

Maternal Mental Health

Overview

- What is Maternal Mental Health (MMH)
- The statistics
- What are the signs and symptoms
- The impact of poor MMH on 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

- Up to 1 in 5 women experience poor mental health in pregnancy and the first postnatal year.
- Postnatal depression affects 13% to 20% of women within the first year after birth.
- Postnatal depression and anxiety in mothers from racialised communities is 13% higher than in white mothers.
- Untreated maternal mental illness may adversely affect the mother-infant relationship and infant development.
- Untreated perinatal mental illnesses are estimated to cost the UK economy roughly £8.1 billion annually (most of this cost stemming from adverse impacts on child 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
- Helplines
- Accept any help offered and don't be afraid to ask for help

Services

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

Looking after yourself

Things I can do

.....by myself

.....with others

People I can talk to.....