

[Onscreen] Hear Her. Hear Her Concerns. Montika's Story. Supporting Sarah through her postpartum journey. CDC, HHS, and Office of Minority Health (OMH) logos.

Montika: I'm Montika Collins. I am in Tulsa, Oklahoma. I'm a nurse and an internationally board certified lactation consultant, a health and wellness coach, and an herbalist. When I first met Sarah, she had the issues with her baby, but I also could tell that she had some other things going on.

[Onscreen] Sarah outside with text "Sarah was experiencing postpartum depression."

Montika: There were a couple of tearful moments when we were talking, and so I asked her about that. How often was she, you know, getting tearful like that? And, you know, we just kind of started talking.

Sarah: When Montika came into our lives as our lactation consultant. It seemed pretty cut and dry. She was going to help me get my breastfeeding journey, you know, on the right path, and then we'd be good to go. But it ended up becoming more to me as someone who was genuinely interested in helping me and my family. She just said, "How are you doing? I know there's been a lot of changes recently."

Montika : My belief, my mentor always said, You heal the mom, you heal the baby.

[Onscreen] Picture of Sarah holding baby, both smiling.

Montika: So my focus is looking at them as a whole. You're looking at a mind, a body, a spiritual. It's the whole picture of not having support and not feeling heard as a mom and having someone that steps in and says, you know, "How are you feeling? What's going on? I'm going to meet you where you're at, and we're going to come up with solutions that are going to work for you and your family."

[Onscreen] Sarah, her children, and more family members posing with smiles and arms around each other.

Sarah: Everyone who saw me thought, You're doing so great. You know, your baby's so cute. He's so healthy and you look great.

[Onscreen] Sarah sitting on a swing, looking down at her hands.

Sarah: But I was hiding the fact that I was totally not okay. So Montika helped me to know that it was okay, that I wasn't okay. But it wasn't my fault. That it was just something I needed help with, that I didn't know how to ask for help with.

[Onscreen] Picture of Sarah and Montika smiling at each other.

Sarah: It was the difference between depression and life for me.

Montika: Once the baby gets here, I feel like everybody is really interested and helpful. Like that first week. But then everybody goes home, you know, and goes back to their lives. We have to do better about follow-up care with moms. That postpartum period, in my opinion, needs the most support.

[Onscreen] Picture of Sarah and Montika smiling at camera.

Sarah: One of the reasons why I felt so confident in the care that Montika was providing because every time she would come it was for lactation purposes, but it always ended up being the only person I saw that whole week. And I just thought, I just have to keep this to myself until it gets better. But then Montika really in her genuine desire to help, saw me and heard me, and knew you need a little bit more than lactation help. And really kind of pushed me toward getting help, because I wasn't okay.

[Onscreen] Picture of Sarah and Montika sitting together and smiling at camera.

Sarah: She gave me the courage to seek the help that I needed at that time.

Montika: I want women to understand that it's not easy and that we don't have to carry the responsibility. You have to ask yourself the question, Am I okay? Because as a mom, we don't ask ourselves, Are we okay? As a mom, we (say), "Is the baby okay? Is my husband okay?" But we're not asking, are we okay? And those things, um, that's the most important question.

[Onscreen] Sarah and her children outside, smiling at camera.

Montika: Because if the mom isn't okay, then the baby is not going to be okay.

Montika: Hear Her.

[Onscreen] Picture of Sarah and Montika smiling for camera. Hear Her. Hear Her Concerns. Learn more at cdc.gov/hearher/ AIAN. CDC, DDHHS, and OMH logos.