



Maternal Mental Health

Maternal Mental Health: Community Care Toolkit



Community Care Tool Kit

The Battlefords Maternal Mental Health Committee is pleased to present the **Maternal Mental Health Community Care Tool Kit**. It includes a Community Care Guide based on the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale and a series of handouts for discussion with mother and her family, on topics such as:

Anxiety and Worry	Emotions	Loss and Grief
Breastfeeding and Mood	Exercise	Rest and Sleep
Boundaries	Family and Friends	Self Care
Depression	Food and Mood	Stress Busters

Treatment

Ways to use this Tool Kit

- **Review the kit in an in-service or with your supervisor:**
 - Using the Tool Kit may trigger uncomfortable feelings or memories for you, but it may also help with personal growth and learning
 - Use the handouts and information provided in the Tool Kit and practice the skills, especially SELF CARE and BOUNDARIES
 - If you are feeling worse about yourself, please tell your supervisor, talk to a counsellor, or contact Employee Assistance for support
- **Screen woman with the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)* at the usual times**
 - See the back of the community Care Guide or other maternal mental health (MMH)materials
- **Review suggestions for her based on her score on the Community Care Guide**
- **Take appropriate action(s) for the score or refer to local supports**
- **Find suitable handout(s) for her current situation and EPDS score or allow her to choose topic**
 - Do not give her all of the handouts at once as this may be overwhelming and ineffective
 - Expect to spend approximately 30 minutes going through the details of each handout
 - If you think that more than one handout will be helpful, plan to give over a few visits
 - If there is a concern about her ability to read, relay the information verbally, and ensure she understands
- **Discuss the handout with the woman and/or her partner**
 - Do not just leave it for her/them to read
 - **KidsFirst** teams please see the list of corresponding modules on the GGK and GGF curricula
- **Document the handout(s) provided and your plans for the next visit**

The Maternal Mental Health Community Care Tool Kit was developed with funding from KidsFirst Battlefords, under the leadership and consultation of Angela Bowen, RN, PhD.

This Tool kit is available for download from KidsFirst Battlefords at www.pnrha.ca, the Saskatchewan Prevention Institute at www.skprevention.ca, and the MotherFirst site www.skmaternalmentalhealth.ca. Feel free to copy and distribute, but please do not change without permission. ©KidsFirst Battlefords.



*The EPDS is only a screen for anxiety/depression. If you are concerned about a woman's mood, her safety, or that of her children, contact your supervisor, the woman's counsellor, her doctor, local emergency services or Healthline 811.

**EPDS SCORE <10= UNLIKELY DEPRESSED****Confirm absence of depression/anxiety, or harm thoughts****Promote Positive Mental Health:**

- Discuss any concerns she may have
- Nurture emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual health
- MMH infocard and discuss handouts: (**Emotions, Sleep & Rest, Family & Friends, Stress Busters, Self-Care, Exercise**)
- Promote confidence

QUESTIONS 3, 4, 5 SCORE >4= PROBABLE ANXIETY
*Confirm score. (EPDS question 10)***Take Action:**

- Discuss any concerns she may have
- Share your concerns with your supervisor
- Increase contact with visits or phone calls
- MMH infocard and discuss handouts: (**Anxiety & Worry, Emotions, Sleep & Rest, Family & Friends, Stress Busters, Self-Care, Exercise, Treatment**)
- Encourage relaxation (**Stress Busters** handout)
- Encourage family involvement (**Family & Friends** handout)
- Repeat EPDS in 2 weeks

EPDS SCORE 10-11= POSSIBLE DEPRESSION*Confirm score. (EPDS question 10)***Take Action:**

- Share concerns with counsellor
- Increase contact with visits or phone calls
- Repeat EPDS in 2 weeks
- MMH infocard and discuss handouts: (**Anxiety & Worry, Emotions, Depression, Sleep & Rest, Family & Friends, Stress Busters, Self-Care, Exercise, Treatment**)
- Encourage relaxation (**Stress Busters** handout)
- Encourage family involvement (**Friends & Family** handout)

EPDS SCORE ≥12= PROBABLE DEPRESSION*Confirm score. (EPDS question 10)***Assess risk to children:**
*"In Need of Protection" and "Duty to Report."***Take Action:**

- Notify counsellor immediately
- Suggest she contact her family doctor or nurse practitioner
- MMH infocard and discuss handouts: (**Depression, Sleep & Rest, Family & Friends, Stress Busters, Self-Care, Exercise, Treatment**)
- Encourage family involvement (**Family & Friends** handout)
- Increase contact – more frequent visits & phone calls

Offer EPDS to partner**POSITIVE QUESTION
10 = POTENTIAL HARM****Confirm Score. ASIST**
Call supervisor immediately, do not leave her alone**Assess Harm Intention:**

1. Has she had previous harm attempts or harmful behaviours?
2. Does she have a plan to harm self or others (baby, children)?

Assess for Psychosis

1. Is she seeing or hearing things that aren't there?
2. Is she having strange experiences/ sensations
3. Are her speech or thoughts disorganized?
4. Are things that she describes realistic?

Assess risk to children:
*"In Need of Protection" and "Duty to Report."***Suspect psychosis or intent to harm?**

- Do not leave alone
- Refer to Counsellor
- Notify next of kin and if woman agrees, family/friends
- Contact or take to family doctor, crisis services, and/or emergency room

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS**Mental Health: 306-446-6500****Battlefords Family Health Centre: 306-937-6840****Primary Health Centre: 306-446-6400****Battlefords Union Hospital: 306-446-6600****Social Services: 306-446-7535****Catholic Family Services: 306-445-6960****Emergency/RCMP 911. Healthline: 811 (24hrs/day)****MEDSASK: Information about medication use in pregnancy or lactation 1-800-665-DRUG (3784) or 1-306-966-6340****Other supports:****See: www.skmaternalmentalhealth.ca**

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EPDS OVER→

EPDS SCREENING & CARE GUIDE

Offer all pregnant women the Maternal Mental Health print materials.

Download or order screening and print materials from the Saskatchewan Prevention Institute at www.preventioninstitute.sk.ca

Maternal Depression - which includes Antenatal Depression (AD) and Postpartum Depression (PPD) and **Maternal Anxiety** affect 1 in 5 women. There are potential effects to the whole family, as 10% of partners experience depression and anxiety, more if the mother is depressed. Parental mental health issues can affect child health and development. Treating anxiety may help to prevent depression.

Signs of anxiety and depression include:

- Irritability or anger	- Excessive worry and guilt	- Inability to relax	- Hypervigilence
- Sleep problems	- Sadness	- Panic attacks	- Repetitive thoughts
- Lack of bonding with baby	- Crying	- Fearfulness	- Obsessive intrusive thoughts
- Indecisiveness	- Thoughts of harm to self or others		

UNIVERSAL SCREENING is a quick and easy way to **determine women at risk** as well as helping to **reduce stigma** of mental health problems. The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale – EPDS – can be done in-person or over the phone. The EPDS is also valid for use with partners.

MINIMAL TIMES TO SCREEN

Pregnancy

- 1st prenatal visit and at 28-34 weeks gestation

Postpartum

- 2-3 weeks postpartum and at 2 month (or 4 if not done at 2) and 6 month child visits

Or as deemed necessary by the practitioner

EPDS Screen

1. I have been able to laugh and see the funny side of things:

As much as I always could	0
Not quite so much now	1
Definitely not so much now	2
Not at all	3

2. I have looked forward with enjoyment to things:

As much as I ever did	0
Rather less than I used to	1
Definitely less than I used to	2
Hardly at all	3

3. I have blamed myself unnecessarily when things went wrong:

Yes, most of the time	3
Yes, some of the time	2
Not very often	1
No, never	0

4. I have been anxious or worried for no good reason:

No, not at all	0
Hardly ever	1
Yes, sometimes	2
Yes, very often	3

5. I have felt scared or panicky for no very good reason:

Yes, quite a lot	3
Yes, sometimes	2
No, not much	1
No, not at all	0

6. Things have been getting on top of me:

Yes, most of the time I haven't been able to cope at all	3
Yes, sometimes I haven't been coping as well as usual	2
No, most of the time I have coped quite well	1
No, I have been coping as well as ever	0

7. I have been so unhappy that I have had difficulty sleeping:

Yes, most of the time	3
Yes, sometimes	2
Not very often	1
No, not at all	0

8. I have felt sad or miserable:

Yes, most of the time	3
Yes, quite often	2
Not very often	1
No, not at all	0

9. I have been so unhappy that I have been crying:

Yes, most of the time	3
Yes, quite often	2
Only occasionally	1
No, never	0

10. The thought of harming myself has occurred to me:

Yes, quite often	3
Sometimes	2
Hardly ever	1
Never	0

TOTAL SCORE: _____

See Score Interpretation and Care OVER

Anxiety Subscale



Worry, which involves being pre-occupied with things on your mind, can be helpful when it makes you get things done, and having some anxiety, such as feeling very nervous or uptight, is normal, but worrying all the time or having unreasonable anxiety can interfere with your daily life and the health of you and your baby.



Women may worry more as pregnancy progresses and after the baby is born

- Pregnant women may worry about many things, for instance their health, the birth, the baby's health, money, work, and taking care of baby
- New mothers may worry about the health and safety of the baby, feeding and caring for the baby properly, their other children, sex, and finances

Worry can

- Leave you feeling emotionally drained
- Lead to or worsen anxiety and depression



Anxiety is common; it affects up to 25% of women in pregnancy. Recognizing anxiety is important because it:

- Increases the risk of postpartum depression
- Can affect the health of mother and development of the baby
- Can be treated and your life can improve



There are different kinds of anxiety problems that can be diagnosed and treated

- **Generalized Anxiety Disorder** involves intense distressful symptoms, such as:
 - Excessive, uncontrollable worry, feeling restless, keyed up, and on edge, problems with concentration, irritability, muscle tension, and sleep problems
- **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)** involves reliving a traumatic situation, long after any physical danger has passed
 - People startle easily, and experience flashbacks and nightmares
- **A Phobia** is an intense fear of something that poses little real danger to the person. It is normal to have some fear, but people with phobias have irrational and exaggerated fears.
 - Just thinking about the object can make you feel anxious
 - The terror of coming in contact with the object can be overwhelming
- **Panic Disorder** includes **unexpected** and **repeated** panic attacks
 - You can feel terrified that something bad will happen because of the panic attack, such as going crazy, losing control, or dying
- **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)** involves intrusive ideas, thoughts, impulses, or images (obsessions), which often lead to doing rituals over and over again (compulsions)
 - Compulsions often involve washing, checking, counting, and arranging things
 - Compulsions can give temporary relief from the anxious feelings, but if they interfere with your life, you need to get help.\



Read the **STRESS BUSTERS** and **SELF CARE** handouts

If your feelings are scary to you or interfere with your daily life, please talk to someone you trust, call your health care provider, or phone Healthline at 811

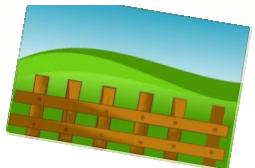


Boundaries

Boundaries are the limits we set for others and ourselves in our life when we are confident and feel good about ourselves.

Fear and guilt are two reasons women find it hard to set and keep healthy boundaries

- You might be afraid of being rejected or abandoned, so you say yes when you really don't want to
- You might fear a fight or argument, so you go along with things just to keep the peace
- You might feel guilty if you do say "no" to sex or other things people might ask you to do
- You might want to avoid hurting someone else's feelings



"No"

Tips for making and keeping boundaries:

- **Decide what you need or want from a situation**
 - Make a list of things you need or want and write it down
- **Set healthy boundaries for you**
 - We are responsible for letting people know what we can and can't do
 - Don't expect other people to be able to read your mind
 - Things may seem obvious to you, but other people may not realize how overwhelmed you might be
 - Balancing your needs and the baby's needs may take compromise and juggling
 - Remember, a well-rested mother is best able to care for herself and her baby
- **Be firm**
 - You have decided what you need, and be firm to keep that boundary
 - Stay calm
 - You do not have to justify or apologize for the boundary that you are setting
 - Be clear and concise
 - Be consistent with your boundaries-stick to them
 - You are the parent, not your child's friend
 - Fewer words are usually more effective
- **Find support**
 - Talk to a trusted friend or care provider to help you when you first start setting goals
- **Saying "no" might make you feel more guilty or anxious when you first start saying it**
 - This is because you are not used to setting boundaries, it will get easier with time
- **Social Media**
 - It is important to maintain your boundaries on social media, such as FaceBook, Twitter, Instagram
 - Being online 24/7 is stressful and can be very time consuming and can distract you from caring for your child(ren)
 - Oversharing can ruin your reputation and bring regret later
 - Things said to you or that you say to others can be misunderstood or hurtful
 - Spending too much time on social media can affect your mood and bring you down
 - Spend time with your children and enjoy your friends in person

Choose to spend some time doing things that bring you joy

Making difficult choices today will help you feel happier tomorrow

Keep at it, one boundary at a time! Be proud of your successes!

Remember: When you keep good boundaries, you are teaching your children to have good boundaries too!

Your children copy you, so be positive and model respect😊



If your feelings are scary to you or interfere with your daily life, please talk to someone you trust, call your health care provider, or phone Healthline at 811



WHY BREASTFEED YOUR BABY?

There are many health benefits to breastfeeding, for mom and baby. Babies are healthiest if they have only breastmilk for the first 6 months of life. Not everyone realizes that breastfeeding is also good for your mood!

Women who are depressed or very anxious may find breastfeeding more difficult at first, but it is important to keep breastfeeding for you and your baby. Breastfeeding can help your mood.



When you breastfeed

- Your body releases 'feel good' hormones (oxytocin and prolactin)
- Your body returns to normal sooner, helping you feel better
- You can enjoy a closer bond with your baby

BEFORE BABY IS BORN

Talk to someone about breastfeeding and learn about baby feeding patterns

- Public Health Nurses and Lactation Consultants are available in many health regions
- Attend prenatal classes and special breastfeeding classes
- Talk to other new mothers who are successfully breastfeeding



Discuss your feelings about breastfeeding with your partner

- It is normal to need support when you are first breastfeeding

Ask your mother and partner's mother about their breastfeeding experiences

- If she did not breastfeed, she may not understand what you are doing or why
- If she had difficulties breastfeeding, she may or may not be able to help you

Do not stop or change your medications without talking to your doctor, it can make your symptoms worse

- Most medications are very safe while breastfeeding
- If you have questions about medications, call MEDSASK 1-800-665-DRUG (3784)

AFTER BABY IS BORN



Ask for help at home, so that you can spend time with your baby

- Breastfeeding takes time at the beginning, so be patient with yourself and your baby

Continue to take your prenatal vitamin and folic acid

- They can help you to feel better

Don't stop breastfeeding without talking to someone who supports you breastfeeding the baby

- Ask the public health nurse or others for help
- You can pump your breastmilk and you or someone else can feed to baby in a bottle or with a syringe

If baby is fussy

- A pacifier/soother can help to meet baby's need to suck, once breastfeeding is established, and can help to prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, but stop after a year as it can contribute to ear infections



Remember to

- Eat well, for both of you - follow Canada's Food Guide
- Exercise regularly - see EXERCISE handout
- Rest and sleep when baby sleeps - see REST & SLEEP handout
- Take care of you - it will help your baby - see SELF CARE handout
- Ask for help - see FAMILY & FRIENDS handout
- Follow your treatment plan - see TREATMENT handout



If your feelings are scary to you or interfere with your daily life, please talk to someone you trust, call your health care provider, or phone Healthline at 811



One in five women can feel teary, sad, or overwhelmed during pregnancy and after giving birth. Many women get the “blues” after the baby is born. Most women recover from the blues in a few weeks, but 10-30% of women will have **postpartum depression**.



SIGNS OF DEPRESSION

- Not enjoying things she used to
- Low energy
- Crying or feeling teary for no reason
- Feeling irritable or more sensitive to things
- More tired or hyperactive
- Not being able to get to sleep or sleeping more
- Problems concentrating
- Forgetting things
- Feeling everything is her fault
- Feeling unable to cope with things in her life
- Anxiety, panic attacks or feeling scared for no reason
- Eating too much or too little
- Thoughts of harming herself or others



CAUSES OF DEPRESSION

The exact cause of depression is unknown, but hormonal changes and stress, along with any of these factors increases risk for depression:

- History of depression or anxiety
- Family history of depression
- Biology of the person
- Being single, living with parents
- Relationship or marital problems
- Being a teenager
- Ethnic minority
- Recent stressful life event: divorce, job loss, death of someone close
- Unplanned pregnancy
- Lack of support
- Financial: food and housing worries
- Low education
- Difficult pregnancy

Untreated depression may be harmful to the mother, her baby, and family

Mothers who are depressed

- Have more and worse depressions in the future
- Tend to isolate themselves, which can deepen the depression
- Are at increased risk of experiencing psychosis after the baby is born
- Have more medical problems in pregnancy and afterwards, such as increased blood pressure
- Have more premature birth and c-section deliveries
- Smoke, drink alcohol, and use drugs more often, which are harmful to her and her baby
- Are less likely to breastfeed her baby

Babies of moms who are depressed

- Are born earlier
- Can be more fussy
- Feed and weigh less
- Are overall less healthy



Children of moms who are depressed

- Have more psychological, social, behaviour, discipline, and school problems

Partners of women who are depressed

- Are much more likely to become depressed too

Depression is not your fault, but you can do some things to feel better

- See SELF CARE, EXERCISE, REST & SLEEP, BOUNDARIES, TREATMENT handouts

If you are hearing or seeing things that other people aren't or your sad feelings are scary to you, talk to someone you trust, call your healthcare provider, or Healthline at 811



Pregnancy can change how a woman feels both physically and emotionally. Pregnant and postpartum women can be more emotional and moody than at other times in their life.

THE FIRST 3 MONTHS OF PREGNANCY

When you first find out you are pregnant you are getting used to the idea of having a baby. You may be surprised or happy, but you can also feel more tired, emotional, and forgetful.

It is important to:

- See a doctor
- Rest and not become stressed
- Take prenatal vitamins and folic acid
- Take care of yourself and your unborn baby
- If you are nauseated and vomiting, talk to your doctor
- Talk to someone if you find you are teary or sad, not interested in anything, can't concentrate or sleep
- Learn what is happening to your body and your baby as he or she grows



THE SECOND 3 MONTHS OF PREGNANCY

You will feel the baby move and may start to feel more attached as she or he grows inside you

Women usually feel physically and emotionally well during this time



- Continue to be active
- Keep taking care of yourself and your unborn baby
- Wear comfortable clothes
- Go to prenatal classes
- Talk to someone if you are not starting to feel close to the baby

THE LAST 3 MONTHS OF PREGNANCY

This is often a time of increased worry about the pregnancy, birth, and caring for the new baby. You might feel less physically comfortable and feel more emotional.



- Getting enough sleep can be a problem, so try to nap during the day
- If you are very anxious about any part of the birth, talk to your doctor or worker
- If you are uncertain about breastfeeding, this is a good time to ask someone



AFTER THE BABY IS BORN

Women are usually less anxious once the baby is born, but they can also be very emotional

- **Some women get too happy or "high" soon after the baby is born, we call this "the pinks"**
 - This is more likely to happen to women with a history of mood swings or bipolar disorder
 - If you are not sleeping or eating, talk to someone you trust
- **Most women experience "the blues"**
 - About 75% of women feel blue and teary for a few weeks after their baby is born
 - If you cannot stop crying, feel depressed or have no feelings at all, talk to someone you trust

If your feelings are scary to you or interfere with your daily life, please talk to someone you trust, call your healthcare provider, or phone Healthline at 811



Exercise is good for your mood!

- **It might be hard to get yourself going, but exercise is very good for your mood**
 - Find a walking or exercise friend
 - Make a pact to call each other a few times each week to exercise, walk, or play together
- **Exercise helps to**
 - Relieve depression and anxiety symptoms
 - Improve your sleep
 - Control your blood sugar and your weight, especially after meals
 - Get your body back to pre-pregnancy shape (or better!)
- **Find an activity that you enjoy**
 - You are more likely to stick with something you like to do
- **Usually within 5 - 10 minutes after beginning moderate exercise you will feel better**
 - Start with a short walk around the block
 - You will probably want to keep going after you start
- **150 minutes of moderate exercise a week is a great goal**
 - Start out slowly and keep at it
 - Aim for 30 minutes of exercise/walking 5 days a week
 - Schedule time to be active into your day and make it a healthy habit
- **You don't have to go to a fancy gym to get exercise**
 - Crank up the music and do your housework quickly
 - Dance around the house, pick up your baby, and enjoy the music
 - Use the stairs and go up them fast
- **Play with your children**
 - Any activity is good. Walking, dancing, and cleaning all count
 - Children will benefit from being outside and older children will sleep and eat better if they have been outside being active.
 - Be a child yourself!
 - Play hopscotch or swing with your older children, they will love it
 - The whole family can participate or someone can watch the baby for you
- **Walk**
 - It costs nothing and you can do it just about anywhere, including local malls
 - Take the baby and other children or ask a friend or family member to stay with them
 - Join or start a stroller group with friends and neighbours
 - Be sure it is safe to walk, for example ask a friend to join you
 - Ask the local school if you can use the gym for a walking group one night a week when the weather is cold and the days are short
 - Walking outside in the sunshine can improve your mood
- **Yoga or other activity classes**
 - Yoga helps with anxiety, depression, and high blood pressure
 - Exercise in groups can be fun



If your feelings are scary to you or interfere with your daily life, please talk to someone you trust, call your healthcare provider, or phone Healthline at 811



When a woman is anxious or depressed, she may withdraw. Being isolated from her friends and family could make her feel more sad and hopeless. She needs you - her family and friends - now, more than ever. Try to remain positive and be gentle and nonjudgmental in your interactions with her.

LEARN ABOUT EMOTIONS, ANXIETY, AND DEPRESSION

- **Learn about and become aware of the symptoms of depression**
 - Ask for information (see ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, and EMOTIONS handouts)
 - If she is hearing or seeing things, or acts inappropriate, contact or take her to her family doctor and/or emergency room
- **Accept that her feelings are real and can be painful for her**
 - LISTEN to her
 - AVOID judging her
 - DO NOT tell her to stop feeling a certain way; she can't just 'stop' her feelings



SUPPORT HER

- **Support can include**
 - Go to visits with her counsellor and doctor
 - Encourage her to take her medications and follow her care provider's suggestions (see TREATMENT handout)
 - Ask what you can do to be helpful
- **Keep your commitments to her and the baby**
 - Be reliable. If you say you will be there for her or to care for the baby, do it. It shows you care
- **Be patient about sex**
 - It can take time for a woman who has had a baby to feel like being intimate again



ENCOURAGE RELAXATION AND HEALTHY LIVING

- **Help with other children**
 - Take all the children to the park or for a walk so mom can relax
 - Play or read with older children
 - Stay with the children so she can do errands more easily
 - Change diapers
- **Help with the housework and chores**
 - Help as best you can – laundry, dishes, shopping, cooking
 - Encourage older children to clean up after themselves and help around the house
- **Go for a walk with her** (see EXERCISE handout)
 - Exercise is good for mood, but it can be hard for someone who is depressed to get out of the house
 - Watch the children so she can go for a walk with a friend or her partner
- **Bring her meals**
 - Make healthy meals that are easy for her to heat up when you aren't there
- **Get her out of the house for a fun activity**
 - Go for a coffee, a walk, or shopping while someone watches the children



TAKE CARE OF HER PARTNER TOO

Living with someone who is depressed can be difficult and tiring. Partners are more likely to be depressed themselves, if the mother is depressed. If you are feeling sad, having trouble concentrating, not sleeping properly, drinking more alcohol, or feeling angry, please **talk to someone**

If her behaviour is worrying to you or you see that it is interfering with her ability to care for the baby and herself, please talk to someone you trust, call her healthcare provider, or Healthline at 811



**What you eat can affect how you feel. Enjoy a balanced diet.
Follow Canada's Food Guide**



Foods that might make you feel good for a short time, but won't help your mood or nutrition:

- Coffee or chocolate
- Alcohol
- Greasy foods
- Very spicy foods, if you don't usually eat them
- Refined and processed foods
- High sugar foods
- Energy drinks

Foods that can help you feel better:

- Dark green vegetables like spinach & broccoli
- Fruit including cherries, bananas & dates
- Whole grain bread, cereal, & pasta
- Pulses like kidney beans, lentils and chickpeas
- Oranges or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of orange juice
- Dairy including milk, low-fat cheese & yogurt
- Nuts and seeds
- Salmon, tuna, sardines, trout
- Turkey, chicken and other lean meats
- Liver, eggs

Eat and Cook Simply! Here is a sample menu:

“Feel better” Breakfast:

- Whole wheat toast with peanut butter or whole grain cereal with low fat milk
- Banana

“Feel better” Snack:

- Nuts or dried fruit
- Low fat yogurt

“Feel better” lunch:

- Tuna Sandwich with dark leaf lettuce or spinach on whole grain bread
- Low sodium vegetable soup
- Orange
- Milk



“Feel better” Dinner:

- Low fat, whole grain pasta casserole
- Caesar salad with low calorie dressing
- Fruit salad



Folic acid and vitamins are very important for your baby's health, but also can improve how you feel before and after the baby is born.

Vitamins can be destroyed when you consume alcohol, nicotine, high-sugar foods, and caffeine.



Loss and Grief

People feel **loss** from all kinds of things:

- Relationship breakdown, including loss of close friends or partner
- Serious health problems for yourself or others close to you, including your baby
- Not feeling safe after a trauma
- Death of someone important to you, including a pet
- Miscarriage, stillbirth or termination of pregnancy



Grief is the emotional or physical pain we feel with loss. It is a normal reaction to loss; there is not one right or wrong way to feel. The more important the loss, the more intense grief can be. Grief is not something to ignore or to try to hide. Symptoms of grief include:

- Shock and numbness - these sensations can help to protect you in the early days
- Sadness, emptiness, loneliness, feeling emotionally unstable
- Guilt about not doing enough to prevent the loss or death, even if there was nothing you could do
- Fear of real or imaginary things, including feelings of anxiety and worry and panic attacks
- You may feel angry and resentful of others or blame yourself
- It is normal to feel angry one day and disconnected from your loss the next day
- Nausea, aches and pains, problems sleeping, fatigue, feelings of heaviness
- Loss or increase in appetite



The **Stages of Grief** occur differently for everyone with no set pattern or timeframe

1. **Denial** is an early reaction as a person tries to minimize what has happened.
2. **Anger** can be towards oneself or others. You might ask *"Why did this happen to me?"*
3. **Bargaining** or negotiating the past or future *"If only I hadn't gone out"* or *"I will never drink again"*
4. **Depression** is part of grief. It is normal to feel sad and lonely after a loss
5. **Acceptance** is when you accept the loss is permanent and life will be different



Be aware that grief and intense loss can affect concentration and ability

- Avoid making major decisions or sudden changes in your life
- Be careful. Avoid doing tasks that can impact your safety, such as driving
- Be gentle to yourself, don't start new projects or strenuous jobs

Healing

- Please be kind to yourself and others, we all grieve differently
- You cannot rush grief, it takes time
- Allow yourself to rest, sleep, and some self-care. See REST and SLEEP and SELF-CARE handouts
- Doing art, playing music, or going for walks can bring some relief
- Avoid self-medicating with tobacco, alcohol, or drugs
- Let yourself cry, you don't need to put on a brave face
- Let friends and family help and support you



Losing a baby through miscarriage, stillbirth, childbirth, SIDS, or a child any time is very difficult. A mother may also be experiencing postpartum physical changes that make it even harder for her to cope with her loss

- People grieve differently and parents may not be able to support each other at this difficult time
- Suggesting the woman has another child is not helpful
- Providing food, help with housework, financial relief, and quiet support can provide comfort
- Do not pretend the baby did not exist, ask about the baby's name

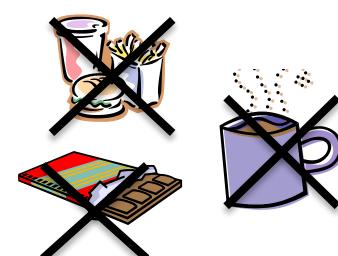


If you need help with intense feelings of loss and grief and you cannot cope with your daily life, please talk to your healthcare provider or Healthline at 811



Sleep can be disrupted in pregnancy and after the baby is born

- **New parents often feel sleep deprived**
 - A new mother is often up feeding and caring for baby in the night when she would normally be asleep
- **People who are depressed often have difficulty sleeping or may sleep too much**
 - This includes problems getting to sleep and waking up too early
- **Lack of sleep affects how we think and can worsen irritability and depression**
 - It is harder to have a good day when you haven't slept properly
- **It is important to try to get at least 6 hours of sleep in 24 hours**
 - This may not happen all at one time, especially after the baby is born
 - Sleep needs vary between people and depends on your health and activity
- **Naps can be helpful**
 - Ask family and friends to care for your child (ren) while you nap
 - Feed and change baby first so she or he is less likely to wake you
 - Tell family and friends you are going to nap and not to disturb you
 - Put a sign on the door
 - Turn off phones, televisions, and any other distracting devices
- **Routines can help sleep**
 - Take a quiet bath
 - Read, instead of watching TV or working on the computer
 - Time in front of a screen can stimulate rather than relax your mind and make falling asleep more difficult
 - Keep a routine for family bedtimes so you can relax when the children are asleep
 - Open the curtains during the day to get sunshine, this will help to regulate your system
- **Keep the bedroom calm, quiet, and dark**
 - Ask your partner to come to bed when you are going or not to interrupt your sleep
 - Avoid TV, cellphones, or computers in the bedroom
 - Turn off the sound on cell phones; only allow phone calls during waking hours
 - Keep lights to a minimum, too many digital lights (especially blue ones) can affect sleep
- **Get exercise in the daytime, especially outdoors**
 - Exercise earlier in the day can help with better sleep later
- **Enjoy a light snack**
 - Some foods that encourage sleep are warm milk, all grain cereal with milk, bananas, cherries, and yogurt
 - Avoid greasy or spicy foods if you aren't used to eating them and overeating late at night
 - Indigestion can interrupt your sleep
- **Avoid alcohol and caffeine**
 - Some people think alcohol helps them to relax, but alcohol can interrupt good sleep
 - Avoid alcohol for at least 4-6 hours before bedtime
 - Avoid caffeine in the 4-6 hours before bedtime including caffeinated coffee, tea, energy drinks, many pops, and chocolate
 - Drink water, milk, decaffeinated coffee or herbal tea



If your feelings are scary to you or interfere with your daily life, please talk to someone you trust, call your healthcare provider, or Healthline at 811



When you take care of yourself, you will feel better and can pass those good feelings on to your baby and family. Some parents feel guilty about taking time for themselves. Self care can give you more energy and improve your health.

SELF CARE FOR MOM

- **How you look affects how you feel -- When you look good, you feel good**
 - Take some time to focus on you
 - Wear clothes that make you feel good, take time for your hair, nails, makeup
 - Take time to shower or bathe daily
- **Arrange childcare**
 - Ask family or friends to help babysit
- **Join parent groups**
 - Get together with other moms or organize a “mom’s morning”
- **Schedule some “Mom” time each week**
 - Take 1 to 2 hours a week
 - Completely turn over responsibility for all childcare to another family member or friend
 - Do something you really enjoy with no interruptions
- **Manage your budget**
 - Money can be a major stressor
 - Ask for help if you are having money problems
- **Appreciate your partner, family, and friends more often**
 - Thank people who help you or do something you appreciate
 - Gratitude can go a long way towards having a loving and supportive family relationship
 - Children will learn to be thankful too

- **Eat Well** - see FOOD and MOOD handout and follow *Canada's Food Guide*
- **Exercise** - see EXERCISE handout
- **Rest** - see REST & SLEEP handout
- **Follow treatment** - see TREATMENT handout
- **Spend time** with people you trust - see BOUNDARIES and FAMILY & FRIENDS handouts

SELF CARE FOR DAD

- **Exercise or play sports**
 - Play or walk outdoors with your partner, the baby, or the older children
- **Engage with the baby and help with baby and childcare**
 - Learn how to comfort and console the baby
- **Hang out with other responsible dads**
 - Enjoy some fun with fathers who are positive about their family
- **Manage the family budget with your partner**
 - Money problems can cause stress
 - Ask for help if money is a problem
- **Take leadership for spending special time with your partner**
 - Arrange childcare
 - She will appreciate knowing you care
- **Thank your partner when she does something you appreciate**
 - Parenting can be stressful, and showing your gratitude can go a long way towards having a loving and supportive family
 - Your children will learn to be positive and appreciate your family

If your feelings are scary to you or interfere with your daily life, please talk to someone you trust, call your healthcare provider, or phone Healthline at 811

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Family life changes dramatically with pregnancy or when a baby is born



New parents can feel overwhelmed, but it is important for you to recognize your needs as well as those of your baby and your other children.

Here are some ways to help you cope better with stress

- **Remember that your needs are important**
 - If you feel comfortable and taken care of, so will your baby and family
 - Be kind to yourself
- **Remember your personal strengths**
 - Write down a list of your strengths
 - You already have many important skills to draw on to help you cope with stress
- **Keep focused on what is important to you as a family**
 - Talk about and discover your family values
- **Try to manage your time better—How do you choose to spend your day?**
 - Delegate—give other people things to do such as household chores
 - Prioritize—what is the most important thing for you to do now? What can wait until another day? Do you really need to go shopping today?
 - Keep a calendar of appointments, children's activities, birthdays and important events
- **Avoid alcohol, tobacco and other drugs**
 - Alcohol, tobacco, and drugs only give you temporary relief from your worries
 - They can make depression, anxiety, and sleep problems worse
- **Get enough sleep**
 - See the REST & SLEEP handout
- **Eat well**
 - See FOOD and MOOD handout and Canada's Food Guide
- **Exercise**
 - See the EXERCISE handout
- **Breathe slowly and deeply**
 - The next time you feel stressed take a moment to take three long deep breaths before you react
 - Ask your worker about relaxing through meditation, yoga, or imagery
- **Ask for and accept help with the baby and housework**
 - Talk to family, friends, or a counselor about how you feel
 - Talk to your partner and ask for specific things they can do to help support you
 - Tell people how much you appreciate their efforts
- **Look for activities that bring you joy**
 - Alone or in a group, make time for fun and do what you enjoy
- **Seek medical care for depression**
 - Depression and anxiety are common
 - If you are feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or depressed you are not alone
 - Talk to your family doctor or other medical professionals in your life
 - See the EMOTIONS, DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, and TREATMENT handouts for more tips



If your feelings are scary to you or interfere with your daily life,
please talk to someone you trust, call your healthcare provider, or phone Healthline at 811



If you are depressed or anxious, here are some things that can help you feel better.

Experts agree it is better for a pregnant or breastfeeding mother and her baby to treat her anxiety and depression than to leave it untreated. This might involve support groups, counselling, medications, or a combination of these.

Talk to someone you trust

- Just talking to someone can help you feel better
- A friend, family, or a support worker is helpful if she or he listens to you and doesn't make you feel judged
 - If you feel worse talking to that person, find someone different to talk with
 - People on Facebook and other sites are not always your true friends; instead of being supportive it can increase your stress and add drama you don't need in your life



Support Groups

- Support groups can help you feel less alone
 - Allow you to share your feelings with others who can relate to how you feel
 - Help you to understand what is happening to you
 - Some are available online, but it is important it be facilitated by a counsellor



Counselling

- A good counsellor can help you deal with the challenges of pregnancy and becoming a mother
 - The counsellor can help you to solve problems with your partner if you are feeling unsafe or unsupported at home



Light Therapy

- Bright light therapy with special light boxes can help improve mood
- Opening your curtains or going for a walk in the daylight can help to improve your mood



Medications

- Take medications if your doctor or nurse prescribes them for you
- Do not stop taking a medication without talking to your doctor or nurse first
 - It can be hard to get the same relief from symptoms if you come off the medications
- Be patient
 - It takes a few weeks for antidepressants to work properly, please don't stop taking them if you don't feel better right away
- Your doctor might prescribe a mood stabilizing medication
 - Some mood stabilizing medications can take a few months to reach full dose and for you to feel the full effect on your mood.
- You might need to try a different medication or more than one medication to get the best result
- Information about medications during pregnancy or breastfeeding is available through your health care provider

Self-care

- You can do things to improve your mood.
 - See SELF CARE, EXERCISE, FOOD and MOOD, and STRESS BUSTERS handouts



Emergency support

- Healthline is available by calling **811**. It is a confidential, 24-hour health information and support telephone line, staffed by nurses and social workers

If you are hearing voices or seeing things that are not there or feel you might harm yourself or others, call someone, and go to an emergency department or 811



Local Supports

Here are some local supports you might find helpful

Mental Health Services: 306-446-6500

Battlefords Family Health Centre: 306-937-6840

Primary Health Centre: 306-446-6400

Battlefords Union Hospital: 306-446-6600

Social Services: 306-446-7535

Catholic Family Services: 306-445-6960



Provincial support

Healthline: 811



MedSask: *Information about medication use in pregnancy or breastfeeding*

1-800-665-DRUG (3784) or 1-306-966-6340

Other helpful information or to get copies of handouts

Saskatchewan Prevention Institute: www.skprevention.ca



MotherFirst: Maternal Mental Health: www.skmaternalmentalhealth.ca



Local Supports

Please individualize to your community or organization

Here are some local supports you might find helpful

Mental Health Services:

Family Health Centre:

Primary Health Centre:

Closest Hospital:

Social Services:

Catholic Family Services:



Provincial support

Healthline: 811

MedSask: *Information about medication use in pregnancy or breastfeeding*

1-800-665-DRUG (3784) or 1-306-966-6340

Other helpful information or to get copies of handouts



Saskatchewan Prevention Institute: www.skprevention.ca

MotherFirst: Maternal Mental Health: www.skmaternalmentalhealth.ca

Maternal Mental Health Toolkit: Tips for Managers

Staff have found that printing the handouts bundled as tear off sheets or in plastic page protectors within a binder is handy and keeps them looking good and prevents them from being lost. These have also been put into a Booklet along with the Community Care Guide and Guidelines to help with staff orientation and for ongoing staff use.

Other handouts specific to maternal mental health are available through the Saskatchewan Prevention Institute (www.skprevention.ca).

Props

Some programs may decide to add props or other resources to their Toolkit. Figure 1 shows a stack of tear off sheets and the collection of props utilised by the maternal mental health staff. Some additional, supplemental resources that other programs have added to the Toolkit are shown in Figure 2. Figure 3 shows the Boundaries Handout with a toy fence to represent maintaining boundaries. Figure 4, another example of props.



Figure 1. Shows the stack of tear off sheets and the collection of props utilised by staff.

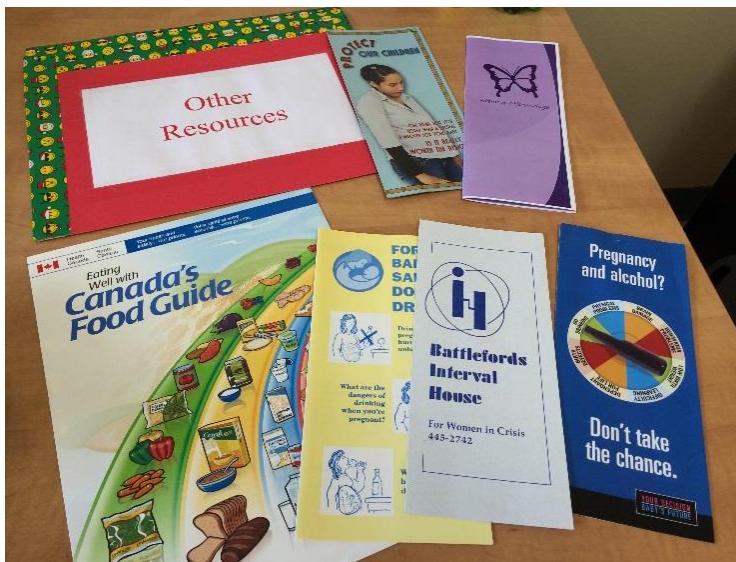


Figure 2. The image shows additional and supplementary resources added to the toolkit.

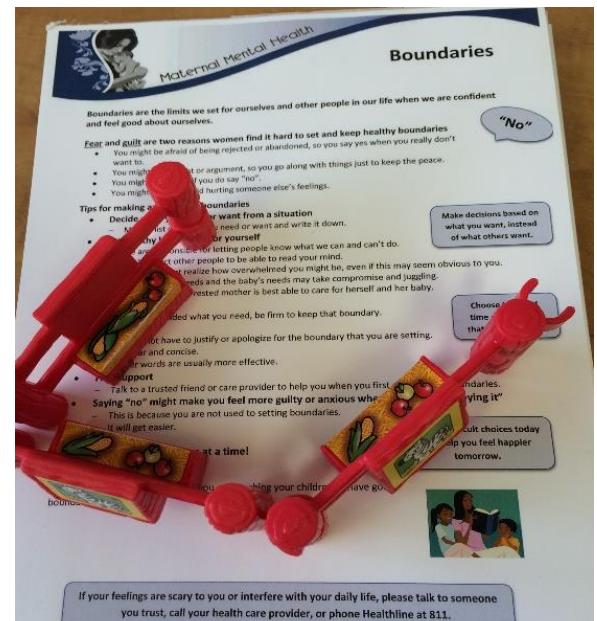


Figure 3. The image shows the Boundaries Handout with a toy fence to represent maintaining boundaries.

Be creative with your props. Some props used by programs include:

Figure 4. Sample props from another program. The fence or toy bed is very popular with children. Family picture.



Handout

ANXIETY
BOUNDARIES
BREAST FEEDING and MOOD
EMOTIONS
EXERCISE
FAMILY AND FRIENDS
LOSS AND GRIEF
REST AND SLEEP
SELF CARE
STRESS BUSTERS
TREATMENT (emergency support)

Sample Toolkit props

Bills, \$, food, car-transportation, cell phone, children (doll), picture or toy brain
Toy fence, sign showing 'its ok to say 'no''
Handout, Bra
Picture of different emotions
Sneakers, pictures
Framed Picture, plaque with family
Kleenex
Toy bed, pillow
Bath, manicure set, nail polish, Candle
Stress ball
Sunflower, lightbulb, flashlight (light therapy). Emergency support numbers, pictures of counselling, telephone