

# Maternal Mental Health

# Overview

- What is Maternal Mental Health?
- The statistics
- What are the signs and symptoms?
- How does MMH affect mothers and families?
- Resources
- Looking after yourself

# What is Maternal Mental Health?

- A new/expectant's woman's mental health during pregnancy and the first year after birth. This includes mental illness existing before pregnancy, as well as illnesses that develop for the first time, or are greatly exacerbated in the perinatal period.
- Examples of perinatal mental illness include **antenatal depression, postnatal depression, anxiety, perinatal obsessive compulsive disorder, postpartum psychosis and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)**. These illnesses can be mild, moderate or severe, requiring different kinds of care or treatment.

# Statistics

- Mental distress and illness are common in pregnancy and the first postnatal year, affecting up to 1 in 5 women
- Postnatal depression and anxiety in mothers from racialised communities is 13% higher than in white mothers
- The most common perinatal mental health problem is postnatal depression, with rates ranging between 13% in the first few weeks to 20% in the first year after the birth
- Mental health related deaths are now the leading cause of maternal death in the first postnatal year
- Untreated maternal mental illness may adversely affect the mother-infant relationship and infant development

# What to look out for?

- Sad and low
- Tearful for no apparent reason
- Worthless
- Hopeless about the future
- Tired
- Unable to cope
- Irritable and angry
- Guilty
- Lose concentration
- Disturbed sleep
- Reduced appetite
- Lack interest in sex
- Have thoughts about death

# Impact on mother and families

## Mother

- Shame
- Stigma
- Inadequacy
- Guilt
- Anger/Frustration

## Father/Partner

- Increased risk of poor mental health
- Isolated
- Guilt
- Relationship conflict

## Baby/Siblings

- Delayed development
- Insecure attachment
- Baby's mental health outcomes as they get older
- Behavioural problems

# Supports

## Self Help

- Connect with a supportive trusted adult
- Peer Support Groups
- Accept any help offered and don't be afraid to ask for help
- Helplines

## Services

- Doctor/Health Visitor/Midwife/Family Nurse Partnership
- Counselling
- Relationship Support Services

# Looking after yourself

Things I can do

.....by myself

.....with others

People I can talk to.....