



introduction for health care providers

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Coping with depression during pregnancy and following the birth:
A Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy-based self-management guide for women

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BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions

www.heretohelp.bc.ca

Kelty Resource Centre — located at BC Children’s Hospital, in the Mental Health Building. This provincial resource centre links families with appropriate resources within their health authority.

www.bcmhas.ca/supportcentre/kelty

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introduction for health care providers

Why this guide was created

This guide was created to help meet the needs of women with depression during pregnancy and following the birth.

Our goals are to:

- 1.** Educate women and health care providers about the signs and symptoms of depression before and following the birth.
- 2.** Educate women and health care providers on the different available treatments.
- 3.** Help women to become active participants in their own treatment and recovery, by using specific exercises and other lifestyle changes.

We bring a wide range of skills to the preparation of this guide, including both clinical and research experience.

module 1



What is the BC Reproductive Mental Health Program?

The BC Reproductive Mental Health Program is a multidisciplinary group consisting of psychiatrists, nurse clinicians, psychologists, counselors, dieticians, social workers and researchers who specialize in women's reproductive mental health and wellbeing. This program is part of the BC Mental Health and Addictions agency and is located at the Children's and Women's Hospitals site in Vancouver, Canada. Together, we have many years of clinical experience working with women and their families who are dealing with emotional difficulties related to the reproductive lifecycle. We bring a wide range of skills to the preparation of this guide, including both clinical and research experience.

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Who is this guide for?

FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS: This guide may be used by health care providers who work with women with depression during and following the birth of their baby. We hope that this guide will help women to deal with their symptoms by making positive changes in their thinking, behavior and self care and help them to have the best possible experience during pregnancy and following the birth. ***Modules 2 through 5 in this guide are written in the voice of a healthcare provider talking to the woman.***

This guide provides both information and exercises that can be used by your patients or clients to help with treatment. Depending on the degree of the symptoms, this guide can be used by health care providers on its own or in combination with other treatment options such as medication. Health care providers may choose from the different section(s) of the guide to personalize the treatment approach. **Health care professionals may also want to look at the companion document that provides tips on how to use this guide when working with pregnant and postpartum women in both individual treatment and group treatment formats.**

FOR WOMEN: This guide was created for doctors, nurses, mental health workers or other health care providers who are working with women who are suffering from depression during and following the birth of their baby. You will most likely want to use this guide with them. In the back are handouts you can use as you work with your doctor or other health care provider.

By using this guide with a trusted health care provider, you have taken the first steps on an important journey.

Be kind to yourself. Change takes time. Your hard work will be of benefit to both you and your family!

Use this guide with women in a way that fits into their current life situation.

module 1



How to use this guide

The guide is organized into different sections. Health care providers may find it helpful to discuss with women the sections in the order they appear. However, a certain section (for example, Self-Care: The NEST-S Program) may be more appropriate for a woman and you may choose to read that part first.

That's OK too. Later on, they may want to discuss all of the sections, as each section provides information and new skills. What's important is that you use this guide with women in a way that fits into their current life situation.

Also, remember that it is perfectly reasonable to go through this guide with women a few pages at a time. It is often a good idea for women to review sections that apply to them, so they have more than one chance to learn everything they need to know. A lot of women find that some ideas make sense right away while others only sink in after they have been reviewed many times.

Most women with depression will find that each of the sections has something helpful to offer – the important thing is to pick something that they feel they can handle and start the learning process!



Overview of this guide

This guide is divided into several sections. Each section can be read on its own.

The **What is depression during pregnancy and following the birth?** section provides some basic information about depression in general, what we know about depression occurring in this specific period, and why some women may develop depression during this time.

The **Getting help: Treatment options for women with depression during pregnancy and following the birth** section describes what we know about effective treatments for depression. It also provides an overview of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy – the effective treatment approach that is the basis for this guide.

Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy for depression during pregnancy and following the birth goes into further detail about the Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy model of depression and the relationship between different symptoms. You may want to discuss with women how to share the information in these sections with support people in their life who are interested in learning more.

Self-care: The NEST-S program section provides some basic information for women about taking care of themselves. Having depression and being a new mother both tend to interfere with doing things that help them to feel well and accomplish important goals. This section provides some lifestyle tips that will help them to “recharge” themselves and give them the energy they need to practice the effective depression management skills covered in this guide.

The **Making positive changes** section outlines how women can set and complete goals and steps for learning how to solve their problems. Women may wish to review the information in this section with support people in their life who can help them in this process.

The **Challenging depressive thinking** section introduces four steps you can teach women to help them identify and challenge their negative thinking. This section also provides information on managing depressive thoughts including common “traps” and steps that women can take to practice more accurate and helpful thinking.

Keep their depression management skills sharp over the long term

module 1



The **Maintaining gains and relapse prevention** section helps you teach women to make a plan for how they will maintain the progress that they have made and keep their depression management skills sharp over the long term. This section is most useful once they have been successfully applying the skills taught in this guide for at least a few weeks.

The **Handouts for women** Section contains forms that women may want to fill out as you go through the guide with them. There are reminders in the guide to let you know when there is a worksheet that might be helpful for the woman. This section includes:

- a. The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (a self-test for depression symptoms)
- b. Worksheets to help women as they work through each of the skills sections (The Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Model of Depression, Setting SMART goals, Healthy Thinking Form, and Problem Solving Worksheet)
- c. Additional Resources that women and their support people may find useful. These include:
 - Tips for talking with your doctor about your symptoms
 - What your loved ones can do to support you



We're looking for feedback

We would like to hear about whether or not this guide has been helpful in your treatment with women. We are open to your suggestions about any changes that you think could make this guide more helpful for women. Please contact Reproductive Mental Health, BC Mental Health and Addictions, C&W. Future revisions of this guide will rely on your responses.

Disclaimer

The information in this guide is not intended to provide or substitute for, professional medical or other health services. This guide focuses on self-care and cognitive behavioral strategies for the treatment of depression during and following the birth. This does not take away from our support for the use of certain medications for treating depression. This guide does not include everything that one should know about depression and treatment. Readers need to know that there is no single correct approach for the treatment of depression.



Acknowledgments

This guide has been developed in part by adapting previous work that has been published on depression and mood disorders. We have done our best to acknowledge in the text where material has been borrowed from other work. In addition, the authors would like to acknowledge the following publications that were used as key resources in the development of this guide:

- **The Antidepressant Skills Workbook.** Dan Bilsker and Randy Paterson, Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health & Addiction (CARMHA), Simon Fraser University. Vancouver, BC 2005. Available on line at <http://www.comh.ca/antidepressant-skills/adult/workbook/>
- **Anxiety Disorders Tool Kit.** BC Partners for Mental Health Addictions Information, Vancouver BC, 2003. Available on-line at <http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/publications/toolkits>
- **BCP Here to Help: Problem Solving & Healthy Thinking Wellness Modules.** BC Partners for Mental Health Addictions Information, Vancouver BC, 2004-2005. Available on-line at <http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/skills/managing-well-being>

The authors would also like to acknowledge these sources that were consulted in the development of this guide:

- **Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, Text Revision.** Washington DC, American Psychiatric Association, 2000
- **Mind Over Mood: Change How You Feel by Changing the Way You Think.** Dennis Greenberger and Christine A. Padesky. Guilford Press, New York, NY, 1995.
- **Postpartum Depression and Anxiety: A Self Help Guide for Mothers.** Pacific Post Partum Support Society, Vancouver BC, 1997. www.postpartum.org , 604-255-7999.
- **The Feeling Good Handbook, Revised Edition.** David D. Burns. Plume, New York: NY, 1999.
- **When Baby Brings the Blues: Solutions for Postpartum Depression.** Ariel Dalfen. John Willey & Sons Canada, Ltd, Mississauga, ON, 2009.



Acknowledgments *continued*

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