

Case Example



“Tami” is a married mother of a three year-old. She seems really anxious when you first meet her; she smiles nervously, and fiddles with her fingers frequently as you chat. She lets on that she was really nervous about your visit today; that she has always been shy and a “worry wart” since she was little. She also tells you that she has had a history of anxiety. You sense that she is sensitive to criticism. When asked, she relays symptoms that sound like anxiety attacks, and she has much more worry than usual about something awful happening to her child.

Worksheet with Questions for Reflection

1. How can you help a client seek professional help?

2. What has your experience been like with clients who are noticeably anxious or depressed?

3. How do you facilitate conversation with an anxious client?

4. What is your experience with clients who are having intrusive thoughts?

5. How do you raise the idea of seeking advice and/or care?

6. **Question for Reflection on People Matter handouts:** The messages in the handouts were obtained directly from mothers with PPD. How can the messages be reframed in a more positive way?

7. **Question for Reflection on Circle of Support handout:** How can you use the circle of support with a client?

8. **Questions for Reflection on Caring for Yourself in a Compassionate Role:** What professional supports and personal care strategies do you use in your current role?

9. What is your understanding of burnout? Vicarious trauma? How does your organization/program address these concerns?



Professionals Working with New Mothers with Postpartum Mood Changes

What to do to help me:

1. Be non-judgemental and treat me as an individual person with individual needs.
2. Have an understanding of what postpartum mood changes are and the effects on myself and my family.
3. Keep negativity out of the conversation.
4. Be prepared to spend time with me.
5. Be helpful, not demanding.
6. Be patient with me as my decision-making skills are lacking.
7. Talk to me with respect.
8. Do not tell me how I am feeling... or should be feeling.
9. When I welcome you into my life/home, please set a positive upbeat atmosphere that is warm, friendly and compassionate.
10. Do not be judgemental about my life/lifestyle and/or my life choices.
11. I hear what you “do” louder than your words. Any of your negative thoughts or attitudes come out loud and clear to me.



Dad/partner... Ten things not to say to a new mom

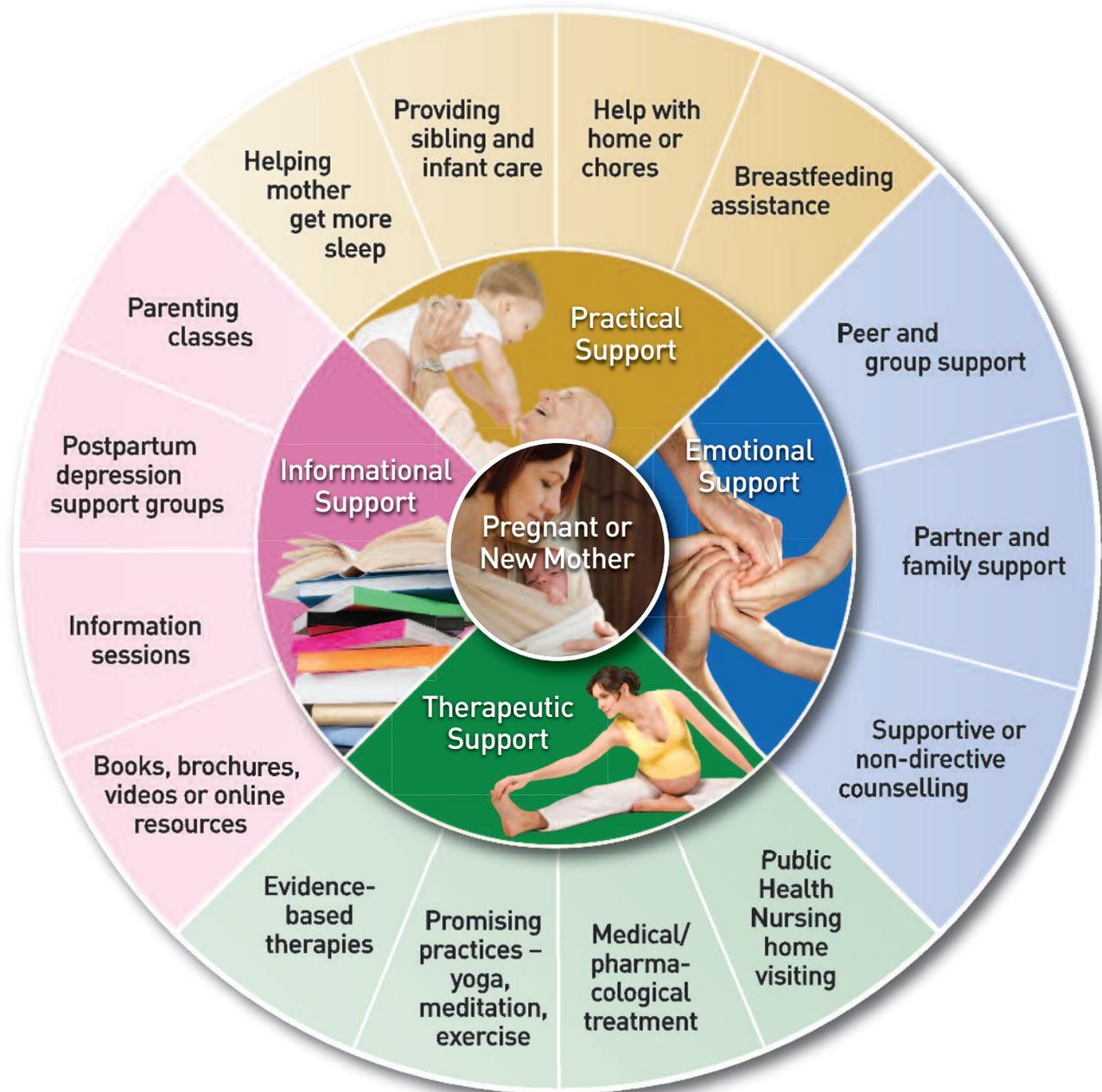
1. **Why is the house such a mess?** *Message I hear:* I am lazy, irresponsible, not a good mother. *What it makes me feel like:* mad, upset; what I do is not important.
2. **What did you do all day?** *Message I hear:* I don't do anything all day. *What it makes me feel like:* angry, frustrated, lack of respect.
3. **Why are you always complaining that you are tired?** *Message I hear:* I'm inadequate, always making excuses for not measuring up.
4. **Are we ever going to have sex again?** *Message I hear:* His physical needs are more important than my emotional needs.
5. **You are a new mom you are supposed to look like crap.** *Message I hear:* I don't look attractive.
6. **When are you going back to work (or get a job)? We need the money.** *Message I hear:* I am lazy, not contributing to the family. Their spending power is shrinking and this is about them.
7. **We can't afford it" (when I want to buy something)** *Message I hear:* I am are not worth it.
8. **Our (child) doesn't act like that when he/she is with me.** *Message I hear:* I am not a good parent/don't know child as well as he does.
9. **I work all day, I need my sleep.** *Message I hear:* he is the most important person here. His needs come first.
10. **Why are you holding on to all these clothes, you will never fit into these again anyway.** *Message I hear:* I am fat and unattractive.

What New Mothers Need from Their Mothers or support person such as: mother-in-law, grandmother, aunt, sister, sister-in-law

Mother/Grandmother: What not to say/do to your daughter when she has a new baby!

1. **“Don’t take over.”** *Message I hear:* I am lazy, irresponsible, not a good mother; what I do is not important. *What it makes me feel like:* mad, upset; I don’t measure up; lowers my self-esteem. *Instead, reword and say:* “What can I do to help?” “Where do you want me to start?” Tone of voice should be friendly and helpful not sarcastic or judgemental.
2. **“Don’t be absent.”** *Message I hear:* You don’t care, I’m not special enough for you to care about. *What it makes me feel like:* alone, scared, unloved, devalued. *Instead:* Be available to me emotionally even if you live miles away.
3. **“Don’t minimize my concerns and don’t assume everything is fine because you want it to be fine.”** *Message I hear:* I’m inadequate, always making excuses for not measuring up. *What it makes me feel like:* self-doubting, guilty, upset, angry, disrespected. *Instead, reword and say:* “You look tired, I’ll take the baby and you sleep.” “I’ll take the baby and kids out for a walk this afternoon.” “Why don’t I order a pizza for dinner and send it over?”
4. **“Don’t assume you have all the answers to my struggles.”** *Message I hear:* I am not measuring up in your eyes and I’m inadequate. *What it makes me feel like:* stupid, unable to cope, overreacting to simple things. *Instead:* Trust that I will “get it” with your gentle and continual support.
5. **“Don’t solve my problems; don’t tell me what to do.”** *Message I hear:* I’m inadequate, I can’t manage my own life. *What it makes me feel like:* devalued, upset, angry, disrespected. *Instead:* Trust that I have the answers for my life and with your support I will find the answers.
6. **Don’t say: “Don’t ask me how to baby sit because I have raised my kids/have other things to do.”** *Message I hear:* I am being punished for being born, I am not worthy of your support. *What it makes me feel like:* alone, vulnerable, angry, scared. *Instead:* Say nothing negative!
7. **Don’t ask: “Why are you always complaining that you are tired?”** *Message I hear:* I’m inadequate, everyone else can cope but you. *What it makes me feel like:* guilty, upset, angry, disrespected. *Instead, reword and say:* “I remember the sleep deprivation. What can I do to help?”
8. **Don’t say: “I would never let my children act like that when they were his/her age!”** (Don’t expect my kids to be good, quiet, stress free to meet your needs.) *Message I hear:* I am not a good parent/don’t know child as well as grandmother does. I must meet your needs over my child’s needs. *What it makes me feel like:* upset, angry, and unsure of parenting skills even when I know I am right. I feel that my child’s loyalty may be lost to me in favour of his/her grandmother. *Instead, reword and say:* “This is what I found worked with you but didn’t work with your brother, you two were so different!” Offer positive suggestions or say nothing.
9. **Don’t say: “Your child doesn’t act like that when he/she is with me.”** *Message I hear:* I am being blamed for my child’s behavior. *What it makes me feel like:* trapped, upset, angry, unsure of my parenting skills even when I know I am right; threatened loss of my child. *Instead, reword and say:* “Some of these behaviors are challenging to figure out and you are doing great in trying different approaches!”
10. **Please say: “Talk to me about some of the obstacles that you are facing as a mother.”** *Message I hear:* I care about you; you are worth it. *What it makes me feel like:* relaxed, valued, cared for.

Creating a Circle of Support for Maternal Mental Health



Best Start Resource Centre. (2009). *Creating Circles of Support for Pregnant Women and New Parents: A manual for service providers supporting women's mental health in pregnancy and postpartum*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Author.

Resources and References Handout

EDUCATION FOR FAMILIES

Here is a selection of resources that can provide education for the family to help them understand their family member's needs.

1. Learning about your family member's illness.

The Here-To-Help BC website www.heretohelp.bc.ca provides an excellent Family Toolkit, including

- *Understanding Mental and Substance Use Disorders (includes: What if my relative refuses to get help?)*

Here-to-Help BC: Family Members:

- *Supporting a Family Member with a Mental Disorder – What Family and Friends Can Do To Help*
 - *How Do I Know When to Help?*
 - *How Can I Help?*

Centre for Addictions and Mental Health: A Family Guide to Concurrent Disorders.

www.camh.net/Care_Treatment/Resources_clients_families_friends/Family_Guide_CD/index.html.

The Postpartum Stress Center, LLC: www.postpartumstress.com/pages/family_support.html. Family support including

- Postpartum Pact: for couples, who experienced previous postpartum depression, expecting another child
- For Those Who Love Me: a card that can be shared with family and supports

2. Coping Tips: For family members and children of a parent with a mental health problem.

For Family Members

- The Family Association for Mental Health Everywhere [FAME], Etobicoke ON, offers simple, effective coping tips, starting with The Four C's about Cause, Cure, Control, and Cope.
 - Family Resource Kit
 - Family Outreach Workers (GTA only)
 - FameKids programs (GTA only)
- Here-to-Help BC: *Caring for Yourself and Other Family Members*
 - Spouses
 - Family Self Care and Recovery From Mental Illness Manual
- *Children of Parents with Mental Illness: Family Talk*. A booklet with tips and information for families where a parent has a mental health problem or disorder. www.copmi.net.au/common/documents/Family_Talk_Booklet_2011_000.pdf.

For Children & Teens:

- CAMH Children’s Book Series: *New storybooks and brochures for children living with a parent dealing with mental health and/or substance use problems.* Suitable for children from diverse families.
 - *Wishes and Worries* – understanding a parent’s problem with alcohol
 - *Can I Catch It Like a Cold?* – understanding a parent’s problem with depression.
 - *When a parent drinks too much: What kids want to know?*
 - *When a parent has bipolar disorder: What kids want to know?*
 - *When a parent has psychosis: What kids want to know?*
 - *When a parent is depressed: What kids want to know?*
- Here-to-Help BC: *Caring for Yourself and Other Family Members*
 - *Young Children of a Parent with a Mental Illness.*
- *Wishing Wellness: A Workbook for Children of Parents with Mental Illness*, by Lisa Anne Clarke. Magination Press, 2006. ISBN: 978-1591473138

3. For Clients

Telephone

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Information Centre (CAMH-IC):
Call 1-800-463-6273 for Support and Information. www.camh.net.

Mood Disorders Association of Ontario (MDAO): www.mooddisorders.ca.
Call 1-866-486-8236.

Ontario Mental Health Helpline 24 hour: www.mentalhealthhelpline.ca.
Call 1-866-531-2600 (chat and email support also available). Anonymous & Confidential.

Telehealth Ontario: telephone 1-866-797-0000. TTY: 1-866-797-0007.

Online Support

Reach Out: Support for People who Care about someone with a mental illness.
www.reachingfamiliesproject.org/phpBB/

- Support groups (6) in English & French

Supporting Recovery

- Here-to-Help BC: *Supporting Recovery from a Mental or Substance Use Disorder.*
- Mood Disorders Association of Ontario (MDAO): www.mooddisorders.ca. Information about Ontario support groups and programs – including *Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP)*; fact sheets; and helpful web links.

RESOURCES FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

Ontario Psychiatric Outreach Program [OPOP]: www.opop.ca.

- A collaborative network of academics and practitioners in the mental health field, sharing expertise and resources to deliver clinical services and education to Ontario's rural, remote and under-serviced areas. See: Programs.

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH): www.camh.net.

Mental Health and Addiction 101 Series: A series of free, quick, easy-to-use online tutorials about mental health problems and substance use.

Best Start Resource Centre: *Creating Circles of Support for Pregnant Women and New Parents*. www.beststart.org/resources/ppmd/pdf/circles_of_support_manual_fnl.pdf.

Best Start Resource Centre: *Life with New Baby*, a website for mothers, their families and service providers: www.lifewithnewbaby.ca

Best Start Resource Centre: *When Compassion Hurts: Vicarious Trauma in Maternal and Early Childhood Professionals*. www.beststart.org/resources/howto/index.html.

Toronto Public Health: *Steps to Wellness, Supporting Women with Postpartum Depression and Anxiety. Professional Guide*.

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health: *Partnering With Families Affected by Concurrent Disorders Facilitators' Guide*. www.camh.net/Publications/Resources_for_Professionals/Partnering_with_families/overview.html.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE MATERIAL

Canadian Collaborative Mental Health Initiative. Working Together Towards Recovery: A Toolkit for Consumers, Families, & Caregivers. www.ccmhi.ca/en/products/toolkits/documents/EN_Workingtogethertowardsrecovery.pdf

Grigoriadis, S., de Camps Meschino, D., Barrons, E., Bradley, L., Eady, A., Fishell, A., Mamisachvili, L., Cook, G.S., O'Keefe, M., Romans, S., Ross, L.E. (2011). Mood and anxiety disorders in a sample of Canadian perinatal women referred for psychiatric care. *Arch Womens Ment Health*. Aug;14(4):325-33. Epub 2011 Jun 22.

Mental Health Commission of Canada. OUT OF THE SHADOWS AT LAST: Transforming Mental Health, Mental Illness and Addiction Services in Canada. 2006.

Paulson, J.F., Bazemore, S.D.(2010). Prenatal and postpartum depression in fathers and its association with maternal depression: a meta-analysis. *JAMA*. May 19;303(19):1961-9.

State Of Mind Part 2: Collateral Damage. When Mental Illness Becomes Part Of The Family. By André Picard. The Globe and Mail. Published online Friday, Jan. 20, 2012. www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health/new-health/conditions/addiction/mental-health/when-mental-illness-becomes-part-of-the-family/article2309983/page1/

Statistics Canada: Mental Health and Wellbeing. www.statcan.gc.ca/subject-sujet/subtheme-soustheme.action?pid=2966&id=2443&lang=eng&more=0

Tiwari, S.K; Wang, J. 2006. The Epidemiology of Mental and Substance Use-Related Disorders Among White, Chinese, and Other Asian Populations in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 51. 1 : 904-12.