

Helping Moms with Maternal Depression

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NMAIMH competencies addressed:

Working with Others

- Building & maintaining relationships
- Supporting others/mentoring
- Empathy & compassion

Reflection

- Contemplation
- Self-awareness
- Professional/personal development

Recently, one of my colleagues requested information about post-partum depression in New Mexico. While looking for the information, I reflected on how important it is to help moms during this difficult time of their life and connect them with the needed resources.

Post-partum depression occurs after the baby is born, and the feelings of depression are more intense and last longer than those feelings often referred to as “baby-blues.” These feelings typically last for about two weeks. Besides the typical depression symptoms the new mom experiences, post-partum depression might interfere with how the baby is taken care of and the bond that is created between mother and baby (Mayo Clinic, 2019). The Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitor System (PRAMS) 2016-2017, shows that in the U.S. 1 in 9 women experience symptoms of postpartum depression and 1 in 8 women in New Mexico experience port-partum depression (CDC, 2019). Therefore, we can infer from this data that post-partum depression is highly prevalent at both the national and state level.

Home visiting services play a crucial role during pregnancy and after the baby is born. The Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (2017) mentions that in general only 20-30% of depressed mothers obtain mental health treatment, while mothers who participate in home visiting are more likely to get treatment, dropping the rate down to 14%. During home visits, moms are screened for depression and other risk factors, provided support, and are linked with other community resources. Home visitors are trained to develop warm and supportive relationships, which helps them to engage with mothers that have depression and be able to connect them to the appropriate resources (Milani et al., 2017).

Moreover, during my research I discovered national and statewide resources regarding maternal depression. For example, there is an evidence-based approach called “Moving Beyond Depression” (MBD), designed to provide effective treatment to depressed moms who participate in home visiting programs. According to the Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (2017), the MBD approach has been adopted in several U.S. states with the following results:

- ✓ Considerable decrease in symptoms of depression
- ✓ Participants no longer meet the criteria for major depression
- ✓ Capability to cope with stress, more gratification in the maternal role, and enhanced social support systems
- ✓ Better attendance for home visits compared to clinic sessions

New Mexico Resource

In the state of New Mexico, mothers who are experiencing post-partum depression can obtain mental health treatment through the Postpartum Support International (PSI) that provides individual and group support in different areas of the state (PSI, 2019).

Questions to encourage discussion and reflection...

- What experiences have you had in providing post-partum depression support?
- How can home visitors be better prepared to provide support regarding post-partum depression?
- What resources are available in your community to help mothers who are dealing with post-partum depression?

References

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- Milani, H., Amiri, P., Mohseny, M., Abadi, A., Vaziri, S., & Vejdani, M. (2017). Postpartum home care and its effects on mothers' health: A clinical trial. *Journal of Research in Medical Sciences*, 22(1), 96. https://doi.org/10.4103/jrms.JRMS_319_17
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