

MAY 2022

# MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH



is about raising public and professional awareness of perinatal mental health problems, advocating for women and birthing people affected by it, changing attitudes and helping families access the information, care and support they need to recover.

## PRE/POSTPARTUM STRESS DEPRESSION

- Pregnancy and new motherhood can bring a range of thoughts, emotions and experiences. While this journey often brings excitement and joy, it also brings challenges, anxiety, and stress.
- It is normal to be scared to talk to someone about the way you are feeling for fear of judgement.
- You are not alone in this struggle.

## REACH OUT

- If you are feeling badly for more than two weeks, please know that support, treatment and care are available.
- Please do not suffer in silence. You deserve to feel well!
- This is an important time in life for you and your developing baby. **Speak to your provider about your treatment and support options.**



## FEEDING

- It's important to consider how the method you feed is supporting your overall health, including mental health. Feeding your baby is not a one size fits all solution. You have the freedom and flexibility to **create an individualized feeding plan to work for your family's unique needs.**
- If you're experiencing challenges or discomfort while breastfeeding, please connect with **professional support as early as you possibly can.**

## SLEEP AND SELF-CARE

- From getting up for night feedings to checking the monitor as well as the stress of taking on a new role in life - there are interruptions that keep many parents from returning to a restful sleep schedule.
- To improve your sleep: practice self-care, log off and cool down, cut back on caffeine and alcohol, cut down on naps, and **go easy on yourself!**

## ALCOHOL USE

- There is no known safe amount of alcohol use during pregnancy or while trying to get pregnant. There is also no safe time for alcohol use during pregnancy (CDC).
- If you are struggling to stop or reduce your alcohol and drug use while pregnant or parenting, you are not alone. CT DMHAS has resources for parents.
- Not drinking alcohol is also the safest option if you are breastfeeding. However, there are safe methods to breastfeed if you are using alcohol. Talk to your provider or reach out to your local WIC office for breastfeeding resources.

## WELLNESS APPOINTMENTS

- Pregnancy can be an exciting but stressful time. Take time to share any concerns or hesitations at your pre-natal appointment to get the help you need and prepare for your little one's arrival.
- Make a postpartum care plan with your provider during pregnancy. A postpartum checkup is a medical checkup you get after having a baby to make sure you're recovering well from labor and birth.
- Postpartum care is important because new moms can be at risk of serious and sometimes life-threatening health complications.



## HEAR THE VOICES OF MOMS IN RECOVERY

### What was most helpful to your recovery and mental health during and after pregnancy?

"Having a supportive partner, and other people in my life that I could talk to. Also, taking moments to myself. Especially after pregnancy. Even if it was a 5 minute fresh air break outside, alone. Just to breathe."

### What is something most people might not be aware about when it comes to mental health during/after pregnancy for someone who struggles with addiction/is in recovery?

"It can be easy to put your mental health on the back burner, because preparing for/having a newborn becomes your center of focus. It is ok, and necessary, to put your mental health first."

### What advice would you give to someone who is pregnant/postpartum and struggling with addiction and their mental health?

"If you are struggling, please ask for help. You are not alone, even if it feels that way sometimes."

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Prioritizing maternal mental health is an important practice, which can help to support the wellbeing of both mother/birthing person and baby. If someone you know is struggling with a mental health or substance use disorder, offer them your support.

**Below are resources for mothers/birthing people struggling with their mental health, including resources for pregnant and parenting people struggling with alcohol and substance use.**

## POSTPARTUM SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL

PSI offers free resources to mothers such as a Helpline, PSI Coordinators, Online Support Meetings and Specialized Coordinators including a Substance Use and Moms Coordinator.

[www.postpartum.net/get-help/help-for-moms/](http://www.postpartum.net/get-help/help-for-moms/)

## POSTPARTUM SUPPORT CT CHAPTER

PSI CT offers a safety net of supports and services for pregnant and postpartum mothers and their families through free services from PSI Coordinators and support groups.

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

## PROUD PROGRAM

The PROUD program (Parents Recovering from Opioid Use Disorders) offers support and family-centered treatment to pregnant women and mothers of infants or young children, in all stages of substance use recovery.

[portal.ct.gov/PROUD](http://portal.ct.gov/PROUD)

## WOMEN'S REACH PROGRAM

The Women's REACH program provides female Recovery Navigators for pregnant or parenting individuals with substance use or co-occurring disorders.

<https://portal.ct.gov/DMHAS/Programs-and-Services/Women/Womens-REACH-Program>

## MOTHER TO BABY CT

Mother to Baby CT is a free consultation service for providers and families searching for guidance on any substance interference with pregnancy development and breastfeeding. They provide telephone or in person consultation and provide information on psychotropic medications in pregnancy available on line.

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



## CT WIC

WIC supports Connecticut mothers and families in breastfeeding their children. Find information on developing a plan to work and breastfeed, access to WIC nutritionists, and peer counseling services.

<https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/WIC/WIC>

## HARTFORD HOSPITAL PERIPARTUM MOOD DISORDERS

Hartford Hospital Peripartum Mood Disorders Program offers evaluation, medication therapy and support group as well as psychotherapy resources.

<https://hartfordhealthcare.org/about-hartford-healthcare/connect-to-healthier/health-essentials/peripartum-mood-disorders>



## MARCH OF DIMES POSTPARTUM CHECKUPS

March of Dimes provides information on scheduling postpartum checkups and creating a postpartum care plan. They also provide information on what a postpartum checkup consists of.

<https://www.marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/your-postpartum-checkups.aspx>

**Are you struggling to reduce or stop your substance use while pregnant or parenting?  
You are not alone.**

[CT DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES](#)

[CT COMMUNITY FOR ADDICTION RECOVERY](#)

[DMHAS ADDICTION SERVICES BED AVAILABILITY](#)

[CT 24/7 TREATMENT ACCESS LINE:](#)

[1-800-563-4086](#)

[211 CT](#)