

# Tips for Supporting Someone with Postpartum Depression

Many women experience strong emotions during pregnancy and after having a baby. It's common to feel sad, worried, or very tired in the days after having a baby. This is sometimes called the "baby blues." These feelings usually go away in a few days, but it's important to offer support to women who are experiencing them.

However, if a woman has these feelings longer than two weeks after giving birth, she may have postpartum depression (PPD). PPD is more serious than the baby blues, lasts longer, and may need to be treated by a health care professional.

It is important to talk about PPD with compassion and kindness. Women may not be aware of their PPD symptoms or might not want to seek help. This fact sheet aims to help supporters listen to, learn from, and help find support for women with PPD.



## Learn



PPD is common and treatable. About **1 in 8 women report symptoms of PPD** in the year after giving birth. Take time to learn about the symptoms of PPD, potential treatment options, and available resources to support women in your life experiencing PPD. This can help you feel more confident talking about PPD and offer resources if they are interested and ready. Here are some places to get started:

- Hear the stories of women who experienced PPD and got help at [www.womenshealth.gov/talkingPPD](http://www.womenshealth.gov/talkingPPD)
- Learn more about PPD and explore the available resources at [www.womenshealth.gov/talkingPPD/toolkit](http://www.womenshealth.gov/talkingPPD/toolkit)

## Listen



If you are concerned that a woman in your life has PPD, find a time that you're both available for a conversation. Find a quiet and comfortable place where you can talk without distractions. Start by expressing your care and concern. Use "I" statements to avoid sounding like you're blaming or judging her. Listen as she responds without interrupting.

- *"I know everyone is focused on the baby, but I want to hear about you."*
- *"I notice you're having trouble sleeping, even when the baby sleeps. What's on your mind?"*
- *"I know a new baby is stressful, but I am worried about you. You do not seem like yourself. Please tell me how you are feeling."*
- *"I really want to know how you're feeling, and I will listen to you."*



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## Create a Supportive Environment

There are things you can do to create a supportive environment to help her healing journey. Some examples include:

- Support her in the daily household and childcare tasks
- Prepare meals, pick up groceries, or buy supplies for the baby
- Encourage her to take time for self-care and to take breaks while you care for the child
- Be attentive, calm, listen, and respond to her needs

If you're unsure how you can support her, ask her how you can help and offer some suggestions. Some examples include:

- *"What do you need at this moment and how can I help make that happen?"*
- *"Would you like to talk?"*
- *"How can I help? I can clean or go going grocery shopping."*
- *"I can help you make appointments and give you a ride there."*
- *"I am here for you no matter what. Let's schedule some time together."*
- *"Can I watch the baby while you get some rest or take a break?"*

When someone is going through a difficult time, they may not be ready or able to ask for or accept help. It's important to listen to and to respect what she says she needs or doesn't need.

## Find PPD Resources

The resources below can help you learn more about PPD and can guide you in finding additional help. If she wants to get help, let her know you'll be there to support her.

- **Call or text the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988** for free access to a trained crisis counselor who can provide you with support and connect you with additional help and resources. If you're deaf or hard of hearing, use your preferred relay service or dial 711 then 988.
- **Call or text the National Maternal Mental Health Hotline at 1-833-TLC-MAMA** (1-833-852-6262) for 24/7 free access to professional counselors. If you're deaf or hard of hearing, use your preferred relay service or dial 711 then 1-833-852-6262.
- **Call or text "Help" to the Postpartum Support International helpline at 1-800-944-4773** for PPD information, resources, and support groups for women, partners, and supporters.
- **Local resources** can be identified in many ways:
  - Ask a health care professional or **find a local health center at [findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov](https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov)**.
  - Reach out to local organizations like social service agencies, family resource centers, libraries, community centers, or places of worship.
  - Look for support groups in your area, such as new moms' groups, breastfeeding support groups, or a baby café. See if there are mother/baby exercise programs in your community.