



ECCCS

Early Childhood Collaborative of Southington

Pregnancy and Postpartum Mental Health: Education and Resources for Families

February 25, 2026

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ECCCS

Early Childhood Collaborative of Southington

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Experts Sending information:

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CT DPH Pregnancy and Postpartum Tobacco Cessation Program

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UConn
HEALTH



PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH 101 FOR THE SOUTHINGTON EARLY CHILDHOOD COLLABORATIVE



Jennifer Vendetti, LMSW, PMH-C ~ Laura Caron, LCSW, PMH-C ~ Mischa Hadaway, LCSW, PMH-C

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REFLECTIONS AND QUESTIONS

- Consider what is important for you right now, you can use our handout questions as a guide
- Write your question or reflection on a sticky note and place in the Parking Lot
- Laura & Mischa will review them while Jen introduces resources
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BABY BLUES

- 60-80% of new mother's
- *Why?* hormone fluctuation, sleep deprivation, adjustment
- *How long does it last?* 2 days-2 weeks after birth
- *What helps?* Partner & social support, self care, feeding support, "sleep is medicine", adequate maternity leave, support group



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FROM CHANGES TO COMPLICATIONS

Perinatal mental health complications are caused by a combination of changes in biology, psychology, and environment. Risk factors include personal or family history of mental illness; lack of social support, especially from their partner; experienced a traumatic birth or previous trauma in their lives; experienced the loss of a baby or have a baby in the neonatal intensive care unit.



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What are PMADs?



P

Perinatal

Pregnancy to 1 year postpartum

M

Mood

Depression, Bipolar Disorder, or Psychosis

A

Anxiety

General Anxiety, Panic, OCD, PTSD

D

Disorder

Interferes with functioning and day-to-day life

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THEMES IN PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH

- Many parents suffer in silence
- PMADs are often underdiagnosed and undertreated
- Prevention and treatment are important
- Impact is on the woman, partner, fetus, infant, child, adolescent, family and generations
- Incidence of depression in women is the highest in reproductive years (Lindal, Pearson, Colpe 2005)
- The #1 complication of childbirth is depression (PSI)
- Many women have their 1st panic attack

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Philadelphia DPH PPD Awareness Campaign

LET'S TALK: PPD AWARENESS VIDEO



The Let's Talk: Postpartum Depression Awareness video is a public service video designed for pregnant women, new moms, fathers, physicians, and for other training and educational purposes. The video aims to meet the following objectives:

- Reduce the stigma associated with postpartum depression
- Promote awareness of the disorder and its symptoms
- Provide a connection to local resources

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REFLECTIONS FROM THE VIDEO

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION?
OTHER REFLECTIONS?



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SYMPTOMS OF PERINATAL DEPRESSION



What Postpartum Depression Feels Like.mp4

Sadness, crying
Unexpected physical complaints
Suicidal thoughts
Irritability, anger
Sleep problems
Hopelessness, helplessness
Guilt, shame
Poor concentration
Isolating self
Experiencing emotional disconnection from the baby
Feeling overwhelmed
Difficulty caring for self
Worthlessness



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FATHERS AND DEPRESSION

- National studies in 2006, 2010 showed 10% of new fathers showed signs of moderate to severe depression.
- Depression symptoms tend to spike between 3-6 months postpartum.
- "Masked", may show increased substance use, increased irritability, be aggressive or hostile.
- Increased isolation
- Possible causes: changing responsibilities, feeling outside the circle of attention, missing sexual relationship, sleep deprivation, Mother experiencing depression



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MOTHERS EXPERIENCING A PMAD MAY SAY.....

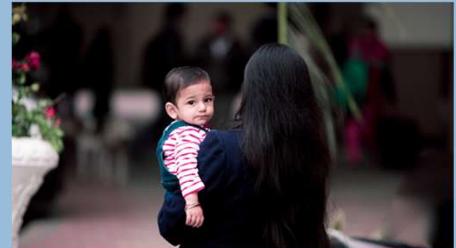
Having a baby was a mistake.

I'm not bonding with my baby.

I'm afraid to be alone with my baby.

I'm exhausted, but I can't sleep, even when my baby sleeps.

I'm a bad mother; my baby would be better off without me.



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PREVALENCE OF PERINATAL MOOD AND ANXIETY DISORDERS

- 15-20% All Women
- 40-60% Low Income Moms
- Pandemic findings 33-36%



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Risk Factors for Postpartum PTSD

- Use of vacuum extractor or forceps during delivery
- Prolapsed Cord
- Baby going to NICU
- Previous trauma, such as rape or sexual abuse
- Severe physical complication during delivery
- Feelings of powerlessness, poor communication, and/or lack of support during delivery
- Unplanned C-Section

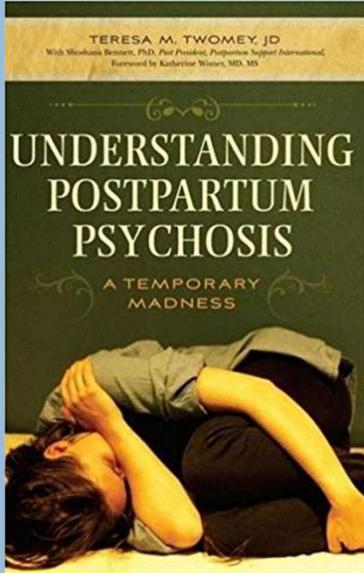
PERINATAL POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER 9%

(Beck, Driscoll, & Watson, 2011)

Up to 34% of moms experience a traumatic birth

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POSTPARTUM PSYCHOSIS



1-2 per 1,000 Mothers

Symptoms may include hallucinations, delusions, mania, paranoia

Medication therapy is essential

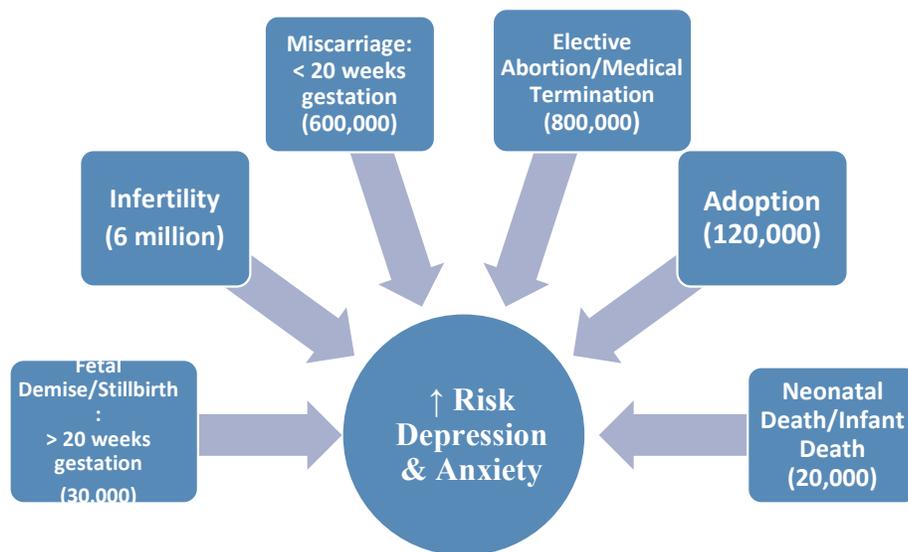
Hospitalization is often necessary

Need for more perinatal specialized hospital programs

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PERINATAL LOSS

A Critical Theme in Understanding Perinatal Mental Health



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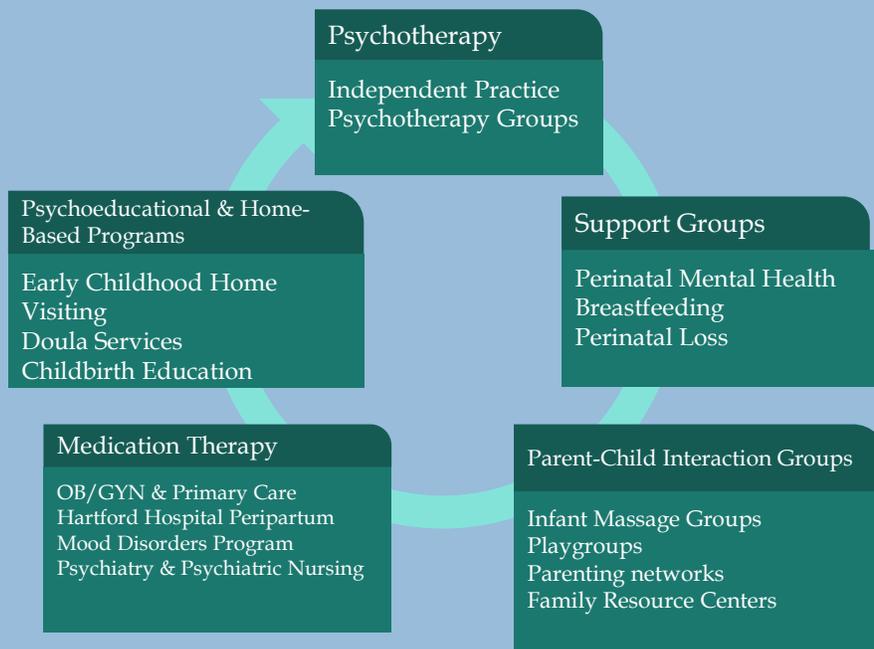
THE GOOD NEWS FOR MOMS & DADS!

You are not alone
 You are not to blame
 With help, you will get better

(Universal Message of Postpartum Support International)

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TREATMENT & SUPPORT FOR PERINATAL FAMILIES



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SERVICES & SUPPORTS IN CT

Home Visiting (CT OEC)

Mental Health & Recovery Services (DMHAS)

Postpartum Support International

Hope after Loss

Tiny Miracles Foundation

Mother to Baby Connecticut

Doula Services

ACCESS Mental Health for Moms

Breastfeeding Support



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