

Maternal Mental Health Workshop (2 Hours)

1. Pre-Test: What do you know about maternal mental health? (5 minutes)

Each participant is given a pre-test to see how much they know about maternal health. We go over the answers before the presentation begins.

2. Introduction (10 minutes)

Take this opportunity to share your story. You need to decide what you're comfortable sharing and use discretion as to the details that you share. I share that I had pregnancy/postpartum anxiety with intrusive thoughts. I talk about my overall mission in the community, educating providers, etc. This is all about me establishing a "relationship" with these families since I am their contact if they need resources. Plus, this is a stand-alone workshop---some of you may be putting this within a larger presentation, but sharing your story if you have one can be pivotal in gaining the trust needed for mothers/families to reach out.

3. Types of Perinatal Mental Health Disorders (10 minutes)

This is a brief overview of the spectrum. I try to stress here that PPD is most commonly talked about and it's an acronym that's tossed around a lot but that it's only one of many complications that can occur. So telling the families that experiencing symptoms during pregnancy is very common is so important because you're talking to pregnant women and they may not understand what's happening to them (if they're suffering) because it's not "postpartum".

Here are the disorders/statistics I list:

- a. Baby Blues (50%-80%)
- b. Pregnancy/Postpartum Depression (1 in 7)
- c. Pregnancy/Postpartum Anxiety (1 in 7)
- d. Pregnancy/Postpartum Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (1 in 7)
- e. Postpartum PTSD (Post-traumatic Stress Disorder) (1 in 7)
- f. Postpartum Psychosis (1-2 in 1000 women)

4. Am I at risk? (10 minutes)

Explaining risk factors is what I found to be missing in almost ALL CBE classes that I attended in my county. Typically, the discussion dives right into symptoms. I found that having an open discussion about the risk factors lends itself to having an open-discussion about mental health in general and the stigma attached to it. Most of the mothers in my workshops come in with the socioeconomic risk factor so it's something that we talk about.

Here's how I present it:

- a. A personal or family history of any of the following can increase your risk.
 - i. Anxiety/Depression
 - ii. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
 - iii. Bipolar Disorder
 - iv. Schizophrenia
- b. Other Risk Factors
 - i. Socioeconomic
 - ii. Past Trauma, Domestic abuse
 - iii. Traumatic pregnancy or birth
 - iv. Previous eating disorder
 - v. Stress: Loss of loved one, divorce, moving
 - vi. Lack of social support
 - vii. Perfectionist personality

5. Symptoms (15 minutes)

I use a handout with a chart to present the symptoms to them. I think visually it's more interesting than a list. I start out with explaining the symptoms of Baby Blues. I then move onto explaining the symptoms of depression and anxiety which often look the same or very similar to that of baby blues. I

stress to them that this is all about the timeline. WHEN are these symptoms happening? Baby blues last 1-2 weeks, any symptoms after that may be an indication to reach out for help. I have an entire slide on postpartum psychosis, explaining the symptoms and more importantly explaining the difference between a mom having intrusive thoughts and a mom having a psychotic break and experiencing psychosis. If partners are present, stress that they're the first line of defense and need to get help if they recognize these psychosis symptoms.

***Show the Postpartum Support International DVD: Healthy Mom, Happy Family (15 minutes)**

6. New Mom Checklist (10 minutes)

I absolutely love the new mom checklist that Postpartum Progress created. I give one to each family and find that this list fits in perfectly after discussing symptoms. I explain that the checklist is helpful in getting a conversation started with their healthcare provider. I also use this time to encourage them to be truthful with their providers saying, "Your provider can't treat a symptom they don't know you're having."

7. Treatment Options (5 minutes)

Since I'm not a licensed therapist or psychiatrist I do not talk about specific medications etc., but there are many things I mention here that are so important. First, I make sure to tell them that not all moms need medication but if you do there are safe medications you can take while pregnant and/or breastfeeding. Second I mention that sometimes just attending a support group can be very helpful. I refer them to PSI's Virtual Support Groups or you can refer them to a local group.

Here's how I present this information:

- a. Therapist: Talk Therapy or Counseling
- b. Psychiatrists: Medication
- c. Support Group: Promotes self-care, social support system, education

BREAK (15 minutes)

8. PPD Promise (5 minutes)

The PPD Promise is an "agreement" between the mother and loved one that's chosen to keep an eye on them and instructed to get mom help if she can't help herself. It explains all the symptoms and is a great way to get the conversation started with their family and support system.

9. Your Postpartum Plan (15 minutes)

Developing a postpartum plan will likely not prevent a maternal mental health complication but it can certainly help a mother/family create their village/support system. Families' love doing this while in the class and it opens up so many conversations. I like to stress here that mothers sitting at the same table with them right there in the class can be a great support for them even if it's just a phone call.