



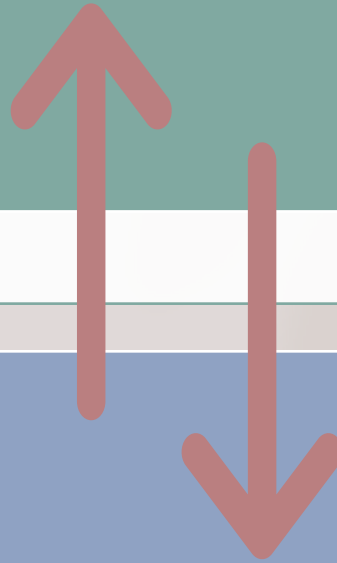
On the Frontlines:
Encouragement for
Postpartum Moms

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Introduction

My role

Your role



Baby Blues...or More???

BABY BLUES

Natural part of post-birth

ONSET: usually 2-3 days after delivery

Lasts up to 2 weeks postpartum

Mild mood swings; anxiety; irritability; weepiness

PERINATAL MOOD/ANXIETY DISORDER

Not "natural"; considered a disability

ONSET: anytime in first year postpartum

Varies per person (a couple weeks to possibly months)

Limits daily functioning

Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders (PMADS)

Not just "postpartum"

- Includes pregnancy
- Onset anytime in the first year postpartum
- Includes infant loss (physiologically considered "postpartum")

Not just "depression"

- Anxiety, OCD, Bipolar, PTSD, Psychosis

Not just the "mom"

- Affects infant development, family system, and parenting practices



40%

of pregnant women will have symptoms during
their pregnancy.



1 in 5

women will suffer from a maternal mental
health disorder like postpartum depression.

TheBlueDot

p•r•o•j•e•c•t

www.thebluedotproject.org



1 in 10

dads will experience a perinatal mental health disorder following the birth of their child.



Only 15%

of women will receive treatment for a maternal mental health disorder like postpartum depression.

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Etiology of PMADS

Physical

- Sensitive endocrine system
- Genetic predisposition

Psychosocial

- Lack of support system
- Social myths (“superwoman”; “perfect mom”)

Concurrent Stressors

- Sleep disruption
- Poor nutrition
- Health challenges
- Interpersonal stress
- Socioeconomic stress

How long does it last?

Different for each person

Stages of recovery

- Acute symptoms may be a couple of weeks or a few months
- Expect a "slump"
- Can have "off and on" symptoms for the entire first postpartum year

Get support as soon as possible



of maternal deaths are due to suicide making maternal suicide deaths more common than deaths caused by **postpartum hemorrhage** or **hypertensive disorders.**

Maternal Suicide in the U.S.

Opportunities for Improved Data Collection
and Health Care System Change



Maternal Suicide is a leading cause of maternal mortality in the U.S.

Studies Show

While maternal suicides can happen during pregnancy, **most maternal suicides occur in the postpartum period and not just in the immediate postpartum period.**


- **62%** of pregnancy-related suicides occur between 43-365 days postpartum.
- **24%** during pregnancy
- **14%** within 42 days postpartum

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The CDC has determined,
using the data from 14 states'
Maternal Mortality Review
Committees, that
**pregnancy-related
deaths from suicide
are 100%
preventable.**



Visionaries for the Future of Maternal Mental Health

ISSUE BRIEF

Universal Screening for Maternal Mental Health Disorders

Screening Frequency and Timing Recommendations



ACOG

The American College of
Obstetricians and Gynecologists

1-2x

- during the perinatal period
- at the comprehensive postpartum visit

AMERICAN
PSYCHIATRIC
ASSOCIATION
FOUNDATION



2x

- during pregnancy

4x

- postpartum
- at 1, 2, 4 month well-child visit



POSTPARTUM SUPPORT
INTERNATIONAL

8x

- 1st prenatal visit
- 2nd trimester
- 3rd trimester
- 6 week postpartum
- 6 &/or 12 month OB & primary care
- 3, 9, 12-mo pediatric well-child visits

Your Role as Hospital Liaisons:

FRONTLINE SUPPORT

Non-medical presence


Normalize need for support

Validate the "hard"

Safe space for vulnerability

Screen - not diagnose!

Educate

A close-up photograph of a newborn baby being kissed on the cheek by a woman. The baby is wearing a light blue and white striped hat and has its eyes closed. The woman has long dark hair and is leaning in to kiss the baby. The background is a hospital bed with a patterned blanket. The text "You Can't Tell By Looking!" is overlaid on the left side of the image in a white serif font.

You Can't Tell By
Looking!

Sample Lead-in Statements/Questions

- *Was pregnancy or labor/delivery different from what you expected?*
- *What has been the hardest part (in the last 24-48 hours)?*
- *You just went through a life-changing event! It is normal to feel a bit overwhelmed and anxious.*
- *It is not easy being a new mother and it is OK to feel unhappy, or worried, or confused at times - especially right after delivery.*

Risk Factors

PHYSICAL

A light green downward-pointing arrow is positioned at the bottom right corner of the 'PHYSICAL' box, pointing towards the 'PSYCHOSOCIAL' box.

PSYCHOSOCIAL

A light blue downward-pointing arrow is positioned at the bottom right corner of the 'PSYCHOSOCIAL' box, pointing towards the 'ENVIRONMENTAL STRESSORS' box.

ENVIRONMENTAL STRESSORS

Risk Factor Language

- “It’s hard for me to ask for help. I usually take care of myself.”
- “Before my periods, I usually get sad, angry, or very cranky.”
- “Sometimes I don’t need sleep, have lots of ideas, and it’s hard to slow down.”
- “I have not slept for at least 4 uninterrupted consecutive hours in days.”
- “I have scary thoughts that won’t go away.”
- “My family is far away, and I feel lonely.”
- “I don’t have many friends nearby that I can rely on.”
- “I didn’t feel happy about my pregnancy.”
- “I don’t have the money, food, or housing that we need.”

Other Risk Factors / Clues

Traumatic Birth

NICU baby

Multiples

Lactation
Difficulties

Age (Teen or
Perimenopause)

Lack of partner
or social
support system

Words of Reassurance

Your feelings of _____ (confusion, anxiety, overwhelm, sadness) are completely normal following the birth of a baby.

You are not alone.

You are not to blame, or “wrong” for feeling these things.

With help, you will be well.

You are enough and will be enough.

Power in Prevention

Physical
Recovery

Support
Resources

Psychoeducation
about "warning
signs"

Psychoeducation
about possible
treatment to
seek



Breastfeeding Challenges

Initial difficulties post-delivery

- Improper latch
- Pain

Lack of lactation consultants in recovery

Lack of breastfeeding education

- Timing of colostrum vs actual milk

Role of birth trauma

- Postpartum hemorrhaging > can affect milk supply
- NICU separation



Partner Involvement

Normalize difficult feelings in partner as well

Encourage partner to look out for signs of depression/anxiety

"2nd Trimester of Fatherhood" phenomenon

Role Play Scenarios

01

The Anxious
One

02

The Silent
One

03

The "I don't
care" One

04

The
Traumatized
One

Resources

[Postpartum Support International](#)

[The Blue Dot Project](#)

[Policy Center for Maternal Mental Health](#)



Q&A