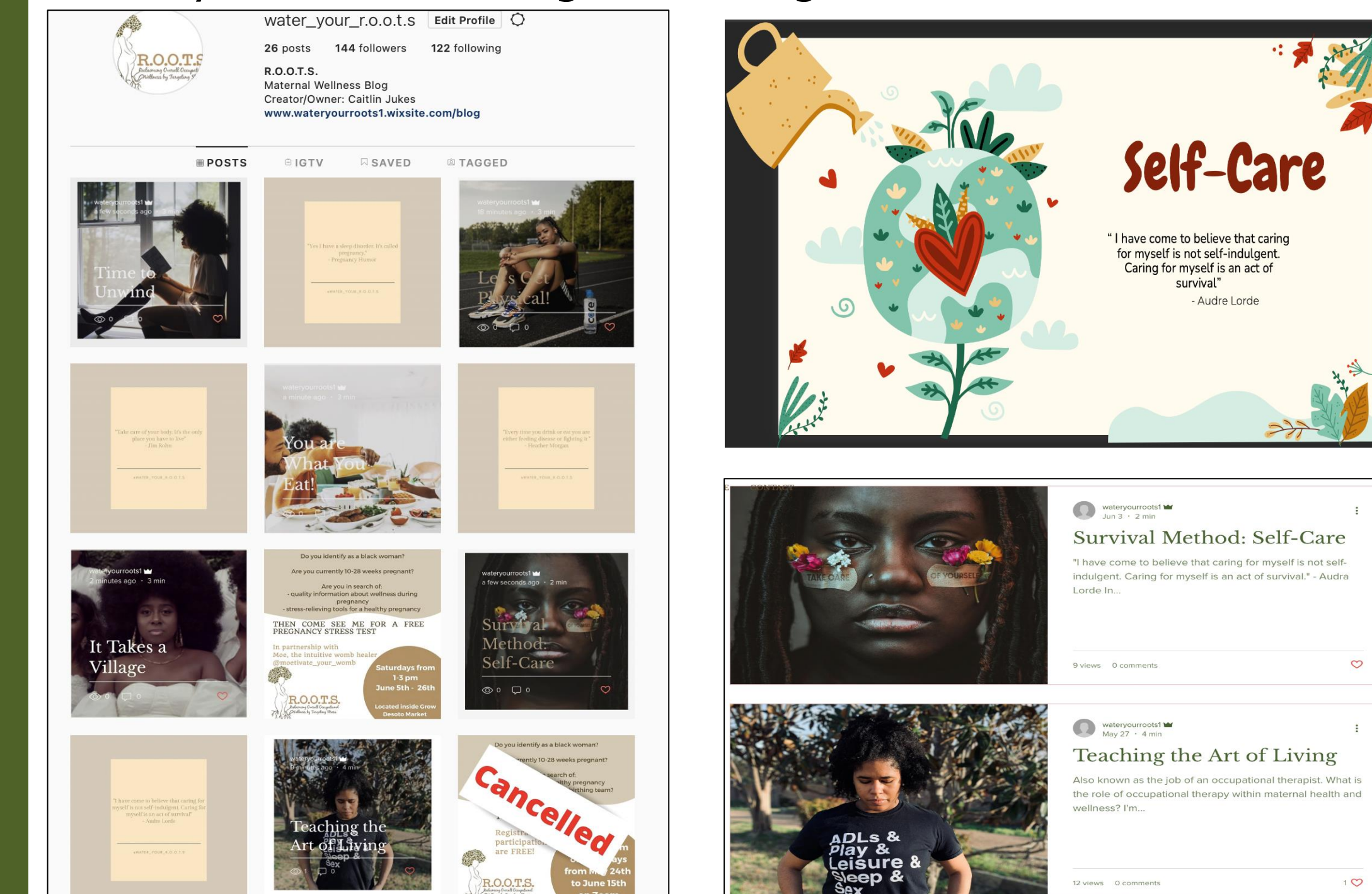


Blog Site Data and Analytics



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)