

handouts for women

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

WRITTEN AND EDITED BY The BC Reproductive Mental Health Program. BC Mental Health and Addiction Services: An Agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

Michelle Haring, PhD, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Consultant

Jules E. Smith, MA, Clinical Counsellor

Doris Bodnar, MSN, Outreach Coordinator

Deirdre Ryan, MB, FRCPC, Consulting Psychiatrist

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www.bcmhas.ca

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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Self-test for depression symptoms in pregnancy and postpartum — Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)

JL Cox, JM Holden, R Sagovsky, Department of Psychiatry, University of Edinburgh (1987)



Name: _____ Date: _____

Number of Months Postpartum: _____

As you have recently had a baby, we would like to know how you are feeling. Please mark the answer which comes closest to how you have felt in the past 7 days not just how you feel today.

Example: I have felt happy

- Yes, all the time
 Yes, most of the time
 No, not very often
 No, not at all

In this example, the “x” means “I have felt happy most of the time during the past week.” Please complete the following questions in the same way.

In the past 7 days:

1. I have been able to laugh and see the funny side of things.

- As much as I always could 0
 Not quite so much now 1
 Definitely not so much now 2
 Not at all 3

2. I have looked forward with enjoyment to things.

- As much as I ever did 0
 Rather less than I used to 1
 Definitely less than I used to 2
 Hardly at all 3

3. I have blamed myself unnecessarily when things went wrong.

- Yes, most of the time 3
 Yes, some of the time 2
 Not very often 1
 No, never 0

© The Royal College of Psychiatrists, 1987.

Cox, J.L., Holden, J. M., & Sagovsky, R. (1987). Detection of postnatal depression: development of the 10-item Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale. *British Journal of Psychiatry*.150, 782-786.



- 4.** I have been anxious or worried for no good reason.
- | | |
|------------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No, not at all | 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hardly ever | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, sometimes | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, very often | 3 |
- 5.** I have felt scared or panicky for no good reason.
- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, quite a lot | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, sometimes | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No, not much | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No, not at all | 0 |
- 6.** Things have been getting on top of me.
- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, most of the time I haven't been able to cope | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, sometimes I haven't been coping as well as usual | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No, most of the time I have coped quite well | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No, I have been coping as well as ever | 0 |
- 7.** I have been so unhappy that I have had difficulty sleeping.
- | | |
|------------------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, most of the time | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, sometimes | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not very often | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No, not at all | 0 |
- 8.** I have felt sad or miserable.
- | | |
|------------------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, most of the time | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, quite often | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Only occasionally | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No, never | 0 |
- 9.** I have been so unhappy that I have been crying.
- | | |
|------------------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, most of the time | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, quite often | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Only occasionally | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No, never | 0 |
- 10.** The thought of harming myself has occurred to me.
- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, quite often | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hardly ever | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Never | 0 |

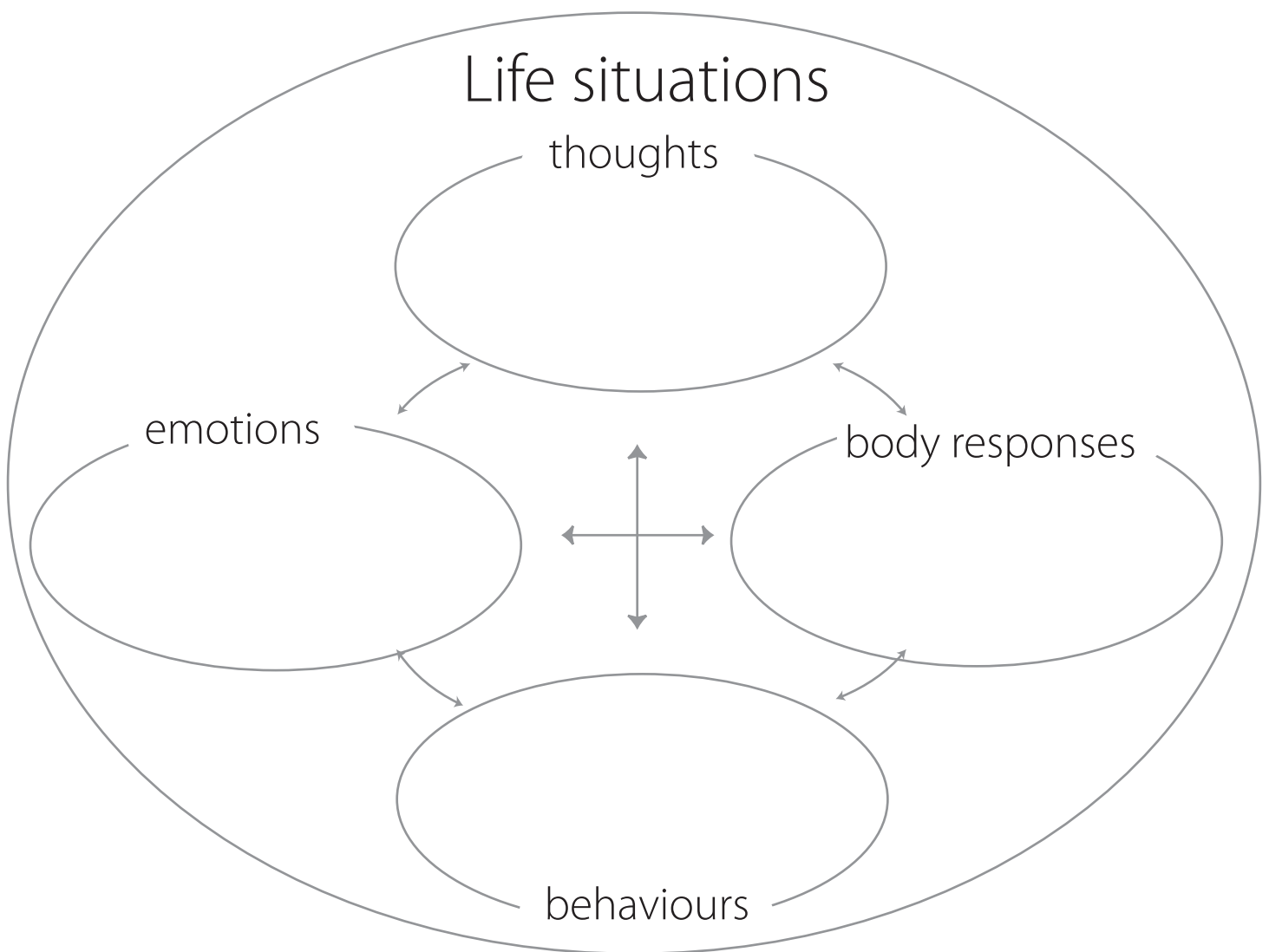
To score this measure:

Add up the numbers appearing beside your answer for each question.

If you score 1, 2, or 3 on question #10, you should consult with your family physician as soon as possible.



2 The Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Model of Depression



3 Goal setting worksheet



Goal setting worksheet

Area	Idea for positive change	SMART Goal/Plan	Done

4 Thought challenging worksheet



Thought challenging worksheet

Situation	Depressive thoughts	Thinking trap or questions to challenge this thought	Healthier thoughts



5 Problem solving worksheet

My Problem:

My Goal:

Things I can do:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

My Pros/Cons List:

I Could...	Pros	Cons

My Solution is:

The steps for carrying out my solution are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



6 Tips for talking to a doctor about your symptoms

Talking to a trusted doctor about your symptoms is important.

If you need to find a new family doctor, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC can give you a list of doctors accepting patients in your area.

MAKING YOUR APPOINTMENT:

- Book a longer than usual appointment. It is okay to ask for a double appointment time. Let the doctor's office staff know that you need extra time.
- Consider bringing a friend or family member with you for support. That person can also help describe your symptoms if you're unable or take notes for you.
- Get help if language is a barrier between you and your doctor. There are interpreters that can help over the phone or by being with you in person. Ask the doctor's office staff if this service is available. If an interpreter service is not available bring someone you trust to interpret for you.

GETTING READY FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT:

- Write a list of all of your symptoms and take it with you. List your body symptoms such as feeling tired or difficulty sleeping as well as what you are thinking, feeling and doing. Your doctor can help you best if she or he knows all your symptoms.
- Do the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale or CBT Model of Depression and bring it to the appointment. Either of these is helpful because they list your symptoms.
- List any recent stressful events or major changes in your life so you remember to tell your doctor about them. Tell him or her if you are experiencing violence or abuse in your relationship. Also tell him or her about any family history of mental health or substance use problems.
- Write your questions down and take them with you to the appointment.
- Take a pen and some paper to the appointment so that you can write down anything that you want to remember. Your support person could take these notes for you during the appointment.
- Have a support person take care of your child so you can focus on your visit.

AT THE APPOINTMENT:

- Tell your doctor what you are thinking, feeling, and doing. She or he needs to know so you get the right treatment and best care.
- Give your doctor the list of symptoms you wrote. Give him or her the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale or the CBT Model of Depression that you filled out.



- Talk about different ways of managing and treating your symptoms. Remember that depression can be treated. Treatment may include talk therapies, medications or both. Make sure you understand what is positive and what is negative about each option. Even if talk therapies are not easily available in your community they should be mentioned as an option for treatment.
- Ask questions. Write your questions down as you think of them so you can ask them before you leave.
- Be sure you and your doctor agree on a treatment plan you can live with. This may not be the final plan but you should have some options to think about until your next appointment.
- Write the answers to your questions or important points that you may want to think about later. These points may be what to do, or how often to do it. Your support person could help you by taking these notes.
- Repeat the treatment steps back to your doctor. This helps make sure that the plan is clear to both of you.
- Ask about other resources available in your community. These may be community programs, childcare subsidies, or postpartum depression support groups.
- If all of your questions were not been answered in this appointment, book another appointment right away. This helps you get all the information you need as soon as possible.

AFTER THE APPOINTMENT:

- Follow through on the steps you have agreed upon as your treatment plan.
- If you feel the plan is not working talk with a trusted friend.
- Make another appointment so that you can talk to your doctor about how you have been doing and if the treatment has been helpful.

www.heretohelp.bc.ca has a toolkit you can use to go over your symptoms. It also answers questions about talking to your doctor. It is information from BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information or BCPMHAI.

Source: Adapted from Bayer Institute P.R.E.P.A.R.E Patient Education Program and the Anxiety Disorders Toolkit.



7 I'm a loved one of a woman who is depressed. How do I help her?

Sharing work, giving support, and supporting her treatment plan are important ways you can help her. Women who are depressed need a sense that work is shared and that she has your support without her needing to ask several times.

The support you give her can make a big difference in helping a new mother to improve her symptoms and get back to feeling like herself again.

Here is a list of ideas. Talk with her about which ones will work best.

Share the work.

- **TAKE OVER SOME OF THE WORK IN THE HOME AND CARE OF THE BABY.** Suggest what tasks you can take on. Ask the mother what you can do to help daily.
- **GIVE HER A BREAK THAT SHE CAN COUNT ON.** Take the baby out for a walk. It can help because it allows her some time when she does not have to respond to her baby. She has some time alone.
- **REDUCE HER STRESS WHEREVER POSSIBLE.** You may not be able to change the fact that the baby is not sleeping, but it may be possible to arrange to get up with the baby a few nights or let mom sleep in on the weekends.
- **HIRE A HOUSECLEANER.** Having the house cleaned once a week can make a huge difference.
- **HIRE SOMEONE TO HELP WITH CHILDCARE.** This gives her practical support and a much needed break. Childcare can also give the new parents time to do something they enjoy together as a couple.
- **ACCEPT HELP FROM FRIENDS OR FAMILY MEMBERS.** If the woman is pregnant, discuss how they can be involved before the baby arrives. Getting organized early can help to reduce worries.
- **ASK YOUR DOCTOR OR PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE TO HELP YOU FIND THE SUPPORT SHE NEEDS.** If finances are an issue and you don't have social support, there are other ways to get a break. Talk to your public health nurse about what resources there are.



Give support.

- **OFFER EMOTIONAL SUPPORT.** Listen, listen, listen. Being with her or listening without offering advice may be what she needs. Do not judge, criticize or blame her.
- **GIVE ENCOURAGEMENT.** A woman with depression in pregnancy or after the birth is going to be hard on herself. Reassure her that she is doing a good job as a mother, partner or in other roles that are important to her. Find something everyday that you can tell her you admire and appreciate about her.
- **TRY TO UNDERSTAND HER NEEDS.** Ask her what kind of support she needs from you.
- **REASSURE HER THAT SHE WILL GET BETTER AND THAT IT MAY TAKE SOME TIME.** It's not helpful to tell her:
 - She should get over this.
 - You are tired of this.
 - She should be happy.
 - To lose weight or work on her appearance in other ways.
 - She "asked for this" by wanting a baby.
- **REMIND HER THAT YOU LOVE HER AND THAT HAVING DEPRESSION DOES NOT CHANGE HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT HER.** Tell her you will stand by her and show her this by using the ideas in this section.

Support her treatment plan and take it slowly.

- **LEARN ABOUT DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY.** This may help you separate the person from the illness and realize that her behaviour and comments may not be directed at you. Let her be in charge of her treatment decisions. Support her choices. Do not become the expert about her illness.
- **BE INVOLVED IN HER RECOVERY AS MUCH AS SHE ASKS.** She may ask you to go with her to doctors' appointments. She may ask your help to do healthy behaviours such as going for walks. Know when to back off so that she does not feel pushed or forced.
- **HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS.** New mothers are usually surprised at how hard it is to 'get anything done' with a new baby in the home. Caring for a baby is a full time job.



- **POINT OUT AND FOCUS ON HER SUCCESSES.** Positive feedback usually motivates women to do even more to manage their depression. It helps create a positive cycle. Remind her that ups and downs are normal. They are to be expected and are not a sign of failure.
- **REWARD EFFORT, NOT OUTCOME.** It is important to reward your loved one for the effort she is putting into managing her depression — even if her attempts are unsuccessful at times. Compliment her. Plan something special to help her stay with the treatment plan until she sees changes in her symptoms because of her efforts.
- **BE AWARE THAT YOUR LOVED ONE MAY STILL BE MOODY, UPSET OR ANGRY.** This should happen less often with treatment and support.
- **UNDERSTAND THAT HER SEXUAL FEELINGS WILL RETURN.** Show affection and be intimate without pressuring her for sex. Find other pleasurable activities to share together.

Care For Yourself

It is common for partners, family and friends to feel stressed when a woman has depression during pregnancy or after the birth of the baby. You may even feel resentment, anger, guilt or fear. Living with someone with depression is not easy. It is important to take care of yourself and be flexible with how you do this.

- **TAKE CARE OF YOUR OWN MENTAL HEALTH.** It can be difficult to support someone going through depression. It is important that you are doing things to maintain your own well-being. Make sure that you take time for yourself. Remember to be flexible. If mom has had a demanding day at home, it may be better to plan your time out for a different day.
- **FIND SOMEONE YOU CAN TALK TO HONESTLY ABOUT HOW YOU ARE FEELING AND HOW HER DEPRESSION OR ANXIETY AFFECTS YOU.** This may be a friend, a family member or a support group.
- **SEEK HELP FOR YOURSELF IF YOU ARE NOT COPING, OR ARE AT RISK OF DEPRESSION.**
www.heretohelp.bc.ca the BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information Website gives more information about depression and anxiety.

Remember, you can't make your loved one well, but you can offer support, understanding and hope that will help her. Each woman will experience depression with different symptoms. The best way to find out what she needs is by asking questions.