

# Breaking the Silence . . . Know the Risks of Perinatal Mood Disorders and How to Help

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# Goal

Empower parents and the community to improve the lives of their families by addressing maternal mental health and parenting with psychiatric disabilities.



# Objectives

- Barriers to Identification and Treatment
- Solutions
- Risk Factors
- Untreated/Undertreated: Impact on the Family
- Prevention and Intervention Strategies
- Nursing Interventions
- Community Support & Resources





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# Barriers to Identification and Treatment of Perinatal Mood Disorders

- Lack of Education and Routine Screening provided by healthcare providers
- Denial and Ignorance by women and public
- Lack of Understanding
  - Motherhood Myths: Super Mom, Super Wife, Birthing, bonding and parenting all come naturally, Babies sleep all the time, Partner will help more when baby is here
  - Mental illness stigma, cultural expectations and differences
  - Taboos



# Barriers to Identification and Treatment of Perinatal Mood Disorders

- Lack of Support
  - Educated and available treatment resources
  - Case management
  - Coordination of care between disciplines/agencies
  - Support Groups
  - Multilingual supports
  - “Hands-on” help for moms and families
  - Buy-in from others, seriousness, \$\$



# Solutions

- Acknowledge Perinatal Depression is real
- Work towards preventing tragic consequences of untreated and undertreated perinatal depression
- Focus on prevention, early detection, education, treatment and support services for a model perinatal depression parent support network



# Solutions

- SUE – Be Supportive, Understanding, Educated
- How can I make a difference?
- Do I have any biases regarding maternal mental health?
- How may I gain information and share with others?



# Perinatal Mood Disorders

## Psychosocial Risk Factors

- Moving
- Financial
- Single parenting
- Poor relationship with own mother
- Conflicts over identity as a mother and role of self and others
- Ill health of the baby or colic
- Sleep deprivation (biopsychosocial!!)
- Insufficient support system
- Recent adoption
- Perfectionistic or controlling personality style



# Untreated/Undertreated Perinatal Mood Disorders: Impact on the Family

- Increased marital/partner discord
- Domestic violence
- Divorce
- Re-evaluation of extended family
- Redefinition of family roles
- Cognitive & Developmental delays
- Behavioral problems
- Increased child neglect/abuse
- Disability/Unemployment
- Substance abuse
- Infanticide/Filicide
- Homicide/Suicide



# Improving Maternal Mental Health in Your Community

- All women of childbearing age must know personal and family's mental health history and share with caregivers
- Accurate assessment by caregivers of women's mental health to be completed at every visit during pregnancy and first year postpartum
- All health professionals must provide in their offices written educational information, resources and treatment options



# Improving Maternal Mental Health in Your Community Resources

- Continuity of healthcare for women and their families must be available in every community
- Timely and appropriate referral to other professionals must include follow-up by the referring parties to insure quality of healthcare

Source: Minimizing Postpartum Depression Through Social Support  
Postpartum Support International, 2003



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# Postpartum Support International's Needs of Childbearing Women

- A companion or advocate to provide support during pregnancy, birth, and the first year postpartum
- Supportive professionals who are knowledgeable about mental health and will access help for a patient with a mood disorder
- Having a time and place to talk about the pregnancy, the birth, and the continuing postpartum experience



# Critical Components to Recovery:

What Women Need Medically, Mentally and Emotionally for Optimum Recovery

- 1) Medical intervention
- 2) Therapeutic intervention
- 3) Support of others



# Nursing Interventions:

## 7 Themes in Nurses' Interaction Perceptions of Nurses' Caring by Mothers with PPD CTBeck 1995

- 1. Having sufficient PPD knowledge to make a quick, correct diagnosis is an essential aspect of caring.
- 2. Astute observations and intuition leads to an awareness that something might be wrong with the mother.
- 3. Nurses provide hope that the mother's living nightmare (of PPD experience) will end.



# Nursing Interventions:

## 7 Themes in Nurses' Interaction Perceptions of Nurses' Caring by Mothers with PPD

- 4. A nurse who readily shares valuable time is perceived as caring.
- 5. Caring involves making appropriate referrals so the mother gets started on the right path to recovery.
- 6. Caring involves the nurse making the extra effort to provide continuity of care for the mother.



# Nursing Interventions:

## 7 Themes in Nurses' Interaction Perceptions of Nurses' Caring by Mothers with PPD

- 7. Understanding what the mother is experiencing provides needed comfort.



# Strategies for Prevention and Intervention

- Education of patient and support system (family and professionals)
- Continuity of healthcare
- Social support is critical. Isolation can be devastating.
- Realistic preparation for parenthood
- Plan of action for the family
- Referral to additional resources



# Strategies to Increase Diagnosis

- Education – Preconception, pregnancy, postpartum
- Obstetrical and midwifery risk assessment  
(Pregnancy is the window of opportunity for prevention, very early detection and intervention and referral to treatment)
- Pediatricians can and should screen new mothers for PPD
- Be informed and involved with local resource and referral system for pregnant and postpartum families.



# Tips for providing PPD support

- Be comfortable with discussing mental illness  
(What to say and what not to say)
- Provide active, non-judgemental listening
- Offer accurate written materials and up-to-date resources
- Follow-up to know that the woman and her family's needs have been met
- Know your facts. Be current with information.



# Tips for Providing PPD Support

Postpartum Support International's  
Universal Message:

You are not alone.

You are not to blame.

You will feel better and get well.



# Mothering the Mother

PSI's Steps to Wellness:

Education/Treatment

Sleep

Nutrition

Exercise

Sharing with others who are  
non-judgemental

Asking for help and Accepting help



# Perinatal Mood Disorders Resources

Postpartum Support International  
[www.postpartum.net](http://www.postpartum.net)

Postpartum Resource Center  
of New York  
[www.postpartumNY.org](http://www.postpartumNY.org)



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# Vision

A Perinatal Depression Parent Support Network in every community.



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# Contact Information

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