

Postpartum Depression

Nation-wide media coverage of several tragic cases has raised awareness of postpartum depression (PPD) and highlighted the importance of recognizing and appropriately treating this serious problem. The assessment and management of mental health is a component of midwifery care specifically addressed in the *Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice*. Midwives are particularly sensitive to the need for support for mothers in the postpartum period and have long advocated for more intensive follow-up for all new mothers. The following resources provide information about recognizing PPD and assisting women and families faced with this problem:

Postpartum Depression Screening Scale (PDSS)

Developed by Cheryl Beck, CNM, DNSc and Robert K. Gagle, EdD, this 35-item, self-report instrument can be administered in 5 to 10 minutes. Used as a brief screening device, it identifies women who are at high risk for postpartum depression, so that they may be referred for definitive diagnosis and treatment. Written at a third-grade reading level, PDSS items are brief and easy to understand, and results indicate Normal adjustment, Significant symptoms of postpartum depression, or Positive screen for major postpartum depression. Contact Western Psychological Services, 12031 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, CA, 90025-1251; phone 310-478-2061 or 800-648-8857; or at http://portal.wpspublish.com/portal/page?_pageid=53,70428&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

Federal Resources:

- **DHHS Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA)**
National Mental Health Information Center has a “fast facts card” on women and depression at: <http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/fastfact6/default.asp>. NMHIC also provides a link which helps to identify local mental health services: <http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/databases>
- The **National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)** provides numerous resources about women and depression as well as postpartum depression. Resources include:
 - *Women and Depression: Discovering Hope*: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/depwomenknows.cfm>.
 - *Breaking Ground, Breaking Through: The NIMH Strategic Plan on Mood Disorders Research* includes discussion of the influence of gender and the reproductive cycle on depression. <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/about/strategic-planning-reports/breaking-ground-breaking-through-the-strategic-plan-for-mood-disorders-research.shtml>.
 - *Depression* This page has information describing symptoms, causes, and treatments with information on getting help and coping. <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/depression.cfm>.
- **The National Women’s Health Information Center** in the US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Women’s Health provides information and publications on topics of interest to women including postpartum depression at: <http://www.4woman.gov/search/catalog.cfm?searchtype=pubtopic&topic=508>
Telephone: 1-800-994-WOMAN (1-800-994-9662)
- In 2005 the **DHHS Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality** published an extensive evidence report called “Perinatal Depression: Prevalence, Screening Accuracy, and Screening Outcomes” which can be found at <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/epcsums/peridepsum.htm>. This document is a meta-analysis of various screening tools and outcomes for women identified as being at high risk for perinatal depression.
- A policy research/practice brief, "Considering Interventions for Depression in Reproductive Age Women in Family Planning Programs" from the Women's and Children's Health Policy Center is at <http://www.jhsph.edu/wchpc/publications/>. It explores family planning (FP) programs as a possible site for incorporating depression screening and treatment into the care of women may have little other contact with the health care system, including challenges of locating these services within FP programs, potential interventions, and recommendations for further action for FP programs, state and local public health agencies, and mental health providers.

Other Organizations:

- The **National Mental Health Association (NMHA)** provides information about PPD and other mental illnesses. The association advocates for awareness of and treatment of mental illness. The fact sheet on PPD is found at: <http://www.nmha.org/index.cfm?objectid=C7DF956C-1372-4D20-C88192E11CCAA8E4>. In addition, FAQs about mental illness and treatment, are found at the NMHA Mental Health Resource Center: <http://www.nmha.org/index.cfm?objectid=AD1196A1-1372-4D20-C839E120D4D99F34>
- **Postpartum Support International** is a social support network and information center which provides resources including a self-assessment test. Their web site is <http://www.postpartum.net/>. Telephone: 805-967-7636. They also have a Postpartum Depression Helpline: 1-800-944-4PPD (4773).
- **Depression Screening**. On the web at www.depression-screening.org/. For information including a comprehensive kit of materials including screening forms, educational brochures, clinician education material and more log on to: www.nmisp.org/events/ndsd/conduct.aspx.

Insurance Issues

Since insurance companies vary, midwives and expectant mothers are encouraged to check with third party payers to find out what services are available and covered. For example, Aetna has instituted a program (a self-assessment form to be completed at 32 weeks with medical follow-up) to help identify women at risk for PPD.

Books

The following are available through amazon.com:

- *Postpartum Mood and Anxiety Disorders: A Guide* by Cheryl Tatano Beck and Jeanne Watson Driscoll
- *This Isn't What I Expected: Recognizing and Recovering From Depression and Anxiety after Childbirth* by Karen Kleinman
- *Shouldn't I Be Happy?: Emotional Problems of Pregnant and Postpartum Women* by Shanila Misri
- *Overcoming Postpartum Depression & Anxiety* by Linda Sebastian
- *The Postpartum Husband* by Karen Kleinman
- *Postpartum Survival Guide* by Anne Dunnewold and Diane Sanford
- *Composing Myself* by Fiona Shaw

Selected Literature

- Beck CT. A checklist to identify women at risk for developing postpartum depression. *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic and Neonatal Nursing* 1998;27:43-44.
- Beck, CT & Gable, RK. Comparative analysis of the performance of the postpartum depression screening scale with two other depression instruments. *Nursing Research* 2001;50:242-250.
- Beck, CT. & Gable, R.K. Postpartum depression screening scale: Development and Psychometric testing. *Nursing Research* 2000;49: 272-282
- Daley AJ, Macarthur C, Winter H. The role of exercise in treating postpartum depression: A review of the literature. *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health* 2007 Jan-Feb;52;(1):56-62.
- Kennedy HP, Beck CT, Driscoll JW. A light in the fog: Caring for women with postpartum depression. *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health* 2002 Sep-Oct;47(5):318-30.
- Patient Handout. "Postpartum depression," side 1 (Adapted from Kennedy HP, Beck CT, Driscoll JW. "A light in the fog: caring for women with postpartum depression") and "Care for women with postpartum depression: N*U*R*S*E approach" side 2 (Adapted from Sichel D & Driscoll JW [1999] Women's moods: What every woman should know about hormones, the brain, and emotional health). New York: William Morrow & company, Inc). *Journal of Midwifery & women's Health* 2002 Sep-Oct;47(5):391-2.
- Sanders, LB. Assessing and managing women with depression: a midwifery perspective. *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health* 20006 May-Jun;51(3):185-92.

The ACNM "QuickInfo" series was developed by the Department of Professional Services to respond to common inquiries, summarizing ACNM resources regarding a particular topic, as well as listing selected literature and a variety of other resources. Your feedback is welcomed; contact Professional Services at 240-485-1800 or info@acnm.org.

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