



Let's break the silence

Approach the postpartum depression (PPD) conversation with your patients and their loved ones.

Open dialogue and screening are essential for the adequate assessment of PPD in women who have recently given birth.¹ However, the social stigma related to PPD may leave many women too afraid to speak up.

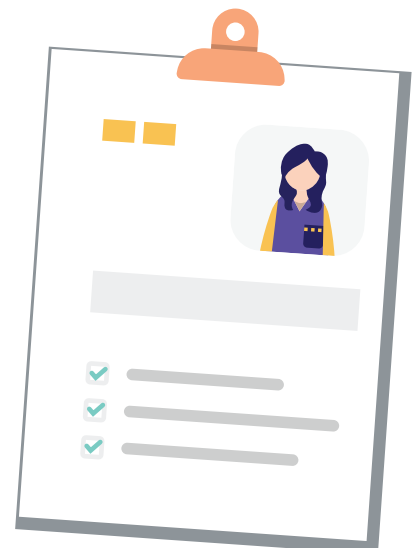
Start the important conversation about PPD with your patients. The following questions can help you uncover risk factors, lifestyle stressors, and symptoms.

Involving a woman's spouse/partner or family members in discussions about PPD may help her feel more connected with those who care about her. It may also help decrease her family members' sense of helplessness if they encounter symptoms of PPD.^{2,3}

The sample questions below are meant to supplement formal screening with a validated tool, such as the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS).

Ask about risk factors:

- Do you or does anyone in your family have a history of depression or anxiety?⁴
- Have you ever taken or are you currently taking an antidepressant medication?⁵
- Have you ever been pregnant before, and if so, did you experience PPD?⁶
- How is your relationship with your spouse/partner? Do you feel emotionally supported?⁷
- Is the new baby adding significant financial stress to your household?⁷



Discuss mood and lifestyle changes post-delivery:

- Are you significantly sleep deprived or sleeping a tremendous amount?
- Have you been crying or sad a lot of the time?
- How has your appetite changed since giving birth? Are you eating much more or less than you did before your baby was born?
- Are you often agitated, irritable, or anxious? And if so, how often?
- Do you frequently have unusually strong feelings of anger or rage toward your spouse/partner, loved ones, or baby? And if so, can you describe those feelings?
- Do you struggle to get most daily activities completed since giving birth?

Assess the mother–infant relationship:

- Do you often feel that you're not good at being a mom? If so, why?
- Do you feel consistently emotionally attached to your baby?
- Are you constantly having anxious or obsessive thoughts?
- Have you ever thought about harming yourself or your baby?



Helpful tips about PPD for your patients' partners and loved ones:

- Stress may contribute to the development of PPD, so eliminating emotional triggers may help⁸
- Many moms with PPD may feel guilty or ashamed. It is important to listen without judgment and be supportive to allow your partner to discuss her feelings openly³
- Lack of sleep can contribute to PPD. You can help the new mom in your life get more sleep by taking on more household chores⁹
- Healthcare professionals, relatives, and PPD support groups can provide support for partners and caregivers

References:

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