

ABIPA – ASHEVILLE BUNCOMBE INSTITUTE OF PARITY ACHIEVEMENT



The Psychological Importance of Mother's Day

By JéWana Grier-McEachin, Executive Director

Mothers play a key role in helping determine who we become in life.

JéWana Grier-McEachin. Photo: Red Angle Photography

The women in our lives—our moms, grandmothers, favorite aunts, teachers, and friends—shape and define us in ways both large and small. They guide us, nurture us, and help form the foundation of who we become.

From the moment we begin developing in the womb, our mothers are looking out for us, providing the safe environment and nourishment we need to thrive. But mom gives us more than a healthy start. Scientists now understand that a mother's emotional state during pregnancy also influences her child's early temperament. Mothers who experience a calm, restful pregnancy tend to have calmer babies. Those exposed to elevated levels of stress

during their pregnancies have babies who are more anxious.

As We Grow and Connect

Our ability to connect with the world around us begins with our connection to mom. In the 1950s, psychologists studied how the mother-child bond shaped a child's capacity to form lasting relationships. Children who were loved,



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nurtured, and raised in a safe, secure environment typically grew into confident, well-adjusted adults. Conversely, infants who spent their formative years in high-stress environments, unsure whether their needs would be met, often became anxious adults who struggled to build meaningful bonds.

Throughout childhood, we look to our mothers to teach us how to relate to the world. And while that initial bond with our biological mother is important, healthy attachment extends beyond biology. Foster parents, adoptive parents, and other primary caregivers play

the same essential role. Children with a close attachment to their caregivers develop the tools they need to become well-adjusted adults.

I often return to the saying, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." When we look at our world today, we must reflect on the psychological importance and impact of mothers on our society. As we celebrate this year, we should also think ahead and strategize for the years to come.

Happy Mother's Day!



What is in Your Maternal Family Health Tree?

by JaiEssence McEachin, MPH

It is fitting that Women's Health Week begins on Mother's Day.

JaiEssence McEachin, MPH. Photo: Red Angle Photography

With that in mind, this month can also be an opportunity to begin mapping your maternal family health tree. In talking with my mother and grandmother, I learned that my great-great-grandmother, Hester Brown, passed away from a stroke related to hypertension and diabetes, along with renal failure. My great-grandmother, Oneeda Webb, also had diabetes, kidney disease, and a history of strokes and aneurysms.

My grandmother experienced a stroke in 2024. She also has a history of diabetes and is currently on dialysis due to low kidney function. My mother, JéWana Grier-McEachin, recently began a low-dose blood pressure medication at the start of this

year. All of this information is vital to me because it gives me a clearer picture of what I may be genetically predisposed to, and what I can address now through a preventative lifestyle.

Many conditions have strong genetic links. The more we know about our family's health, the better snapshot we have of our own. Knowing your family health history can be just as important as knowing your personal health numbers. After all, the Human Genome Project estimates that we have between 20,000 and 25,000 genes in our bodies, and they serve as a roadmap for our overall function and health.

According to the article *Why Knowing Your Family Health History Matters* by Dr. Nikhila Reddy, "For female patients or patients who have a uterus and ovaries, it can be helpful to ask their mother or parent around what age they started menstruating and the age they reached menopause. Sometimes

patients who are in their early 40s come in concerned about menopause symptoms, such as hot flashes, but they're still getting their menstrual cycle, which can be confusing."

Dr. Reddy says, "Patients in this scenario are likely premenopausal, indicating that they may reach menopause in the near future, and will eventually stop menstruating. If their mother or parent reached menopause in their 40s, then the patient might experience menopause around the same age, instead of reaching menopause around the average age of 50. It provides a clue as to what's going on and helps reassure the patient that this is a normal physiologic process."

Being familiar with our family members' health helps us, and our doctors, stay on top of both mental and physical well-being. Conditions such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and certain cancers have genetic links and often run in families. In some cases, a



well-researched family health history can help doctors identify gene disorders or chromosomal abnormalities that may lead to conditions such as breast cancer, colon cancer, or cystic fibrosis.

My charge to our readers this month is simple: begin developing your Maternal Family Health Tree. The knowledge you gather today can support your health for years to come.

ABIPA

PO Box 448, Asheville, NC 28802
Office (828) 673-8195 • Fax (828) 251-8365
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