



## What Partners and Families Need to Know About Postpartum Mood Disorders and Their Treatment

### About Postpartum Mood Disorders

- In general, women experience Depression twice as frequently as men.
- A woman is more likely to deal with a mental illness in her childbearing years than at any other point in her life.
- Postpartum Mood Disorders affect up to 20 percent of new mothers. They are medical conditions, and they can be treated.
- Postpartum Mood Disorders can happen to anyone. They can strike with no warning, and with no risk factors.
- Postpartum Mood Disorders impact those at all socioeconomic levels, those with marriages that are good as well as those that are troubled, and can impact single mothers and adoptive mothers. They can happen with any pregnancy, whether it is the mother's first baby or baby two, three, or four. For example, it may happen with her first and third birth, but not her second and fourth.
- Postpartum Mood Disorders are real illnesses. She is not making this up.
- Postpartum Mood Disorders do not happen because she is a bad mom, or because she does not love her baby enough.
- It is not possible to just "snap out of" a Postpartum Mood Disorder. She cannot will it away. You want her to get better, and so does she. If she knew how to do it on her own she would.
- Recovery takes time. It can take weeks, and often, many months. Be patient and do not pressure her. She would feel better right now if she could. Save your energy instead for helping her navigate through this difficult situation.
- She will get better with proper support and treatment. She will begin to experience pleasure in life again. She will get back to being her "normal" self. This will take time. Just because she is not better immediately does not mean that treatment is not working.
- Don't spend too much time trying to figure out why this happened. We don't know the exact reasons that Postpartum Mood Disorders occur. The reasons are varied, numerous, and complex.

### About Treatment for Postpartum Mood Disorders

- Good therapy can be expensive. However, getting help must be a priority. The longer you wait, the worse it will get. The worse it gets, the harder it becomes to treat. Delaying treatment due to costs will only make it last longer. And ultimately, the costs are greater the worse the situation becomes. Don't let money get in the way of getting help.
- Her illness is real. She needs treatment to get better.
- Postpartum Mood Disorders are family issues. Don't let her go through this alone. Supporting her to go to therapy is essential to her recovery. Attend a session with her. Ask questions, and try to understand her illness. Learn how you can best support her.