



What a Postpartum Mother Needs

She needs you to be informed and aware. Don't assume she is fine just because she says she is.

Don't tell her to "snap out of it." She wants to feel better too, and would if she could.

Don't tell her she is strong and she can get through it alone without help if help is really needed.

Offer her verbal reassurance; physical affection without the pressure of sex; compassionate listening; a partner in parenting, housework, and chores.

If she is breastfeeding, offer practical support—a glass of water, an extra pillow, a companion on the couch while she feeds the baby.

She needs to hear she is doing a good job. In all likelihood she feels that she is not.

Simply sit with her when she feels bad. You don't always have to have something to say. Just your presence can be a big comfort.

Take her seriously, and listen to her concerns.

Encourage her to talk about her feelings, but don't judge them or try to fix them.

Give her permission to take care of herself.

Help her set limits for herself, and with others.

Encourage her to take breaks.

Encourage her to rest as much as possible.

Ask for help from friends, family, and supportive others.

Take care of yourself, too. When you are rested, nourished, and healthy, you can be a better support to her.

Take breaks for yourself, and develop your own social support network.

Be flexible with your schedule whenever possible.

Offer both practical and emotional support.

Ask her how you can help her *right now*. What does she need in this moment? If she does not know, make suggestions.

Pitch in around the house, and with the baby, before she asks for help. Moms do well at *taking care*, not at being taken care of. She may not ask for the help she needs. Don't wait for her to ask; just offer.

Believe in her ability to recover. Offer her reassurance, and be patient with her.

Reassure her you love her no matter how long it takes for her to feel better.

Remind her that this isn't forever, and that it won't always feel this way.