

Health After Pregnancy: Supporting Your Loved One's Mental Health



It takes a village to raise a baby and support new parents!

As many as 1 in 5 people face mental health issues during pregnancy or in the year following delivery. Supporting your loved ones after pregnancy and knowing how to spot the signs or symptoms of postpartum mood disorders is very important.



What is postpartum depression?

Postpartum depression is a type of depression that causes intense feelings of sadness or despair that can keep people from being able to do their daily tasks. Postpartum depression can happen up to one year after giving birth, but commonly starts around one to three weeks after birth.



What is postpartum anxiety?

Postpartum anxiety is a feeling of nervousness, worry, or concern that gets in the way of daily life. Postpartum anxiety can happen up to one year after giving birth, but commonly starts in the first six weeks after birth. Anxiety disorders are some of the most common mental health conditions, with one in five adults having an anxiety disorder.



What are the signs or symptoms of postpartum mood disorders?

Emotional ups and downs after giving birth are common. “Baby blues”, or temporary mood changes after giving birth, affect most people. Someone may have a more serious perinatal mood disorder if their mood is preventing them from caring for themselves and their baby.

As a partner, friend, or loved one, you are in a special place to be able to see when your loved one is struggling. There are many signs to look out for, including not seeming bonded to their baby, self-harm, or unsafe ways of dealing with stress like alcohol or substance use.



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Listen to **Fourth Trimester: Postpartum Mental Health** to learn more.



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<https://womenshealthcast.podbean.com/e/4thtri-mental-health/>



Symptoms of postpartum depression:

- Difficulty accomplishing daily tasks like getting out of bed, showering, eating Excessive tiredness, difficulty sleeping, or sleeping too much
- Low interest in daily activities Feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness
- Difficulty concentrating



Symptoms of postpartum anxiety:

- Feeling excessive worry or fear, racing thoughts
- Fast heartbeat, dizziness, headaches or nausea
- Trouble sleeping



How can I support my loved one after delivery?

There are many things people might find supportive or helpful after having a baby. You can talk to your loved one to learn about their specific needs, including things like:

- Bringing food or meals
- Cleaning, washing dishes, doing laundry, or doing other household tasks
- Taking care of the baby so new parents can rest, shower, or take a break
- Being a listening ear if they want to talk about how they are feeling
- Understanding the signs of serious postpartum mental health concerns
- Helping them find resources to support their mental health



More Resources

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
– dial 988 at any time or visit
<https://988lifeline.org/>

National Maternal Mental Health Hotline – dial 1-833-943-5746 or visit
<https://go.wisc.edu/m4431h>

Postpartum Support International, Wisconsin Chapter:
<https://psichapters.com/wi/>

Public Health Madison Dane County Community Resource Guide:
<https://go.wisc.edu/157hcq>

Postpartum Depression FAQs –
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
<https://go.wisc.edu/6u0s5c>

Postpartum Anxiety FAQs –
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
<https://go.wisc.edu/43bg49>