

# Desirée L. Israel, LCSW-C, LICSW

Reproductive Mental Health Leader | Baltimore, MD



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Accomplished and results-driven reproductive mental health leader with a legacy of empowering individuals and families with the resources to succeed. Strong foundation in program evaluation, planning, and management. Personable and engaging with a unique blend of leadership, interpersonal, and business acumen. Ability to coordinate with clients and other key stakeholders while remaining responsive to their needs. Devoted to liberating birthing people and families by using African-centered modalities and rituals to achieve holistic wellness. Envisions obtaining a challenging new leadership role for an organization that values fresh perspectives and equality over the status quo.

## EDUCATION

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Ph.D. in Social Work (In Progress) | Widener University | Exp: 2025  
Master of Social Work (School Social Work) | Morgan State University | 2011  
Bachelor of Science in Social Work | Morgan State University | 2008

## CLINICAL & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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### Founder/Lead Consultant

Aug 2015 - present

MotherlandCo., LLC (Baltimore, MD)

- Leveraged background in perinatal mood disorders and reproductive justice to launch MotherlandCo., which provides mental health therapy and support to families suffering from perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs), while maintaining accountability for day-to-day operations.
- Established a firm foundation to substantiate my long-term vision by hiring and training a team of professionals in daily operations, including PMAD screening.
- Partnered with various local and national organizations, including birth equality, reproductive justice, and perinatal mental health groups, to provide families with the resources and knowledge to succeed.
- Synthesized anti-oppressive and anti-racist principles with liberation frameworks to develop bespoke curriculum and syllabi; and paneled with a range of payer systems, such as Medicaid, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Cigna, United Healthcare, Optum, and Aetna.

### MSW Off-Site Field Instructor

Feb 2021 - Aug 2021

Widener University (Chester, PA)

- Assisted in integrating social work theory, practice, and research into learning objectives and tasks while working in a contract capacity as an Off-Site Instructor for Widener University.
- Monitored and reviewed student assignments, evaluations, and performance to identify strengths and opportunities for growth while supplying constructive feedback and support.
- Enhanced coursework by consulting with the Faculty Liaison regarding learning contracts, performance issues, and the integration of fieldwork and coursework.
- Spearheaded and addressed a mission-critical philosophical review of the Social Work Practice Families by incorporating decolonizing models into the syllabi.

### Clinical Services Supervisor

Nov 2020 - Aug 2021

Pressley Ridge, Inc. (Towson, MD)

- Designed and developed an electronic health record system (MyEvolv) to fit the needs of the program and participants in coordination with internal stakeholders, as a Clinical Services Supervisor.

- Forged and maintained robust working relationships with local public agencies.
- Championed clinical and case management staff performance by providing technical guidance, direction, and consultation; and provided direct supervision of all LMSW Transition Care Coordinators per COMAR guidelines.
- Distilled programmatic intervention modalities and outcome goals to enhance training capacity while documenting notes in the software system, MyEvolv.
- Cultivated continuous improvement by helping develop new agency policies, procedures, and programs.
- Monitored the flow of information between clients and agency staff while simultaneously remaining cognizant of budgetary issues and constraints.

**Transition Team Coordinator**

Nov 2019 - Nov 2020

Pressley Ridge, Inc. (Towson, MD)

- Evaluated and modified the plan of care on an ongoing basis while monitoring the participant's progress toward the completion of established goals, as the Transition Team Coordinator.
- Networked with community organizations to refer youth for education, mental health, physical health, support and/or vocational training.
- Empowered participants by connecting them with vital community resources, spanning the areas of child care, parenting, breastfeeding, and doula support.
- Updated and maintained client case records while working in a fast-paced, team-oriented environment.

**Off-Site Therapist**

Nov 2018 - Nov 2019

Better Tomorrow Starts Today Services, Inc. (Baltimore, MD)

- Maintained accountability for completing individual and family therapy sessions, as an Off-Site Therapist at Better Tomorrow Starts Today Services.
- Adhered to all COMAR and CARF standards and BTST agency policies by documenting services rendered in a timely fashion.

**Family Life Educator**

Sep 2016 - Nov 2018

The Children's Guild, Inc. (Baltimore, MD)

- Coordinated with children in treatment foster care and family members to provide a range of critical clinical and case management services, as a Family Life Educator at The Children's Guild.
- Enabled foster parents to utilize available resources while integrating the components of daily living in an educational manner.

**Social Work Medical Case Manager**

Sep 2014 - Feb 2015 & Aug 2015 - Sep 2016

Healthcare Access Maryland (Baltimore, MD)

- Navigated newly arrived foster care children through various elements of healthcare services, including medical, dental, and behavioral health.
- Utilized extensive background and knowledge to work with "high risk" youth, including children requiring multiple psychotropic medications and high-intensity services, while remaining attentive to their complex behavioral and psychiatric needs.

**Social Worker II (Child Protective Services)**

Mar 2015 - Aug 2015

Baltimore County Dept. of Social Services (Baltimore, MD)

- Spearheaded and led investigations into suspected child abuse and neglect by conducting rigorous risk and safety assessments, as a Child Protective Services Social Worker for the County of Baltimore.
- Mitigated the risk of future maltreatment through the development of comprehensive service plans.
- Connected families with appropriate services while coordinating foster care and service direction with court staff and other key stakeholders.

**Social Worker**

Mar 2013 – Sep 2014

Seraaj Family Homes, Inc. (Towson, MD)

- Engaged children and families in one-on-one settings to understand their needs, while providing a range of case management services, as a Social Worker for Seraaj Family Homes.
- Gathered and analyzed information concerning child placement; and steadfastly assessed each child's unique needs, progress, and discharge planning.
- Linked youth and foster families to critical community resources; and updated and maintained detailed case notes throughout the process.

**Independent Contractor**

Sep 2012 – Feb 2013

Souldier Seyyid Solutions (Baltimore, MD)

- Maintained responsibility for providing social work consulting services to individuals, families, and human service agencies, while working autonomously as an independent contractor.
- Facilitated Licensure Academy on the LSWA/LGSW/LCSW-C levels.
- Provided support for foster parents in areas of recruitment and retention at Progressive Steps, Inc.
- Supervised and managed all aspects of the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Program at All Walks of Life, LLC, while remaining cognizant of budgetary constraints.

**Case Manager**

Jul – Sep 2011 &amp; Mar – Dec 2012

King Edwards, Inc. (Baltimore, MD)

- Investigated and identified areas of need and support for youth by assessing their level of success or progression, while serving as a Case Manager at King Edwards, Inc.
- Enhanced teamwide knowledge by facilitating regular team meetings to share key insights.
- Improved productivity by communicating and disseminating tasks to the Independent Living Specialist, while supplying ongoing support and guidance to new workers.
- Updated, filed, and maintained comprehensive youth case records and paperwork.

**School-Based Therapist**

Oct 2011 – Feb 2012

Change Health Systems, Inc. (Baltimore, MD)

- Provided a range of mental health services to youth in education programs, including assessment, prevention, case management, and treatment.
- Maintained a caseload of students in several Baltimore City Head Start Programs.

**MSW Practicum Student**

Sep 2010 – Apr 2011

Reginald Lewis High School (Baltimore, MD)

- Ensured a full understanding of the IEP process by analyzing and reviewing IEP records, while completing a practicum at a Baltimore-area high school.
- Liaised with students with special needs and staff to coordinate the delivery of educational services.
- Increased student engagement by utilizing the Manners Matter curriculum to develop a new Life Skills program, which enhanced student etiquette and social skills.
- Monitored student progress routinely by attending meetings with staff while maintaining accurate and timely records of the end-to-end IEP process.

**Child Care Worker**

Jun 2010 – Nov 2010

The Board of Child Care (Baltimore, MD)

- Maintained responsibility for performing various administrative tasks, such as logging events in the house logbook each night.
- Ensured an accurate census in the house by making overnight call-ins while providing supervision to residents throughout the night to ensure their whereabouts at all times.

**MSW Practicum Student**

Sep 2009 - Apr 2010

The Family Tree of Maryland (Baltimore, MD)

- Stimulated youths' social, emotional, and cognitive behaviors by facilitating the Parents' Anonymous Children's Program during anger management and parenting education sessions.
- Coordinated and led anonymous support group sessions with parents who were first-time offenders of child abuse and/or neglect.
- Identified resources relevant local resources using the United Way First Call for Help database.
- Provided information and referrals through the consumer call line while completing session notes for anger management and parenting classes.

**Residential Coordinator**

Jan 2009 - Aug 2009

Mosaic Community Service (Ellicott City, MD)

- Monitored and observed resident behavior to assess their level of functioning while serving as a Residential Coordinator for the Mosaic Community Service.
- Documented the end-to-end rehabilitation plan, services, behaviors, and progress per company and program standards.
- Elevated resident engagement by coordinating weekend travel activities; and developed individualized rehabilitation plans that addressed their needs.

**Family Services Caseworker**

Jul 2008 - Jun 2010

Baltimore City Dept. of Social Services (MD)

- Promoted the health, safety, well-being, and permanency of distressed children at all times while serving as a Family Services Caseworker for the County of Baltimore.
- Connected individuals and/or families who were troubled with vital local resources and services.
- Assessed and documented the health and safety of children by conducting weekly/monthly home visits, home health assessments, and SAFE-C and risk assessments.

**VOLUNTEERISM/COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

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**Co-Founder**

Feb 2017 - present

Perinatal Mental Health Alliance for People of Color (Nationwide)

- Advocated for the mental health needs of clients or professionals of color by providing them with vital information and resources regarding perinatal mental health, as the Co-Founder of Perinatal Mental Health Alliance for People of Color, an affiliate of Postpartum Support International.
- Enhanced their initiative of reaching underserved populations of African/Black/Caribbean, Latina, Asian, and Pacific Islander families.
- Generated over \$50K to build capacity for clinicians of color to be trained in perinatal mood and anxiety disorders; and provided scholarships for 400+ mental health professionals to attend the 2-day PSI training (in-person or virtually).

**Co-Founder**

Feb 2017 - present

The Bloom Collective (Nationwide)

- Empowered over 40 black women by partnering with Lactation Education Resources to provide clients with lactation training to become Certified Breastfeeding Specialists.

**Maryland Co-Coordinator**

Aug 2016 - present

Postpartum Support International (MD)

- Coordinated with a range of birthing people, parents, partners, and families to provide them with social support, information, and resources, as the Maryland Co-Coordinator of Postpartum Support International.

- Instilled hope and reassurance to individuals and families by linking them with critical community resources to help them recover (or prevent) distress related to mental health during pregnancy, postpartum, or post-loss.

### **Diversity Committee Member**

Oct 2015 – Feb 2017

Postpartum Progress, Inc.

- Championed the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion by contributing to regular board meetings, as a Diversity Committee member of Postpartum Progress, Inc.
- Liaised with other committee members to discuss the issues facing minority women around the issue of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders.
- Achieved tremendous success, including expanding services to minorities and other underserved populations.

### **Board Member**

Nov 2016 – Nov 2018

2020 Mom

- Advocated and collaborated with other like-minded professionals to close gaps in maternal mental health care, while serving as a Board Member for 2020 Mom.
- Guided, advised, and helped manage various major projects and fundraising activities, including mental health care education and advocacy.

## **LICENSES & CERTIFICATIONS**

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Licensed Certified Social Worker, Clinical (LCSW-C) | 2019-2023

Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW) | 2021-2023

Maternal Mental Health Intensive | Seleni Institute | 2018

Trauma-Informed Care | SAMHSA | 2016

Perinatal Mood & Anxiety Disorders | Postpartum Support International | 2015

Birth Doula | The Birth Well | 2014

## **HONORS & AWARDS**

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Inductee | Phi Alpha National Honors Society (Social Work) | Mar 2010-present

Advisor, Secretary, & Treasurer | Swing Phi Swing Social Fellowship, Inc. | Mar 2008-present

## **ORGANIZATIONS**

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Association of Black Social Workers | 2018-present

Postpartum Support International | 2016-present

National Perinatal Task Force | 2015-present

## **PUBLICATIONS**

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Israel, D. *When Postpartum Packs a Punch: Fighting Back and Finding Joy* [Book Review]. Kristina Cowan. *Clinical Lactation*, 9(1), pg. 44. 2018.

## **PRESENTATIONS & PANELS**

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Israel, D., et al. *Bridging the Gap: Women of Color and PMAD Professionals*. Annual conference of Postpartum Support International, Houston, TX. Jul. 2018.

Israel, D. *Beyond the Baby Blues: An Overview of Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders for Helping Professionals*. Annual Conference of Maryland Reproductive Update-Access Matters, Baltimore, MD. Apr. 2018.

Coleman, J., and Israel, D. *Perinatal Mental Health and Beyond* (Postpartum Facilitator Training). Baltimore Healthy Start, Baltimore, MD. Dec. 2017.

Israel, D. *Birth While Black: The Effects of Racial Trauma and Perinatal Outcomes*. Annual Conference of GOLD Perinatal, Online. Oct. 2017.

Israel, D. *Raising of America* Documentary Viewing and Community Conversation. Baltimore Healthy Start, Baltimore, MD. Oct. 2017.

Israel, D. *Targeted Prevention*. Substance Abuse and Health Services Administration Maternal Depression Meeting, Rockville, MD. Aug. 2017.

Israel, D., et al. *Bridging the Gap: Women of Color and PMAD Professionals*. Annual conference of Postpartum Support International, Philadelphia, PA. Jul. 2017.

## **ADDITIONAL SKILLS**

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Program Management  
Community Outreach  
Fundraising  
Board Leadership  
Budget Management  
DEI Initiatives  
Event Management  
Case Management  
Crisis Intervention

Family/Group Therapy  
Perinatal Mood Disorders  
Anxiety Disorders  
Anger Management  
Clinical Research  
Data Analysis  
Report Writing/Documentation  
Relationship Management  
Team Leadership

Staff Training & Development  
Youth Development  
Team & Culture Building  
Interpersonal Communication  
Complex Problem Solving  
Analytical Skills  
Public Speaking  
Time Management  
MS Office Suite