

Post Natal Depression and Families

It is often difficult for the people close to the mother with post-natal depression (PND) to know how best to support their loved one and know what support is available to them. This leaflet has been written to provide this advice for partners, other family members and friends.

What Family Members can do to Help

It is important to try not to be shocked, disappointed or blame the person with PND. PND is very common and is not anyone's fault. Try to get her to seek and accept help from others. Reassure her that she will get better.

Read as much as you can on post-natal depression so that you can understand it better. Ask the health visitor, or GP if you need more information.

Encourage her to look after herself – to eat well, sleep well and find time to do a little something for herself. Don't let her spend too much time alone as isolation can make things worse. Support her to go out every day and engage in activities she likes doing. Help her with the practical things such as the laundry and cleaning, but if she prefers to do this herself, offer to look after the baby so she can do this.

If she talks about harming herself, or not wanting to live, ensure that she communicates this with the healthcare workers involved in her care. If you are seriously concerned, Berkshire Mental Health Services are available in a 24hrs a day and contactable on 0300 365 0300.

Support for Family Members

If you are feeling affected by your loved ones' depression, it is important to seek support from other family members and friends. If you feel like you are the only person supporting her, try to encourage and accept any help offered that you gives you a short break from your caring responsibilities. Ensure that she doesn't feel abandoned by you.

It is thought that up to 1 in 25 new fathers can get depressed. Further information and advice can be found at www.fatherhoodinstitute.org. If you feel you need more formal help Talking Therapies may be able to offer treatment for depression. You can discuss a referral with your GP or make a self-referral by phone.

Sources used to write this information sheet:
<http://www.mind.org.uk>