



## Steps to Take if You Think You Might Have a Perinatal Mood Disorder

- Seek support as soon as you become concerned about the way you are thinking, feeling, or behaving.
- Educate yourself about Perinatal Mood Disorders.
- Choose a doctor that you are comfortable with, that you trust, and that won't dismiss your concerns.
- If your concerns are minimized by your provider, seek care elsewhere.
- It is a hard thing to do, especially when you are feeling bad, but you are truly your own best advocate. Be very clear about your needs. You have the right to information and support, and to have your concerns respected and listened to. You have the right to be an integral part of your healthcare team and to participate in the process of treatment planning.
- Ask for a thyroid function test to be performed by your doctor to rule out possible underlying physical causes.
- If your doctor recommends medications, ask a lot of questions. Do not hesitate to keep questioning until you are satisfied with the answers you are getting. It is your body. Make sure that the doctor with whom you are working is well informed regarding perinatal and postpartum mental health. Inform the doctor if you are breastfeeding so that can be considered in the decision making process.
- Ask for a referral to a good therapist, preferably someone who *specializes in working with issues around perinatal mental health*.
- Your provider will not know how to help you if you don't tell them the full extent of what you are experiencing, and don't share all of the information that you have. Don't let your fear stop you, or your concerns about what others may think. Don't worry about trying to look good or keeping up appearances. This will only interfere with the process of recovery, and keep you feeling badly longer.