MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH

Anxiety and/or depression during pregnancy and the first year after giving birth affect up to 1 in 5 new or expectant mothers and their families.*

BEING A NEW MOTHER CAN AFFECT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

IF FOLLOWING CHILDBIRTH YOU EXPERIENCE EMOTIONAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL CHANGES THAT ADVERSELY AFFECT YOU OR YOUR FAMILY’S MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

YOU MAY BE SUFFERING FROM A POSTPARTUM DISORDER.
What are Perinatal Disorders?

Mental health complications can occur in women during the perinatal period, from time of conception through the infant’s first year of life.

Postpartum Blues or "Baby Blues"
Characterized by mood swings, postpartum blues are normal reactions that many mothers experience following childbirth. The onset usually occurs three to five days after delivery, and should subside as hormone levels begin to stabilize.

Postpartum Depression (PPD)
PPD is a major form of depression and is less common than postpartum blues. PPD includes all the symptoms of depression but occurs only following childbirth. It can begin any time after delivery and can last up to a year. PPD is estimated to occur in approximately 10 to 20 percent of new mothers.

Anxiety
A woman with anxiety may experience extreme worries and fears, often over the health and safety of the baby. Some women have panic attacks and might feel shortness of breath, chest pain, dizziness, a feeling of losing control, and numbness and tingling.*

Panic Disorder
This is a form of anxiety in which the sufferer feels very nervous and has recurring panic attacks. During a panic attack, she may experience shortness of breath, chest pain, claustrophobia, dizziness, heart palpitations, and numbness and tingling in the extremities. Panic attacks seem to go in waves, but they are temporary and resolve without assistance.*

Birth-Related Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
After childbirth, women may also experience post traumatic stress disorder. PTSD includes two key elements: (1) Experiencing or witnessing an event involving actual or threatened danger to the self or others, and (2) Responding with intense fear, helplessness or horror.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
OCD is characterized by repetitive, upsetting and unwanted thoughts or mental images (obsessions), and sometimes they need to do certain things over and over (compulsions) to reduce the anxiety caused by those thoughts.*

*Information obtained from Postpartum Support Virginia, 2019
** Information obtained from National Perinatal Association, 2018
What are the signs & symptoms of Perinatal Disorders?

**Emotional and Physical Symptoms**

**Persistent Sadness**

**Anxiety**

**Feeling overwhelmed or "empty"**

**Crying Episodes**

**Chronic Fatigue**

**Panic Attacks**

**Loss of Interest in previously enjoyable activities**

**Problems with concentration or making simple decisions**

**Avoidant Behaviors**

**Persistent Self-Doubt**

**Changes in Sleeping and/or Eating Patterns**

**Feelings of Hopelessness, Helplessness, or Guilt**

**Experiencing angry and/or irritable moods**

**Fear of being alone or separated for your baby**

What are the treatment options for Perinatal Disorders?

The most successful treatment plan for perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs) may include:

- **Complete Medication Examination**
- **Some medical conditions, such as a thyroid imbalance and anemia, are fairly common in the postpartum period and can contribute to feelings of depression and lethargy.**
- **A psychiatric evaluation**
- **Self-help techniques**
- **Participation in a support group**
- **Talk therapy with a psychologist or counselor**
- **Medication and/or hospitalization when necessary**

MHA Georgia's Tips and Tricks to Mental Health Wellness!

1. **Know Your Triggers and Early Warning Signs of a Manic or Depressive Episode**
2. **Create Your Emergency Action Plan with Contacts, Medications and Preferred Treatment Plan**
3. **Don’t Isolate! Join a Support Group or Build New Relationships for Face to Face Connection**
4. **Develop an Active Daily Routine with Healthy Lifestyle Choices**
5. **Keep Stress to a Minimum by using Relaxation Techniques and making Leisure Time a Priority**
6. **Watch what you put in your body by avoiding harmful substances and eating right!**