



**Resource Booklet:**

**Postpartum Distress, Depression  
And/or Anxious Moods**

*\*Please note that this booklet was created and intended for the use of mothers who are or experiencing postpartum depression or anxiety, or anyone seeking information on this subject. Information contained in this booklet is for personal information seeking only and is not intended to replace the advice or support of health care professionals.*

## **This information booklet includes:**

### ❖ Postpartum Depression/Anxiety and Parent Websites and Resources

- Crisis Lines
- Well informed sites
- Social Media platforms

### ❖ Book list for Postpartum Depression/Anxiety

### ❖ Childcare Options and Other Resources in Ottawa

### ❖ Suggestions for Yourself

- Ideas to reduce stress
- Establishing support systems
- Coping with anxiety
- Some practical suggestions

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Information contained in any website is for personal information seeking only and is not intended to replace the advice or support of health care professionals. Contact phone numbers have been included specifically if they are toll free. If you have concerns about a diagnosis or medication, we advise you to speak to your doctor or clinical specialist (such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, doctor or pharmacist).

## Well Informed Websites and Resources

### Crisis Lines

[www.crisisline.ca](http://www.crisisline.ca) The Mental Health Crisis Line offers professionally trained volunteers are there to answer your call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They will provide support in a crisis and can transfer your call to the local crisis team if needed. Call: within Ottawa 613-722-6914 outside Ottawa 1-866-996-0991

[www.dcottawa.on.ca](http://www.dcottawa.on.ca) The Distress Centre of Ottawa & Region offers a 24 hour help line that is confidential and anonymous for those who are in distress, in crisis, or who need to speak with someone. Call: 613-238-3311

[www.mhsio.on.ca/PPMD](http://www.mhsio.on.ca/PPMD) Mental Health Service Information Ontario (MHSIO) can provide you with information about mental health services and supports in your community and across Ontario. Call: 1-866-531-2600

### Perinatal Mood Disorders Resources

[www.postpartum.org](http://www.postpartum.org) This is the Pacific Postpartum Support Society, located in Vancouver, B.C. They publish the book “Postpartum Depression and Anxiety: A Self Help Guide”. This site offers such information as signs of postpartum, personal stories, resources and support offered as well as a specific section for partners.

[www.lifewithnewbaby.ca](http://www.lifewithnewbaby.ca) This Province of Ontario site provides an overview of symptoms, signs and treatment of PPD/A. It also includes information for partners and friends. Call: Ontario's Maternal, Newborn and Early Child Development Resource Centre 1-800-397-9567

[www.oursistersplace.ca](http://www.oursistersplace.ca) This is a program of the Mood Disorders Association of Ontario that provides support to women who are dealing with problems related both to mood and hormonal changes throughout the life cycle, including PPD/A. Includes an online postpartum support group. Call: 1-866-363-MOOD (6663)

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[www.postpartumstress.com](http://www.postpartumstress.com) The Postpartum Stress Centre is based out of Pennsylvania and offers an informative site for professionals, mothers and partners who are looking to gain understanding and support about postpartum depression and anxiety.

[www.postpartumprogress.com](http://www.postpartumprogress.com) Postpartum Progress is the most widely-read blog on postpartum depression, postpartum anxiety/OCD, postpartum psychosis, depression during pregnancy and other mental illnesses related to childbirth.

[www.postpartum.net](http://www.postpartum.net) This website for Postpartum Support International offers information on how to educate, advocate and provide support for maternal mental health worldwide. Call: 1-800-944-4PPD

[www.postpartumhealth.com](http://www.postpartumhealth.com) This site for the Centre for Postpartum Health, based out of California, offers many resources such as articles, interesting websites and information regarding PPD/A.

### **Breastfeeding**

<http://ottawa.ca/en/residents/public-health/pregnancy-and-babies/breastfeeding-your-baby-first-few-weeks> The City of Ottawa offers free drop-in breastfeeding clinics and resources.

<http://ovlc.net/> Ottawa Valley Lactation Consultants

[www.nbci.ca](http://www.nbci.ca) This site, from the Newman Breastfeeding Clinic and Institute is headed by internationally renowned pediatrician and breastfeeding expert, Dr. Jack Newman. The site offers support and treatment information for mothers experiencing breastfeeding challenges.

### **Playgroups, Parenting Resources and Workshops**

<http://www.parentinginottawa.com> Parenting in Ottawa is a new resource for parents created by Ottawa Public Health and its community partners. It was designed to make parenting in Ottawa a little bit easier. Browse our website to find information written by local health experts. We serve all parents and parents-to-be in the City of Ottawa.

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[www.parentresource.on.ca](http://www.parentresource.on.ca) The Parent Resource Centre is located here in Ottawa. On their website you will find information on various groups and signs and symptoms of postpartum depression and anxiety. There is also information on parenting issues and programs available throughout the city. Call: 613-565-2467

[www.ontarioearlyyears.ca](http://www.ontarioearlyyears.ca) or call toll Free 1-866-821-7770 to find a centre near you.

Places created by the Ontario government where Early Years professionals are available to answer questions about your child's development and provide information or services for children up to the age of six. On-site playgroups are available. There are 7 EYCs across Ottawa.

### **Websites for Partners**

<http://dadcentral.ca/>

Committed to strong, healthy children by affirming and valuing the bond between fathers and their children, Dad Central Ontario works to provide relevant and well-crafted information for fathers and for individuals, agencies, and programs working with fathers.

[www.newdadmanual.ca](http://www.newdadmanual.ca) (24-hour crib-side assistance for new fathers).

[www.postpartummen.com](http://www.postpartummen.com) (for new fathers with concerns about depression, anxiety or other problems with mood; includes an on-line forum).

[www.postpartumdads.org](http://www.postpartumdads.org) (guidance for partners and families supporting a woman through postpartum depression).

[www.dadscan.ca](http://www.dadscan.ca) This website based out of London, ON offers tips and practical information to fathers as well as offers them advice on how to cope with the day to day stress of having a new baby.

<http://www.howisdadgoing.org.au/> (NEW) this website provides all kinds of dads with access to the best information and resources. You might need some extra support if you or your partner are struggling with mental health issues in the perinatal period – the time leading up to and after having a baby.

<http://lgbtqpn.ca/>

The LGBTQ Parenting Network is a program of Sherbourne Health Centre. We support lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer parenting through research, training, resources and community development.

## **Social Media Forums**

### **Chat Forums and Discussion Boards:**

<http://mypostpartumvoice.com/> This site is full of various stories, resources, and insights for every struggling mother, for partners, family members, and even for professionals looking for a glimpse into the mind of a survivor.

[www.canadianparents.com](http://www.canadianparents.com) This site offers parents numerous message boards on many parenting issues, including one on postpartum depression located in the Mind & Body section. In the “Ask the Expert” section you may ask questions to a number of different medical and child care experts, including an expert on PPD/A.

[www.parenthoodplace.com](http://www.parenthoodplace.com) This is a Canadian website that consists of chat rooms and message boards on various issues and topics, including one dedicated to postpartum depression and anxiety.

[www.postpartumprogress.typepad.com](http://www.postpartumprogress.typepad.com) This is an American based blog on depression and anxiety during pregnancy and postpartum. It includes a list of support groups in both Canada and the US as well as suggestions on books regarding postpartum.

[www.ppdsupportpage.com](http://www.ppdsupportpage.com) This PPD/A online support group based out of Washington offers ways to communicate via discussion boards and peer support email lists. It also offers resources such as books and websites and information on PPD/A.

[www.todayparent.com](http://www.todayparent.com) Based on the magazine, this site contains past articles on various topics. Articles are sorted and include helpful topics on PPD as well as some in “just for dads”. This site also offers links to other websites and discussion boards

### **TED Talks:**

Bréne Brown - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLZhG90HFG8>

Other \_\_\_\_\_  
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### **APS:**

- **Healthy Minds** at <http://www.theroyal.ca/mental-health-centre/apps/healthymindsapp/>

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- **Mind the Bump** *By beyondblue*

[Mind the Bump](#) is a free mindfulness meditation app to help individuals and couples support their mental and emotional wellbeing in preparation for having a baby and becoming a new parent.

Easy to use app that will help reduce stress and improve wellbeing during and after pregnancy.

Mind the Bump is a free app and can be downloaded from the [Mind the Bump - Apple App Store](#) and [Mind the Bump - Google Play Store](#).

- **Self-help Anxiety Management**

This app suggests self-help methods of reducing anxiety, including ways to challenge anxiety-provoking thoughts, and relaxation techniques to reduce physical symptoms of anxiety.

(Android) <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.uwe.myoxygen&hl=en>

(Apple) <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/self-help-for-anxiety-management/id666767947?mt=8>

- **Stop Panic & Anxiety Self-Help**

This app assists you in managing symptoms of panic, and developing skills to challenge fearful thinking.

(Android) <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.excelatlife.panic&hl=en>

- **MindShift**

This app helps you to identify thoughts that play a role in anxiety, and to develop more constructive ways of thinking. It also recommends active steps you can take to better cope with your anxiety.

(Apple) <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/mindshift/id634684825?mt=8>

## RELAXATION

- **HeadSpace** - This app reviews meditation and mindfulness exercises that help reduce feelings of stress.

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(Android)

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.getsomeheadspace.android&hl=en>

(Apple) <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/headspace-meditation-techniques/id493145008?mt=8>

- **Complete Relaxation Lite**

(Android)

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.completerelaxationlite&hl=en>

This app provides a variety of guided relaxation and meditation exercises to help decrease levels of stress.

- **Take a break! – Guided Meditations for Stress Relief**

This app provides guided meditations that help to reduce feelings of stress.

(Apple) <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/take-break!-guided-meditations/id453857236?mt=8>

## DEPRESSION

- **MoodTools – Depression Aid**

This app uses the concept of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to help you identify and challenge negative/distorted thinking patterns. It also suggests helpful behaviours to help you reduce the intensity of your distressing emotions.

(Android)

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.moodtools.moodtools&hl=en>

- **Depression CBT Self-Help Guide**

This app uses the concept of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to help you challenge thoughts that may be playing a role in your depression. It also suggests helpful behaviours to help you reduce the intensity of your distressing emotions.

(Android)

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.excelatlife.depression&hl=en>

- **What's Up?**



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This app highlights the connection between irrational thinking and depressive symptoms. It describes methods to overcome such thoughts, and assists you with setting goals and practices to reduce your feelings of distress.

(Apple) <https://itunes.apple.com/en/app/whats-up/id968251160?mt=8>

- **Depressioncheck**

This app helps you assess your level of depression, and generates a report to explain your symptoms. It can be used to monitor your recovery while undergoing treatment.

(Apple) <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/depressioncheck/id398170644?mt=8>

## SLEEP

CBT-i Coach - This app uses the theory behind Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Insomnia, and teaches you how to develop positive sleep routines and improve your sleep environment. It also reviews strategies proven to improve sleep quality and reduce symptoms of insomnia.

(Android) <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.t2.cbti&hl=en>

(Apple) <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/cbt-i-coach/id655918660?mt=8>

- **Best Sleep Hygiene**

This app enables you to track your current sleep habits, and generates a list of recommendations that can be added to your routine to improve your quality of sleep.

(Android) <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.and.dev.sleepygeine&hl=en>

(Apple) <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/best-sleep-hygiene/id804014317?mt=8>

Other \_\_\_\_\_  
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## BLOGS

- Heather Armstrong at <http://dooce.com/>

Other \_\_\_\_\_  
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## PODCAST

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Guided Meditations at UCLA Mindfulness Research Centre –  
<http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22>

Other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Books About Postpartum Depression and Anxiety**

*Postpartum Depression and Anxiety: A self-help guide for mothers* by Pacific Postpartum Support Society

*It Sucked and Then I Cried: How I Had a Baby, a Breakdown, and a Much Needed*  
Margarita Paperback – Mar 23 2010  
by Heather Armstrong (Author)

*Beyond the Sling: A Real-Life Guide to Raising Confident, Loving Children the Attachment Parenting Way* Paperback – Sep 4 2012  
by Ph.D. Mayim Bialik Ph.D.

*Carry On, Warrior: The Power of Embracing Your Messy, Beautiful Life* Paperback – Apr 8 2014  
by Glennon Doyle Melton (Author)

*When Baby Brings the Blues: Solutions for Postpartum Depression*, 2009  
By Dr. Ariel Dalfen

This guide offers women medical and psychotherapeutic options as well as practical lifestyle changes. It also includes daily affirmations used by Dr. Dalfen's own patients when recovering from PPD/A.

*The Smiling Mask*, 2008

By Tania Bird, Elita Paterson, Carla O'Reilly and Peggy Collins

This book encompasses the lives of three Canadian families who have lived through the trauma of postpartum illnesses. These families share their experiences and knowledge. There is also self-help information to help parents with potential warning signs of PPD/A.  
[www.thesmilingmask.ca](http://www.thesmilingmask.ca)

*Postpartum Depression for Dummies*, 2007

By Dr. Shoshanna Bennett

This book can help you begin the process of determining what's going on with you and give you a better idea of where you fall so that you can get yourself into proper treatment right away.

*Postpartum Depression Demystified: An Essential Guide for Understanding and Overcoming the Most Common Complications After Childbirth*, 2007

By Joyce Venis

Renowned PPD/A authority Joyce Venis and Suzanne McCloskey, both PPD/A sufferers themselves, turn their combined experience and expertise into an insightful and supportive guide for everyone living with and seeking to understand this condition.

***Beyond the Blues: A Guide to Understanding and Treating Prenatal and Postpartum Depression*, 2006**

By Dr. Shoshanna Bennett

This book contains information about risk factors, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mood disorders in pregnancy and postpartum. This is a readable and practical book for understanding postpartum depression and its treatment options.

***The Mother-to-Mother Postpartum Depression Support Book*, 2006**

By Sandra Poulin

Written by mothers, for mothers, this book is a collection of stories that describe the women's and their families' battles with PPD. The stories include intimate details about the symptoms, the struggles, and the strategies that helped the women and their families emerge victorious.

***Down Came the Rain: My Journey Through Postpartum Depression*, 2005**

By Brooke Shields

Shields is at first joyful at the birth of her baby girl, Rowan. However, she is soon overcome by crippling postpartum depression, a condition that leaves her all but incapable of looking after the child. *Rain's* ultimate message is that the many millions of women suffering symptoms like hers are not alone.

***Postpartum Depression and Anxiety: A Self Help Guide for Mothers*, 2004**

By The Pacific Postpartum Support Society

This is a practical guide for mothers who are experiencing postpartum depression and anxiety. It explores the symptoms and offers explanations for the 'why'. The book is based on the experiences of thousands of women and it describes what has helped them get through this difficult time.

[www.postpartum.org](http://www.postpartum.org)

***Behind the Smile: My Journey Out of Postpartum Depression*, 2002**

By Marie Osmond, Marcia Wilkie and Dr. Judith Moore

Postpartum depression is an infrequently discussed illness; this book, which includes the advice of Dr. Judith Moore and the spirit of Marie Osmond, opens up a forum for women who are trying to cope with this difficult condition.

***The Postpartum Husband*, 2001**

By Karen Kleinman

Postpartum depression affects your partner too. This book offers information and supportive advice for the partners of women with PPD/A. It is written in bullet points and brief paragraphs that give specific and clear information. A helpful tool for partners who may be confused and scared.

## **French Language Books**

*Angoisse et depression post-partum: un guide pratique pour les mères* par Pacific Post-Partum Society 1997

## ***LGBTQ Parenting***

### **Adopting on Your Own**

Lee Varon

Written by a social worker with two adopted children, for people considering adoption, the book give facts and information, along with worksheets and checklists that may help readers to make the decision to adopt (or not), to mentally prepare for the process and to begin to open up their lives to a child. She addresses issues such as age, money, types of adoption, and resources. Throughout the book, she uses examples of gay and lesbian singles preparing to adopt, and lists gay and lesbian organizations in her resource sections.

### **Complete Lesbian and Gay Parenting Guide**

Arlene Istar Lev

Arlene Lev has written a handbook on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender parenting that moves beyond the right to parent to the examination of the day-to-day realities of life with children. Lev, a family therapist working with alternative families, describes the emerging diversity of LGBT families, options for becoming parents, single parenting, coming-out, and infertility, as well as humorously addressing issues such as coping with colic and finding time for adult intimacy.

### **Essential Guide to Lesbian Conception, Pregnancy & Birth**

Kim Toevs and Stephanie Brill

Toevs and Brill, the author of the *Queer Parent's Primer*, cover all of the basics in this guide. They provide charts and illustrations, checklists, fertility information, and personal exercises geared specifically toward lesbian, bisexual, and single mothers.

### **Family of Adoption**

Joyce Maguire Pavao

Written by a founder and director of an adoption organization, this book demonstrates that there are predictable and understandable stages and challenges for adopted people.

### **Fatherhood for Gay Men: An Emotional and Practical Guide to Becoming a Gay Dad**

By Kevin McGarry

Author Kevin McGarry recounts his passage into parenthood after years of having his natural fathering instincts stifled by the limits—real and perceived—of being gay. This book details the emotional, financial, practical, and social realities of the adoption process for gay men. The book also includes results of the 2000 study by Gillian Dunne,

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senior researcher for the London School of Economics Gender Institute, of 100 gay fathers and fathers-to-be.

### **Gay Parenting**

Shana Priwer and Cynthia Phillips

Parenting is never easy. Gay and lesbian couples face unique questions and concerns such as bullying and homophobia, adoption and fostering, and equity rights under the law.

### **Gay Parents/Straight Schools**

Virginia Casper and Stephen B. Schultz

This book openly addresses the specific educational realities and needs of lesbian-and gay-headed families. Based on research that includes perspectives from all involved, this book looks at such issues as communication between parents and school staff, homophobia at home and school, gender roles, curriculum planning, and more.

### **Lesbian and Gay Parenting Handbook**

April Martin, PH.D.

Even though this groundbreaking, comprehensive primer on LGBT parenting is from 1993, it's still a good resource for the "big picture," including a discussion of all the options to begin your family as well as good chapters on how to make it all work: Raising Our Children (Where did I come from? What do they call us? Will they be gay or straight?); Family Life (Change and stress, Family triangles, Having a second child); Breaking Up and Out in the World (Going public, Neighbors and Communities, Medical Settings).

### **Lesbian and Gay Voices: An Annotated Bibliography and Guide**

Frances Ann Day

A reference tool for parents, teachers and librarians, this annotated bibliography features book reviews, author profiles and guidelines for evaluating books in this genre.

### **Lesbian Stepfamilies**

Janet M. Wright

This book, specifically on the subject of lesbians bringing their families together and making one healthy stepfamily, takes a look at five families, their challenges, accomplishments, and experiences.

### **Mothers and Babies DVD: Lesbians Creating Families**

Ami and Craig Burns have created a video that profiles 6 couples on their individual paths to pregnancy and childbirth. They sought to validate lesbian families and illuminate their unique struggles and family dynamics.

Running Time: 54:00 minutes

### **The Queer Parents Primer**

Stephanie Brill

A book that looks at parenting skills, the author discusses language we use in families;

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coming out as a family and relating to others in your family; navigating the childcare and school systems; developing your family's spirituality, etc.

### **Welcome to Our Family: A Baby Journal for LGBT Parents**

Sally Lindsay

Illustrations: Laura Shepard

Time and again, we've heard from LGBT parents that they'd really like to see us publish a baby record book. Now, in partnership with the Family Pride Coalition, we are proud to present a beautifully illustrated baby journal that allows LGBT families to keep track of every important milestone of their child's first year.

## Postpartum Support and Resources in Ottawa

### Childcare Options (Short-term and Respite)

#### **Andrew Fleck Child Care Services:**

Short term child care services can be accessed if you are an eligible employee of a participating company. They will provide short term childcare if regular childcare arrangements have been disrupted or if your child is mildly ill and must remain at home.

Call: 613-739-0130

[www.stcc.on.ca](http://www.stcc.on.ca)

#### **Canadian Mothercraft:**

Provide part-time/respice care for children 6 weeks to 5 yrs old. Services are for parents who work part-time or who need occasional/emergency care.

Call: 613-728-1839

[www.mothercraft.com](http://www.mothercraft.com)

#### **Children's Place Wellness Centre:**

Offers 24/7 childcare for respite and parent night outs. They also have a group care service for children recovering from mild illness, surgery and injuries.

1150 Carling Ave.

310 Legget Drive (Kanata)

Call: 613-729-1222

Call: 613-592-5002

[www.childrensplace.on.ca](http://www.childrensplace.on.ca)

#### **City of Ottawa:**

Website contains information on different types of childcare options available to parents. Information on child care centres, home child care options, nursery schools, etc.

Call: 211

[http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/childcare/ottawa/options/index\\_en.html](http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/childcare/ottawa/options/index_en.html)

#### **Early Years Centres:**

Places created by the Ontario government where Early Years professionals are available to answer questions about your child's development and provide information or services for children up to the age of six. On-site playgroups are available. There are 7 EYCs across Ottawa.

Call: 1-866-821-7770

[www.ontarioearlyyears.ca](http://www.ontarioearlyyears.ca)



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### **Parent Resource Centre:**

This centre operates a Resource Line that you can call Monday to Thursday 9 am to 3:30 pm for information on services in the community and any questions or concerns regarding your child.

Call: 613-565-2467 ext 222

[www.parentresource.on.ca](http://www.parentresource.on.ca)

### **Postpartum Doulas:**

The role of a postpartum doula changes often as each family's needs are unique. The primary focus of the postpartum doula is to nurture and support the mother and her family.

Visit the website for more information:

<http://www.postpartumsupportottawa.com/>

## Suggestions for Yourself

### Ideas to reduce stress:

Taking deep, slow breaths

Try to eat properly and drink plenty of water

Exercise daily

Stretch and relax

At least once a day take a “break” from mothering and do something for yourself

Avoid getting over-tired, if possible try to take short naps during the day

Make a game plan with your partner and your family, do not place all the responsibilities on yourself

Stop a negative thought and see yourself doing something that feels really good

Make a list of what you are grateful for

Read a positive affirmation for the day

Accept that you are human and mistakes are a part of being alive

Develop a support system for yourself (See chart below)

<b>People you can contact for support</b>	<b>How can they help you?</b>	<b>Telephone number(s)</b>

## **Establishing Support Systems:**

Support is one of the most important parts of recovery from postpartum depression and anxiety.

### **Ask yourself:**

Do I have support?

Do those around me know that I need support?

Do they know *how* to give me support?

Do you support **yourself**? Do you give **yourself** permission to be sad, to get angry, to not have it all together all the time, to let the house go, to take the time you need to get better?

Support can come in many different forms:

- **Emotional Support**  
This is support provided by at least one person that is able to provide you with a sense of well being and emotional security.
- **Social Network Support**  
These are supports provided by people who share the same interests and beliefs as you do.
- **Esteem Support**  
This support is provided by people who admire your talents and who recognize your abilities and skills.
- **Tangible Support**  
This is support from people who you can depend on in an emergency
- **Informational Support**  
This support is provided by someone who you can turn to if you need advice or are having problems in your life.

Once you have established who your potential supports could be, the next step is to ask them. Asking for support takes courage and is definitely not easy, but the rewards to doing so are immense.

It is important to be clear and precise and to tell people exactly what it is that you need and how they can provide it. It is ok to be honest and open and to put your feelings first without feeling guilty.

## **Coping with Anxiety:**

Anxiety can be a common part of postpartum depression and anxiety. If you are experiencing anxiety, you may feel as though you are going “crazy”. **You are not.** As you begin to recover from the depression, your anxiety will lessen as well.

Here are some things that you can do to help yourself cope with the anxiety:

1. *Try to get as much rest as possible.* Anxiety is always worse when you are tired. If possible, try to sleep the same amount of hours each night in order to keep your cycle regular. If you are having troubles falling asleep, try developing a bedtime ritual, for example listening to relaxing music or having a cup of warm milk before going to bed.
2. *Learn some relaxation techniques.* Take 10 to 20 minutes a day to practice relaxation exercises. When done regularly, these exercises can allow you to feel more relaxed in general and not only after doing them. You may be surprised to learn how quickly your mind can relax if you learn how to relax your entire body.
3. *Write your worries on paper.* By putting things down in words, you are releasing them onto the pages rather than keeping them pent up inside. Less stress naturally equals less anxiety. Putting your worries down on a list can help you identify which ones are legitimate and which ones are toxic.
4. *Make a list of things that you need to do and focus on one task at a time.* Stress often develops when you feel rushed or overwhelmed. Being able to manage your time might even mean having to cut out or put on hold one or two things from your list.
5. *Get regular checkups.* If you are anxious about your health or your baby’s health, make sure to get checkups. It is also important to eat healthy and get regular exercise in order to reduce stress and anxiety in your life.
6. *Develop strategies.* Look at the people and situations around you which may make you anxious and develop strategies for handling them. For example, if you find that watching the news is distressing, avoid watching it for awhile.
7. *Plan some fun activities.* Being able to sit down and indulge in an activity of your choice is important. Whatever activity you choose, do it regularly and **do not** feel guilty for taking time to do something for yourself.
8. *Give yourself time and pay attention to your feelings.*

## **Some Practical Suggestions:**

Take frequent breaks. Reserve yourself time for at least one break a day from your mothering duties. A break can be as simple as sitting down for a cup of tea or taking a bath. You can also have lunch with a friend or take a nice walk.

Do good things for yourself. This is something that you must make a point of doing, even scheduling a time slot for it if necessary. This must be something that you would like to do, not something you feel you need to do. Activities could include getting a haircut, going for a massage, buying new clothes for yourself, learning something new such as music, knitting or a new sport.

Give your negative emotions air time. Allow yourself to grieve, to feel sad, to feel angry. We often try to “think positively” and end up censoring out our bad feelings, thus prolonging them. Tears can be healing and can actually relieve stress.

Find ways to get angry safely. This means giving oneself permission to be angry in a safe way without taking it out on another person. Feeling of anger may range from mild irritation, resentment or frustration to profound rage, so it is important to find an outlet which works best for you. Here are some suggestions: screaming into a pillow, running up and down stairs, writing letters (but not mailing them).

Develop a support system for yourself. Try to attend mother’s groups, programs or workshops, family places, etc, with the goal to take care of yourself and sharing with new other new mothers.

Give yourself credit. Mothering is probably the greatest challenge that most people will ever have to meet. In spite of this, there is little social recognition for the immense contributions which mothers make. Realize how important you are to your family and know that what you are doing will make a difference some day.

Set small goals for yourself. When you come up against a stumbling block, break down the steps you need to get over it and work on them one at a time. For example, if getting out of the house seems impossible, start off by going for a short walk around the block. If you surpass your initial goal, consider the extra accomplishment a bonus.

Make your plans but don’t plan the results. You may make plans and be looking forward to something, and then find out that the event doesn’t turn out as planned. If plans end up going astray try to enjoy what you can, if possible continue as planned by yourself. Although it may not go exactly as you had originally planned but you can still get something good out of it.

*Information detailed in “Coping with Anxiety” and “Some Practical Suggestions” was adapted from the Postpartum Depression: Patient Information Sheet provided by the Postpartum Stress Center [www.postpartumstress.com](http://www.postpartumstress.com)*

## **Tips for Partners and Supporters**

Top Recommendations (adapted from <http://postpartumdads.org>)

1. Try to find a local support group in your area. MOMS group in Ottawa or through Ottawa Hospital/Montfort (hospital programs need a referral a doctor)
2. Get a referral to a doctor that is trained to deal with PPD. Ask your pediatrician, family doctor, ob/gyn, or other person you trust for recommendations. Finding someone you and your wife both trust and feel comfortable with is crucial for recovery.
3. Be prepared for a long recovery with setbacks along the way. PPD is not something that can be fixed overnight. It may take a few weeks or it may take a few years for your partner to recover and for your family to heal.
4. Attend as many doctor appointments as possible. This will not only demonstrate to your partner how much you care about her but it will also give you a chance to communicate with the doctor and hear the doctor's instructions. Don't assume that your partner is going to be open with her doctor, or that she is going to comprehend or trust what he tells her.
5. Continue treatment even when she starts feeling better. While discontinuing treatment is very tempting once she starts feeling better it can be very dangerous. The chances of relapse are much higher if treatment is stopped too early.
6. Get help for yourself and your family. Don't let the stigma of depression keep you from sharing with others what is going on. There are many people out there willing to help people and they just need to be asked.
7. Love your partner or person you are supporting. Be tender, be supportive. Believe her and believe in her. Do not assume she is "over-reacting" or being "unreasonable."
8. Be her lifeline. You may be the one who needs to make the call about whether she needs medical attention. She may not be able to ask for it herself.
9. Ask questions. My husband says that if he knew then what he knows now he would have asked many more questions — Can you read? Can you follow a TV plot? Are you hearing things? Etc. — Those are things that apply to psychosis

### **Top Tips For Partners/Supporters**

- Don't keep it a secret
- Accept help from others
- Talk to your family and friends
- Make time for yourself, play sport, see friends and work colleagues, in moderation
  - Find time together on a regular basis
  - Accept that some people will not understand
  - Stay positive in front of partner (most of the time)

<b>Drop-In Services</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Program/Organization</b>	<b>Day/Time</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Mondays	<b>Mothercraft Ottawa</b> Postpartum Support Drop-In *No Drop-In Group on Holiday Mondays	Mondays 10:00AM - 12:00pm	Courtney Holmes at 613-728-1839 X227
Wednesdays	The Joys and Challenges of Mothering <b>Shirley E. Greenberg Resources Centre for Women at the Royal Ottawa Hospital</b>	Wednesdays 10:00AM-11:30AM	Ann-Marie O'Brien at 613-722-6521 X6879
Fridays	<b>Family Services Ottawa Perinatal Support Drop-In</b> *No registration required, babies welcome	TBA	Contact – Intake 613-725-3601 X117

<b>Support Groups and Services</b>			
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Program Description</b>	<b>Day/Time</b>	<b>Registration Contact</b>
<b>Family Services Ottawa/ Services à la famille Ottawa</b>	<b>MOMS Therapy Support Group</b> 8 week group session including an assessment, exit interview and information session for partners.  Fee based on sliding scale and childcare recommended.	Wednesdays 10:00AM - 12:00pm  Offered throughout the year. September, November, February and April.	Please call intake to register at 613-725-3601 X117 or intake@familyservicesottawa.org
<b>Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health</b>	Wabano Post Natal Support Group	Tuesdays 1:00 to 2:30pm	Please call Belinda Larente to Register (613) 748-0657 or blarente@wabano.com

<b>Hospital Based Programs</b>			
<b>Hospital</b>	<b>Description of Program/Services</b>	<b>Referral Needed</b>	<b>Contact</b>
<b>The Ottawa Hospital</b>	Ottawa Regional Perinatal Mental Health Program. Services include assessment, psychiatric medication consultation/monitoring, and group therapy for depression and anxiety.	<u>Yes</u> , by physician or midwife (needs to be co-signed by family doctor) who is affiliated with the hospital.  Can access program through ER walk-in.	For a referral form: 613-737-8899 X73986

## MOMS Program

<b>Montfort Hospital</b>	<p>Mental Health Clinic</p> <p>Consultation and group therapy.</p> <p>Languages served – French, English (Groups are Francophone)</p>	<p><u>Yes</u>, through outpatient or a family doctor.</p> <p>Referral through Emergency services available 24-7 at Emergency Department</p>	<p>Contact Outpatient for initial appointment: 613-746-4621, X3909</p>
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<b>In Home/Telephone Support</b>			
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Program Description</b>	<b>Services</b>	<b>Contact</b>
<b>Ottawa Public Health</b>	<p>Healthy Babies/Healthy Children</p> <p>The Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program provides home visiting, to expectant mothers and families with children from birth to their transition to school.</p> <p>This program is designed to help parents who need more support give their children a healthy start.</p> <p>A public health nurse is available to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with you at your home to discuss how we can help your family</li> <li>• Assess your family's health, including your child's growth and development, mental health, parenting challenges and stresses affecting your family</li> <li>• Provide health teaching, counseling, and active support</li> <li>• Help you to connect with community resources</li> </ul> <p>Involve other members of her team - family visitors and a social worker, as needed</p>	<p>Home visiting by Public Health Nurse.</p> <p>May include the support other members of her team - family visitors and a social worker, as needed</p> <p>The service is available in the language that you speak and there is no cost to you for this service.</p>	<p>613-PARENTS [613-727-3687]</p> <p>TTY: 613-580-9656, <b>Toll free:</b> 1-866-426-8885</p> <p>Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm</p>

For more information and programing, please visit our website at [www.familyservicesottawa.org](http://www.familyservicesottawa.org)