New Mom Checklist for Maternal Mental Health Help

Name: ___________________________ Mom’s age: _____________

I’d like to talk to you about the stress I’ve been having since I had my baby. Because I’m exhausted, overwhelmed & struggling, this is the best way for me to make sure you know what is going on with me, and that I might need your help. I think I might have (Mom, check any that apply):

- Postpartum depression (PPD)
- Postpartum anxiety or OCD
- Postpartum psychosis
- Postpartum PTSD (post-traumatic stress)
- Bipolar disorder or mania
- Not sure; I just know something isn't right

Here are some of the recognized symptoms of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders that I have been having (Mom, check any that apply to you):

- I can’t sleep, even when my baby is sleeping.
- I have lost my appetite.
- I feel sad. I have been crying a lot for no reason.
- I am feeling worried or anxious most of the time.
- I am having anger or rage that is not normal for me.
- I feel numb or disconnected from my life. I can’t enjoy the things I used to.
- I don’t feel like I’m bonding with my baby.
- I am having scary “what if” thoughts over & over about harm coming to me, my baby or others (also called intrusive thoughts, a sign of postpartum OCD).
- I feel a lot of guilt and shame.
- I’m worried that I’m not a good mother.
- I feel overwhelmed with all of the things in my life.
- I can’t concentrate or stay focused on things.
- I feel like I’m losing it.
- I want to be alone all or most of the time.
- My thoughts are racing. I can’t sit still.
- I feel like the only way to make myself feel better is by using alcohol, prescription drugs or other substances.
- Sometimes I wonder if my baby or my family would be better off without me.
- I’ve been having physical symptoms that are not normal for me (for example: migraines, back aches, stomach aches, shortness of breath, panic attacks)
- I have had serious thoughts of hurting myself.
- I have had thoughts that I should (not that I might or what if, but that I should or need to) hurt my baby or someone else.
- I am worried I’m seeing or hearing things that other people don’t see or hear.
- I’m afraid to be alone with my baby.
- I feel very concerned or paranoid that other people might hurt me.

I have had these symptoms for more than _______ weeks. I am _____ weeks/months (circle one) postpartum.

Here are some recognized risk factors for maternal mental illness that may help you understand my situation (Mom, check any that apply to you):

- I have had depression, anxiety/OCD or PPD before
- I have a history of bipolar disorder or psychosis
- My family has a history of mental illness
- I have a history of or am now going through trauma (for example: domestic violence, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, poverty, loss of a parent)
- I have had a stressful event in the last year (for example: house move, job loss, divorce or relationship problems, or the death of a loved one)
- I’m a single mom
- I don’t have much help or support at home from my partner or family members
- I have a lot of financial stress
- I have had infertility treatment
- My baby has colic, reflux or other health problems
- I have had a previous miscarriage or stillbirth
- I have a history of diabetes, thyroid problems, or pre-menstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD)
- I delivered multiples
- I’m away from my home country or culture
- I or my baby had problems in pregnancy or childbirth (for example: baby in NICU, unplanned C-section, bed rest)

This checklist is not intended to diagnose any mental illness. It is a discussion tool for moms to use with healthcare providers. It was created by Postpartum Progress, a national nonprofit supporting moms with maternal mental illness. For more free tools and support for perinatal mood & anxiety disorders, visit postpartumprogress.org.
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