



EMPLOYEE SERIES

Tips for Managing Postpartum Depression (PPD)

It is quite normal for many new mothers to experience mood changes following the birth of a child. As the hormones of pregnancy suddenly drop and mothers are adjusting and learning to take care of their new baby, they will begin to experience a mix of emotions including sense of hopelessness and worthlessness. Some mums may even think that they should not be feeling this way as they are expected to be happy about the new addition to their family. Such thoughts may cause them to think of themselves as a 'bad parent' who struggle to enjoy the presence of their child. When such feelings and thoughts become persistent and long lasting, they can be in the way of renewing your efforts to emotionally connect with your child and to welcome their offer of love and joy into your life.

Remember, experiencing PPD is nobody's fault. It can be managed effectively. It is important that you seek medical advice as soon as you feel that you are experiencing unusual/severe mood swings.

Consider implementing the following strategies in view of reducing the adverse effects of PPD and improving connection to your child:



Allocate time to rest during the day. Physical and emotional rest is vital for you to be the best version of yourself to your child. Implementing a plan of rest amidst demands and challenges of the new baby will improve the quality of your relationship with your child. This may mean seeking/accepting support from your family or friends to ensure that you have time for yourself to get out of the house, involve in things that you used to enjoy, or even a nap without interruptions.



Engage in physical activities. Physical activities can provide an opportunity to relax your body not just your mind. Slowly introduce yourself to things that enjoy and give you energy - walking is a good starting point. When necessary, ask your doctor when you can begin your exercises.



Be aware of your expectations and their demands. Each individual mother will differ from the manner and time taken to connect with their child. Undue pressure to connect with your child can make you feel guilty and increase anxiety. Notice the times you emotionally connect with your child and enjoy each other. For example, you may do this by picking them up, reassuring when they cry, cuddling and touching, smiling and singing.



Avoid alcohol and recreational drugs. These substances can make mood swings worse and reduce your motivation to engage with you family and baby.



Stay connected to those you care and love. Welcome opportunities to talk to your partner, family members and friends and share what you are experiencing. You may even decide to connect with other moms who have gone through similar experiences and be curious about what helped them to remain resilient and hopeful. You need not to go through your experiences alone.



Ask for help. If you continue to signs and symptoms of PPD such as thoughts of guilt, worthlessness, suicide and/or fatigue, insomnia, changes in appetite, los of interest in activities, please consult a medical professional and seek support from a qualified counsellor.

Reference:

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/mental-health/mental-health-conditions/postpartum-depression>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/postpartum-depression/symptoms-causes/syc-20376617>

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/postpartum-depression-and-the-baby-blues.htm>

https://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/lit_review_postpartum_depression.pdf

If you would like to book an appointment and /or speak with one of our Counsellors, it's as easy as calling 1300 66 77 00 or New Zealand 0800 327 669 or visit our website www.accesswellbeingservices.com.au