

## *Who do you call on for support?*

When thinking about who to select as your M.O.M.S. Team Captains or members, consider the following questions.

- Who can you rely on when you have an emergency?
- What civic organizations or churches in your community might offer some support?
- With whom in your life do you feel most comfortable?
- Can your employer offer any type of support?
- Are there any other new moms you know of who might be interested in sharing support?
- Who might live far away, but could support you long distance via social media or phone?
- Where is your closest Postpartum Support International volunteer? Call or text the numbers below for support, guidance, and referrals to local resources.

Postpartum Support International (PSI) is an organization aimed to increase awareness about the emotional changes that women experience during pregnancy and postpartum. PSI supports, educates, and advocates for people living with mental illness. For more information about the North Carolina PSI Chapter, visit <http://psychapters.com/nc/>. PSI's toll-free HelpLine can be reached at 1-800-944-4773 or by texting 503-894-9453.

*Needing  
help  
is human.  
Helping  
is humanity.*

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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## M.O.M.S.

## Mobilization Of Maternal Support Teams

# MOBILIZATION OF MATERNAL SUPPORT, OR M.O.M.S. TEAMS

## What are M.O.M.S. teams?

Organized, informed groups of family members, friends, professionals, or volunteers who want to help a mom and her new family stay healthy. All pregnant women and new parents can benefit from a M.O.M.S. team, but for mothers who have limited support, health problems, or increased risk of mental illness, a M.O.M.S. team is essential for them and their new families to get the healthiest start possible.

## What can M.O.M.S. help with?

The right kind of support helps moms succeed in three key elements: sleep, self-care (or MyCare), and healthy relationships. These elements are linked to the health of mom and her family during pregnancy and postpartum (Kim and Dee 2017). Here's what the studies show.



In a study of 578 women presenting for perinatal psychiatric care, 98% reported poor sleep quality (Menke et al. 2018).

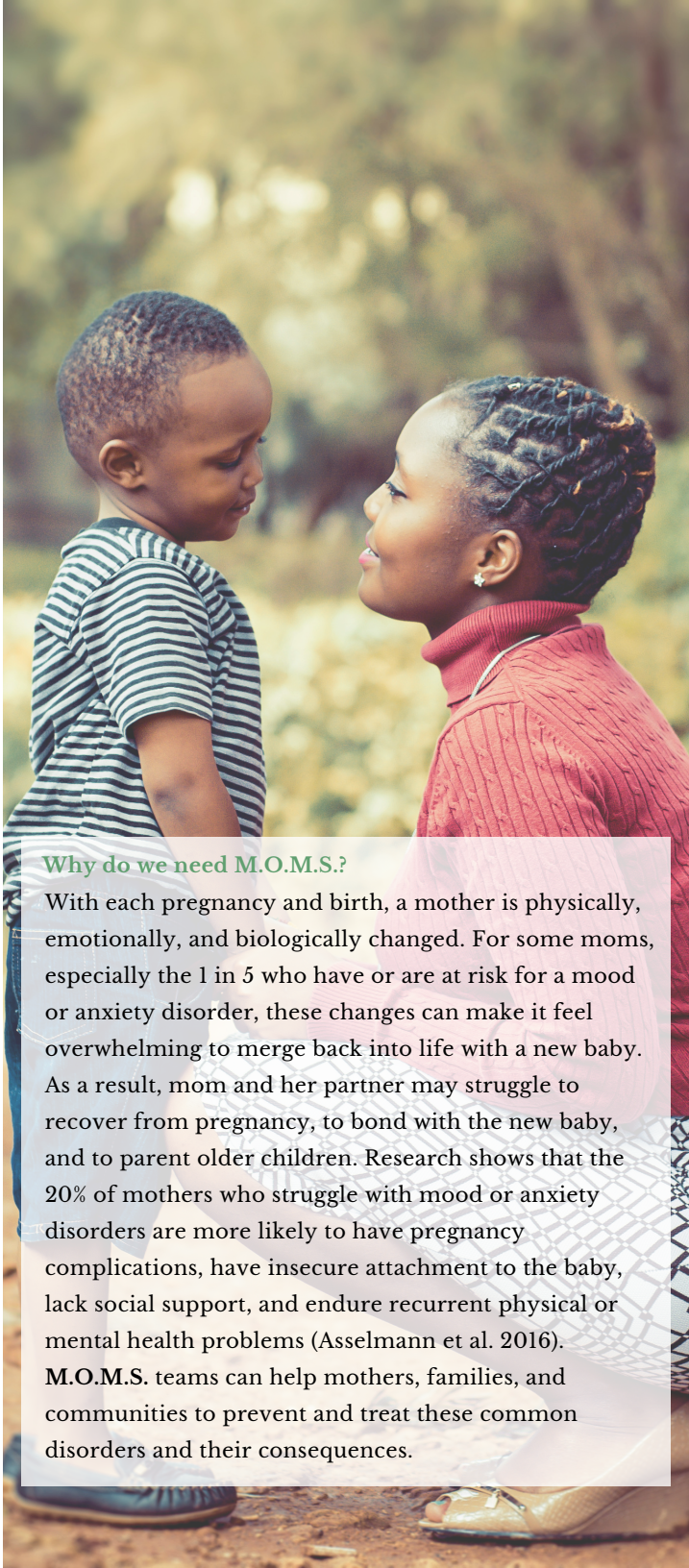


MyCare can include exercise, attendance at follow-up appointments, and mindfulness practices. Many studies link MyCare to maternal & mental health.



Research shows that women with more relationship satisfaction have a greater sense of mental well-being (Małus et al. 2016).

Perinatal or pregnancy-related mood and anxiety disorders are preventable and treatable. M.O.M.S. teams can play a crucial role in preventing and treating these common but serious illnesses. Social support can protect a mom from postpartum depression, improve her nutrition, psychological well-being, and the likelihood of exercise.



## Why do we need M.O.M.S.?

With each pregnancy and birth, a mother is physically, emotionally, and biologically changed. For some moms, especially the 1 in 5 who have or are at risk for a mood or anxiety disorder, these changes can make it feel overwhelming to merge back into life with a new baby. As a result, mom and her partner may struggle to recover from pregnancy, to bond with the new baby, and to parent older children. Research shows that the 20% of mothers who struggle with mood or anxiety disorders are more likely to have pregnancy complications, have insecure attachment to the baby, lack social support, and endure recurrent physical or mental health problems (Asselmann et al. 2016). M.O.M.S. teams can help mothers, families, and communities to prevent and treat these common disorders and their consequences.

# GETTING STARTED WITH YOUR M.O.M.S. TEAM

## Who will be on your M.O.M.S. team?

Try to assemble at least three Team Captains for Sleep, MyCare, and Relationships. You might find them among your neighbors, relatives, friends, and community, or ask your doctor's office or local doulas for assistance. Team members can contribute in many ways to find creative solutions to any issue. Listed below are some ideas of how team members can help

- Send a new mom positive text messages
- Help assemble meal plans or shopping lists
- Help arrange childcare
- Arrange transportation to appointments
- Organize outings for older siblings

## Your Sleep Team

Sleep deprivation can be both a risk factor for and symptom of poor physical and mental health. A partner or M.O.M.S. team member can offer protection from sleep deprivation by sharing the burden of caring for baby at night.

## Your MyCare Team

Self-care, including good nutrition, exercise, and follow-up doctor's appointments, is another challenging area for new moms. A friend or relative can contribute to the health of a new family by assisting with transportation for appointments, preparing healthy meals, or helping mom get back into exercise.

## Your Relationships Team

Being the mother of a newborn can be isolating and overwhelming, and have devastating consequences for social life. Even social interactions that do take place can feel very different after having a baby. A M.O.M.S. team member can help plan outings, find babysitters, or even take the kids for a couple of hours to help out.