



Perinatal Mental Health Discussion Tool for Parents Experiencing Loss

As many as 1 in 5 moms (1 in 10 dads) experience symptoms of depression and anxiety during the perinatal period (pregnancy to 1 year postpartum or post-loss). People of every age, income level, race, and culture can develop Perinatal Mental Health Disorders (PMHDs).

Parents who are grieving the loss of a pregnancy or baby may experience many of the PMHD symptoms listed below. After a pregnancy loss, while there is no baby to care for, you are still in the postpartum period and at risk of developing a PMHD at the same time as experiencing grief. But this can be a confusing time, as many of the listed symptoms are part of the grief experience and should not be seen as part of a diagnosis other than deep sadness for their loss. As a general rule for PMHD, if the symptoms worsen or persist for longer than two weeks, you may be experiencing a mental health complication.

Grief evolves over time, shifting and changing, with the gentle expectation that you'll gradually return to functioning—at your own pace. Support groups and therapy can be enough to navigate the grief experience, but if any of the symptoms listed below persist over many weeks or months, seek consultation to assess if this may be a PMHD in addition to normal grief.

This tool can help you track your symptoms and be a resource for discussing them with your medical provider.

I have been experiencing the following symptoms: (please mark all symptoms that apply)

- Feeling depressed or void of feeling
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Lack of interest in things that once brought you pleasure
- Trouble concentrating
- Brain feels foggy
- Not wanting to eat
- Feeling anxious or panicky
- Feeling angry or irritable
- Dizziness or heart palpitations
- Not able to sleep
- Extreme worries or fears
- Flashbacks regarding the pregnancy or delivery
- Scary and unwanted thoughts
- Feeling an urge to repeat certain behaviors to reduce anxiety
- Needing very little sleep while still functioning
- Feeling more energetic than usual
- Seeing images or hearing sounds that others cannot see/hear
- Thoughts of harming yourself

Risk Factors

Below are several risk factors associated with perinatal depression (PPD), perinatal anxiety (PPA), and postpartum PTSD. Knowing these PMHD risk factors can help you communicate more effectively with your family and medical provider about what you are experiencing.

Risk factors for perinatal mental health disorders include the following: (please mark all risk factors that apply)

- Previous pregnancy or infant loss
- History of depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, or psychosis
- History of diabetes or thyroid issues
- History of PMS/PMDD
- History of trauma or abuse
- Family history of mental illness
- Major recent life event, including loss, moving or relocation and job loss
- Being a member of a high-stress parenting group such as:
 - Single or teen parent
 - NICU parent
 - LGBTQIA parent
 - Parents of color
 - Parents of multiples
 - Military families
- Traumatic pregnancy or delivery
- Relationship stress
- Financial stress
- No or little social support
- Away from home country

RESOURCES

[Postpartum.net](https://www.postpartum.net)

- Find information and resources about pregnancy and infant loss <https://postpartum.net/get-help/loss-grief-in-pregnancy-postpartum/>
- Contact the PSI HelpLine for information, resources, and support. Call/Llama: 1-800-944-4773 (English & Español) & Text/Texto "Help" to 800-944-4773 (English) or 971-203-7773 (Español)
- FREE Online Weekly Support Groups: Led by a trained facilitator. For days and times, please visit: <https://www.postpartum.net/get-help/psi-online-support-meetings/>
- FREE Psychiatric Consult Line: Your medical provider can call 877.499.4773 and speak with a reproductive psychiatrist to learn about medications commonly used in the perinatal time period.
- Connect by PSI app: Easily access the HelpLine, support groups, or connect with a specialized coordinator. Download Connect by PSI from your app store.

** This is not a diagnostic tool and should not take the place of an actual diagnosis by a licensed professional. **