

The

PPMD

Connection



News from the Peel Postpartum Mood Disorder Committee

Summer 2014



“Every day may not be good, but there’s something good in every day.”

~Unknown~

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Coordinators Corner: Since the last newsletter, the PMD program has been busy. Our Rapid Review regarding accessing services for immigrant women and PMD is nearing completion! Over the summer, we will be finalizing our recommendations and the report. Our next newsletter will focus on details of our findings and the report will be available on the Peel Public Health website when complete. The number of visits to our website continues to grow and in recent months the site has been averaging 100 visits/day. We have also welcomed 3 new volunteers to our Peer Educator Program and our volunteers have been busy with presentations. You will likely notice our road signs around the region in the next few weeks.

When we think about summer, we typically think about a less stressful and more carefree season....we no longer need to wrap up in layers or find boots and lost mittens and there is more sun and daylight....however, changes in routine, hot weather, and less sleep may also accompany summer. For some, these can trigger stress and depression. See this edition's 'Did you know?' for more information.

Once again, two community members have contributed to the newsletter. Thanks to Joyce Van Anandel, a support group facilitator and Kimberley Brawley, a PPMD Steering Committee member for sharing information about their programs and some of the ways they support women with PMD.

~Philippa Bodolai ~ philippa.bodolai@peelregion.ca



Life is Hard - Join a Support Group

By: Joyce Van Anandel, Facilitator, Caledon Parent-Child Centre

For many women, there can be a sense of shame and fear associated with the stigma attached to Postpartum Mood Disorders (PMD). That stigma can discourage PMD sufferers from seeking help. This is unfortunate as PMD is a treatable mental health issue that, left untreated, can lead to ongoing difficulties in parenting and relationships.

As a society, we have been programmed to expect the arrival of a baby to be the happiest time of a woman’s life. Women who suffer from PMD are often the most surprised when that is not the case. However, as many as one in five women experience mood disorders during pregnancy and up to 1 year after giving birth or adopting a baby. In recent years, much effort has been made towards reducing the stigma around all mental illness, including PMD. However, statistics are suspected to be larger due to women suffering and not getting the help they need due to lack of diagnosis, an inability to locate resources, or the fear and shame associated with their condition.

Medication and individual therapy are two of the resources commonly used to treat PMD; support groups can also be very beneficial. They provide women the opportunity to come together in a safe environment to receive mutual support and share the lived experience of PMD. For many women, it is the one place where they can talk about their experience

without having to cover up how they are feeling so they won’t feel judged. Sometimes friendships develop that continue long after participation in the group, providing long-term understanding and mutual support. Support groups also provide coping strategies and the ability to share and learn techniques and tools that have helped other participants.

Years ago, after the birth of my fourth child, I was surprised to find myself experiencing PMD. I came forward to my family doctor and a public health nurse who suggested I attend a PMD support group. I was uncertain. In the days leading up to the group, I encountered a billboard on the highway near my home which said, “Life is Hard - Join a Support Group.” That simple message left me feeling amazed and validated and off I went. To this day, I often recommend support groups to clients who struggle with a variety of difficulties encountered in life.

For mothers diagnosed with PMD, or those just feeling they are having a difficult time during the adjustment to motherhood, it is important to remember help is available. A support group is one such resource. While it may appear everyone else has it perfectly together, the reality is 1 in 5 women are having a difficult time and can benefit from attending a group. We all know life can be hard - so go ahead and join a support group.





Postpartum Mood Disorder and the Peel Infant Parent Program

By: Kimberley Brawley, MSW, RSW, Child and Family Therapist, Peel Children's Centre

The Peel Infant Parent Program (PIPP) is an innovative program operated through a partnership between Peel Children's Centre and the Region of Peel's Children's Services. This therapeutic program is provided by an interdisciplinary team for parents/caregivers and their child age 0 to 36 months, who reside in Peel region. Mothers and their partners can seek support from staff for a variety of concerns including the impact of Postpartum Mood Disorder (PMD) on their parenting. PIPP combines an on-site program with enriching activities for caregivers and child guided by a Resource Teacher; and in-home counselling sessions with a Child and Family Clinician. Individual goals and interventions developed in full partnership with parents/caregivers help assist with the building of strong and healthy relationships with their child. Parenting can be overwhelming at the best of times, and symptoms of depression and anxiety can further complicate caring and responding to an infant/toddler's needs. The PIPP on-site program creates a supportive environment and opportunities for parents to experience optimal interactions using songs & lan-

guage, child-directed play, and enjoyable experiences to enhance the parent-child relationship. The counselling component, that is offered in-home on a weekly basis, further supports the parent's ability to attune to their child's needs. The clinician guides parents on how to support their child's social and emotional development, and to gently explore any factors that could impact their ability to read the cues of their child. Symptoms of PMD, negative thoughts and feelings, past trauma, feeling overwhelmed or unable to cope, and fatigue are common experiences that parents enrolled at PIPP experience and can share with staff. The opportunity for mentoring, within a safe and respectful environment, along with medical support, while building relationships with the PIPP team has been helpful for increasing parent confidence, skill development and ability to attune to their child more effectively. The program is free of cost and voluntary. Referrals are initiated by professionals and/or parents by calling the Region of Peel SNAP-PIRS Intake at 905-791-7800.



Did you know?

The shorter and colder days in the winter months are often triggers for depression, especially for those who experience Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). For some, the summer months can also be a difficult. Factors such as weather, daylight shifts, increased costs (vacations, summer camps), and changes in routine may contribute to depression and anxiety symptoms. Although less common, there are also those who suffer from Summertime SAD. For more information about summer depression, visit:

<http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2014/07/08/busting-summertime-depression/>

Dad's Space

When a new mom is struggling, dad's are usually the first to recognize that she may need help. They often become mom's primary support. It is not easy supporting others through tough times, and it is not always easy for dad's to know what to do or say. Here are some tips:

- 1) Talk to her. Ask her how she is feeling and what she needs- she may not always know, but it is important to keep communicating. Spend time together.
- 2) Encourage Mom to have a nap or a bath. Take the baby out for a walk so Mom gets a break.
- 3) Help with, or get help for, housework and laundry.
- 4) Limit visitors and limit visit times. Ask mom who she is comfortable seeing~ she may welcome the company of a close friend or family member, but too many guests will increase her stress.
- 5) Make sure the fridge or pantry is stocked with healthy food so she can grab a quick and easy snack. Make her a sandwich before you leave for work, or make sure there is a frozen meal she can pop in the oven- don't expect gourmet meals because she is home all day!
- 6) Help her to find an Ontario Early Years Centre or new parent group. Try to go with her the first time so you can meet staff and become familiar with programs too.
- 7) Connect with a Public Health Nurse or Physician to get support for mom or to have your own questions answered.
- 8) Try to attend well baby visits and other appointments with her.
- 9) Believe and trust she will get better.
- 10) Take time for yourself.....having a new baby is not easy.....you need support too.....



"Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass under the trees on a summer's day, listening to the murmur of water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is by no means a waste of time."

~John Lubbock~