

Thriving Families

Summary of Research on MotherWise

An independent, federally-funded study found long-term positive impacts of the MotherWise program on family outcomes. In this randomized controlled trial, those assigned to MotherWise reported better relationship and conflict management skills, less approval of violence, greater relationship happiness, and more use of constructive conflict management behaviors than those assigned to the no-treatment control group. In addition, those enrolled in MotherWise had fewer unintended pregnancies in the year following enrollment than those in the control group (Patnaik & Wood, 2021), and, by two and a half years after enrollment, the families in MotherWise had experienced fewer relationship transitions (Patnaik et al., 2022). Another published paper with this same sample and medical chart data show that those in the MotherWise program were 55% less likely to have a preterm birth (Rhoades et al., 2022). They also had healthier baby birth weights, and were more likely to attend their postpartum checkup and report using contraceptives at that appointment (Mazzoni et al., in press) and, among those who identified as Black or African American, the program also reduced postpartum depression (Allen et al., in press).

- Allen, M. O. T., Rhoades, G. K., & Mazzoni, S. E. (2023). Individual-oriented relationship education and postpartum depression: The impact of the MotherWise program. *Couple and Family Psychology: Research and Practice*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cfp0000241>
- Baumgartner, S. & Paulsell, D. (2019). MotherWise: Implementation of a healthy marriage and relationship education program for pregnant and new mothers. In (Vol. OPRE Report # 2019-42). Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Mazzoni, S. E., *Allen, M. O. T., Hyer, J., Peña, R. & Rhoades, G. K. (in press). Impact of prenatal group healthy relationship education on postpartum contraception. *Women's Health Reports*.
- Patnaik, A., & Wood, R. G. (2021). Healthy marriage and relationship education for expectant and new mothers: The one-year impacts of MotherWise. In (Vol. OPRE Report #2021-183). Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Patnaik, A., Gonzalez, K., & Wood, R. G. (2022). Healthy marriage and relationship education for expectant and new mothers: The 30-month impacts of MotherWise. In (Vol. OPRE Report #2022-240). Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Patnaik, A., Wood, R. G., & Gonzalez, K. (2022). Impacts of healthy marriage and relationship education for expectant and new mothers. *Family Relations*. Advanced online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12818>
- Rhoades, G. K., Allen, M. O. T., Peña, R., Hyer, J., & Mazzoni, S. E. (2022). Relationship education for women during pregnancy: The impact of MotherWise on birth outcomes. *Family Process*, 61, 1134– 1143. <https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12756>

