

The PPMD

Connection



News from the Peel Postpartum Mood Disorder Committee

FALL 2011



*Winter is an etching,
spring a watercolour,
summer an oil
painting, and autumn
a mosaic of them all"*

Stanley Horowitz

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Coordinators Corner:

It is hard to believe that another summer has come and gone, and as I approach my first year anniversary as Acting Postpartum Mood Disorder Specialist, it is time to look back at some of the milestones that we have reached over the past year. The Postpartum Family Support Line has been very busy, and answering almost twice the number of anticipated calls, as well as reaching out and providing ongoing support through almost 600 outbound calls. Some of the support groups have had mixed attendance, but facilitators have been able to help each other to find ways of reaching out to new participants, and in one case moving locations to better serve the community. Five new volunteers joined our program as Peer Educators and the volunteers have been busy delivering workshops at Healthy Start sites, OEYCs and other new parent programs. We have continued to build our partnerships within Peel. We have plans underway to do a full evaluation of the PPMD Program in order to help us identify gaps in services for professionals and families, and help with strategic planning for the coming years. And finally we have been busy developing our new brand and resources, with a new brochure, a new postcard, and yes....the newsletter does look a little different and is consistent with our new look. Stay tuned ...the website is due for an update as well! It has been an exciting and busy year. I look forward to continuing to support professionals, women, and their families through the initiatives of PMD in Peel. Thanks to all of you who have supported me through the past year.

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Adjustment After Birth Peer Support Groups

Every week, five Ontario Early Years Centres in Peel offer facilitated Peer Support Groups for mothers needing additional support following the birth or adoption of a child.

Mothers share their own experiences, when they feel ready to do so, in a safe and supportive environment. They learn strategies to help them cope and to make healthy life choices for themselves and their families. Participants learn from each other as they share their successes and challenges and support each other.

The Peer Support Groups do not require participants to have a professional diagnosis. There is no registration required, however it is recommended that you call the centre ahead of time to find out group times. The groups run for 2 hours and childminding is available.

The "Adjustments after Birth" support group has been truly a lifesaver for me. After the birth of your first baby, everyone tells you that this should be the best time of your life. When it isn't, you can feel very isolated and alone. The support group has given me a place to give voice to my feelings and my fears, given me a place where I feel I can be understood. I look forward every week to coming and just being somewhere where there are other women going through the same thing I am, women who know how postpartum depression feels. It is a place to feel safe, a place to share, and place to talk, get advice and laugh. I don't know what I would have done without it!

Groups are held at the following locations:

Brampton Parent Child Resource Centres, Sandalwood Parkway 905-495-3430

Caledon Parent Child Centre, Bolton 905-857-0090

Dixie-Bloor Neighbourhood Centre, Tomken Rd 905-276-6392

Mississauga Parent Child Resource Centres, Lakeshore Rd 905-822-1114

Mississauga Parent Child Resource Centres, Meadowvale Town Centre Cir. 905-567-4156

Check the [Community Resources](#) link on the pmdinpeel.ca website for more information.



Healthy Dads, Happy Family: How PPMD affects fathers *

Nothing is more joyous than the addition of a new baby to a parent's life. But for some, this joyous occasion takes a step back to the reality of Postpartum Mood Disorder (PPMD). Generally experienced by mothers shortly after child birth, PPMD brings on feelings of sadness, moments of irritability and a sense of exhaustion. These common symptoms often referred to as the "baby blues" are felt by 80% of new mothers. Baby blues does not last long and usually requires no treatment. In nearly 20% of women however, the baby blues linger beyond 10 days, indicative of postpartum depression setting in. In the Peel region, this "translates to 3,000 women per year."

Fathers experience PPMD too!

PPMD is not exclusive to women. Incidents among fathers can be 1.2 - 25.5%. Men experience feelings of sadness, isolation and sometimes increased anger and conflict. For Yasser, a first-time father and Peel resident, he began to experience symptoms of PPMD during the pre-natal period. "Like most dads, I took a 'laid back' approach...with an aura of confidence that 'everything will be okay.' As the due date approached a few anxieties started to surface. I had difficulty facing the loss of independence, and admitting my lack of knowledge on how to practically support my wife during her labour," says Yasser



are transferrable among spouses. "My anxiety elevated further when my wife started to mentally prepare me by asking questions like: 'you're gonna stay up with me all night to support the baby, RIGHT?' This amplified my stress and created a bit of mild depression." With pre-labour classes understandably focused on a mother's experience during child birth, Yasser was left feeling frustrated and confused about how to support his wife during the delivery. He attended a father's session at the Region of Peel focusing on parenting, but wanted more information about supporting the birth process. So Yasser launched a "segregated pre-natal class" in his community focusing on labour preparation from gender-specific views, with discussions on pre-natal issues facing parents, i.e., increased financial pressure, spousal demands, dealing with the loss of social interaction, and generally, life as parents knew it before baby.

With fathers feeling their own emotional changes at this time, PPMD can be easily overlooked, says Dr. Paul Ramchandani of Waneford Hospital. Depressive symptoms have an impact on fathers, and also potentially on their developing babies. Research shows that Postpartum Depression has a higher chance of developing in those with previous depressive history. Through education and awareness, parents can ensure that they can equally support each other by recognizing the signs and symptoms of PPMD by helping their partners get the support they need to overcome the disorder.

For more information about PPMD, please visit www.pmdinpeel.ca or call the Peel Postpartum Family Support Line at: 905-459-8441, Monday-Friday, 10 am-10 pm

* Article originally printed in PCYI Newsletter. Reprinted with permission.

The stress of the prenatal phase, fear of the unknown, and anticipation of life changes can create anxieties that

Did you know?



Many people look forward to the holidays as a time for fun and fellowship with family and friends. However, for many it can be a time of increased stress and increased risk for depression. It is important to be aware of how you and those around you are feeling. For more information regarding holiday depression and tips on how to cope, visit Psych Central's article on [Depression at the Holidays](#).

COMING SOON: Dad's Link at pmdinpeel.ca

In the coming weeks, there will be a new link added to the pmdinpeel.ca website. A 'Dad's Link' is currently being developed and will be launched shortly.

Dads can be affected by PMD in one of two ways: they may be supporting their spouse or partner who is struggling with PMD; or they may develop depression themselves.

Research suggests that approximately 10% of dads develop postpartum depression, and rates may be higher if their spouse or partner has postpartum depression. Resources for men are often more difficult to find. This link will help service pro-

viders and families to find some of those resources quickly and easily. Videos, books, and websites will be included.

The Dad's link will be updated with new resources as they become available. If you know of a great resource, please share it with me so that I can add it to the resource list.

Anyone who has subscribed to the newsletter will get a notification when the link becomes active. If you do not subscribe, but wish to be notified of the link, please send me an email with "Dad's Link" in the subject line.

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**"Everyday do
something that will
inch you closer
to a better
tomorrow"**

Doug Firebaugh

