

When Being Strong Starts to Hurt: A Real Talk on Black Maternal Mental Health



“You’re so strong.”

“You always figure it out.”

“I don’t know how you do it all.”

We’ve all heard it. Hell, we’ve probably said it to other women. But somewhere along the way, being called “strong” stopped feeling like a compliment and started to feel like a curse.

Because here’s the truth: strength without support becomes survival. And too many black mothers are out here surviving in silence.

Black women are three to four times more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications in the U.S., and it’s not because we’re broken. It’s because we’re dismissed.

Misunderstood.

Labeled as dramatic when we advocate for ourselves, and ignored when we don’t. But maternal mental health isn’t just about what happens in the delivery room.

It’s about what happens when the visitors stop showing up and the baby blues turn into full-blown depression. When you feel guilty for wanting to rest, are touched out, emotionally numb, and still expected to keep everyone alive and the house clean.

We carry generations of strength.
But we’ve also inherited silence.

That “don’t let them see you cry” energy that makes us tuck away our trauma like it’s laundry we’ll fold later. It’s the myth of the “strong black mom” and it’s time to put that myth to bed.

You can be nurturing and need nurturing, love your baby and still grieve the version of you that feels lost in motherhood.

So What Do We Do?

We start telling the truth and normalizing asking for help; not after we’ve broken down, but before.

We retreat from treating our exhaustion like a personality trait in order to make room for our soft, sacred, scared parts and not just the parts that “get it done.”

And as supporters, we check on the ones who “look like they’re doing great.” Because sometimes the loudest laughs are hiding the deepest fatigue.

You Deserve More Than Survival

If you’re a mother reading this, I want you to know:

You don’t have to earn rest.
You don’t have to explain your sadness.
You are allowed to need help.
You are allowed to receive it.

Strength is beautiful. But so is softness.

Need Support?

Whether you’re a new mama, a grieving mama, or someone trying to become a mama, you’re not alone. If you’re ready for deeper support, I’m currently accepting new therapy clients. But if you’re not quite there yet, or need something immediate, here are some trusted mental health resources:

Postpartum Support International (PSI)
1-800-944-4773 or www.postpartum.net

- Free helpline & support groups for moms, dads, and partners.

Therapy for Black Girls
www.therapyforblackgirls.com

- Culturally competent therapists who get it.

National Maternal Mental Health Hotline – 1-833-943-5746

- 24/7 free & confidential support, available in English & Spanish.