Perinatal Emotional Complications: Birthing Healthier Families ©

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Listening to people will change worlds
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All forms of perinatal emotional complications are treatable. They are also the most common complication of pregnancy.

During- Prenatal

After- Postpartum

During and after- Perinatal

Depression after adoption

Mara Acel-Green, LICSW
Range of Perinatal Emotional Complications

Postpartum baby blues- 50-85% women (Not a mental health issue)

Pregnancy depression- 20%; Pregnancy Anxiety- 10%

Postpartum depression- 21.9% (post-adoption incidence approximately the same or slightly higher). Some studies indicate 14%.

Postpartum anxiety- 17%

Postpartum PTSD- 6%
PEC’s Continued

Postpartum OCD- 3-5%

Postpartum bi-polar: risks higher with personal or family history. “Comparing over the same duration of time, postpartum women who had discontinued medication for pregnancy were at exquisitely high risk of mood episode recurrence.” “Postpartum relapse rates for unmediated during pregnancy 66% compared to 23% who took prophylactic meds.)

Postpartum psychosis- 0.01-0.02%

Paternal perinatal depression- 10% (highest incidence months 3-6 with 25% of the total between first trimester and first birthday)

Only 17% of women get treatment for postpartum depression, although I have seen numbers as low at 7%
"Postpartum Depression"

- 40% Before Pregnancy
- 27% During Pregnancy
- 33% After Pregnancy
What about men?

* Paternal postpartum depression- 10% (highest incidence months 3-6 with 25% of the total between first trimester and first birthday)

* [www.Postpartumdad.org](http://www.Postpartumdad.org)
Some Common Risk Factors
(sample list only)

Sleep Disturbances
Poverty
Lack of a partner
Marital difficulties
Nursing issues
Lack of perceived or actual social supports
Increased life stressors
Substance abuse, past or current
Trauma History, past or current
Ambivalence toward the pregnancy and/or anxiety about the fetus
Previous episode of depression, anxiety, PTSD, or OCD
History of sensitivity to hormone shifts
Some examples of perinatal emotional complications symptoms. Some, or all, interfere with functioning:

- Depressed or sad mood
- Changes in appetite
- Tearfulness
- Intrusive thoughts
- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Sleep Changes/Disturbance
- Feelings of guilt
- Fatigue
- Feelings of worthlessness or incompetence
- Panic
- Poor concentration
- Irritability/Anger/Rage
- Suicidal thoughts
- Isolation
Impact of untreated depression and anxiety

Several caregiving activities also appear to be compromised by postpartum depression including feeding practices, most especially breastfeeding, sleep routines and well-child visits, vaccinations and safety practices. These data highlight the need for universal screening of maternal and paternal depression during the postpartum period.

Researchers have attributed the long-term effects of maternal depression including behavior problems, cognitive delays and physical health problems to disturbed early interactions (Beardslee, Versage & Gladstone, 1998).

Excessive anxiety during pregnancy is associated with changes in fetal behavior, pregnancy complications, and difficulties in maternal and child postpartum adjustment (Wenzel, 2011).
Impact of untreated depression during pregnancy and postpartum on attachment

“Disturbances in maternal–infant bonding within the first few months may be due to a number of factors, some of which occur even before a baby is born, including depression during pregnancy, whether the pregnancy is intended, and the quality of the partner/marital relationship. The impact of these factors in early maternal attachment.”
“According to a study from the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, sleep deprivation reduces our emotional intelligence, self-regard, assertiveness, sense of independence, empathy toward others, the quality of our interpersonal relationships, positive thinking, and impulse control.”
Using the Nurse Model

N- Nutrition

U- Understanding

R- Rest and Relaxation

S- Spirituality

E- Exercise

Web resource- postpartum plan

Web resource- resource list
#treatmentworks

- Ask the person if their support people, family, friends, and birth professionals, know they are having a hard time.

- Encourage folks to talk to their family's care providers about next steps based on the particular symptoms. Assist client in contacting their doctor, midwife, or pcp.

- Common recommendations include: therapy, acupuncture, exercise, additional help (like a doula), therapy groups, massage, medication, and/or a new mom's support group.

- Call their health insurance to inquire about their mental health benefits. Ask them if they have a list of providers who offer specialty treatment for pregnancy and postpartum mental health.
Our family’s plan is to have a smooth postpartum period. We know that we will be tired even when things go well, and we will need some additional support. This plan will help us put together a list of friends, family, community, and professionals who will help our family succeed, despite the natural challenges that emerge in the postpartum period.

Our village (support people) with phone numbers: (friends, family, neighbors, religious community, babysitters, and professionals).

People who will cook or coordinate healthy food: (such as getting take out gift cards, coordinating mealtrain or lots of helping hands.) Don’t forget to have a couple of grocery lists available for people who want to shop, as well as round trip printed directions from your house to grocery stores available for those who ask.

People who will specifically support the new mother (including times of day available) for rests, showers, walking partners, visits, phone/Skype chats, positive parenting support/advice, and anything else she needs. Great to organize at the shower or religious birth ritual.
People who will specifically support the new partner/spouse/husband (including times of day available) for rests, showers, walking partners, visits, phone/Skype chats, positive parenting support/advice, and anything else he needs. Great to organize all the shower or religious birth rituals.

People who will specifically support other child/ren and/or pets.

Mom’s self care plan (If you love to do it and it makes you happy, make time for it!!)

Partner/spouse/husband’s self-care plan (If you love to do it and it makes you happy, make time for it!)

nourish. grow. thrive.

Find nearby birth and postpartum doulas www.dona.org
Find nearby lactation professionals http://www.lcra.org/elia/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3091
Check out www.postpartum.net for a full array of state-by-state resources.

Developed by Mara Acei-Green, LICSW, who has a private practice in Watertown, MA where she sees adolescents and adults and offer specialty treatment for pregnant and postpartum women and their families.
She can be found at www.maragreen.com or www.strongrootscounseling.com

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Birthing Healthier Families:
Boston Area Resources

Food:
- Instacart
- Roche Brothers
- Peapod
- Boston Organics
- Google Express
- LotsOfHelpingHands.com (free website)
- MealMama.com (free website)

Support & Activities:
- Center for Early Relationship Support 781-647-JFCS (5327) (free programming)
- Visiting Moms: free home visits for new parents
- Support Groups: Over 14 on-going support groups for new mothers (adoptive moms welcomed)
- This is not what I expected group: For people experiencing postpartum depression and anxiety.
- Fragile Beginnings: This program provides services for parents of premature infants.
- Feeding Support
- Sleep Consultations
- Healthy Families: services for young parents under 21
- First Connections (978) 287-0221 (free programming)

Public Libraries (free programming)
- Watertown Family Network 617-926-1661
- Somerville Family Network 617-629-2948
- North Cambridge Center for Families of North Cambridge 617-349-6385
- Natick Nurtick Family Network 508-655-2557
- Concord First Connections Family Network 978-287-0221
- Boston area Boston Family Network 617-474-1143


Mr. Aubin Midwives moms group (Tuesdays at 2pm, at Waverly Oaks site) see:
http://www.mamab.org/postpartum.html for schedule

Beth Israel Parent Connection: www.bidmc.org/parentconnection

The Parent Line (United Way of Massachusetts Bay): (free) 1-617-421-1789

Mara Axel-Green, LICSW
Strong Roots Counseling
Parental Stress Line – A (free) 24-hour hotline in Massachusetts 1-800-632-8188
Freedman Center 617-353-3666 (mix of free and fee based programs)
The Loved Child 617-771-0543 (mix of free and fee based programs)
Mama & Me (617) 477-3432 (mix of free and fee based programs)
Babies, Bumps and Beyond (781) 449-3616 (fee based programs)
Together in Motion (781) 643-1377 (fee based programs)
Inside Playground (617) 923-1772 (fee based programs)
The little gym (781) 899-7700 (fee based programs)
JCC Boston (617) 538-6522 (mix of free and fee based programs)
Kidspace Belmont MA (low cost fee program) (617) 484-TOYS (8697)

Exercise:
Prenatal yoga: Gesundwerk Wellness and Yoga (fee based programs)
Inner Strength Yoga (fee based program)
Postnatal yoga: www.fivepointyoga.com (fee based programs)
YMCA—offers free childcare
Boston Sports Club—offers free childcare
Waverly Oaks Athletic Club—offers free childcare
Healthworks—paid childcare on-site

Birth and Postpartum Doulas:
www.dona.org or www.doulamatch.net (fee based services)

Lactation Professionals and breastfeeding supports:
www.ibclc.org (fee based services)
www.zipmail.org list of support by zip code (mostly free)

Full list of area resources:
www.massbirth.com

Marc Axel-Green, LICSW
Strong Roots Counseling
What can we say to open the conversation?

* An emotional complication is the most common complication of pregnancy. I wonder how you have been feeling over the last couple of weeks?

* An emotional complication is the most common complication of pregnancy. It can sometimes feel like sadness, anger, it can interrupt your sleep, and it can make you feel overwhelmed. Have you been feeling any of these things?
Getting people to help

MCPAP for Moms
Interface Project
PSI of MA
JF&CS supports
Doulas listserve
Fight song
Questions, Comments, Reflections

mara@strongrootscounseling.com
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Want to learn more about what’s happening at Strong Roots Counseling? Join our mailing list.
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