

The

# PPMD

# Connection



## News from the Peel Postpartum Mood Disorder Committee

Spring 2014



*Flowers  
grow out of  
dark  
moments*

~Corita Kent~

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**Coordinators Corner:** After what has been a very long winter, it seems that spring may finally be arriving! It has been a difficult winter for many, as the cold temperatures and incessant snow and ice have made it difficult to seek out the supports and services that are needed. Let's hope that the change in weather will also help our families to once again connect with others in their communities.

In this issue of the PPMD Connection, I have asked 2 of our community members to contribute to our newsletter. Karen Nish, a Facilitator of one of our support groups, and Lisa Molinelli, one of our PMD Peer Educators, have written about the programs in which they are involved. I want to thank each of them for their contributions. Their unique perspectives give us more insight into these programs.

During National Volunteer Week in April, we will once again be thanking all of our volunteers for their contributions to our program. Without their hard work and dedication, we would not be able to run our Peer Education program which is one of our primary outreach strategies to new parents!

Our Rapid Review regarding services for immigrant women with PMD (see: Fall 2013 Newsletter) has been keeping us busy! Stay tuned for our findings in the next PPMD newsletter.

I hope everyone can start to get out and enjoy the outdoors again soon...I am sure we will all appreciate the spring flowers even more this year!

~Philippa Bodolai ~ [philippa.bodolai@peelregion.ca](mailto:philippa.bodolai@peelregion.ca)

### Peer Support Groups: A Facilitator's Point of View By: Karen Nish, Mississauga Parent Child Centres

Currently, in the Region of Peel, there are six postpartum mood disorder peer support groups offered through the Ontario Early Years Centres. These groups are for moms needing additional support after the birth or the adoption of a child.

The moms share their experiences in a safe and supportive environment and learn strategies to help them cope during this challenging period of adjustment.

The weekly, two hour sessions are co-facilitated by two staff members. The support groups are offered in the afternoons, on different days of the week at the various locations, giving the moms a choice of days that may best suit their schedule. Child-minding is available, allowing the moms time to focus on getting needed support, and light refreshments are served.

Sometimes, the women attending the support groups have been diagnosed with postpartum mood disorder, while others come because they are struggling with feelings of depression, anxiety or just feeling overwhelmed and needing additional support. Some are referred by their health care professionals; others find out about the support group through attendance at infant programs at the Ontario Early Years, through searching the internet, or from pamphlets they have received. At times, dads call or come into the centre looking for help and

support for mom and the family. Some of the moms are already connected to other postpartum mood disorder programs such as the one offered at Trillium Health Partners- Credit Valley Hospital site

Through mutual emotional support, the women are empowered to navigate their own recovery and learn self-care skills. The women are encouraged to take care of themselves, to eat healthy, to get some physical activity and to take time for themselves. One mom referred to the group session as her "reset button." She knew that the support and the acceptance she received from the other moms would help her get through to the next week. She kept the "reset button" in sight and took one day at a time. It is amazing to see the strength and courage of these women as they journey through the healing process.

By sharing experiences, the moms quickly learn that they are not alone; other moms are having the same struggles and it helps to break down feelings of isolation and stigmatization. The moms are encouraged to attend other programs offered at the Ontario Early Years Centres and learn about additional resources and services available in the community. The postpartum mood disorder peer support groups are one way to support moms through the healing process and journey to recovery.





## PPMD Peer Educator Program: A Volunteer Perspective By: Lisa Molinelli, PMD Volunteer Peer Educator

Volunteering for the Region of Peel Peer Educator Program for PPMD has been a rewarding experience, but my hope is that the reward is just not my own. I became a volunteer because I did not want any woman to suffer like I did through Postpartum Depression and Anxiety. I was a changed woman after the birth of my son, but my heart blazed to help other women understand that there is help, that they are not alone, and they are not barred by stigmas and ignorance in the world around them.

Increasing awareness and removing stigmas are two of the main goals of the Peer Educator Program. If the world is aware, then women can get help faster. By doing presentations to groups of mothers, or moms-to-be, I have had the opportunity to educate these women (and sometimes men /fathers). I can tell them about the facts of PMD, how it affects everyone, and how to get help.

As well as the education part of the presentation, we also play ice-breaker games and run activities that pro-

voke participants to think about themselves, like “Myths about Motherhood”. During our presentations (we usually do these in teams of two), we share our stories with the group. In my experience, the sharing of our stories has received the most positive feedback and is the most helpful part of the presentation for moms to relate to us.

The program fully trains volunteers and holds meetings twice a year to learn about what is new, to introduce new volunteers, and to re-enlist current volunteers, if we so choose. We are fully prepared with a training binder and the presentation kits include a custom made flip-board display for easy travel and set up in the centres.

It is a fantastic program that is always evolving to reach as far as we can, as fast as we can, to promote PMD awareness.



### Did you know?

Every year, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) hosts Mental Health Week to increase awareness and of mental illness in Canada. This year’s Mental Health Week will be held May 5-11. One of the areas of focus this year will be on increasing awareness of women’s mental health, by providing information, resources and strategies to address women’s mental health issues

For more information, visit: <http://mentalhealthweek.cmha.ca/>

### Dad's Self- Care

DAD'S CARE

*We often educate women about self-care after the birth of their baby. Self-care activities include:*

- \* *eating well,*
- \* *being physically active,*
- \* *developing realistic expectations,*
- \* *taking part in calming activities,*
- \* *getting enough sleep,*
- \* *connecting with friends,*
- \* *finding supports.*

*It is essential, however, to also talk to Dads about their self-care. When parents are overwhelmed and stressed, they have more difficulty dealing with changes in their lives. Taking care of oneself is an important way to be both physically and mentally healthy. Remember to talk to Dads about their self-care activities Help them to find ways to take part in the activities that are important to them, relieve their stress, and support their health.*

One may walk over  
the highest  
mountain one step  
at a time

~John Wanamaker~

