



## Introduction

- The social groups that one belongs to influence the creation of self-identity<sup>1</sup>
- Changes in self-identity that occur during pregnancy set the stage for how a woman is able to incorporate her child into her own self-identity<sup>2</sup>
- Prenatal yoga reduces stress and anxiety during pregnancy, leading to increased feelings of attachment to the baby<sup>3,4</sup>
- Limited research on prenatal yoga and maternal identity formation

### Research Aim

To examine how participating in a prenatal yoga class with other mothers-to-be may influence maternal identity formation

## Methods

- Qualitative research design
- Convenience sampling
- Semi-structured interviews of 3 pregnant women attending a prenatal yoga class
- Thematic coding and analysis

## Results

Building Community

*"It's like a support group with a little bit of yoga thrown in"*

Reassurance

*"...you see we're all just doing the best we can"*

Heightened Awareness of the Baby

*"...I can feel the feet kick more...it feels like she's with me in this"*

Coping with Change

*"...to just feel like you have space to just be or do or not do"*

## Discussion

- The physical, psychological, and social aspects of a prenatal yoga class allowed the women to feel more confident in their abilities as a mother
- Through building confidence, the women could begin to self-identify as mothers and subsequently prepare for their new roles
- Results extend prior research on factors contributing to maternal identity formation

## Implications for OS & OT

- Understand the unique needs of pregnant women during their transition to motherhood: need for support and validation throughout the changes that occur during pregnancy
- The role of social occupations in identity formation

## References

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3. Beddoe, A. E., Paul Yang, C. P., Kennedy, H. P., Weiss, S. J., & Lee, K. A. (2009). The effects of mindfulness-based yoga during pregnancy on maternal psychological and physical distress. *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic, and Neonatal Nursing*, 38(3), 310-319.
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