

# Impacts on Women's Mental Health Following COVID-19 Infection During Delivery: A Qualitative Study



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## Background

- Illness and hospitalization represent psychological stressors that may have lasting impacts on mental health.
- Pregnancy is a critical time for nurturing mental health and COVID-19 impacted the mood and health of pregnant patients.
- Little is known about the long-term outcomes among patients who were ill with COVID-19 during hospitalization for delivery.

## Methods

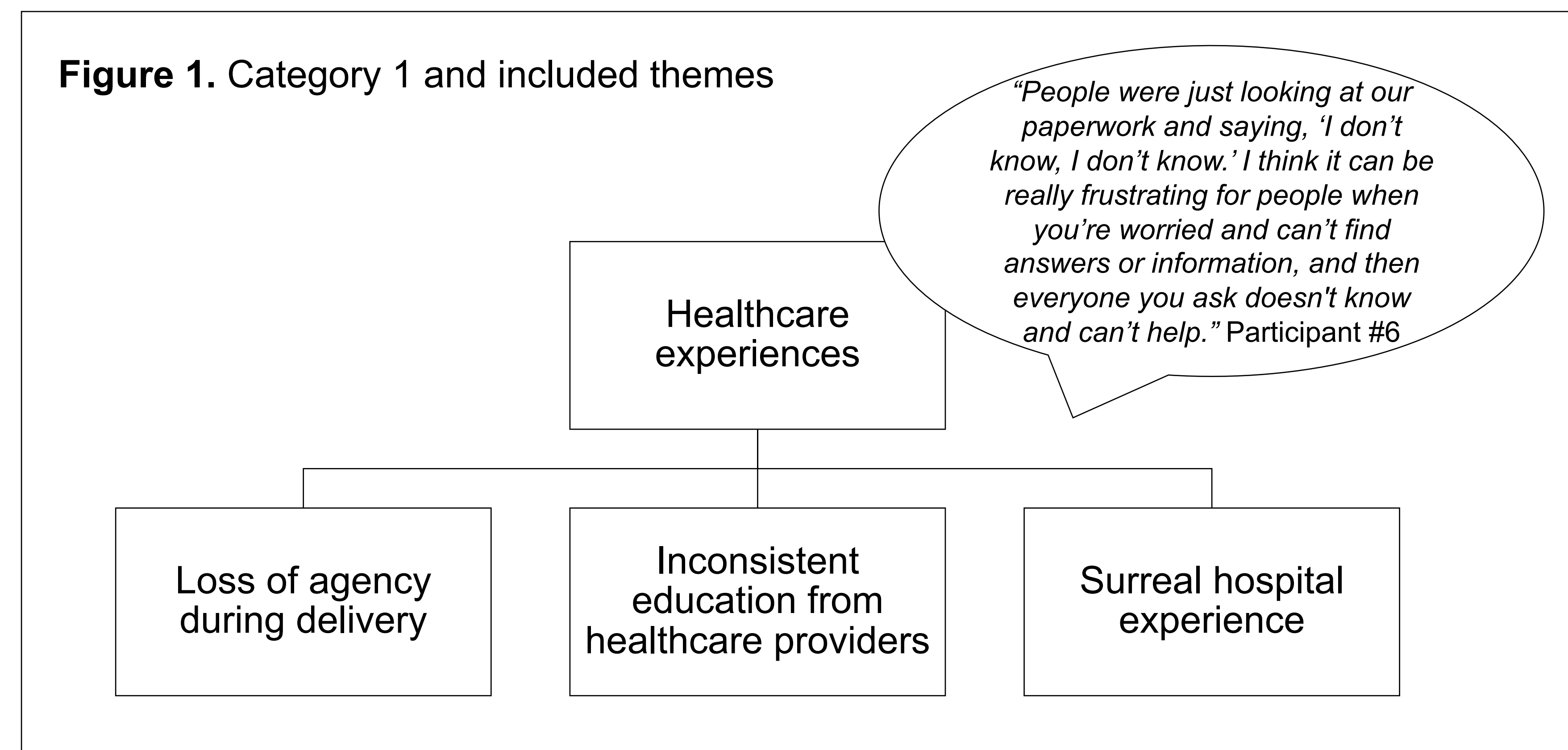
- We conducted phone interviews in March – April 2022 with ten individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 and delivered a baby between March – November 2020.
- Two investigators independently coded interview transcripts then analyzed as a team using a content analytical approach.
- We also compared interviews based on participants' race and ethnicity.

**Table 1.** Participant demographics

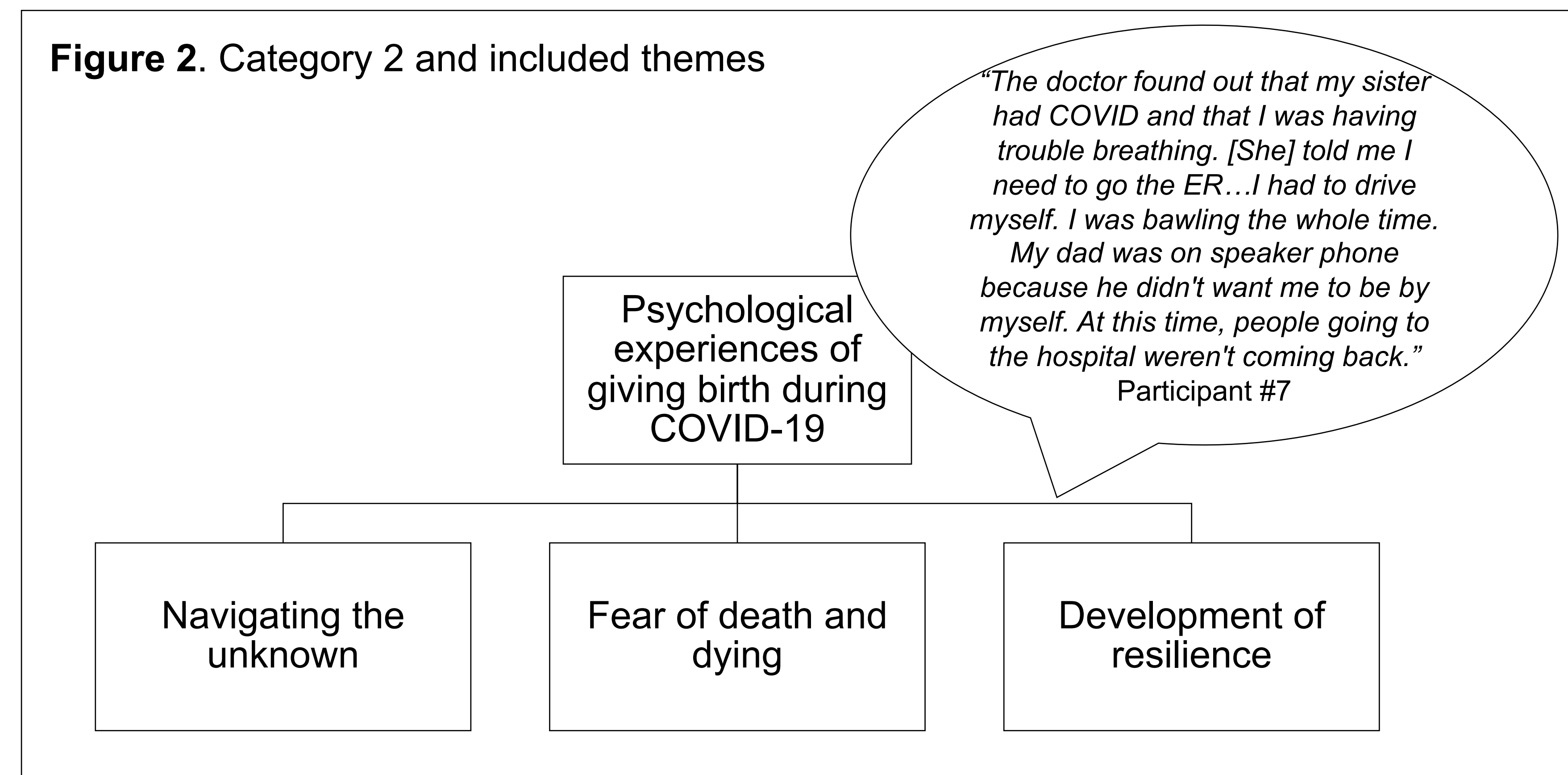
Participant #	Age	Race	Ethnicity	Marital status
1	28	Black/African American	Non-Hispanic	Separated
2	35	Black/African American	Non-Hispanic	Single
3	32	Black/African American	Non-Hispanic	Single
4	30	Black/African American	Non-Hispanic	Single
5	34	Other (Middle Eastern)	Non-Hispanic	Married
6	45	White	Hispanic	Married
7	34	White	Non-Hispanic	Married
8	32	White	Non-Hispanic	Married
9	31	White	Hispanic	Married
10	34	White	Non-Hispanic	Married

## Results

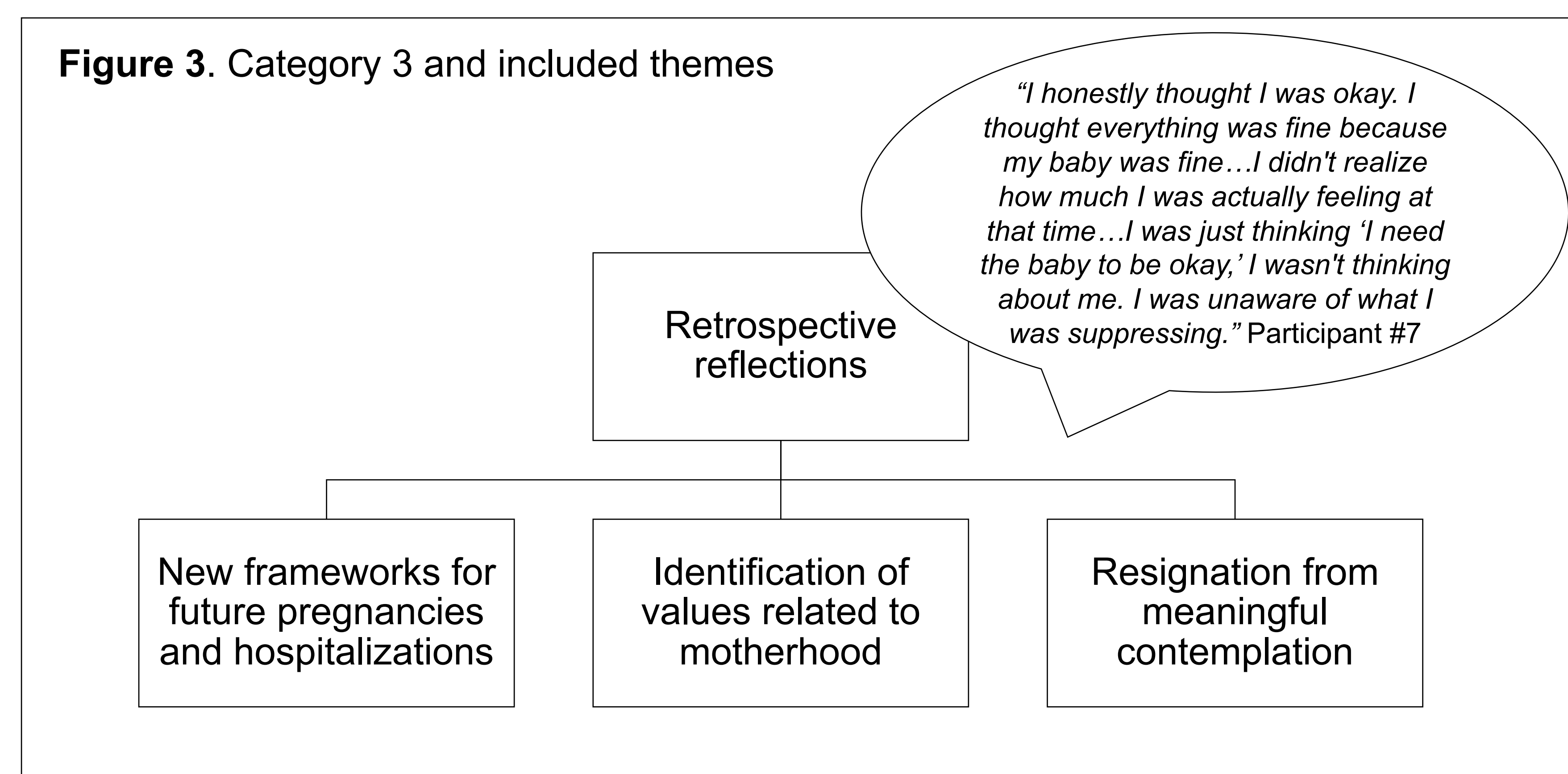
**Figure 1.** Category 1 and included themes



**Figure 2.** Category 2 and included themes

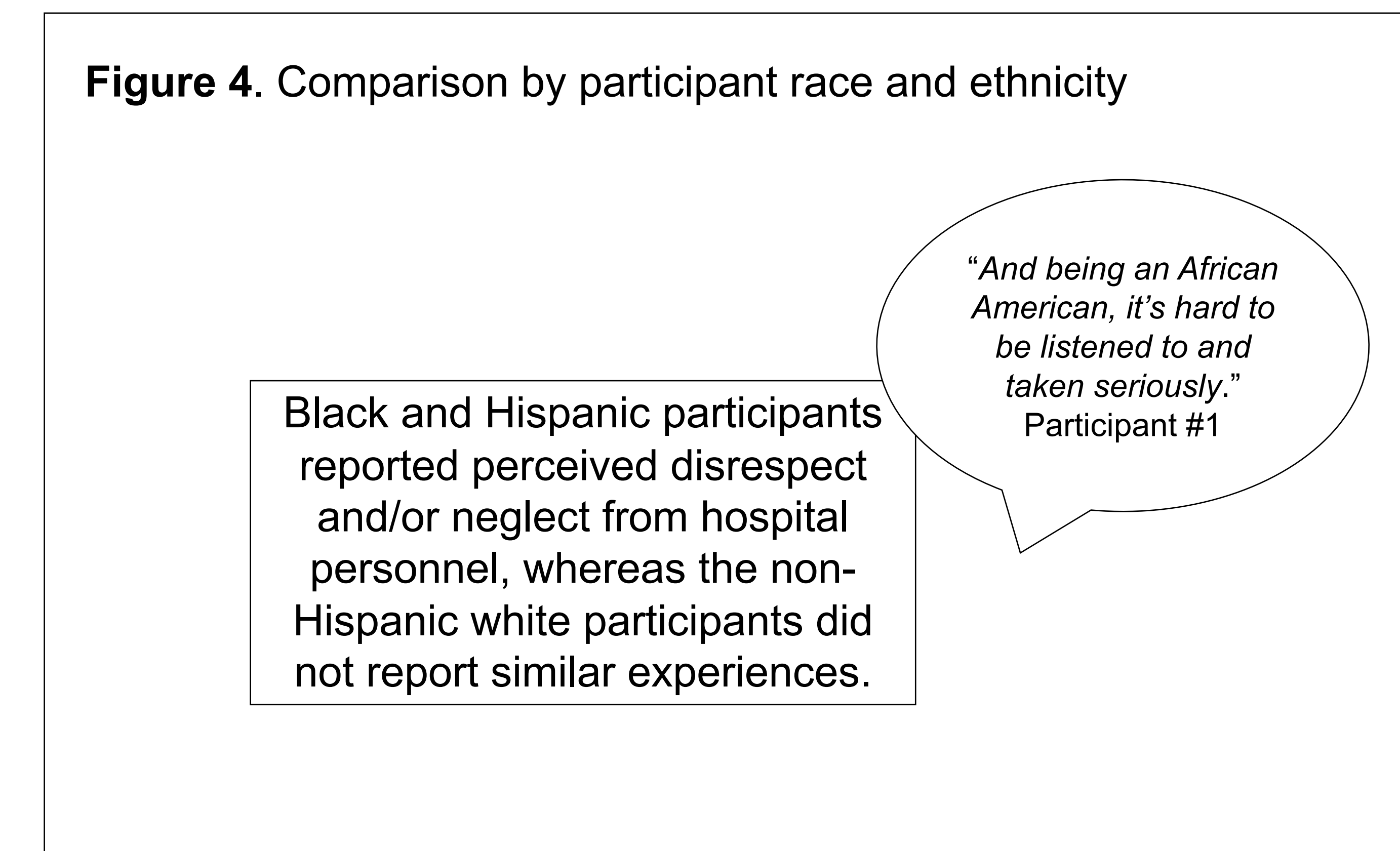


**Figure 3.** Category 3 and included themes



## Results cont'd

**Figure 4.** Comparison by participant race and ethnicity



## Conclusions

- Results of this study show that consulting psychiatrists caring for patients who delivered a baby at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic may be able to support these patients' self-actualization and restore a sense of control previously lost to the unprecedented circumstances of the pandemic by (1) promoting conversation about their experiences, and (2) encouraging expression of wants, needs, and values related to hospitalization for illness, delivery, and motherhood.
- These lessons can also be applied to treating patients with other difficult L&D experiences or trauma-associated hospitalizations. The feelings of fear and isolation can be chronically harmful if not addressed, and the interview themes teach us that mothers may suppress the expression of the trauma of their hospital experiences; as psychiatrists, setting the stage for patients to truthfully express the healthcare and psychological experiences of traumatic hospitalizations not only allows practitioners to identify which mood symptoms to treat but may allow patients to have a better understanding of what happened versus what they needed to happen to promote their mental health best.
- Finally, avenues for further study include looking at the long-term impacts of being COVID+ during L&D and any impact these experiences might have on patients' future delivery experiences.

## References

