



Supporting a Loved One Struggling with a Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorder

WHAT ARE PMADS?



This term refers to a number of mental health conditions that mothers and birthing people can face during pregnancy or after delivery.

PMADs are the most common complication of the perinatal period and often go untreated.

PERINATAL MOOD AND ANXIETY DISORDERS MAY –

Feel like...

- Hopelessness, anxiety, or sadness
- Being quick to anger and irritability
- Headaches or stomachaches

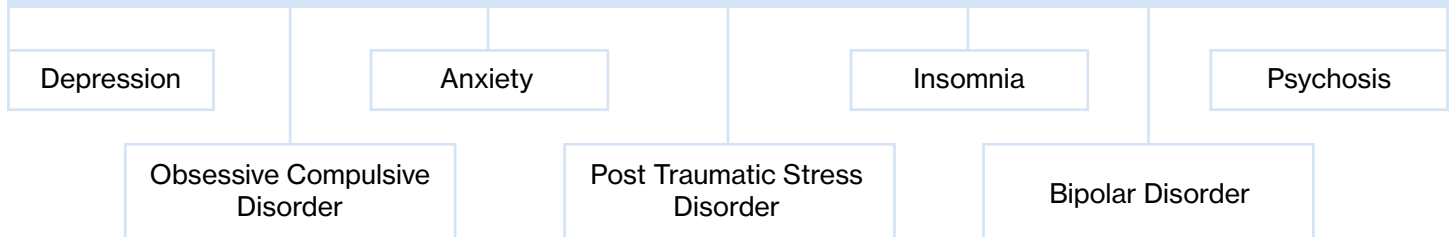
Look like...

- Sleep and appetite changes
- Lack of concentration
- Disinterest in activities, families, and friends

Sound like ...

- Worry about something bad happening
- “My family would be better off without me”

PERINATAL MOOD AND ANXIETY DISORDERS (PMADS)



WHAT CAUSES PMADS?

- Researchers think that risk factors can be different for each person. It is not your or your partner’s fault if either of you develops a mood or anxiety disorder.
- Up to 50% of people with PMADs go untreated, and the effects can impact the entire family.
- It is critical for fathers, co-parents, and partners to know how to help mothers navigate PMADs in order to have a successful pregnancy and postpartum period.
- You can’t “fix” PMADs, but you can help your partner get the support, care, and help they need. There are a number of safe, evidence-based treatments to choose from.

WHAT ABOUT BABY BLUES?

This is a **common and temporary** part of the postpartum experience where your partner might seem sad, moody, and weepy.

If you notice your partner’s mood changes lasting longer than two weeks or impacting their ability to care for themselves or the baby, contact your healthcare provider.

WHAT DO I DO?

1 Take care of your partner

- Consider taking shifts with the baby at night so you and your partner each get several hours of uninterrupted rest.
- Listen to your partner and remain non-judgmental.
- Make sure that visitors are supportive and positive.
- Pay attention to how your partner is feeling.
- Share any changes in your partner's behavior or mood with their healthcare team during your baby's well-child visits and your partner's postpartum checkups.

2 Find enjoyable activities for the whole family

- Enjoy fresh air and outdoor activities (like taking a walk as a family).
- Connect with and accept support from trusted family, loved ones, and your community.
- Talk to a trusted friend or family member.
- Eat healthy, simple meals.
- Drink plenty of water.

3 Bond with baby

- Hold baby often – skin-to-skin contact is a great way to bond with your new baby.
- Remember that all babies cry and that it's not your fault. If you are worried about baby's crying, contact your pediatrician or other care provider.
- Find ways to support feeding the baby. Remember that learning to breastfeed takes time and can be challenging. Contact your pediatrician or lactation specialist if needed.

4 Protect sleep

- Sleep is very important during your first few weeks home with your baby.
- Help your partner find time to take naps during the day when someone else can care for your baby.



Learn more at
ncmatters.org

TAKING CARE OF YOU

- Be sure to care for yourself as you are supporting your partner in these early days of adjustment to new parenthood.
- If you are worried about your own mental health, please reach out to your healthcare provider.
- It is normal for relationship satisfaction to decline in the postpartum period as the household adjusts to the demands of a new baby.
- Couples therapy can help you and your partner learn to support each other more effectively during this time.

Did you know?

As many as 1 in 10 men may experience postpartum depression or anxiety.



Scan the QR code to find more resources for dads

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR YOUR FAMILY

• Postpartum Support International

A confidential helpline that provides basic information, support, and resources for pregnant and postpartum individuals. Includes virtual and phone-based support groups for parents and their loved ones.

Call or Text: 1-800-944-4773

• SAFEChild - Moms Supporting Moms Healthline

Phone support for moms and their families through their non-emergency warm line.

Call or Text: 910-898-2139

• National Maternal Mental Health Hotline

A confidential hotline for pregnant women, new moms, and their loved ones.

Call or Text 24/7: 1-833-852-6262

• NC MATTERS

Healthcare providers can call NC MATTERS to speak with a maternal mental health expert about safe and effective treatment options for perinatal patients. You can share this number with them.

Ask your doctor to call: 919-681-2909 x 2

If you need behavioral health crisis services, please contact your healthcare provider or call 911.