Postpartum Support International
29th Annual Conference

Perinatal Mental Health Warmlines:
Training Volunteers, Sustaining Services, and
Dealing with Emergencies

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Presenters

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- Wendy Davis, PhD, PSI Executive Director, Baby Blues Connection Founding Director, psychotherapist in Portland Oregon

Disclosures

The presenters have no disclosures
Objectives

1. Define roles and boundaries of providing social support to pregnant and postpartum families.
2. Describe logistics of providing social support through telephone warmlines.
3. Identify ways to provide resources and follow up for callers.
4. Describe ways to deal with emergencies on a social support warmline.

PSI Bridges the Gap

We provide direct peer support to families, train professionals, and provide a bridge to connect them.

Postpartum Support International
Universal Message

You are not alone
You are not to blame
With Help, you will be well
What is a Warline?
- Human connection
- Provide emotional and informational support
- Resources, not clinical advice or diagnosis
- Not a crisis line
  - Have crisis and hotline numbers available to give to callers

Warline Logistics
- Voicemail calls responded to within 24 hours
- Voicemail system can alert volunteers of a call
- Through Vonage, Google Voice, or other internet phone service provider
- Phone number rings directly to voicemail
- Options for email alerts, text alerts, and transcribed calls

First Contact Intake & Records
- Date, length of call, referral source
- Callers name, phone number, email and/or address
- Description of difficulties, symptoms, etc.
- Baby’s date of delivery/due date and number of children/pregnancies
- Existing support system
- Other calls made for support
- Discussed with a healthcare professional?
Types of calls

- Pregnant or postpartum
- Perinatal Loss
- Moms and Dads who need support
- Providers who have a patient in need of therapy and support
- Concerned partners or family members looking for guidance on how to help their loved one; sometimes partner also needs resources

FAQ from callers

- Should I be calling this number?
- Do I have PPD?
- Did I cause this? Did I do something wrong?
- Will it ever go away?
- I’m pregnant. Should I call a different number?
- It is so bad, I Don’t know what to do
- My wife is suffering but she is really resistant to accept help, what should I do?

Responding to callers

Listening is POWERFUL

- First, let them talk, listen to their story
- Listen for information
- Listen to understand the caller
- Listen with openness, no rush to judgment
Building Connections

Interacting helps building a CONNECTION
- Invite the caller to tell you what's is going on
- Ask questions that help you understand the caller
- Use their words so they feel heard
- Acknowledge their hardship - it must be difficult/scary/confusing/overwhelming
- Express your personal understanding - I know it is not easy...
- Self disclosure is OK if helpful to the caller

Questions to draw the caller out:
- What's been the most difficult part of this for you?
- What part do you think you'd like to get help with?
- Have you told anyone how you're feeling?
- Many women feel _______. Do you ever feel that?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Empower the caller

Uplift their spirit, give hope, use universal message, provide info and resources
- I am so glad you called us, we are here to help
- You are not alone, it's not your fault
- With help things can get better and easier
- It takes a village...you don't have to deal with it on your own
- I would like you to know about PPD that...
- The importance of self-care
- I have helpful resources

How do you empower callers?
Warmlines and Emergencies
Davis. Kenig. Rosales

Culturally Informed Services

Listening to the melting pot of mothers
- Mothers universally have a lot in common
- What is normal and acceptable, stressful and challenging may be different among mothers because of cultural aspects:
  - Race, ethnicity, religious, geographic areas (nationality, urban, rural) Socio-Economic, Gender, age
- We can’t rely on stereotypes of certain culture or population to understand the unique experience of each mom
- Be open to learn from each mom what are her personal values, expectations, needs

Cultural challenges & helpful support

Learning from the mom about:
- Pressures/challenges
- Expectation
- Stigmas - weak, crazy, mental, failure
- Support & resources available

We want to offer support and resources that are compatible with the cultural reality of the mother
Elements to Consider

- Who is in the family system?
- Are the mother/family's physiological needs being met?
  - Food, water, sleep, homeostasis/stability, etc.
- Socio-economic status of mother?
- Economic stability: financial independence, employment, resources, access to healthcare not covered through insurance (i.e. massage, chiro., etc.), constraints due to other’s judgments, etc.

Maternal needs & cultural context

Cultural pressures can negatively affect maternal mental health when they interfere with meeting the following needs:

- Survival and basic life needs
- Safety and stability
- Love and belonging
- Self-esteem
- Self actualization

A Volunteer’s Experience on Spanish-speaking warmline

- Minimizing after they’ve called the warmline
  - They’ve overcome it, they’re ok and don’t need a referral now
  - They were feeling really bad a "while" back but now it’s not so bad now
- Symptoms
  - Physical vs. emotional
- Supports
  - Minimal or no support, isolation, language barriers, not familiar with the neighborhood, cultural shock.
- Undocumented & Underinsured
  - Limited resources, few FREE services, & limited resources offered in Spanish.
Training and Supporting Volunteers
- Orientation and training
- Team communication
- Support and access for questions every day
- Volunteer Mentors
- Continuing education
  - 1:1 with Warmline Coordinator/Supervisor
  - In-person meetings
  - Conference calls
  - Webinars

Responses and Follow Up

Sending Materials
Mail or email:
- Brochure/info
- Educational materials
- Material for support partners
- Website and book list
- Community resource list
- Support group flyer
Keeping Records

- Confidentiality
- Record of call
- Summary sheet
- Computer database and logs

Responses and Follow Up

- Provide referrals to support group and other community support
- Simple action plan
- Call back as needed/or provide a follow up call
- Threat to harm self or others is the only time there is an exception to confidentiality
- Add disclosure statement and confidentiality statement to website, emails, fliers, etc

Connecting with RESOURCES
Your resource list
- Develop your list with all kinds of providers
- Have resources in front of you before you return call
- Offer to send through email

PSI Support Resources
- Local PSI Coordinators
- PSI Online Support Groups every week
- Chat with an Expert – Dads and Moms
- Closed FB Group
- Military Support Coordinators
- Dads Resources
- Dads Coordinator
- Psychosis Coordinator

PSI Support Coordinators
http://www.postpartum.net/get-help/locations/
- Telephone and email support for moms/families
- Connect with help: providers, groups, classes
- Providers apply to be on local resource list
- PSI Regional Coordinators
- Would you like to volunteer? Contact psioffice@postpartum.net
PSI Online Support Groups
www.postpartum.net/psi-online-support-meetings/

Weekly Online Support Meetings

- Join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
- Get comfortable, grab a cup of coffee!
- Listen and share your story in a room.
- Meeting in Spanish only.

Go to www.postpartumcentral.com/psi and click the button!

PSI Chat with an Expert

- www.postpartum.net/chat-with-an-expert/
- Every Wednesday for Moms
- First Mondays for Dads

Links in Spanish

- Nueva Vida Facebook Community Page
  https://www.facebook.com/nuevavidapostpartum
- Nueva Vida Twitter page
  https://twitter.com/nueva_vida_hoy
- Google Plus
  https://plus.google.com/+EricaMedinaSerrada/posts
- ADEP (psychoeducation & chatroom)
  http://www.ayudaparaaldeprender.org.mx
- Suicide support & prevention app
  http://www.myapp.org/en/
Information about medication for families

- MothertoBaby: 866-626-6847
  http://www.mothertobaby.org
- InfantRisk: 806-352-2519
  http://www.infantrisk.com
- MOTHERISK: 877-439-2744
  www.motherisk.org/prof/drugs.jsp
- Mass General Women's Health
  www.womensmentalhealth.org

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Emergencies and Risk of Harm

- What is the role of social support?
- Communicating with someone in crisis
- Emergency Protocols

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Clarifying Your Role

- Warmline Volunteers are not available or trained for 24-hour emergency support.
- Be clear about your role, availability, and ability to help. Our role is to help her find the help she needs. It is not always to be that help.
- Announce your availability and emergency resources in your written or verbal communication.
- Have emergency services info with you before you get on the phone
- Make sure you have support or supervision from others.
Assessing Risk of Harm

- Be willing to ask hard questions
  - “Some women feel so bad that they think of hurting themselves. Do you feel like that?”
  - When you think about that, have you ever thought of a plan or is it a feeling?
  - “Have you ever felt this before?”
  - “Have you ever hurt yourself before?”
  - “Do you have any questions for me?”

- Assess “Feeling like dying” vs. having a plan

Assessing Risks: Anxiety?

- All volunteers should have good understanding of symptoms of anxiety and intrusive images/thoughts that do not propel a woman to action.

- Before taking any action, do your best to understand whether she is having intrusive thoughts or fears with low risk vs. intent to cause harm to self or others.

- Reach out to your support team for support and guidance as soon as you are concerned

Assessing Resources

- Ask about support
- Don’t assume comfort

- Possible Sources
  - Significant Others
  - Healthcare Providers
  - Mental Health
  - Clergy
  - Twelve Step Group or Sponsor
  - Case Worker
Responses to Risk of Harm

- “Have you told anyone else about this?”
- “I am really glad you are being honest with me. I will help you find the support you need.”
- “I am going to give you some good emergency resources that you can contact at any time. I will call you back and make sure you are safe.”
- “What would help you feel safe from harm?”
- “Let’s create a to-do plan for you to use when you feel in a crisis. Let’s identify who you will call first, who might be able to come over to your house to be with you, etc.”
- Discuss what a crisis line can do and how it differs from what you can do.
- Arrange a time to call her back, and make sure you follow through.

Emergency Resources

- 24 hour crisis hotlines - Reliable and up-to-date numbers and websites!
  - Local and national: Have all numbers with you before you get on the phone
- National Crisis Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
  - http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/
- Local Urgent Care
- Referral for Medication Evaluation
- 211-info?
  - Does your community have “211-info” referral line?
- National Domestic Violence Hotline:
  - http://www.thehotline.org/ 1-800-799-7233
  - http://espanol.thehotline.org/ 1-800-799-7233

Connecting with Crisis Resources

- “I am listening to you, and taking what you say seriously. It will help for me to talk to your support system.”
- Ask for phone numbers for healthcare provider, therapist, or family member(s).
- Ask to talk to her significant other if present.
- If you are referring her to a specific provider or urgent care, tell her that you will call them and make sure they’re available.
PSI Social Support Webinar Series

www.psi-socialsupport-onlinetraining.eventbrite.com

- Developing support networks for pregnant and postpartum families
- Register at any time for the whole course and receive all eleven recordings and handouts
- Designed for all social support advocates for pregnant and postpartum women
- PSI Certificate of Completion in Perinatal Social Support Network Development at completion of series

PSI Contact Information

1-800-944-4773 (1-800-944-4PPD)

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